

GOSPEL ADVOCATE SERIES

Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary

ON

UNIFORM BIBLE LESSONS

FOR THE

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

1947

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

TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL VOLUME

P R I C E

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

ORDER FROM

GOSPEL ADVOCATE COMPANY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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P R E F A C E

In the following pages the reader has the twenty-sixth volume published by the Gospel Advocate Company on the Bible school lessons. They were first known as ELAM'S NOTES, and then as ANNUAL LESSON COMMENTARY. This is the second volume known as TEACHER'S ANNUAL LESSON COMMENTARY, and the third on the new series of Uniform Bible Lessons for the churches of Christ.

In this volume for 1947 the reader will meet with the greatest characters of all time. The first quarter is devoted to a study of some of the great men of the Old Testament, while the second quarter is given to the study of some great men of the New Testament. In the third quarter the reader will study some of the great women of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The fourth quarter is devoted to a study of the major prophets. In this last quarter we study not only the characters of these men, but some of their teachings.

Since the primary purpose of this book is to help the teachers of all departments, the writer has endeavored to give information suggested by the various places, customs, and characters which, for lack of space, could not be given in the quarterlies. It is not supposed that any one teacher will have time to use all of this information in addition to what is given in his quarterly, but possession of more information than can be used will give the teacher confidence, and give the students respect for the teacher. Suggestions have also been made to teachers of the different departments as to the points to be emphasized in each lesson, which the writer hopes will be used as a supplement to what is contained in the various quarterlies.

Standard works of the best-known authors have been used in preparing these lessons. Credit has been given for long quotations, but not for all short ones. The Bible Dictionary is based on Hackett's four-volume edition of Smith's Bible Dictionary. Extreme care has been exercised to give the exact language of these authors.

If teachers find this book helpful in preparing and teaching their lessons, the writer will feel repaid for the time and efforts spent in the writing of it. It is the sincere desire of the writer that it may be helpful to all who read it, and that it may be used to the glory of God and the honor of his Son.

THE AUTHOR.

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BIBLE DICTIONARY OF PROPER NAMES

Compiled by ROY H. LANIER

A

- Aar-on (enlightened), Ex. 6: 16-20. Brother of Moses and first high priest.
Ab, Jer. 1: 3. Fifth month of Hebrew sacred year, eleventh of civil year; our August.
- A-bel (breath, transitoriness), Gen. 4: 2. Second son of Adam.
- A-bi-a-thar (the Great one is Father), 1 Kings 4: 4. High priest in time of David, and the eleventh from Aaron.
- A-bib (sprouting), Ex. 13: 4. First month of the sacred, seventh of the civil, year of the Hebrew calendar; our April.
- A-bim-e-lech (father of the king), Gen. 20: 2. King of Gerar in the time of Abraham.
- A-bra-ham, A-bram (father of a multitude, exalted father), Gen. 12: 1. Founder of the Hebrew people and father of the faithful.
- Ab-sa-lom (father of peace), 2 Sam. 18: 33. Only son of David by Maacah, a Gentile woman.
- A-cha-ia (trouble), Acts 18: 27. A region of Greece; a Roman province in Paul's day.
- Ad-am (ruddy, earth), Gen. 3: 17. The name of the first man.
Ad-o-ni-jah (my Lord is Jehovah), 1 Kings 1: 5. Fourth son of David.
- Ag-a-bus, Acts 11: 28. A Christian prophet who foretold a famine.
A-has-u-e-rus (king), Esth. 1: 1. King of Persia; Xerxes of profane history.
A-haz (possessor), 2 Kings 16: 1. Eleventh king of Judah, son of Jotham.
- A-i (the heap), Josh. 7: 2. A royal city of the Canaanites; destroyed by Joshua.
Al-ex-an-der the Great (the helper of men). King of Macedon—356 to 323 B.C.
- Am-a-lek-ites, 1 Sam. 14: 48. A nomadic people who dwelt in the peninsula of Sinai.
- Am-a-zi-ah (strength of Jehovah), 2 Kings 12: 21. Eighth king of Judah; son of Joash.
- Am-mon-ites, 2 Sam 10: 1. Children of Ammon, the son of Lot by his younger daughter.
- Am-ram (exalted people), Ex. 6: 18. Father of Moses.
An-a-kim (giant), Josh. 14: 12. A race of giants in southern Canaan.
- An-a-ni-as (Jehovah is gracious), Acts 5: 1. Husband of Sapphira; died for lying.
An-a-thoth (echo), Jer. 1: 1. A levitical city; birthplace of Jeremiah.
- An-drew (manly), John 1: 44. Apostle, brother of Peter, resident of Bethsaida.
- An-ti-christ (opposed to Christ), 1 John 2: 18. A term used by John signifying false Christians, heretical teachers.
- An-ti-och, Acts 11: 20. 1. A city of Syria, headquarters of Paul. 2. A city of Pisidia where Paul established a church.
- A-pol-lo, the god of manly youth and beauty; the twin of Artemis; deity of Philippi.
- A-pol-los (destroyer), Acts 18: 24. An eloquent Jew of Alexandria, and gospel preacher.
- Ar-a-rat (creation, holy land), Gen. 8: 4. A district of Armenia where the ark rested.
Ar-e-op-a-gus (hill of Mars), Acts 17: 22. A hill in Athens. Also a court governing the religion and education of youth, founded by Cecrops in 1556 B.C.
- Ar-me-ni-a (Greek form of Ararat), 2 Kings 19: 37. Tableland between Caucasus and Tarsus mountain ranges, the source of Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.
- Ar-te-mis (Greek for Latin Diana), Acts 19: 24. Ephesian goddess.
- As-e-nath (dedicated to Neith), Gen. 41: 45. Wife of Joseph.
- Ash-e-rah (wife), same as Ashteroth, 1 Sam. 31: 10. Idol of Phoenicians and Philistines.
- A-sia, Acts 19: 10. The largest of the continents, but used in the Bible to refer to what we now call Asia Minor.
- As-syr-i-ans (plain), 2 Kings 19: 35. The people of Assyria.
Ath-ens, Acts 17: 21. The capital of Attica, founded by Cecrops in 1556 B.C.
- Az-a-ri-ah (whom Jehovah helps), Dan. 1: 6, 7. Daniel's companion, Abednego.

B

- Ba-al (master, possessor), Jer. 7: 9. Chief male deity of the Phoenicians and Philistines.
- Ba-al-e-ju-dah, 2 Sam. 6: 2. Another name for Kiriath-pearim, where the ark was kept for twenty years, 1 Sam. 7: 1, 2.
- Bab-y-lon (confusion), Jer. 25: 9. Capital of Chaldea; place of captivity of Judah.
- Ba-laam (lord of the people), Num. 23: 1. A prophet of Midian who tried to curse Israel.

- Ba-lak (empty, waster), Num. 22: 2. Son of Zippor, king of Moab.
 Ba-rak (lightning), Judges 4: 6. Leader of Israel's army under Deborah.
 Bar-na-bas (son of consolation), Acts 4: 36. A Levite of Cyprus and companion of Paul.
 Bar-zil-lai (iron), 2 Sam. 19: 31. A Gileadite who helped David flee from Absalom.
 Bas-e-math (fragrant). Two wives of Esau bearing same name. Gen. 26: 34; 36: 3.
 Be-er-she-ba (well of the oath), Gen. 21: 31. Name of a city in Judah; also name of a well.
 Bel (lord), Jer. 51: 44. Chaldean name for the god Baal.
 Ben-ja-min (son of the right hand), Gen. 35: 18, 24. Son of Jacob by Rachel.
 Be-roe-a, Acts 17: 10. City of Macedonia where Paul preached.
 Beth-a-ny (house of dates), John 11: 1. The home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha; also a city beyond the Jordan, John 1: 28.
 Beth-el (house of God), Gen. 35: 15. City about twelve miles north of Jerusalem.
 Beth-le-hem (house of bread), Gen. 35: 19. City six miles south of Jerusalem, where Rachel died; Boaz married Ruth; and Jesus was born.
 Beth-sa-i-da (house of fish), John 1: 44. The home of Andrew, Peter, and Philip.
 Be-thu-el (man of God), Gen. 22: 22. Son of Nahor by Milcah; father of Rebekah.
 Beu-lah (married). Isa. 62: 4. A symbolic name for the land of Israel.
 Bi-thyn-i-a, Acts 16: 7. A province of Asia Minor.
 Bo-az (fleetness), Ruth 2: 1. A wealthy Bethlehemite who married Ruth.
 Bo-chim (the weepers), Josh. 2: 1, 5. A place west of the Jordan and north of Gilgal.

C

- Caes-a-re-a, Acts 8: 40. A seaport on the Mediterranean seventy miles northwest of Jerusalem.
 Caes-a-re-a Phi-lip-pi, Matt. 16: 13. A town in northern Palestine, 120 miles from Jerusalem.
 Cain (lance, possession), Gen. 4: 1. First son of Adam, and first murderer.
 Ca-leb (bold), Num. 13: 30. Son of Jephunneh, and a faithful spy.
 Cal-va-ry (skull), Luke 23: 33. The Greek name for the place where Jesus died.
 Ca-na-an (low, flat), Gen. 10: 6. Fourth son of Ham; also land where the Jews lived.
 Can-da-ce, Acts 8: 27. A name given all queens of Ethiopia, as Pharaoh was a name for all kings of Egypt.
 Ca-per-na-um (village of Nahum), Mark 2: 1. A town on west shore of Galilee.
 Car-che-mish (fort of Chemosh), 2 Chron. 35: 20. City on the Euphrates, taken by Nebuchadnezzar in 608 B.C., Jer. 46: 2.
 Carmel (the park), 1 Kings 18: 19. The name of a mountain of western Palestine.
 Cas-lu-him, Gen. 10: 14. Descendants of Ham through Mizraim; ancestors of the Philistines.
 Chal-de-ans, Dan. 5: 7. People of Chaldea. Also a class of wise men of Daniel's day.
 Che-bar (joining), Ezek. 1: 1. A royal canal joining the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.
 Che-mosh (god of fire), 1 Kings 11: 7. National deity of the Moabites.
 Chis-lev, Neh. 1: 1. Ninth month of sacred, third of civil, calendar of Jews.
 Chil-i-on (sickly), Ruth 1: 2. Son of Elimelech; husband of Orpah.
 Chin-ne-reth, Josh. 13: 27. Another name for the Sea of Galilee.
 Christ (anointed), Matt. 16: 16. The Greek word for the Hebrew term Messiah.
 Ci-li-ci-a, Acts 22: 3. A province of Asia Minor of which Tarsus was capital.
 Co-los-sae, Col. 1: 2. A city of Phrygia in Asia Minor where Paul preached.
 Cor-inth, Acts 18: 1. A city of Greece where Paul established the church.
 Cor-ne-li-us, Acts 10. A Roman centurion who lived at Caesarea.
 Crete, Tit. 1: 5. An island in the Mediterranean, south of Greece.
 Cush-ite (dark-colored), Num. 12: 1. Descendant of Cush, the son of Ham; Ethiopian.
 Cy-prus (copper), Acts 4: 36. Island in Mediterranean; home of Barnabas.
 Cy-rus (the sun), Dan. 1: 21. Founder of the Persian empire.

D

- Da-gon (fish), Judges 16: 21. The national god of the Philistines.
 Da-mas-cus, Acts 9: 19. Most ancient city of Syria; 133 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

- Dan (judge). Gen. 30: 6. Fifth son of Jacob. One of the twelve tribes. A city in the extreme northern part of Palestine.
- Dan-iel (God is judge), Dan. 1: 6. A captive in Babylon, and fourth of the major prophets.
- Da-ri-us (the restrainer), Dan. 6: 1. A common name for kings of Media and Persia.
- Da-vid (beloved), Ruth 4: 17. Youngest son of Jesse; second king of Israel.
- Deb-o-rah (bee, wasp), Judges 4: 4. Name of a prophetess and judge.
- De-li-lah (languishing), Judges 16: 4. A Philistine woman who betrayed Samson.
- De-mas, 2 Tim. 4: 10. A disciple who forsook Paul at Rome.
- Deu-te-ron-o-my (second writing of the law). Fifth book of Bible written by Moses.
- Dis-pen-sa-tion. A system of principles governing people during a certain period of time.
- Dis-per-sion (scattered). A term applied to Jews who did not return from captivity.
- Dor-cas (doe, gazelle). Acts 9: 36. A woman whom Peter raised from the dead at Joppa.
- Do-than (two wells), Gen. 37: 17. The place where Joseph found his brethren.

E

- E-bal (stone). Josh. 8: 30. A mountain in Ephraim.
- E-den (pleasantness), Gen. 2: 8-15. The district in which man first lived.
- E-dom (red), Gen. 32: 3. The country in which the descendants of Esau lived.
- E-gypt. Jer. 31: 32. The northeast part of Africa; the nation to which Israel looked for help in the days of Jeremiah.
- E-lam (youth), Gen. 14: 1. A province south of Assyria and east of Persia.
- E-lath (palm trees), 2 Kings 14: 22. A fortified city of Judah.
- El-e-a-zar (God's help), 1 Cor. 24: 3. Son of Aaron, and second high priest.
- El-i (high), 1 Sam. 1: 9. High priest in time of Samu^l.
- El-i-e-zer (God of help), Gen. 15: 2. Servant of Abraham.
- El-i-jah (Jehovah is my God), 1 Kings 17: 1. A prophet in the reign of Ahab.
- El-im-e-lech (God is king), Ruth 1: 2. A Bethlehemite, husband of Naomi.
- E-lis-a-beth (God is her oath), Luke 1: 5. Wife of Zacharias and mother of John the Baptist.
- E-li-sha (God is salvation), 1 Kings 19: 16. The successor of Elijah.
- El-ka-nah (God possesses), 1 Sam. 1: 1. The father of Samuel.
- El-Khu-lil. The modern name for Kir-i-ath-ar-ba, which is Hebron. Gen. 23: 2.
- E-lul (the gleaning month), Neh. 6: 15. Sixth month of the sacred, twelfth of civil, year, answering to the last of our August and first of September.
- E-ly-mas (wise man), Acts 13: 8. A sorcerer who opposed Paul.
- E-noch (initiated), Gen. 5: 24. One who walked with God, and was translated.
- E-phah. A Jewish measure equal to a bushel in early, and less in later, times.
- Eph-e-sus, Acts 19: 1. Capital of Asia; where Paul established the church.
- E-phra-im (double fruitfulness), Gen. 41: 52. Son of Joseph. City in the wilderness to which Jesus retired on one occasion, John 11: 54.
- Eph-rath, Gen. 35: 16. Another name for Bethlehem, where Rachel died.
- Eph-rath-ites. Ruth 1: 2. Inhabitants of Bethlehem-Judah.
- E-phron (strong), Gen. 23: 8. A Hittite from whom Abraham bought the cave of Macpelah.
- E-sau (hairy), Gen. 25: 25. Son of Isaac; father of the Edomites.
- Es-dra-e-lon. The Greek form of the Hebrew word Jez-reel; a valley, or plain, "extends across central Palestine from the Mediterranean to the Jordan."
- Es-ther (star), Esth. 2: 7. A captive Jewess who became queen of Persia.
- E-thi-o-pi-a (Cush), Acts 8: 27. A country of Africa, south of Egypt.
- Eu-phra-tes (bursting, sweet), Gen. 2: 14. A river of Eden, 1,780 miles long.
- Eve (life), Gen. 3: 20. The first woman and wife of Adam.
- E-ze-ki-el (God will strengthen), Ezek. 1: 3. A priest, and third of major prophets.

F

- Fe-lix (happy), Acts 23: 26. A Roman governor who held Paul in prison.
- Fes-tus (festival), Acts 24: 27. The Roman governor who succeeded Felix.
- First-born, Ex. 13: 13. The first son born to a family, who succeeded his father as head.
- First-fruits, Ex. 22: 29. First ripe fruit offered to Jehovah.

G

- Ga-bri-el (man of God), Luke 1: 19. Angel that appeared to Elisabeth and Mary.

Ga-la-ti-a (land of the Gauls), Acts 16: 6. A province of Asia Minor.
 Gal-i-lee (circuit). Section of Palestine north of Samaria and west of Jordan.
 Also a lake of northern Palestine.
 Ga-za (strong, fortress). Acts 8: 26. A city of southwest Palestine.
 Ged-a-li-ah (Jehovah is great), Jer. 40: 5. Ruler of the people left in Judah.
 Ge-ha-zie (diminisher), 2 Kings 4: 12. S^orvant of the prophet Elisha.
 Gen-e-sis (beginning). The first book of the Bible.
 Gen-nes-a-ref (garden of the princes), Luke 5: 1. Another name for Sea of Galilee.
 Gen-tile (nation, foreigners). A Hebrew word which includes all except Jews.
 Ge-rar (district, abode), Gen. 20: 1. A place of Abraham's sojourn.
 Ger-i-zim (waste places), Josh. 8: 33. A mountain where the law was read.
 Ger-shon (a stranger there), Ex. 6: 16. The first son of Moses.
 Geth-sem-a-ne (oil press), Matt. 26: 36. A garden on the Mount of Olives.
 Gib-e-on (belonging to a hill), Josh. 9: 3. A Hivite city whose people made a covenant with Joshua by receiving him.
 Gid-e-on (a hewer, brave warrior), Judges 6. A judge and warrior in Israel.
 Gi-hon (stream), Gen. 2: 13. The second river of the garden in Eden.
 Gil-gal (rolling), Josh. 4: 19. A place west of the Jordan and north of Jericho.
 Gol-go-tha (a skull), John 19: 17. Hebrew name of the place where Jesus died.
 Go-li-ath (an exile), 1 Sam. 17: 4. The giant whom David slew.
 Go-mor-rath (submersion), Gen. 18: 20. A city destroyed by fire from heaven.
 Grot-to. A cave where Jeremiah is supposed to have written Lamentations.

H

Ha-das-sah (myrtle), Esth. 2: 7. The name Esther formerly wore.
 Hagar (flight), Gen. 16: 1. Sarah's handmaid; concubine of Abraham; mother of Ishmael.
 Ha-man (celebrated), Esth. 3: 1. Chief minister or vizier of King Ahasuerus.
 Han-a-ni-ah (whom Jehovah has given), Dan. 1: 7. The Hebrew name of Shadrach.
 Han-nah (grace), 1 Sam. 1: 2. The mother of the prophet Samuel.
 Han-rah (strong), Gen. 11: 26. The brother of Abraham; father of Lot and Milcah.
 Har-ma-ged-on (height, or city of Megiddo), Rev. 16: 16. (Am. Std. Ver.)
 The great battlefield of the Old Testament.
 Ha-ze-roth (camping grounds), Num. 11: 35. Name of a desert stop of the Israelites.
 Ha-zor (inclosure), Josh. 11: 1. A fortified city of northern Palestine. and only one burnt by Joshua; the home of Jabin and Sisera in time of the judges.
 He-brew (belonging to Eber), Gen. 14: 13. Name given Abraham and his descendants.
 He-bron (union, alliance), Jo?h. 15: 54. City twenty miles south of Jerusalem.
 Heph-zi-bah (my delight is in her), Isa. 62: 4. A name for Jerusalem when restored.
 Her-mon (prominent), Matt. 17: 1. Mountain where Jesus was transfigured.
 Her-od (hero like). The family name of several Roman rulers over Palestine;
 Idumeans by race, and Jews by religious faith.
 He-ro-di-as (from Herod), Matt. 14: 3. Wife of two Herods; had John the Baptist killed.
 Heth (terror), Gen. 49: 31. Son of Canaan; ancestor of the Hittites.
 Hez-e-ki-ah (strength of Jehovah), 2 Kings 18: 6. Thirteenth king of Judah.
 Hid-de-kei (swift), Gen. 2: 14. The third river of Eden.
 Hil-ki-ah (Jehovah is my portion), Jer. 1: 1. Father of Jeremiah the prophet.
 Hin-nom (gratis), Jer. 32: 35. A valley west and southwest of Jerusalem.
 Hi-ram (noble born). King of Tyre, who helped Solomon build the temple.
 Hit-tites. A nation of Canaan, descended from Heth.
 Holy I and. A term in general use to refer to Palestine.
 Holy Spirit. Matt. 1: 20. Third person of the Godhead.
 Ho-reb (dry, waste), Ex. 3: 1. Another name for Mount Sinai.

I

I-co-ni-um, Acts 14: 1. City in Asia Minor where Paul and Barnabas preached.
 Inn-man-u-el (God with us), Matt. 1: 23. Name given Jesus by prophecy.
 Inn. Luke 2: 7. A lodging place, similar to tourist camps.
 I-saac (laughter), Gen. 35: 27. Son of Abraham by Sarah.
 I-sa-iah (Jehovah is salvation), Isa. 1: 1. First of the major prophets.
 Is-cah (Jehovah is looking), Gen. 11: 29. Daughter of Haran; sister of Lot.
 Ish-ma-el (whom God hears), 1. Son of Abraham by Hagar, Gen. 16: 15.
 2. Son of Neth-a-ni-ah who slew Gedeliah, Jer. 41: 1-3.
 Ish-ma-el-ites, Gen. 37: 25. The descendants of Ishmael.

- Is-ra-el (he who striveth with God), Gen. 32: 28. Name given Jacob and his posterity.
 Is-sa-char (there is a reward), Gen. 30: 18. Ninth son of Jacob.
 It-a-ly, Acts 18: 2. A country in Europe.
 Ith-a-mar (land of palms), Ex. 6: 23. Youngest son of Aaron.

J

- Ja-az-a-ni-ah (whom Jehovah hears), Ezek. 8: 11. Son of Shaphan; idol worshiper.
 Ja-bin (intelligent), Judges 4: 2. A king of Canaan defeated by Barak.
 Ja-cob (supplanter), Gen. 25: 26. Son of Isaac, and head of the twelve tribes of Jews.
 Ja-el (climber, wild goat), Judges 4: 17. Wife of Heber, who slew Sisera.
 Ja-i-rus (God enlightens), Mark 5: 22. Ruler of a synagogue in Galilee.
 James (Greek form of Jacob), 1. Brother of John, Mark 1: 19. 2. Son of Alphaeus, an apostle, Mark 3: 18. 3. Brother of Jesus, Matt. 13: 55.
 Jeb-u-sites, 2 Chron. 3: 1. Descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham. Gen. 10: 6, 15.
 Jec-o-ni-ah (Jehovah establishes), Jer. 27: 20. King of Judah for three months.
 Jed-i-di-ah (beloved of Jehovah), 2 Sam 12: 25. Another name for Solomon.
 Je-hoi-a-chin (appointed of Jehovah), 2 Chron. 36: 9. Another name for Jeconiah.
 Je-hoi-a-da (known of Jehovah), 2 Chron. 24: 15. High priest in time of King Joash.
 Je-hoi-a-kim (Jehovah sets up), 2 Chron. 36: 5. King of Judah for eleven years.
 Je-ho-vah (I am), Ex. 3: 14. First person of godhead, the Eternal Living One.
 Jeph-thah (God will free), Judges 11: 1. One of the judges of Israel.
 Jer-e-mi-ah (whom Jehovah exalts), Jer. 1: 1. The second of the major prophets.
 Jer-i-chó (place of fragrance), Josh. 3: 16. First city of Canaan destroyed by Joshua.
 Je-ru-sa-lem (foundation of peace), Matt. 23: 37. Religious and political center of Jews.
 Jez-e-bel (chaste), 1 Kings 16: 31. Wife of Ahab, a worshiper of idols.
 Jez-reel (God will sow), Judges 6: 33. A valley in central Palestine.
 Jo-ash (whom Jehovah gave), Judges 6: 11. Father of Gideon.
 Joch-e-bed (whose glory is Jehovah), Ex. 6: 20. Mother of Moses.
 John (whom Jehovah has given), Mark 3: 17. Son of Zebedee, and an apostle.
 John the Baptist (immersed), Matt. 3: 1. The forerunner of Jesus.
 Jop-pa (beauty), Acts 10: 11. Town of western Palestine; modern name Jaffa.
 Jor-dan (the descender), Josh. 2: 7. Longest river in Palestine.
 Jo-seph (increaser), Gen. 30: 24. Son of Jacob by Rachel.
 Josh-u-a (Jehovah is Saviour), Ex. 17: 9. Minister and successor of Moses.
 Jo-si-ah (Jehovah heals), 2 Chron. 34: 1. Son of Amon and fifteenth king of Judah.
 Jo-tham (Jehovah is upright), 2 Chron. 27: 1. Son of Uzziah and tenth king of Judah.
 Ju-dah (praise), Gen. 29: 35. Son of Jacob; one of the twelve tribes; the name of the southern kingdom after the division at the death of Solomon.
 Ju-das Is-car-i-ot (the man from Kerioth), Matt. 26: 15. The apostle who betrayed Jesus.
 Judges. Men who administered the affairs of Israel from Joshua to Saul, the first king.
 Ju-dith (praised), Gen. 26: 34. Wife of Esau, a Hittite.

K

- Ka-desh, Ka-desh-Bar-ne-a (holy), Num. 13: 26. Where Miriam died.
 Ka-desh-Naph-ta-li. Josh. 20: 7. City in extreme north of Palestine.
 Ke-tu-rah (incense), Gen. 25: 1. A wife who bore Abraham six sons.
 Kid-ron (turbid), John 18: 1. Valley southeast of Jerusalem.
 Kir-iath-ar-ba (city of Arba), Gen. 23: 2. Another name for Hebron.
 Kish (bow), Esth. 2: 5. A Benjamite, great grandfather of Mordecai.
 Kish-on (torrent), Judges 4: 7. A river rising in Mt. Tabor and flowing into the Mediterranean Sea.
 Ko-hath (assembly), Ex. 6: 16. One of three sons of Levi.

L

- La-mech (youth), Gen. 5: 25. The father of Noah.
 Lam-en-ta-tions. Book written by Jeremiah.
 La-od-i-ce-a (justice of the people), Col. 2: 1. A city in the province of Phrygia.
 Lap-i-doth (lamps), Judges 4: 4. Husband of Deborah.

Laz-a-rus (whom God helps), John 11: 1. Brother of Mary and Martha.
 Le-vites (joined, or crown), 1 Kings 8: 4. Descendants of Levi; the tribe from which all priests were selected, and who took care of the tabernacle and temple.
 Lib-er-tines (freedmen), Acts 6: 9. Jews freed from Roman slavery.
 Lot (veil), Gen. 11: 27. Son of Haran; nephew of Abraham.
 Luke (light-siving), Col. 4: 4. A physician who accompanied Paul.
 Lyd-da, Acts 9: 32. A city of Dan, ten miles east of Joppa.
 Lyd-i-a (strife), Acts 16: 14. Paul's first convert in Europe.
 Lys-tra, Acts 16: 1. The home of Timothy, where Paul preached.

M

Mac-ca-bees. A family who ruled in Palestine in the second century before Christ.
 Mac-e-do-ni-a, Acts 16: 9. The northern section of Greece; Philippi a principal city.
 Mach-pe-lah (the portion), Gen. 23: 9. The cave where Abraham buried his dead.
 Ma-her-shal-al-hash-baz (the spoil speedeth), Isa. 8: 1, 3. Son of Isaiah.
 Mah-lon (pinning), Ruth 1: 2. Son of Naomi; first husband of Ruth.
 Ma-nas-seh (forgetting), Gen. 41: 51. The first son of Joseph; one of the twelve tribes.
 Mark, John, Acts 12: 12. Companion of Paul and Barnabas.
 Mar-tha (lady, feminine form of Lord), John 11: 1. Sister of Mary and Ma-ry (bitter, same as Miriam). 1. Mother of Jesus, Matt. 1: 18. 2. Sister of Lazarus, John 11: 1. 3. The mother of Mark, Acts 12: 12.
 Mat-thew (gift of Jehovah), Matt. 10: 3. A publican who became an apostle.
 Medes (middle), Dan. 6: 6. A powerful nation of western Asia.
 Med-i-ter-ra-ne-an. The great sea lying west of Palestine.
 Me-gid-do (place of troops), 2 Chrön. 35: 22. City in plain of Jezreel.
 Mel-chiz-e-dek (king of righteousness), Gen. 14: 18. King and priest of Salem.
 Me-ra-ri (unhappy), Gen. 6: 19. The son of Levi.
 Me-rom (waters of the height), Josh. 11: 5. Lake near headwaters of the Jordan.
 Mes-o-po-ta-mi-a (high land of two rivers), Gen. 24: 10. A country east of Palestine, between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.
 Mes-si-ah (anointed), John 1: 41. The Hebrew word for Christ.
 Me-thu-se-lah (man of a dart), Gen. 5: 25. Son of Enoch; grandfather of Noah.
 Mi-cah (who is like Jehovah), Mic. 1: 1. The sixth of the minor prophets.
 Mid-i-an (strife), Gen. 25: 2. Son of Abraham by Keturah. Also name of country.
 Mil-cah (counsel), Gen. 11: 29. Wife of Nahor, and daughter of Haran.
 Mi-le-tus, Acts 20: 15. A seaport in the province of Caria in Asia Minor.
 Mil-len-ni-um (a thousand years), Rev. 20: 2. A period during which Satan is bound.
 Mir-i-am (their rebellion), Num. 12: 1. Sister of Moses and Aaron.
 Mish-a-el (who is what God is), Dan. 1: 7. Another name for Meshach, Daniel's friend.
 Mite, Mark 12: 42. A Hebrew coin worth about two mills.
 Mo-ab (of his father), Gen. 19: 37. Son of Lot by his daughter.
 Mo-ab-ites, Ruth 1: 22. The descendants of Moab, the son of Lot.
 Mor-de-cai (dedicated to Mars), Esth. 5: 5. The cousin of Esther.
 Mo-reh (teacher), Gen. 12: 6. The first stopping place of Abraham in Canaan.
 Mo-ri-ah (Jehovah provides), Gen. 22: 2. Mount on which Abraham offered Isaac.
 Mo-ses (drawn out), Ex. 2: 5. Prophet, lawgiver, and deliverer of Israel.
 Mug-heir. Modern name for Ur of Chaldees.

N

Na-bal (fool), 1 Sam. 25: 2. First husband of Abigail.
 Na-hor (slayer), Gen. 11: 27. The brother of Abraham.
 Na-o-mi (my delight), Ruth 1: 2. Wife of Elimelech, mother-in-law of Ruth.
 Naph-ta-li (wrestling), Gen. 30: 8. Fifth son of Jacob. One of twelve tribes.
 Na-than (given of God), 2 Sam. 5: 14. 1. Son of David by Bathsheba. 2. A prophet in time of David, 2 Sam. 12.
 Naz-a-reth (the guarded one), Luke 2: 39. The home of Jesus during childhood.
 Naz-i-rite (one separated). Num. 6: 1-21. A person who took a peculiar vow to set himself apart to God's service.
 Ne-ap-o-lis (new city), Acts 16: 11. The seaport of Philippi.
 Ne-bo (height), Deut. 34: 1. Mountain peak from which Moses viewed Canaan.

- Neb-u-chad-nez-zar (may Nebo protect the crown), 2 Kings 24: 10. King of Babylon.
- Neb-u-chad-rez-zar (Nebo is protector against misfortune), Ezek. 26: 7. Another form of the name Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.
- Neb-u-zar-a-dan (Nebo gives posterity), Jer. 39: 9. Captain of the guard under Nebuchadnezzar.
- Ne-he-mi-ah (consoled by Jehovah), Neh. 1: 1. A minor prophet.
- Neph-i-lim (giants), Gen. 6: 4. Sons of Anak who came of the Nephilim.
- New Cov-e-nant, Heb. 8: 8. The gospel of Christ.
- Nile (blue, dark). Word not in Bible: called river of Egypt, Gen. 15: 18.
- Nin-e-veh (city of Ninus), Gen. 10: 11. The city to which Jonah preached.
- No-ah (consolation), Gen. 6: 9. The man who built the ark and was saved from the flood.
- Nob (height), 1 Sam. 21: 1. A Levite city to which David fled.

O

- O-bed (he who serves), Ruth 4: 17. Son of Ruth by Boaz.
- Ol-ives, Mount of, Matt. 21: 1. Olivet, Acts 1: 12. Mount east of Jerusalem.
- On (sun), Gen. 41: 45. Also called Heliopolis. Home of Joseph's wife.
- Oph-rah (female fawn), Judges 6: 11. The home town of Gideon.
- Or-pah (mane, forelock), Ruth 1: 4. Daughter-in-law of Naomi.

P

- Pad-dan-a-ram (the tableland of Aram), Gen. 25: 20. That portion of country which bordered the Euphrates, where Abraham's kindred lived.
- Pal-es-tine (land of strangers). The word occurs four times in the Authorized, but not at all in the American Standard Version, which has Phi-lis-ti-a. It is used to mean only a part of Canaan along the shore of the Mediterranean. But common usage today applies it to all of the land of Canaan, the Holy Land.
- Par-a-dise (orchard of pleasure), Luke 23: 43. The place of rest for departed spirits of the righteous.
- Pass-over, Exodus 12. A Jewish feast to commemorate the sparing of the firstborn of Jews from the death angel in Egypt; the feast was held on the fourteenth of Nisan, our April.
- Pa-tri-archs (father of a tribe), Heb. 7: 4. A name used of heads of families.
- Paul (little, wonderful), Acts 13: 9. The great apostle to the Gentiles.
- Pe-kah (open-eyed), 2 Kings 15: 25. Eighteenth king of Israel.
- Pe-nin-nah (coral, or pearl), 1 Sam. 1: 2. A wife of Elkanah.
- Pen-te-cost (fiftieth), Acts 2. A Jewish feast day fifty days after Passover.
- Per-ga-mum-Per-gamos (height), Rev. 1: 11. A city of Mysia in Asia Minor.
- Per-sia (pure), 2 Chron. 36: 22. Empire over which Cyrus ruled.
- Pe-ter (a stone), John 1: 42. The leading figure among the apostles.
- Pha-raoh (sun), Gen. 37: 36. A title applied to rulers of Egypt.
- Phar-i-sees (separated), Acts 5: 34. A religious sect of the Jews.
- Phil-ip (lover of horses), John 1: 44. 1. One of the twelve apostles. 2. An evangelist, Acts 8: 5.
- Phi-lip-pi, Acts 16: 12. One of the chief cities of Macedonia.
- Phi-lis-tines (immigrants), Judges 16: 23. Inhabitants of Philistia.
- Phoe-ni-ci-a, Acts 11: 19. A tract of country bordering the Mediterranean, with Tyre and Sidon as its principal cities.
- Phryg-i-a (dry, barren), Acts 18, 23. Name of a province of Asia Minor.
- Pis-gah (the part, piece), Deut. 34: 1. A part of the mountain range of Abarim. Nebo was the top of Pisgah. Scholars differ about which was the mountain and which the peak.
- Pi-shon (streaming), Gen. 2: 11. One of the four rivers of Eden.
- Pris-cil-la, Acts 18: 26. The wife of Aquila, and teacher of Apollos.
- Pros-e-lyte (stranger), Matt. 23: 15. Name given by the Jews to people who accepted the Jewish faith.
- Pub-li-can, Luke 3: 12. A name given to men who gathered Roman taxes.
- Pulse, Dan. 1: 12. Uncooked grains used for food.
- Pu-rim (lots), Esth. 3: 7. A feast of the Jews celebrating their deliverance from Haman.

R

- Rab-bi (master, teacher), Matt. 23: 7. A title of respect.
- Ra-chel (ewe, sheep), Gen. 29: 6. Daughter of Laban, wife of Jacob.
- Ra-math-a-im-zo-phim, or Ra-mah (double height), 1 Sam. 1: 1. Home of Samuel.
- Re-bek-ah (ensnarer), Gen. 22: 23. Sister of Laban, wife of Isaac.
- Red Sea. Ex. 14: 2. The sea between Egypt and Arabia, crossed by the Israelites.
- Reph-i-dim (rest), Num. 33: 14. Last stop of Israelites before reaching Sinai.
- Re-zin (stable, firm), 2 Kings 15: 37. King of Syria.
- Ruth (a friend), Ruth 1: 4. Wife of Boaz, ancestress of Christ.

S

- Sab-bath (a day of rest), Ex. 16: 23. Seventh day of the week; Jewish rest day.
- Sab-bath Day's Journey, Acts 1: 12. About seven-eighths of a mile.
- Sad-du-ces (followers of Zadok), Acts 23: 8. A religious sect of the Jews.
- Sa-mar-i-tans (watch mountain), John 4: 9. Inhabitants of Samaria, the district between Judea and Galilee.
- Samaritan Pentateuch. The five books of Moses revised by the Samaritans.
- Sam-son (little sun), Judges 15: 20. A judge in Israel, and the strong man of the Bible.
- Sam-u-el (asked of God), 1 Sam. 3: 1. The last judge of Israel; a great prophet.
- San-he-drin (council). This word is not in the Bible; it is spoken of as the council. Acts 4: 15. It was the supreme court of the Jews, composed of about seventy men.
- Sap-phi-ra (beautiful), Acts 5: 1. The wife of Ananias.
- Sa-rah (princess), Gen. 20: 12. Wife of Abraham.
- Sa-rai (my princess), Gen. 17: 15. Daughter of Terah, name changed to Sarah.
- Sa-tan (adversary), Matt. 4: 10. A name applied to the devil.
- Saul (asked for). 1. First king of Israel, 1 Sam. 10: 1. 2. First name of Paul, Acts 13: 9.
- Se-leu-ci-a, Acts 13: 4. A Mediterranean seaport.
- Sen-nach-e-rib (sin, or moon, increases brothers), 2 Kings 19: 36. Assyrian king.
- Sep-tu-a-gint. Greek version of Old Testament translated by seventy men.
- Seth (appointed), Gen. 4: 25. A son of Adam and Eve.
- Sha-phan (coney), Ezek. 8: 11. Father of Jaazaniah the idolater.
- Sha-ron (the plain), Acts 9: 35. A plain bordering the Mediterranean Sea.
- She-ar-jash-ub (a remnant shall return), Isa. 7: 3. Son of Isaiah.
- She-ba (wine, red), 1 Kings 10: 1. (This is not the Hebrew word which means oath.) This is the name of a queen of Arabia, not of Ethiopia as thought by some.
- She-chem (shoulder), Gen. 33: 18. A city of Samaria.
- She-chi-nah (rest, dwell). Term not in Bible. A term used by the Jews to express the visible majesty of the Divine Presence, usually in a light, Luke 2: 9.
- Shesh-baz-zar (fire worshiper), Ezra 1: 8. Another name for Ze-rub-ba-bel.
- Shi-loh (place of rest). Josh. 18: 1. The place where the old tabernacle stood.
- Shu-nam-mite (native of Shunem), 2 Kings 4: 8. A woman who befriended Elisha.
- Shu-shan (lily), Esth. 1: 2. The seat of the Persian government.
- Si-chem. Same as Shechem.
- Si-don (fortified), Matt. 15: 21. A city of Phoenicia.
- Si-las, Acts 15: 22. Paul's companion in missionary work. Same as Silvanus.
- Si-lo-am (sent), John 9: 7. Name of a pool in Jerusalem.
- Si-mon (hearing), Luke 4: 38. Another name for Peter. Also a man who was a sorcerer. Acts 8: 9.
- Si-na-i (jagged), Ex. 19: 1. Mountain on which law of Moses was given.
- Sis-e-ra (battle array), Judges 4: 2. Captain of the army of Jabin.
- So-coh (branches), 1 Sam. 17: 1. Name of two towns in Judah.
- Sod-om (place of lime), Gen. 10: 19. City in which Lot lived.
- Sol-o-mon (peaceful one), 1 Kings 1: 33. Son of David, king of Israel.
- So-rek (vineyard), Judges 16: 4. A valley where lived a woman Samson loved.
- Ste-phen (crown), Acts 6: 5. The first Christian martyr.
- Susa. The same as Shushan, the capital of Persia.
- Sy-char. John 4: 5. A city of Samaria.
- Syn-a-gogue (congregation), Matt. 4: 23. A place of Jewish worship.
- Syr-i-a (the high land), 2 Sam. 8: 6. Name of a country north of Canaan.

T

- Tabernacle, Ex. 40: 34. A tent built by Moses for the worship of Jehovah.
- Ta-bi-tha (gazelle), Acts 9: 36. Another name for Dorcas.
- Ta-bor (height), Judges 4: 6. A mountain of central Palestine.
- Tal-mud. The body of Jewish civil and canonical law.
- Tar-gum. An Aramaic paraphrase of portions of the Old Testament.
- Te-beth (winter), Esth. 2: 16. Tenth month of sacred, fourth of civil, year.
- Te-he-vi-ta. Traditional wife of Terah and mother of Sarah.
- Tel-a-bib (corn-hill), Ezek. 3: 15. A place where Ezekiel worked with Jewish exiles.
- Temple. Place of Jewish worship, first built by Solomon, 1 Kings 6-8.
- Te-rah (turning, wandering), Gen. 11: 27. Father of Abraham.
- Thes-sa-lo-ni-ca, Acts 17: 1. A city of Macedonia, where Paul established the church.

Thy-a-ti-ra, Acts 16: 14. A city of Asia Minor, the home of Lydia.
 Ti-be-ri-as, John 6: 1. Another name for Sea of Galilee; also a town by that name.
 Tig-lath-pi-le-ser, 2 Kings 15: 29 (Til-gath-pil-ne-ser, 2 Chron. 28: 20). An Assyrian king.
 Tim-nath (portion), Judges 14: 1. A city of the Philistines.
 Tim-nath-se-rah (portion of abundance), Josh. 19: 50. The home of Joshua.
 Tim-o-thy (honoring God), Acts 16: 1. Paul's son and companion in the gospel.
 Ti-tus (honorable), Tit. 1: 4. Paul's son and companion in the gospel.
 Transfiguration, Mount of, Matt. 17. Mount Hermon, according to modern scholars.
 Tro-as, Acts 16: 8. A seaport in extreme western part of Asia Minor.
 Troph-i-mus (foster-child), 2 Tim. 4: 20. One of Paul's companions.
 Tyre, 1 Kings 5: 1. A Phoenician city, home of King Hiram.
 Ty-ro-poe-on Valley. A valley in Jerusalem dividing the southern part of the city.

U

Ur (light), Gen. 11: 31. The city where Abraham was born.
 U-ri-ah (light of Jehovah), 2 Sam. 11: 3. Husband of Bathsheba, killed by David.
 Uz-zi-ah (strength of Jehovah), 2 Kings 15: 13. Ninth king of Judah.

V

Vash-ti, Esth. 1: 9. Queen of Persia replaced by Esther.
 Vir-gin, Matt. 1: 23. An unmarried female.

W

Watch, Ezek. 3: 17. The fourth part of the night.

Y

Yo-na. Traditional wife of Terah and mother of Abraham.

Z

Zac-chae-us (pure), Luke 19: 2. A tax collector near Jericho, host to Jesus.
 Zach-a-ri-as (remembered by Jehovah), Luke 1: 5. Father of John the Baptist.
 Za-dok (upright), 2 Sam. 8: 17. A priest in the time of David.
 Za-gros. A mountain chain north of Shushan.
 Zeb-e-dee (gift of Jehovah), Matt. 4: 21. Father of James and John.
 Zeb-u-lun (dwelling), Gen. 30: 20. Tenth son of Jacob; name of a tribe of Israel.
 Zed-e-ki-ah (justice of Jehovah), 2 Kings 24: 17. Last, nineteenth, king of Judah.
 Ze-rub-ba-bel (begotten in Babylon), 1 Chron. 3: 19. The head of the tribe of Judah in the time of Cyrus.
 Zin (low palm tree), Num. 13: 21. Name of a desert south of Judah.
 Zi-on (sunny), Jer. 50: 5. Name of a hill in southwestern part of Jerusalem.
 Zo-rah (sinking down), Judges 13: 2. The birthplace of Samson.

FIRST QUARTER

SOME GREAT MEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

AIM:—To learn the qualities of true greatness from the study of men whom God used to accomplish his will on earth, and to make these traits of character a part of the lives of those who study these lessons.

Lesson I—January 5, 1947

ADAM, THE FIRST MAN

The Lesson Text

Gen. 1: 26-30

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.

Acts 17: 26-28

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.

1 Cor. 15: 45-49

45 So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven.

48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."* (Gen. 1: 27.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 5: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

December 30. M.....	Helpmeet for Adam (Gen. 2: 18-25)
December 31. T.....	Adam Cursed (Gen. 3: 17-21)
January 1. W.....	Death Came Through Adam (Rom. 5: 12-19)
January 2. T.....	The First Adam (1 Cor. 15: 45-49)
January 3. F.....	Adam Not Beguiled (1 Tim. 2: 11-15)
January 4. S.....	The Descendants of Adam (Gen. 5: 1-5)
January 5. S.....	Adam Attempts to Cover His Sin (Job 31: 31-35)

TIME.—4004 B.C.

PLACE.—Garden of Eden.

PERSONS.—God, Adam, and Eve.

Lesson Subject Explained

The subject of our lesson for this week is one of primary importance. It is very fitting that the first lesson for the new year should be about the first man. And it is well for the teachers to emphasize the fact that Adam was the first man, and impress the student with the fact that the first man was so distinct from, and so far above, all the other animal creation that he gave them their names, and was given dominion over them. He was not a mere improvement over the lower animals, or the next link in the evolutionary process. He was *man*, endowed with sufficient wisdom to rule over the earth, to dress and keep his garden home in its primitive beauty, and to render intelligent obedience to his God. It will be worth while for every student to get a comprehensive and lasting impression of what man was when God made him and pronounced him good, and then strive to work back to that original standard.

Context of the Lesson

The book of Genesis easily divides itself into five divisions, each being given to the life and attainments of an outstanding character. These five great characters are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The purpose of the book is to give a history of the beginnings of the scheme of redemption through Christ who came to the world through a chosen people. And the men and women who had a place in this line are the subjects of inspired writers whether they were good or bad, holy or profane.

The first division of the book is given over to the account of creation. Adam is the principal figure. Enough concerning him and his fortunes is revealed to let us know the place he held in God's dealings with humanity. In Adam the human race had and lost its chance to live in peace and purity without sin and its terrible consequences. In this lesson we are concerned primarily with the creation of Adam and the commission God gave him to replenish and subdue the earth. Truly this was a "great commission," but Adam was equal to the task. The Lord endowed him with everything necessary for the accomplishment of this mission. Following our lesson text, we find that Adam failed in this mission, not because he was incapable of doing it, but because he gave way to temptation, through which act he plunged himself and his posterity into the darkness of sin and shame. But the last division of our lesson text takes us far into the future from Adam's day to the "last Adam" whose image we shall bear when the process of redemption is completed.

The Historical Background

This section of our lesson material will be given over to a more detailed study of the time, places, and persons of the lesson; and it will cover more ground. In this section will be given the dates of all scripture references in the lesson text. And it will include more persons and places than are given under these headings above. This section of the lesson is intended to give the teachers a fund of information which the student's quarterly does not have space to

give, and which will enable the teacher to answer such questions as the students may raise with reference to the lesson.

The time of this lesson is 4004 B.C. However, the teacher should know that not all are agreed on dates. Among conservative scholars there is what is known as the "Long Chronology" and the "Short Chronology." The earliest date is 5426 B.C. The latest date is 3983 B.C. We are following the chronology given by Bishop Ussher. Different texts of the scriptures account for some of these differences. For instance, the Hebrew text gives 1,656 years as the period of time from creation to the flood. The Samaritan text gives 1,307 years, while the Septuagint gives 2,242 years. And Josephus gives it as 2,256 years. The McClintock and Strong *Encyclopedia* gives the date of Adam's creation as 4172 B.C. These figures are given to show that we cannot be dogmatic as to the exact number of years covered.

The date of Paul's speech in Athens is A.D. 51; and the date of the writing of Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church is A.D. 57.

The place of this lesson is given as the Garden of Eden. The general supposition that the garden was Eden is wrong. "Eden was a region or territory, we know not how extensive, in which God planted a garden." There were four rivers in this region not in the garden. The names of the rivers are given as Pishon, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates. Men of learning have differed greatly as to the identity of some of these rivers. But it seems that the best explanation is that the Pishon is the Phasis, which empties into the Euxine Sea; the Gihon is the Araxes, which runs into the Caspian Sea; the Hiddekel is the Tigris, which with the Euphrates is easily located. These four great streams, with numerous branches, rise a short distance from each other in the highlands of Armenia. Eden was undoubtedly in this region. It is thought that the garden was near the juncture of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

Athens, the second place of our lesson, where Paul made this wonderful speech, was the capital of Attica, the chief seat of Grecian learning and civilization. There were four hills of moderate height within the walls of the city; one of these was called the Areopagus. It was on this hill that the council of Athens met, sometimes known as the upper council because of the elevated meeting place. It is also called Mars' Hill because according to tradition the god Mars was brought to trial before the assembled gods on this hill for the murder of the son of Neptune. At the foot of this hill was the market place where Paul reasoned daily with them that met him.

The persons of this lesson are of unusual interest. Adam's date is from 4004 to 3074 B.C. The word Adam is defined by McClintock and Strong to mean "red." They say the same Hebrew word is also rendered "man," including woman; and when the article is used "ha-Adam," the man, it is a proper name. It comes from "Adamah," which means earth, or ground. "The term apparently has reference to the ground from which he was formed, which is called *Adamah*. The idea of *redness of color* seems to be inherent in either word." (Smith's *Dictionary*.)

Eve is the name of the first woman. She was given that name by Adam "because she was the mother of all living." (Gen. 3: 20.) The word is the feminine form of the Hebrew adjective which means *living* or *alive*, or of a Hebrew noun which means *life*. Only three children of Adam and Even are mentioned, though there were

daughters born to them. (Gen. 5: 4.) Cain and Abel probably were twins, born two years after creation, and Seth was born 130 years after creation. (Gen. 5: 3.) At that time Eve drops out of the inspired narrative.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary Department

The Elementary Department includes ages six to eight. It is the business of the teacher to know what the child of this age is, and what will appeal to him. Good books along this line should be studied by the teachers. At best we can give but little in this work. However, some of the characteristics of this age are enjoyment of rivalry and competition, imaginative play, love for stories of action, and a growing power to reason. Some of the major objectives in this period are to help the child see God's power, wisdom, and goodness in creation and providence; to arouse in the child a desire to be the Lord's helper; to bring joy and happiness to others; and to assist in the formation of correct habits.

This lesson will be given to them in story form. Then let them tell the story back to the teacher. Have all the children watch for points left out, and then let them fill in when the story is ended. Let them see in how many ways God manifested his goodness to Adam, such as giving him a garden (Paradise) in which to live; providing him food which could be had so easily; a well-watered garden assuring fruitful seasons; no enmity between him and the animals; and creating him a helpmeet in Eve. Find a picture of a beautiful garden to take to class with you, and suggest that students try to get pictures. If you have a sand table, or cutouts, you can illustrate this story to good advantage.

Junior Department

This department includes ages nine to eleven. This is a period when social instincts are beginning; hero worship is at its height; the opinion of peers is very important; and the gang instinct is prominent. Also in this period children begin to awake to their religious condition; they begin to desire to become Christians, and many of them obey the gospel during this period.

The major objectives of the teacher during this period should be to get the child to memorize all the scripture possible, and learn to appreciate it. Obedience to parents should be stressed. Faithfulness to God, regardless of indifference of parents, may also be taught them and appreciated by them in this period. Respect for poor and aged is to be taught. And by all means a reverent and worshipful attitude during the period of worship is to be stressed.

Children of this age still appreciate stories, and they enjoy telling them. Along with this lesson it will be well to build a poster. Get a large piece of cardboard, draw the boundaries of a garden and rivers, perhaps lakes, running through it. Have the children to bring pictures of trees, animals, and a man and woman to paste on the board. In this way they construct a picture of the Garden of Eden. They will enjoy the work and it holds their interest. They will remember the lesson longer.

Intermediate Department

This division includes ages twelve to fourteen. This is a time of rapid physical growth and when sex instincts develop and bring new

sensations and emotions with their problems and temptations. Idealism and altruism take root and develop at this age. In this period children wish to know why; teachers must be consistent and reasonable.

The major objectives of this period should be to lead to gospel obedience; to lead the boys to take part in prayers and to conduct the devotional in their own department; to lead them to acquire clean moral habits; and to teach them to be careful of their companionships. They should be taught the dignity of labor and to select a worthy vocation.

In this lesson they should be impressed with the holiness of Adam before his sin and his joy in associating with God, and it should be our aim to develop such holiness that by the grace of God we may be permitted to get back to intimate association and communion with God in heaven. Another lesson to stress is the fact that Adam was given work to do. Labor is not a consequence of sin: Adam was given the duty of keeping the garden before he sinned. Use 1 Thess. 4: 11, 12; 2 Thess. 3: 7-12 to put over this lesson.

Senior Department

This department includes ages fifteen to seventeen. This is the high school age when they are busy with books, athletics, and social functions; love affairs are serious. They are creators and discoverers; memory is at its best. This is a time when they are looking for something definite and positive on which to build their faith.

The major object of this period should be to lead the unsaved to Christ; strengthen their moral habits; take on more responsibilities in church activities; refrain from unchristian social and recreational activities; and get a Christian view of what a home should be and plant within them the desire to build Christian homes.

This lesson gives the teacher a fine opportunity to present the lesson on the home as being (1) from God, (2) for man's happiness, (3) for the continuance of the race, and (4) a place where God can visit.

Adult Department

This period includes ages eighteen and up. The child is out of school and into college or business. Old ties are broken and new connections are formed. Heavier obligations are likely to take some away from the church. Those who are not led to Christ early in this period are in danger of never accepting Christ, so one of the major objectives of the teacher should be to lead all the unsaved of the class to obey the gospel. And later in the period they will need help to form Christian homes; to settle misunderstandings and apply gospel principles to the home, business, social, and political relationships and duties in which they find themselves entangled. It is a fearful responsibility to be the teacher of this department because of its varied needs and possibilities, but yet it is a most wonderful opportunity to that teacher who cares to prepare for successful work.

This lesson will give the teacher an opportunity to teach the fearful consequence of sin. From the reference in Acts he can teach the brotherhood of man and our duty to take the gospel to all nations. The nature of man, being both physical and spiritual with the energies and passions of the flesh being under control of the spirit, is a lesson for adults.

Golden Text Explained

When we are told that God created man in his own image, we are not to understand that this physical body was made after the pattern of God's body. God is a Spirit. (John 4: 24.) A spirit has not flesh and bones. (Luke 24: 39.) Paul says since we are the offspring of God we ought not to think a likeness of God can be made of wood, stone, or gold. (Acts 17: 28, 29.) If our body was made in the image of God and is the offspring of God, it would be like God in form, so a likeness of God and our body could be made of wood or stone. God is said to be the Father of our spirits. (Heb. 12: 9.) The child is in the image of the father, so it is our spirit which was made in the image of God. Paul suggests that this likeness consists in righteousness, holiness, and knowledge. (Eph. 4: 24; Col. 3: 10.) Hence man was wise in his mind, holy in his heart, and righteous in his actions. "God made man upright." (Eccles. 7: 29.)

Topics for Discussion

1. God said, "Let us make man." Since the plural form "us" is used, we may well look for all three persons of the Godhead in creation: God (Gen. 5: 1; 1 Pet. 4: 19), Jesus Christ (John 1: 1-3; Col. 1: 15-17; Heb. 1: 1-3), Holy Spirit (Gen. 1: 2; Job 26: 13).

2. All men are of common stock. No one is better than the other except as he respects the will of God with reference to himself, his duty to his neighbor, and his relationship to God.

3. In God we live, move, and have our being. From this we conclude that we are so utterly dependent upon God that we cannot exist without him. This lays us under obligation to serve God to show our appreciation for life with all its blessings and possibilities of an eternity of happiness after this life where no sin can hurt us.

4. The steps of degeneration: (1) unbelief; (2) disobedience; (3) guilt; (4) exile from God; and (5) death. The steps of regeneration: (1) belief; (2) obedience; (3) forgiveness; (4) union with God; and (5) everlasting life.

Lesson II—January 12, 1947

NOAH, A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Lesson Text

Gen. 6: 8-12; 9: 1, 2

8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of Je-ho'vah.

9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God.

10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Ja'pheth.

11 And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

12 And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

1 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the heavens; with all wherewith the ground teemeth, and all the fishes of the sea, into your hand are they delivered.

Ezek. 14: 14

14 Though these three men, Noah, Dan'iel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Je-ho' vah.

Matt. 24: 37, 38

37 And as *were* the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man.

38 For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark.

Heb. 11: 7

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house: through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

2 Pet. 2: 4, 5

4 For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5 And spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“And spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness.”* (2 Pet. 2: 5a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 9: 11-17.

Daily Bible Readings

January 6. M.....	Noah, Son of Lamech (Gen. 5: 28-32)
January 7. T.....	Noah Finds Favor with God (Gen. 6: 9-12)
January 8. W.....	Noah Builds the Ark (Gen. 6: 13-16)
January 9. T.....	Noah Goes into the Ark (Gen. 7: 1-12)
January 10. F.....	Noah Builds an Altar (Gen. 8: 20-22)
January 11. S.....	Noah's Posterity (Gen. 9: 20-29)
January 12. S.....	Noah Classed with Daniel and Job (Ezek. 14: 12-20)

TIME.—2948 to 1998 B.C.

PLACE.—Probably somewhere in Armenia.

PERSONS.—God and Noah.

Lesson Subject Explained

Noah was a preacher of righteousness. And we may conclude that he was a good one. Whether he was an orator we do not know, but he got his material for his sermons from God, so no fault can be found with that. Men preach both by word and example. Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and walked with God. Noah and Enoch (Gen. 5: 24) are the only men mentioned in the Bible of whom it is said by inspiration that they walked with God. Since Noah walked with God, was a just and perfect man, we know that he practiced what he preached. When men preach God's word and live in harmony with it before their fellow men, they are good preachers.

He preached righteousness to an unrighteous generation. He did not wink at their sins and tell them stories of their ancestors and their accomplishments. Like Paul who preached of righteousness and judgment to come before the wicked governor (Acts 24: 24, 25), Noah told the people of his day what they needed to hear.

But in spite of his good preaching he had no success, except to hold his own family against the rushing tide of ungodliness. He failed to convert even one soul. "As seed sown on the beaten way-side path bounces from its surface, finding no welcome, so the warnings and expostulations of this man of God flew back in his face, accompanied with the mockeries and maledictions of the ungodly. Yet he went his weary rounds and toiled on in his fruitless mission, setting his face like a flint against the scoffing populace—now thunder-

ing against the iniquities that stalked unblushingly at noonday, and anon tearfully beseeching his impious and reckless auditors to flee from the impending vengeance; nor ever ceased his warnings and entreaties until the flood came. At their feasts, at their weddings, in their public places, in the presence of the violence and monster wrongs and crimes that everywhere prevailed, undismayed by threats, unconquered by the rage of untamed passions, unaffected by the profanities and jeers and scoffs that answered his most earnest appeals, ever and always he was a 'preacher of righteousness' at God's command."

Context of the Lesson

Noah was the tenth in the lines of descent from Adam through Seth. Those before him were Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan (Cainan), Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech. (Gen. 5.) It is interesting to know that Noah was eighty-four years old when Enosh, the third from Adam, died. Enosh was contemporary with Adam for 695 years. So during that eighty-four years Noah could have learned much from Enosh who spent 695 years with Adam. Lamech, Noah's father, was contemporary with Adam for fifty-six years. And Methuselah, Noah's grandfather who died the same year of the flood, was contemporary with Adam for 243 years. So Noah must have known in detail the events of creation, what life in the garden and communion with God meant, what a deceiver Satan is, and the terrible consequences of sin. He received these things from the original sources with a directness that left no room for doubt. The obvious truthfulness of these stories must have made a deep and lasting impression on Noah. Undoubtedly these traditions, finding good soil in Noah's heart, kept him from the all but universal sins of his age. These gave him the strength to walk with God.

The Historical Background

The dates for Noah's birth and death have already been given. The events of our lesson in Gen. 6: 8-12 are dated about 2448 B.C., and Gen. 9: 1, 2 about 2347 B.C. The date for the reference in Ezekiel is 591 B.C.; that in Matthew before A.D. 60, but later than Mark; that in Hebrews is before the destruction of Jerusalem, perhaps A.D. 69; that in Second Peter A.D. 67.

The flood came in the six hundredth year of Noah's life. (Gen. 7: 11.) He lived 350 years after the flood (Gen. 9: 28), so we conclude that the flood came in the first part of the six hundredth year of his life. The flood came in the 1,656th year after creation, and from this we learn that Noah was born 1,056 years after creation. Adam and Methuselah span the entire period between creation and the flood, their lives overlapping 243 years.

As to the places of this lesson, we know very little with any degree of certainty. The place where these people lived seems not to have been important in the mind of the Holy Spirit. But we are told that the ark came to rest "upon the mountains of Ararat." (Gen. 8: 4.) It should be noticed that the Bible does not say th"ark rested on a mountain call tains of Ararat." Geikie says, "There is no hint of any particular mountain bearing the name." It was not until later times that the name came to be applied to the highest peak of a chain of mountains of the Armenian highlands, rising 16,254 feet above sea level, and is

called Greater Mount Ararat. Not far away is another peak more than 12,000 feet above sea level, and is known as the Lesser Ararat. Smith's *Dictionary* suggests that this was a logical and "natural resting place for the ark after the deluge," for its geographical location contributed to the best distribution of the race. The lofty plateau overlooked the plains of the Araxes on the north and that of Mesopotamia on the south. Its rough, harsh climate speeded the distribution of people to "more tempting regions on all sides of it." The latest map put out by the *National Geographic Magazine* puts Ararat on the line between Turkey and Armenia, at the extreme northwestern tip of Iran.

There is but one outstanding person connected with our lesson, Noah. We have already observed that he was the tenth from Adam, and that he lived 950 years, lacking only nineteen years living as long as any man ever lived. Thinking of Noah as a man among men we may say:

(1) He was a man of faith. His first warning of the flood came about one hundred twenty years before the flood. If God renewed his faith by further assurances and promises, nothing is said about it. He worked and preached more than one hundred years on the basis of one statement, so far as we know, from God that he would destroy the world by a flood. This must have been a most severe test of his faith; but if he ever wavered in the least, we have no evidence of it.

(2) Noah had a liberal education. He must have known considerable about shipbuilding. The timber was to be chosen, cut, prepared for use, brought into place, and assembled according to plans. Representatives of all kinds of clean and unclean animals and fowls had to be selected and brought into the ark. And he must have known a lot about people. No doubt he used many laborers to help him with heavy timber in building the ark. It takes some knowledge of people to be a preacher if the job is done properly.

(3) Noah stands at the head of the list for determination and steadfastness. For one hundred and twenty years he stands up for God and righteousness when all others are living for the devil. No strength of character is needed to drift with the tide, but it takes a great character to stand alone for any considerable length of time.

(4) Noah was just and perfect in his generation. "We take the idea of perfectness to be that of *completeness*. He was not great merely in this or that particular, but in the full and harmonious development of all the parts and features of a righteous character—in the symmetry that admits of no deformity in the shape of undeveloped or overdeveloped traits, or of excrescences."

(5) Noah had God's highest recommendation. He is mentioned along with four other men in a way that no other on earth is mentioned. God described the wickedness of a nation being such that if Noah, Daniel, and Job were living in it even their righteousness would not be sufficient to save any but themselves. (Ezek. 14: 14.) Again he said, "though Moses and Samuel stood before me." I would not hear them in behalf of this people. (Jer. 15: 1.) To live in such way as to deserve a place among the first five of all time is a truly great accomplishment.

In connection with this lesson the teacher will likely be asked about the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men." (Gen. 6: 1-4.) It has been argued that the expression "sons of God" means the

angels mentioned in 2 Pet. 2: 4 and Jude 6, and that they came down in human form and married women, and that the issues were giants physically. But this is too fanciful to have any basis in facts. Among the descendants of Seth there were some who still revered and obeyed God and lived for something better than the flesh and the world; they were called sons of God. While the descendants of Cain were entirely estranged from God. Their women are described as "fair," that is they were physically beautiful and attractive, nothing is said about them being pious or holy. "Doubtless the culture of the fine arts had supplied them with means of enchantment of a sensuous nature; so that they presented to the eye the most perilous of temptations—beauty and grace, concealing heartlessness, cruelty, and all ungodliness." And the word "Nephilim" or giants does not necessarily mean physical giants, though the word one time does have that meaning. (Num. 13: 33.) Adam Clarke says the Hebrew word is translated by a Greek word in the Septuagint which means "earth-born." When the Sethites married the ungodly, worldly-minded daughters of men, the issue was a generation of earthborn people, taking after the earthly nature and characteristics of the depraved side of the house..

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This lesson is overflowing with stories of interest to your pupils. They will love to hear you tell the story, and they will enjoy telling it to you. They will enjoy getting pictures of animals and ships to illustrate their stories if you will plan your work far enough ahead to tell them what to bring. Such little tasks given them on Sunday will help to hold their interest in the lesson through the week. So give them something to do.

Do not be a slave to the questions in your quarterly. They are good for the purpose for which the writer put them there. They will help the pupil to get the lesson, and provide a test so the pupil can determine whether he knows the lesson. They make it possible for the most inexperienced teacher to bring out the thoughts in the lesson. Teachers of experience will use those questions and other material to plan a lesson of throbbing human interest and activity with a living human being as its center.

You will get the children to appreciate what walking with God means. Noah and Enoch are the only two men mentioned in the Bible as walking with God. To walk with God one must think like God, keep his conversation pure, and keep his deeds in harmony with God's will. All the world was so wicked that Noah had no companions among them; he found his companionship with God. It is better to be alone with God than to be surrounded by sinners.

Sin is not walking with God, but away from God. And to go away from God is to bring suffering and destruction upon ourselves. Children in these departments can be led to understand that the world brought destruction upon itself because of its sins, and that Noah was saved because he walked with God. So God's goodness to the righteous and his severity to the wicked can be brought out to impress the children with the necessity of walking with God.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Children in these departments are coming more and more in contact with the world. In high school especially they are making new friends and more friends than they ever had before. The majority of these associates are not spiritual-minded. It will also be safe to say that most of them have not had the sheltered life which the average child of a Christian home accustomed to attending Bible school has had. So they are learning that young people of respectable appearance are doing things which parents and preachers and Bible teachers have been telling them they should not do. They are finding themselves in the minority on many issues involving morals and modesty. They will need encouragement to be true to the ideals the church and home have planted in their hearts.

No character affords better material for such lessons than does Noah. He was the faithful among the faithless; he was one in a million. He lived among a people entirely divorced from God, and utterly abandoned to the cunning arts of sinful pleasure. "Their subtle power penetrated all the ramifications of society, entered into the business of life, and impregnated the atmosphere. Vice was at a premium; virtue had not even a nominal value. God was not in any of the thoughts of men. . . . There was nothing left to sustain the virtuous heart but the approbation of the unseen God and the encouraging voice of conscience. Yet against this tremendous pressure, and in the midst of these intoxicating pleasures of sin, Noah maintained his integrity and 'walked with God.'" Can you ask for better material with which to impress your students with the possibility of living a pure life in the midst of the sin in which they find themselves? And the fact that God blessed Noah for holding on to his views of righteousness when all others let go will help you to put over the lesson that it pays to live right in spite of the apostasy of all others.

And Noah, this man who walked with God, was a worshiper. The first thing he did when he got out of the ark was to build an altar and worship God. (Gen. 8: 20.) Back before the flood we can see many altars where God is worshiped. But as years go by these altars, one after another, crumble and decay, "and the smoke of sacrifice no longer rose to bear witness to faith in God through the sin-offerings of the contrite in heart." But the fire on Noah's altar never went out. When all others had crumbled to dust, the altar of Noah still sent up its column of smoke to testify of a living faith on the earth. And the fire on his altar never went out until it was quenched by the waters of the flood. No greater material can be found with which to impress these young people with the importance of worship in their lives, regardless of the fact that their associates rarely, if ever, attend worship.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lessons mentioned above are good for young people of this age too. But in addition it will be well to impress these with the sense of responsibility of exerting a saving influence in their generation. Noah was a preacher of righteousness both by word and deed. If ever there was a generation which needed such influences it was Noah's. But our generation is much in need of preachers of righteousness to stem the tide of ungodliness, the tide of loose sensual living, and to save as many as possible from its blighting influences.

Another lesson for young people is that the marriage of "sons of God" with the "daughters of men" resulted in the apostasy of the "sons of God." When godly people think lightly of marriage, and enter the union with those who have no higher ambitions than gaining and holding and enjoying the things of this world, that home will have a mixture of worldliness, and the children of that home will be more inclined to the world. Such mixtures of this kind can never result in greater purity, in godlier homes, and saintlier lives.

Noah affords a wonderful example to young people and adults watch their steps even after they seemingly have completely formed their characters. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." After Noah had stood alone for more than one hundred years among a godless generation; after he had condemned the sins of his fellows and afforded them a wonderful example of how men ought to live; and after he had saved his family from the blighting influences of sin around them—after all this Noah so far forgot himself and his God that he got drunk and disgraced himself before his family. (Gen. 9: 20-23.) There will never come a time in life when one can let down the guard against sin. Satan is always and forever on the job to lead us away from God.

Golden Text Explained

Peter used Noah's experience to prove that God does not overlook the righteousness of the righteous; nor does he forget the wickedness of the wicked. God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. This proves that what is said of Noah in the Old Testament is meant for an example to us, and that it is worth while for us to study the characters who lived so long ago. Paul says these things happened unto them by way of example, and they are written for our admonition. (1 Cor. 10; 11; Rom. 15; 4.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Majorities are not always right. Noah was in the minority in his day in religious matters. Majorities are usually wrong. (Matt. 7; 13, 14.) A majority vote never settled anything as to right and wrong in a church. God's will, expressed in the Bible, is the standard by which we determine what is right and what is wrong.

2. Not every one who worked on the ark was saved in it. Noah undoubtedly had help other than his three sons to handle the heavy timber used in the ark. And not every one who works in the church will be saved in that last judgment day of which the flood was a type. There were many of the Sethites, sons of God, who, through their association with the daughters of men, sank into such depths of depravity that even their thoughts were evil continually.

3. God delayed the destruction of the world for one hundred twenty years, but its delay did not lessen its terrors. Neither did the delay prove that God cared not for sin. It was the mercy of God that caused the delay, but it was God's justice that finally brought destruction upon the ungodly. God's mercy still gives the sinner time to repent, but his justice will finally and surely bring every one into judgment where the impenitent will suffer for his sins.

4. Noah was saved by faith. (Heb. 11; 7.) (1) It was a faith that accepted God's word at face value. (2) It was a faith which

feared God to the point of submitting to God's way. (3) It was a faith that obeyed all God's commandments in spite of the cost. (Gen. 6: 22.)

5. Noah was saved by grace. (Gen. 6: 8.) He found favor in God's sight. But though his salvation was by grace, he still had to be obedient to God. God's grace does not extend to the disobedient. It was God's grace plus Noah's obedience. So it is we are saved by grace today.

6. Noah was saved by water. (1 Pet. 3: 20.) The water took Noah out of a world of sin and translated him into a world of righteousness. So baptism, says Peter, saves us today.

7. Noah was saved by the ark. (Heb. 11: 7.) The ark was God's place of safety then. The church is God's place of safety today: it is God's house and our place of refuge.

Lesson III—January 19, 1947

ABRAHAM, FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL

The Lesson Text

Gen. 12: 1-3; 17: 1-6

1 Now Je-ho'vah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing;

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Je-ho'vah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for the father of a multitude of nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

Gal. 3: 6-9

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.

7 Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham.

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gen'tiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed.

9 So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham.

Heb. 11: 8-10

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Golden Text.—*"By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac."*
(Heb. 11: 17a.)

Devotional Reading.—Rom. 4: 16-20.

Daily Bible Readings

January 13. M.....	Abraham Called (Gen. 12: 1-9)
January 14. T.....	Abraham's Name Changed (Gen. 17: 1-8)
January 15. W.....	Abraham Promised a Son (Gen. 17: 15-21)
January 16. T.....	Abraham Offers Up Isaac (Gen. 22: 1-8)
January 17. F.....	Abraham Buries Sarah (Gen. 23: 17-20)
January 18. S.....	Walking in the Steps of Abraham's Faith (Rom. 4: 9-14)
January 19. S.....	The Death of Abraham (Gen. 25: 1-11)

TIME.—1921 and 1897 B.C.

PLACES.—Ur of Chaldees; Haran; Canaan.

PERSONS.—God, Abraham, and Sarah.

Lesson Subject Explained

Abraham is called "father" by more people than any other man, perhaps, this side of Noah. "Jews, Magians, Sabians, Indians, and Mohammedans have claimed him as the great patriarch and founder of their several sects." And the Holy Spirit speaks of him as the father of all who believe on Christ. "That he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them, . . . who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, . . . who is the father of us all." (Rom. 4: 11-16.) "Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. . . . And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." (Gal. 3: 7-29.) The relationship is not that of the flesh, but of the spirit. The Jews attached great importance to the fact that they descended from such a great man and friend of God; many of them actually thought they were going to heaven on account of that relationship regardless of how they lived. But we are taught that we are children of Abraham and heirs with him of the promises if we walk in the steps of that faith which he had. Peter teaches women that they are children of Sarah "if ye do well." (1 Pet. 3: 6.)

Context of the Lesson

Our lesson begins with Abram being called out of Haran. From the record in Genesis we might conclude that this is where Abram was when God first called him. But from Acts 7: 2-4 we learn that Abram was in "Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran," and that it was there he received his first call. It is thought that they dwelt in Haran about five years. It was there that Terah, Abraham's father, died at the age of 205 years. Being freed from any further duties and obligations with reference to his aged father, Abraham could continue his obedience to God's command to go to a land the Lord would show him. It should not be thought that Abraham had forgotten God's call, or that he was reluctant to continue his journey. God's appearance to him at this time was to give him further promises and assurances.

It should be remembered that there are thirteen years between events recorded in the last verse of chapter sixteen and the first verse of chapter seventeen, for in the former it is said that Abraham was eighty-six years old and in the latter it is said that he was ninety-nine years old. If God appeared to him during all these years, we have no record of it. This was certainly a trial of his faith. Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. During the twenty-

five years covered in our lesson Sarah had been taken from him and restored; he had been separated from Lot; had been blessed by Melchizedek; and had taken Hagar for wife, of whom was born Ishmael, who, they thought, was to be heir of the promises.

The Historical Background

The time of our lesson, as given above, refers to the time when Abraham was told to leave Haran, 1921 B.C.; and the other date 1897 B.C. is the time when the covenant of circumcision was made, and their names were changed. If, as scholars think, Abraham stayed in Haran five years, he left Ur of the Chaldees 1926 B.C. He was born 1996 B.C. Sarah was born 1986 B.C. and died 127 years later. (Gen. 23; 1.) Abraham died 1821 B.C. at the age of 175 years. (Gen. 25; 7, 8.)

The time for the writing of the letter to the Galatians is A.D. 57 or 58. The time of the writing of Hebrews is rather uncertain, but all think it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Some think it was written as early as A.D. 63.

Ur of the Chaldees is the first place to claim our attention. The word Ur means *fire* or *light*. It is said to be one of the most ancient cities of the world; its modern name is Mugheir. Ur was the center of the worship of the moon-god "Sin" in the southern portion of Chaldea, and Haran was the principal seat of this god in the northern part of the country. Since the word Ur means fire, it is thought that these people were worshipers of fire. "The city was then hopelessly given over to polytheism, and there was no opportunity in it for the cultivation of monotheism." It is said that Ur "represented at that time the highest civilization which had been achieved by man."

Haran was a city in the northwestern portion of Chaldea. From Ur to Egypt there were two roads, one through the desert, which was used by the hardy, well-armed bands of traders; the other, by Haran, which went around the desert. It was much longer but was easier and safer, and was used principally by those migrating with families who could not endure the hardness of the shorter route. "In migrating to the west, Terah did what Babylonians and 'Amorites' were constantly doing." It was here that Terah died at the age of 205 years. (Gen. 11: 32.) It was here too that Nahor, Terah's son, remained when Abraham moved on to Canaan. The country is called Paddan-aram in Gen. 25: 20 and 28: 2. From Nahor's family at Haran came Isaac's wife, and to that place Jacob went for his wife.

When Abraham entered Canaan for the first time he came to Sichem (Shechem), unto the plain (oak) of Moreh. (Gen. 12: 6.) The city was between two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal, and "the feet of these mountains, where they rise from the town, are not more than five hundred yards apart," and is about 1800 feet above sea level. It was here that the blessings of the law were read from Gerizim and the curses from Ebal. (Deut. 27: 11-13.) Here Joshua delivered his last speech to Israel. (Josh. 24.) And here the ten tribes pulled away from Rehoboam, and for a time Shechem was their capital. (1 Kings 12.)

The persons of this lesson are Abram and Sarai. The word Abram means *exalted father*, or *father of elevation*. His name was later changed to Abraham, which means *father of a multitude*. The name Sarai means *contentious*, according to some, but according to Adam

Clarke, *my prince*, or *princess*. According to him, *Sarai* refers to her government over her own family alone, while *Sarah*, *princess*, refers to her government over the nations of whom she was to be the mother. (Gen. 17: 15, 16.)

Abraham married his half sister. (Gen. 20: 12.) Some think she was his niece, the daughter of Haran. Haran had two daughters, Milcah and Iscah. Haran was the oldest of Terah's sons and died early. Nahor, a younger brother, married Milcah, his niece. And since Sarai is spoken of as Terah's "daughter-in-law" instead of his daughter (Gen. 11: 31), many think she was the same as Iscah. (McClintock and Strong.) But Adam Clarke gives an ancient tradition, preserved by Ebn Batrick, as follows: "Terah first married *Yona*, by whom he had Abraham; afterwards he married *Tehevita*, by whom he had Sarah."

There were two other women in Abraham's life, Hagar and Keturah. Hagar was the handmaid of Sarah. She was an Egyptian slave. Being Sarah's slave, personal property, Sarah had the right, according to the customs of the day, to do with her as she pleased. And since Hagar was a slave, the children born to her would belong to Sarah. It seems that Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham in her human effort to bring about the fulfillment of the promise God had made to Abraham that he was to have a son through whom his posterity would be as numberless as the stars of heaven. Being barren, Sarah thought this was the only way the promise could be fulfilled. A greater faith might have waited on God to bring things to pass in his own good way.

Of Keturah we know but little. Whether Abraham married her before or after the death of Sarah we do not know. And whether she was a real wife or concubine is not very clear. True this marriage is mentioned after the death of Sarah is recorded, but this may have been done to avoid breaking into a story with foreign matter. Both Adam Clarke and Smith's *Bible Dictionary* incline to the idea that Keturah was a concubine whom Abraham took during Sarah's lifetime, since Abraham is said to have been past the procreation of children when Isaac was promised, so much so that his birth was counted miraculous as much on account of Abraham's condition as on account of Sarah's barrenness. (Gen. 18: 11, 12; Rom. 4: 19; Heb. 11: 12.) In Gen. 25: 6 Abraham is said to have had "concubines," and we know of none but Hagar unless Keturah was the other. Keturah bore Abraham six sons, to whom Abraham gave gifts and sent them away to the east so that there would be no conflict between them and Isaac over the land promised to the seed of Abraham.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

It is very probable that there is not even one child in your class who has not heard many times about Abraham. Probably each one knows something definite about some one experience in the life of Abraham. It will be well to let the children tell what they know of him whether it is a part of this particular lesson text or not. It is impossible to use as lesson text all the stories of interest to children about this great character. To make use of the daily Bible reading texts, and to add interest to the classwork, it will be well to assign each text, except the one for Saturday, to certain students for

special reports. Each one records an interesting story in the life of Abraham and the children will enjoy a special assignment.

The story in Gen. 12: 1-3 affords good material to teach these children how much Abraham loved God and how great his faith must have been, and these are good lessons for them. (1) He was told to leave his country. How many would be willing to leave America? Yes, all might like to go abroad for a trip, a vacation. But how many would like to leave it forever? (2) He was told to leave his kindred and his father's house. How many would like to leave all their kinsfolk never to see them again? Would we like to leave all our friends, schoolmates? (3) He was told to go, but not where to go—"unto the land that I will show thee." If we are to leave America, we would wish to have something to say about where we would go. But Abraham did not have that choice. His faith in God enabled him to feel sure God would take him to a land good for him.

Children in these departments will appreciate the fact that God appeared to Abraham and talked with him. God's appearances were always made to good people. Who among us would not like to talk with God? We would feel honored to talk with the President, or some other great man. How great an honor it must have been to talk with God! Then it will be easy to pass from that to the fact that all of us have the opportunity of going to live with God where we can see him face to face, and talk with him to our heart's content. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Teachers should plan their lessons in detail before going to the class. If you depend on the inspiration of the moment to give you something definite, or some logical arrangement of your material, you will find yourself groping but not quite reaching, and your pupils will feel that they have been let down. As you study the comments in the quarterly and the historical background and other departments of this lesson, write down those things you think will be of interest to your children, and those lessons which you feel you can put over to the best advantage. There is more material than you can cover in one lesson period, and you should not try to cover it all. When you have written down the thoughts you wish to use, arrange them in order, placing the most important things first. Make an estimate of the amount of time you can give to the discussion of each part of the lesson. Then go over your material until you have become so familiar with it that you can teach it without the use of your book or notes. This will help you to gain and hold the interest and respect of your students.

Why did Abraham stop in Haran and stay there five years? We cannot be sure, but the probability is that the journey was too much for the aged Terah. So Abraham stopped in his journey long enough to care for him until the day of his death. From this you can teach the lesson of parental respect. This is a lesson these groups need very much. They are just getting to the age where they are inclined to think their parents do not know very much; they are apt to think of their parents as belonging to a bygone age, whose ways and ideas are entirely too ancient to be respected; at best they can only tolerate them. Abraham, one of the greatest men who ever lived, lingered to pay respect to his aged father.

The journey of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan has often been used to teach lessons on faith, obedience, sacrificing the world and its pleasures for better things of a spiritual nature, and many other worth-while lessons. But Abraham's journey from Ur of Chaldees to Canaan may be used to teach similar lessons. We can easily imagine Abraham telling Terah and the rest of the family that he had been called of God to leave to go to some distant land which the Lord would show him. Being worshipers of idols and knowing nothing of God, they begged him not to leave his people, his associates, his business, the burying place which held the forms of his mother and others of sacred memory. No doubt the pleading of his family had its weight, but Abraham was so resolute and so eager to obey the call that his enthusiasm was catching, and his father, brother, and family, and his wife decided to go. Yes, young people can influence others to go along with them to the heavenly Canaan, if they do not allow the ties of business, social life, and kindred to dampen their ardor.

Young People and Adult Departments

Following the thought presented in the above paragraph these departments can get a valuable lesson on answering the call to duty in spite of hindrances. Abraham did not allow considerations of loved ones, home ties, business or social connections to keep him from obeying his call. Nahor stayed in Haran, though he undoubtedly started out from Ur with the idea of going all the way with Abraham. While the call was not to Nahor, and so it was not his duty to go, his staying in Haran can be used to present some worth-while lessons. The journey was long and hard and expensive. Nahor could make more money by staying in one place than he could by being continually on the move as it was obvious Abraham would be. Many today allow the call to service to God to go unheeded because it is difficult and expensive. Again, Nahor saw that Haran was a fine place to live; the land was productive; it was a fine place for a man in his occupation. He did not know *where* Abraham was going, much less about the fertility of the land. Abraham trusted God to take him to a land suited to his needs, but Nahor did not have that faith. He preferred to hold to what he had and could see. So many today fall in love with this present world which they can see, handle, and enjoy, and allow their appreciation of things earthly to keep them from going by faith into that heavenly land. It is one thing to start, but quite another thing to persevere unto the end of the journey in spite of all this world has to offer. Abraham was a wanderer in the land all his life; never did he feel that he had found *the place* to settle; he looked for a city whose builder and maker is God. (Heb. 11: 9, 10.) If you get over this one lesson and make it a guiding force in just one life, you will have succeeded in a grand way.

Many preachers are using Abraham as an example of justification by faith only. Our text says Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness, and from this many conclude that all we have to do today to be saved is to believe. It is true that he was justified by faith, but not by faith only. Abraham's faith was characterized by three things: (1) It accepted God's word without doubt. (Gen. 15: 1-6; Rom. 4: 16-22.) (2) His faith feared God to the point of submitting to God's way. (Gen. 22: 12.) (3)

His faith obeyed God in spite of the cost. (Gen. 22: 18; 26: 5; Heb. 11: 8.) And James says Abraham was justified by works when he offered up Isaac. (James 2: 21.) So we conclude that his justification was not complete when first he believed, but was complete when his faith led him to obey God in the sacrifice of his Son. So our justification is not complete when first we believe in Christ, but is complete when we render that obedience God requires of us. So Jesus said. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16: 16.)

Golden Text Explained

The main statement in our text is, "By faith Abraham . . . offered up Isaac." The words "being tried" simply explained that Abraham was under trial of the Lord when the offering was made. Offering of children as sacrifices was rather common in his day, as well as afterwards. Geikie says the Chaldeans had adopted the practice long before Abraham. (Vol. I, p. 394.) And the Canaanite races, at least those of Cushite origin, had brought the rite from the Euphrates to Palestine. Even the Jews of later times adopted such practices. (2 Chron. 28: 3.) This trial of Abraham at least taught him that "the lonely follower of Jehovah was not behind the servants of Chemosh or Baal in self-surrender to his God." Since this was done by faith, we know that God told him to do it; it was not a strange notion of his own. And the fact that God kept him from the actual deed, and supplied an animal in the place of Isaac, shows that God does not approve of human sacrifice.

Topics for Discussion

1. God called Abraham out of an environment unfavorable to the accomplishment of his purposes, and led him to live apart from the world. So we are called out of the world to live a separate life. Love and appreciation for things earthly make impossible the development of a heavenly character.
2. Abraham built an altar for worship everywhere he went except in Egypt. And there he practiced deception. When he was living in sin, he was not inclined to worship God. When he left Egypt the first time, he went back to Bethel to the altar he built when first he came into Canaan. Maybe it is not intended, but a good lesson is suggested. When he sinned, he went right back to the beginning place, and to the altar he raised when first he came into the land. It is good for us to go back to that altar frequently.
3. When God appeared and talked, Abraham fell on his face. This showed his reverence for God. We need such reverence today. It should be shown in our respect for the assembly for worship; it should be shown in our attitude toward the Bible, and the things taught therein.
4. No sacrifice goes unrewarded. Abraham gave up this world, never to own more than enough in which to bury his dead, but he gained a city whose builder and maker is God. We ought not to be overambitious to gain and hold much of the world. Beware of covetousness!

Lesson IV—January 26, 1947

ISAAC, A MAN OF PEACE

The Lesson Text

Gen. 21: 5-7; 22: 6-9; 26: 18-22

5 And Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son I'saac was born unto him.

6 And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh; every one that heareth will laugh with me.

7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should give children suck? for I have borne him a son in his old age.

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon I'saac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together.

7 And I'saac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?

8 And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound I'saac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

18 And I'saac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

19 And I'saac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.

20 And the herdsmen of Gerar strove with I'saac's herdsmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well E'sek, because they contended with him.

21 And they digged another well, and they strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sit nah.

22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Re-ho'both; and he said, For now Je-ho'vah hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

Heb. 11: 17-20

17 By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up I'saac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;

18 *Even he* to whom it was said, In I'saac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back.

20 By faith I'saac blessed Jacob and E'sau, even concerning things to come.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you."* (2 Cor. 13: lib.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 9: 7-13.

Daily Bible Readings

January 20. M.....	Isaac's Birth (Gen. 21: 1-7)
January 21. T.....	Isaac Marries Rebekah (Gen. 24: 61-67)
January 22. W.....	Isaac the Father of Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25: 19-26)
January 23. T.....	Isaac's Possessions (Gen. 26: 12-17)
January 24. F.....	Isaac Blesses Jacob (Gen. 27: 18-26)
January 25. S.....	Isaac Blesses Esau (Gen. 27: 37-40)
January 26. S.....	The Death of Isaac (Gen. 35: 28, 29)

Time.—1896 B.C. for Gen. 21: 5-7; 1872 B.C. for Gen. 22: 6-9; and 1804 B.C. for Gen. 26: 18-22.

Places.—Hebron; Land of Moriah; Valley of Gerar.

Persons.—Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Philistines.

Lesson Subject Explained

Isaac was a man of peace; his father was a man of action. When Abraham's sense of justice was outraged, he gathered his servants and men of neighboring tribes and meted out justice to the wrongdoers. (Gen. 14.) The Philistines did not dare try to drive Abraham from the better districts of the country. But they drove Isaac from one place to another while he submitted meekly to their injustice. "All the glimpses we obtain of Isaac's character leave the impression of gentleness, inoffensiveness, meditateness, submissiveness—almost passiveness. Ishmael bullied him when he was a child. In his youth or early manhood, when his father took him to Mount Moriah to offer him up for a burnt offering, there was entire submissiveness." The fact that he was a man of peace should not cause us to look upon him as a weakling and unworthy of our emulation. If his life lacks brilliancy and romance, it takes on fair proportions of moral vigor and excellence, and teaches us the power of gentleness. "The picture of a plain, patient plodding man making the earth pleasant by his gentleness and amiability; making a home, with many elements of strife in it, peaceful by his meekness and patience; prospering by honest industry; linking his soul to heaven by holy meditation, and leaving everywhere the odor of sanctity unmingled with any memory of unrighteousness or oppression, is a picture more encouraging and inspiring for the great multitude, than one of bolder features." We need more Isaacs.

Context of the Lesson

It is interesting to study the growth of families. Terah, the father of Abraham, had three sons. Haran died, leaving only two daughters and Lot. (Gen. 11; 28, 29.) But Nahor stayed in Haran and had twelve children by his wife and concubine. (Gen. 22: 20-24.) These formed a great kingdom of people in northern Mesopotamia. Coming into Canaan, we find Terah's illustrious son Abraham with two sons past middle life and six sons in his old age. Ishmael was the father of twelve sons, each the head of a numerous tribe. (Gen. 25: 12-18.) Keturah bare him six sons, who were sent toward the east from Palestine, while Ishmael's children dwelt in Arabia and Mesopotamia. Then Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. From Gen. 36 we learn that Esau was the father of the Edomites, a numerous people. Jacob had twelve sons who became heads of as many tribes that composed the great nation of the Jews. These all came from Terah through Nahor and Abraham. And from this source have come two great religions, Mahometanism and Christianity, influencing more people, directly and indirectly, than any other forces in the world.

The Historical Background

Isaac was born in 1896 B.C.; he died in Hebron 1716 B.C., being 180 years old. The word Isaac means *laughter*. The name was given by the Lord, perhaps because Sarah laughed when she heard that she was to bear a son in her old age. (Gen. 18: 11-15.) Rebekah was born in Paddan-aram, or northern Mesopotamia, at or near Haran, Abraham's first stop on his journey to Canaan. She was the daughter of Bethuel; the granddaughter of Nahor. The time of her birth and death are unknown. Isaac was married to Rebekah at the

age of forty. (Gen. 25: 20.) This was three or four years after the death of Sarah.

The origin of the Philistines is very obscure; there are many theories. One is that they came out of Casluhim (Gen. 10: 14), and these are said to be the descendants of Ham. Those who hold to this idea think the Philistines came from Egypt. It is said by others that they came from Crete. But since this is said to have been in the fourteenth century B.C., these could not have been the people with whom Isaac dwelt seventeen centuries B.C. The Mediterranean Sea is called the "sea of the Philistines." (Ex. 23: 31.) So they must have been settled around that body of water. At that time they were in the path which led from Egypt to Canaan. (Ex. 13: 17.) Every mention of them where a definite location is given places them to the south of Canaan and east of the Mediterranean Sea; between that sea and the Dead Sea.

It is said that their language was Semitic, hence there was no difficulty of language between them and Isaac. They were a very religious people, at times carrying their idols with them into battle. (2 Sam. 5: 21.) And they celebrated their victories in the house of their idols. (1 Sam. 31: 8-10.) Their national god was Dagon, which means *little fish*. "Dagon was represented with the face and hands of a man and the tail of a fish." "The most famous temples of Dagon were at Gaza (Judges 16: 21-30) and Ashdod (1 Sam. 5: 5, 6)." They also worshiped Ashtaroth. (1 Sam. 31: 10.) This goddess is sometimes called Astarte and Ishtar. This was "the principal female divinity of the Phoenicians, as Baal was the principal male divinity."

The places of our lesson are of unusual interest. Hebron was the oldest town in Palestine, and one of the oldest in the world. It was about halfway between Beersheba and Jerusalem, twenty miles from each, and was about 2,800 feet above sea level. It was known first as Mamre. (Gen. 13: 18.) It was the place where the Anakim (giants) lived. (Josh. 14: 15.) Sarah was buried there. (Gen. 23: 17-20.) Joshua took Hebron (Josh. 10: 36, 37), and Caleb retook it (Josh. 14: 12-14). And David made his royal residence there. (2 Sam. 2: 1-4.)

The word Moriah means *seen of Jehovah*. The land of Moriah is the place where Abraham went to offer Isaac. It is thought to be the same as Mount Moriah, one of the hills of Jerusalem on which Solomon built the temple, on the spot once occupied by the threshing floor of Oman the Jebusite. (2 Chron. 3: 1.) The Jews believe that the altar of burnt offerings in the temple stood upon the very site of the altar on which Abraham offered his son.

Gerar was a rich country in the south portion of Palestine. Abimelech was the ruler of this country when Isaac lived there. This is the place where Abraham said Sarah was his sister. (Gen. 20.) Isaac practiced deception in the same place, in the same way, though without as much justification as Abraham had.

The age of Isaac at the time he was offered as a sacrifice by his father has been the subject of considerable speculation. Abraham called him "the lad," but this does not help a lot in determining his age. Parents frequently speak of their youngest child as "the baby," though he may be thirty years old and six feet tall. And since Isaac was Abraham's "only son" by Sarah, the term "lad" may be a term of affection applied to him until late in life. The fact that Isaac was able to carry the wood for the sacrifice up the

mountain, when, it is presumed, the climbing was too difficult for the beasts of burden, is proof that he was not a mere child. Josephus says he was twenty-five years old at the time. Others have estimated his age at sixteen. Adam Clarke gives the date in his work as 1872 B.C., which would make him twenty-four years old. At any rate he was old enough that his father could not have used him as an offering without his consent. Though Abraham seemed reluctant to tell him, and did not tell him until the altar was ready and the sacrifice had to be bound to the wood, even then Isaac could have refused, and his physical strength could easily have prevented his one hundred twenty-four-year-old father from binding him to the wood. His willingness on this occasion pictures the willingness of Jesus, the only Son of his Father, to be offered for the sins of the world, and perhaps in this same vicinity, the land of Moriah.

Two quotations will serve to give us a summary of his character. "Isaac was evidently a man of kind and gentle disposition, of a calm and reflective turn of mind, simple in his habits, having few wants, good rather than great, fitted to receive impressions and follow a guide, not to originate important influences, or perform deeds of renown." (McClintock and Strong.) "He was a lover of quiet. . . . He was not lazy, idle, or luxurious. He was not a stuffed specimen of a contented and sleek animal. He was a man of industry, as his successful farming and his ever-growing riches testify; and he was a man of thought, as his fondness for meditation sufficiently evinces. But there was nothing in him warlike, nothing aggressive. . . . The gentler virtues—and these we take to have been rare in that age—shine with a sweet, pleasant, and steady light, like the stars in the heavens. His faith in God never trembles. He injures none. He is diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. He steadily maintains the worship of Jehovah, honors the memory of his father, cherishes great affection for his mother, is true to his wife, and works righteousness day by day. His life comes nearer to the tame, monotonous everyday life of good people, whose history has nothing startling in it, whose virtues are the steady, unobtrusive, modest virtues on which the peace of home, and the security of the commonwealth, and the prosperity of life depend." (Errett.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The birth and offering of Isaac are two things of absorbing interest to children of these departments. The teachers should go back of our lesson text (Gen. 18: 1-15) to lay the groundwork for the lesson concerning his birth. (1) Sarah was barren—nature had not made Sarah capable of bearing children. (2) Both Abraham and Sarah were old, past the age when people ordinarily have children: Sarah was ninety and Abraham was one hundred years old.

(3) Sarah laughed when the angel said she was to have a son, so the son was named Isaac, which means *laughter*. (4) Since Sarah and Abraham were both very old, and Sarah had been wanting a son for so long, and since this son was given them according to a special promise of God, and since they knew he was the son through whom God would some day bless the world in a most wonderful way, they naturally loved him very devotedly. Here is an opportunity to teach children how much they are loved and appreciated by their

parents, which in turn will beget within them love and devotion to their parents.

The sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham gives you the opportunity to teach children that, no matter how much their parents love them, they must love God more. The Bible record lays stress on Abraham's love for Isaac. (Gen. 22: 2.) "Take now thy son, *thine only son*, whom thou lovest." This was not only a test of Abraham's love for God, as to whether it was greater than his love for his son, but it served as a test of Isaac: (1) His submission to his father's will. Isaac was old enough and strong enough to keep from being bound to the wood on the altar, but when his father told him he was to be the offering he was submissive. (2) This shows Isaac's respect for his father's sincerity in religious matters. Isaac did not hold his father's religion in contempt. Children today should have the deepest respect and reverence for the worship as conducted by their parents in the home, and for public worship, though they may not be old enough to understand and appreciate all of it.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The teachers of these departments will do well to begin with the matter under consideration in the above paragraph. Respect for the worship of God as conducted by the parents at home and for public worship is a very important lesson for children of these departments, and we should never allow an opportunity for teaching it to pass unused. And there is no doubt but that Isaac himself entered into the spirit of this offering and willingly gave himself up to be the sacrifice. As Isaac took part in this worshipful act with his father so young people of these ages should have a part in both home and public worship. They may have a part in prayers, expressing thanks at their table; they ought to have a part in Bible readings in the home circle. They should be allowed to conduct devotional services in their classrooms Sunday mornings, take part in prayer meetings. Teachers should encourage boys to do such things, and then call the attention of the preacher and elders to those boys who are capable of rendering such services and ask that they be used in public worship.

The passivity of Isaac should be stressed in these classes. He was a man of peace when he had enough provocation to lead the average man to fight for his rights. It seems the Philistines were too lazy to dig wells; they preferred to take them away from Isaac after he had dug them. And when they contended for a well, Isaac moved on and dug another rather than have trouble. This he continued until, "as is generally the result, gentleness wearied violence out, and the Philistines tired of annoying before Isaac tired of yielding. . . . Such a quiet spirit, strong in nonresistance, and ready to yield rather than quarrel, was strangely out of place in these wild days and lands. He obeyed the Sermon on the Mount millenniums before it was spoken. Whether from temperament or from faith, he is the first instance of the Christian type of excellence in the Old Testament. For there ought to be no question that the spirit of meekness, which will not meet violence by violence, is the Christian spirit. Christian morals alter the perspective of moral excellences, and exalt meekness above the 'heroic virtues' admired by the world." Of such a course it may be said. (1) it is scriptural. (Matt. 5: 5, 38-48; Rom. 12: 17-21; 1 Pet. 2: 19-23.) And, (2) it im-

pressed his enemies with the fact that God was with him. (Gen. 26: 28.) And, (3) it made friends of the Philistines who made a covenant with him to respect his rights, whereas if he had resisted then he would have made enemies of them and they would have continued to persecute him from malice. This course which Isaac pursued is all the more commendable because Isaac was powerful enough, as the Philistines themselves admit (Gen. 26: 29), to have stood his ground. Abraham was able to do battle against powerful chiefs. (Gen. 14: 13-16.) Isaac fell heir to all Abraham had, so no doubt he was able to fight for his rights.

Young People and Adult Departments

The foregoing paragraph contains fine lessons for these departments. People never get too old to observe such lessons as make us like our Lord, and there are none that contribute more to Christ-likeness than these lessons in the above paragraph.

Isaac was a man of peace, not only with his neighbors, but in his home also. The peace that was enjoyed in the home was due to him, sometimes in spite of the attitudes and actions of his wife. Sarah is held up by New Testament writers as an example of what Christian women ought to be (1 Pet. 3: 5, 6), but Rebekah is not. She seems to have her share of the duplicity of her father and brother; she was unable to deal with her sons impartially, and she was willing to take advantage of her husband's near blindness to help her favorite son get what he wanted. But Isaac caused no ugly home scenes if there was any resentment in his heart.

Isaac loved his mother and was with her continually until her death. He mourned for her until his marriage, some four years later, at the age of forty, at which time it is said he was comforted. (Gen. 24: 67.) This is certainly a beautiful sentiment, and young men will do well to think on these things.

Isaac lived at a time when practically all men had more than one wife, or if they had but one *wife* they had a number of *concubines*. His father had concubines. But Isaac was content to have but one woman in his life. "Wholly devoted to her, in an age when Abraham and Jacob alike had concubines, and not withstanding her childlessness for twenty years, the pair have always been the Hebrew ideal of chaste married life." (Geikie.) This gives the teacher a splendid opportunity to get over some much-needed lessons about Christian homes. (1) Abraham was not willing that his son should marry women of the land whose religious faith and training were not what they should be. (2) Isaac gave Rebekah all his love and devotion. (3) He worked hard and provided well for her. (4) Through consideration for her faults and weaknesses he maintained peace in the home where there could easily have been strife. (5) He maintained the altar of worship in his home. (Gen. 26: 25.) These are primary principles in home building and teachers of these departments have great opportunities and fearful responsibilities with reference to these matters.

Golden Text Explained

In Isaac we have seen a good example of living in peace with one's neighbors as well as in the home. This means self-denial, being unselfish, willing to suffer injuries, and many times doing good to those who despise you and do all manner of evil against you. But

it is what the Lord expects, and demands, of us, and it will bring great rewards. The greatest reward of all is that God, who is characterized by love and peace, will be with those who live in peace. This is enough to repay us for all we suffer that we may live in peace.

Topics for Discussion

1. Isaac was the most beloved son of aged parents, heir to great wealth, yet he did not become selfish, lazy, haughty, and intractable. Surely his parents must have brought him up in the way he should go. (Prov. 22: 6.)

2. Isaac dug again the wells his father had dug, and called them by the same names his father had used for them. Young people sometimes get the idea that the ways and ideals of their parents are not modern enough, not up-to-date, so they forsake them and go for new fads. In matters religious it will be well for them to give consideration to the faith of their fathers so long as it is in harmony with the Bible.

3. These old wells had become filled with rubbish and had to be cleaned out. So old and scriptural forms sometime become clogged with the rubbish of human traditions. It takes wise and courageous young people to stay with the old scriptural forms and clean out the rubbish of human traditions, but it is our opportunity and responsibility. Worship is a fine thing so long as scriptural forms are maintained. But the human traditions of incense and musical instruments, and many other things, have been allowed to fill these forms of worship. We must get people to hold to scriptural forms of worship.

4. Our homes may be viewed as wells which become clogged with rubbish of selfishness, neglect of God and each other, and sometimes there is jealousy and actual quarreling. When this is the case the well needs redigging; we need to clean out the rubbish and get back down to the water course so the influence of God and his teaching can flow into our lives without hindrance, to sweeten us and make us useful to others.

5. Isaac did not always get his way at home or in his community, but he did not raise a big fuss about it. Sometimes members of the church put up a howl if they do not get their way in everything that is done. We must learn to live in peace if we hope to have a place to live in heaven, which is going to be a place of peace.

Lesson V—February 2, 1947

JACOB, A PRINCE WITH GOD

The Lesson Text

Gen. 25: 27-34; 28: 18-22; 35: 9-12

27 And the boys grew: and E'sau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents.

28 Now I'saac loved E'sau, because he did eat of his venison: and Re-bek'ah loved Jacob.

29 And Jacob boiled pottage: and E'sau came in from the field, and he was faint:

30 And E'sau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called E'dom.

31 And Jacob said, Sell me first thy birthright.

32 And E'sau said. Behold, I am about to die: and what profit shall the birthright do to me?

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me first; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

34 And Jacob gave E'sau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: so E'sau despised his birthright.

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place Beth'-el: but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Je-ho'vah will be my God.

22 Then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came from Pad'dan-a-ram, and blessed him.

10 And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Is-ra-el shall be thy name: and he called his name Is-ra-el.

11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;

12 And the land which I gave unto Abraham and I'saac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

Heb. 11: 21

21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning upon the top of his staff.*

Golden Text.—*“And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”* (Gen. 32: 28.)

Devotional Reading.—Gen. 32: 22-30.

Daily Bible Readings

January 27. M.....	Jacob and Esau Contrasted (Gen. 25: 27-34)
January 28. T.....	Jacob Deceives Isaac (Gen. 27: 5-17)
January 29. W.....	Jacob's Vision at Bethel (Gen. 28: 10-17)
January 30. T.....	Jacob's Vow (Gen. 28: 18-22)
January 31. F.....	Jacob Takes Wives (Gen. 29: 21-30)
February 1. S.....	Jacob's Children (Gen. 35: 22-27)
February 2. S.....	The Death of Jacob (Gen. 49: 28-33)

Time.—1836 to 1689 B.C.

Places.—Beersheba, Bethel, Paddan-aram.

Persons.—God and Jacob.

Lesson Subject Explained

The subject of our lesson, suggesting that Jacob was a “Prince with God,” is based on the reading of Gen. 32: 28 in the King James (Authorized) Version of the Bible. There it reads, “And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” By some the word *Israel* is thought to mean *Prince of God*. Adam Clarke is among those who so define it. But the American Standard Version reads, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” Those who accept this rendering give *Israel* the meaning of *he who strives with God*. This name was given on the occasion of his wres-

pling with the angel at the ford of Jabbok on his return from Paddan-aram to Canaan. It was there that he wrestled all night with "a man" (Gen. 32: 24), with "God" (Gen. 32: 28), "the angel" (Hos. 12: 4). Jacob had not always been a prince with God. Much of his life was lived on a rather low plane. But following that night of wrestling with God in the face of dangers with which he felt his inability to cope, and being made to realize that he was in the presence of One who could give him the help and direction he so much needed, Jacob was a changed character. Being a changed character, he needed a change of names. And this new name described him in his later life.

Context of the Lesson

The first division of our lesson relates an incident in the early life of Jacob and his twin brother, Esau. They were with their father, Isaac, at Beersheba at the time. We are likely to think of them as being younger than they were. According to the best information on the subject they were thirty-one years old at the time Jacob bought the birthright. And it is easy to get the idea that Jacob left for Paddan-aram soon thereafter, perhaps a matter of months. But Esau did not marry until he was forty years old, and Rebekah gave as her reason for wanting Jacob to go to Paddan-aram that she did not wish Jacob to marry a woman of that land as Esau had done. (Gen. 27: 46.) Jacob was at least fifty-seven years old when he went to Paddan-aram, and many contend that he was seventy-seven.

The second division of our lesson is removed from the first by at least twenty-six years. If Gen. 31: 41 be taken to mean that Jacob had been in Paddan-aram only twenty years, Jacob was seventy-seven years old, and this lesson is removed from the first by forty-six years. But if the verse is taken to mean that Jacob was in Paddan-aram forty years, Jacob was fifty-seven years old, and this part of the lesson is removed from the other twenty-six years. Those who wish to investigate the matter may read Adam Clarke, Vol. I, p. 204, in an effort to prove that Jacob was in Paddan-aram forty years; then read McClintock and Strong, Vol. IV, p. 729, where they try to prove he was there twenty years.

The third division of our lesson deals with an event which occurred about one year after Jacob reached Canaan. Although Gen. 35: 9 seems to indicate that Jacob had just arrived from Paddan-aram, by comparing Gen. 33: 18 and chapter 34 the reader will find that he first settled in Shechem "when he came from Paddan-aram." Then after the unfortunate events of chapter 34 God directs Jacob to move to Bethel. It was there that Jacob destroyed all the gods and earrings which were related in any way with the idols of Paddan-aram, severing the last connection between his family and the idolatrous worship of the East.

The Historical Background

Jacob was born 1836 B.C.; he died 1689 B.C., at the age of 147 years. (Gen. 47: 28.) The last we hear of Esau is at the burial of Isaac, when Jacob and Esau were 120 years old.

The places of this lesson are of great interest. Beersheba means the *well of the oath*, or the *well of swearing*. It got this name when Abraham dug a well and had Abimelech to swear that the well had been dug by, and therefore belonged to, Abraham. (Gen. 21: 31.)

The place seems to have been known for its wells, and McGarvey says all that remains now of the city are some old ruins a short distance from three wells, one of them no doubt being the one Abraham dug. The wells are five and one-half, nine, and twelve and one-half feet in diameter; and they are twenty-three, forty-three, and forty-five feet deep.

Beersheba was the birthplace of Jacob and Esau. Abraham lived there at the time of the sacrifice of Isaac and for a long time afterwards. Isaac lived in the vicinity of Beersheba much of his life, not roving around like Abraham did. Jacob left there for Paddan-aram and did not see the place again until late in his life when he was going with his family into Egypt to see his lost son Joseph and live with him. He stopped there long enough to offer "sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac." (Gen. 46; 1.) There God appeared unto Jacob to give him assurance that he was doing the right thing to go to Egypt, and renewed the promise that he would become a great nation.

Bethel is the next place to claim our attention. The word means *house of God*. It was here that Jacob lay down for rest as he was going from Beersheba to Haran. And here as he slept he saw the ladder which reached from earth to heaven and angels were going up and down on it. Here he got an enlarged idea of God. God was not a local God keeping watch over Isaac's tents only, but he was even "in this place." And one year after he returned to Canaan from Paddan-aram God told him to return to Bethel, and there he set up his altar to worship God. It is rather strange that a city so prominent in the life of the patriarchs should not be mentioned in the New Testament. If Jesus ever went to the place, no mention is made of the fact. He was within sight of the place when he stopped at the well Jacob dug near Sychar. And when he went to Ephraim (John 11: 54), he was only four or five miles from the site of old Bethel.

Paddan-aram means *the tableland of Aram*. It is the country in which Haran was situated. It will be remembered that Haran is the place where Terah and Abraham and Nahor stopped for five years until the death of Terah, when Abraham moved on into Canaan, but Nahor stayed. It was to this country that Abraham sent his faithful servant to get a wife for Isaac. And to this place Jacob was sent to get a wife that he might not make the mistake Esau had made and also that he might escape the wrath of Esau. It was the north-western portion of Mesopotamia. And there Jacob made his fortune, found his wives, and reared a large family.

As Jacob and Esau were twins and more than half a century of their lives was spent together, it is difficult to study the character of one without comparing, or contrasting, it with the other. Geikie says, "Esau was frank and generous; Jacob crafty and mean. Free-handed, lighthearted, and careless, the shaggy, energetic hunter shows off for a time to a far greater advantage than the plodding, quiet, astute dweller in tents. In Jacob we have a struggle against baser elements of character, gradually resulting in the triumph of the nobler; in Esau, the original good darkens, as he grows older, into overmastering evil. ... He has no depth of nature, lives for the moment, cares nothing for higher interests, has no aim but the present satisfaction of his pleasures or bodily wants. . . . The want of solid

qualities changes him gradually into a mere Bedouin chief, living by war and plunder."

In early life Jacob was a self-seeker, willing to stoop to low, mean tricks to carry his point and win over his fellow man. "The groundwork of his character, we are led to believe, was religious faith; yet it was a faith so feeble, or so far carnalized, that for a long time it was overborne by self-sufficiency and a selfish ambition. His appreciation of the value of the birthright indicates faith in the covenant promises; but his method of obtaining it displays great selfishness. . . . He had faith enough in God's promises to inspire him with a strong ambition to inherit them; but he had more confidence in his own method of obtaining the inheritance than in God's method of bestowing it." (Errett.)

How much of Jacob's meanness he got from his mother we can never know. She was partial to Jacob, while Isaac was partial to Esau. And if their ideals, attitudes, and actions in connection with the bestowing of the blessing (Gen. 27) are a sample of what usually went on in the home, we can hardly expect more of the boys. Isaac "slyly, almost clandestinely," attempted to give the blessing to Esau, when he had every reason to know that Jacob was destined by the Lord to have it. Then we see the mother contriving to deceive her husband, teaching her son to lie, and becoming a partner with him in his sin. Such action on her part is a "shocking revelation of her unfaithfulness to her husband and to both her children."

But Jacob had two experiences in life which served to correct his ideals and give him a greater appreciation of things spiritual, a greater sense of honor and justice, and a greater dependence on God and not so much on his own strength. One was the vision of the ladder from earth to heaven, and the other was his wrestling with God. (Gen. 32: 24.) While neither is directly connected with this lesson, the teacher will not know the "Israel" that was Jacob without a study of those two experiences.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

There are two stories in this lesson which are brimful of lessons for children of these departments. First, there is the story of Esau selling his birthright to Jacob. You can picture Esau as being tired and hungry from a long and difficult hunting trip. Evidently he had not been very successful on that particular hunt or he would not have been so hungry. He is desperately in need of food. No doubt Esau overvalued such things, and in this he made a mistake. Many people do the same today. But Jacob was crafty, watching for a chance to get the birthright. We are not to suppose this is the first time Jacob knew the birthright was for sale; surely this is not the first time Jacob had bargained with Esau for it. This was just another opportunity which Jacob saw for getting what he wanted. Jacob was selfish and mercenary in his dealings with Esau. He should have been willing to feed a hungry brother without extorting from him that which was his. In this Jacob is a good example of what children are not to be.

But in another matter Jacob is a good example of what these children should be. He put a high valuation on things religious and sacred. Esau was a profane person. (Heb. 12: 16.) He was profane

in that he regarded sacred things as having little or no value. Jacob knew that Esau did not appreciate his birthright, and that he would never use it to his good and the glory of God. Jacob believed he could, and would, so use it if he had it. So he was continually seeking to gain it. Jacob is a good example of what we should be in that he appreciated the spiritual things, and longed for the opportunity to use them for God.

The other story is that of Jacob's ladder. Every child has heard that story, and they all like to hear it again, and tell it. Our lesson text covers only the conclusion of the story, but the teacher of these departments will find the children more interested in the story than in the lessons drawn from it. But when the story is told, you will have the basis for several lessons: (1) That God is everywhere, and that he is near us and beholding us even when we sleep. (2) That God will prosper us in the things we do that are right. Notice Gen. 28: 15; read that promise to the children; impress them with the fact that God will be with and prosper people in such work as keeping sheep, as Jacob did, and in farming, working in shop or store, if only they live for him. (3) Children of this age are old enough to begin to learn the lesson of giving back to God a portion of their money. As Jacob vowed to give one-tenth, so people today should set aside a certain portion of their income to be used in God's work of saving the lost and caring for the poor.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The last lesson in the above paragraph is a good lesson for these departments, especially since boys in this age are beginning to earn money on their own. While this example does not teach us that we must give one-tenth, nor is there any teaching in the New Testament to that effect, yet this is a fine place to begin to teach young people that they are indebted to God for his goodness to them, and that in return they must help him carry on his work in this world. Create within them an appreciation for God and his goodness to them. Do not approach them from the standpoint that giving is a commandment of God, and that disobedience to God sends people to hell. Of course that is true, but there is a better way of approach and a more effective way. If you can get a response on the basis of love and appreciation, the response will last longer.

Selling one's birthright for a mess of pottage is common in children of this age, and the teacher will do well to dwell on this part of the lesson. The birthright went to the first-born son. It included: (1) Succession to earthly inheritance in Canaan. (Gen. 28: 4.) (2) A double portion of the father's estate. (Deut. 21: 17.) (3) Right to be the priest of the family in the absence of the father before the Levitical priesthood was established. (4) Preeminence and lordship over the rest of the family. (Gen. 27: 29.)

All of this Esau sold for satisfaction of his appetite for food, which he could have prepared himself had he cared to wait a while for it. But how many of us are throwing away a great future for a very small present? "A man who lives only for such ends as may be attained on this side of the grave is as 'profane' a person as Esau, and despises his birthright as truly." And, "There may be more refinement of sensuality in modern pleasures; but are not intellectual strength and dignity bartered for merely animal enjoyments or physical excitements; moral excellence for indulgence of

passion; spiritual attainment and enjoyments for fun and frolic; pure affections, home delights, social standing, for the disgusting associations and worse than beastly degradation of the whiskey and beer saloon?" Men sell their good name for money, for political and social power and influence. These are making a worse bargain than Esau made.

Another lesson for many in these departments may be drawn from the vow which Jacob made. From that time forward Jacob was living according to a vow which he must not violate; he must regard his vow as sacred. Young people should be under vow to God. Those who are members of the church are under vow to God. They have said they would quit sin and live for God. If they do not regard their vows to God as sacred, they have no sense of honor and should not be trusted in anything.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lessons of the foregoing paragraphs are good for these departments. Men in business need to learn to regard religion as something sacred to be carried with them into all business endeavors; the principles of religion are not to be forgotten in business. It is easy to sell one's birthright—the right that comes with our new birth—for a small amount of money; we may even trade our birthright in an effort to get money and fail, and then find that we have lost both the birthright and the money we hoped to get. (1 Tim. 6: 9, 10.)

Jacob affords a good opportunity to teach a lesson on honesty—to refuse to lie. In Gen. 27: 5-24 we have the record of Jacob stealing the blessings. It will be well for the teacher to give someone the job of giving a special lesson on lying from that text. Let him show how many times Jacob lied to his father; what he hoped to gain by lying; how he was aided and encouraged by his mother to lie; and with the aid of a concordance let him show what the Bible teaches about lying.

Another special assignment for either of these departments is for someone to contrast the character of Jacob before he went to Padan-aram with what he was after he came back to Canaan, and show what brought about the change.

Golden Text Explained

The word Jacob means *supplanter* and very well describe's Jacob's character in his early life. The word Israel means *he who strives with God*, in the sense of prevailing with God. Jacob prevailed with men in early life by outwitting them, sometimes stooping to low, base tactics to win his point. Israel prevailed with God because he felt his need of God and refused to let go until he had obtained the blessing he desired of God. In early life he was self-sufficient and independent; in later life he realized his need of God and leaned upon him for strength and comfort. More Israels and less Jacobs!

Topics for Discussion

1. When Jacob went into a far country, he took God with him; when the prodigal went there, he went without God. Jacob came back full-handed and honored by his brother; the prodigal came back in hunger and disgrace, despised by his brother. If you go where

you cannot take God with you, the return trip will likely be in disgrace and with regrets.

2. Demas sold his birthright for a mess of pottage when he gave up his post of duty because he loved this present world. (2 Tim. 4: 10.) It is easy to do the same thing today. Mark came very near making the same mistake when he gave up the journey with Paul and Barnabas. (Acts 13: 13; 15: 36-41.) Only the interest of one who had faith in him and gave him another chance may have been responsible for him being profitable later. (2 Tim. 4: 11.)

3. God made his plans with reference to Jacob, not for what Jacob was when he was in youth and middle age, but for what God knew he would become in later life. However this in no way interfered with Jacob's right to do as he pleased. Had he pleased to do so he could have lived for the world as Esau did. God's foreknowledge enabled him to plan on Jacob changing and living for things spiritual and eternal.

4. As long as Jacob was of this world, worldly, God could not use him; but when he turned and gave heavenly things their proper value, and their proper place in his life, God could, and did, use Jacob for great things. God can use each one of us if we will prepare ourselves for his use by such a turn, change, as characterized Jacob.

Lesson VI—February 9, 1947

JOSEPH, A MAN WHO OVERCAME

The Lesson Text

Gen. 37: 5-11; 39: 5, 6; 41: 39-44

5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright: and, behold, your sheaves came round about and made obeisance to my sheaf.

8 And his brethren said to him. Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed yet a dream; and, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars made obeisance to me.

10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him, and said unto him. What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

5 And it came to pass from the time that he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that Je-ho'vah blessed the E-gyp'tian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Je-ho'vah was upon all that he had in the house and in the field.

6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught that was with him, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was comely and well-favored.

39 And Pha'raoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou:

40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

41 And Pha'raoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of E'gypt.

42 And Pha'raoh took off his signet ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he set him over all the land of Egypt.

44 And Pha'raoh said unto Joseph, I am Pha'raoh and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt.

Heb. 11: 22

22 By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Is'ra-el; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt." (Gen. 41: 41.)

Devotional Reading.—Gen. 43: 26-34.

Daily Bible Readings

February 3.	M.....	The Birth of Joseph (Gen. 30: 22-25)
February 4.	T.....	Joseph a Favorite of Jacob (Gen. 37: 1-4)
February 5.	W.....	Joseph's Dreams (Gen. 37: 5-11)
February 6.	T.....	Joseph Sold into Egypt (Gen. 37: 25-28)
February 7.	F.....	Joseph in Prison (Gen. 39: 19-23)
February 8.	S.....	Joseph Ruler of Egypt (Gen. 41: 37-45)
February 9.	S.....	The Death of Joseph (Gen. 50: 22-26)

TIME.—1745 to 1635 B.C.

PLACES.—Canaan and Egypt.

PERSONS.—God and Joseph.

Lesson Subject Explained

Everyone admires an overcomer. And the greater the hindering circumstances, the greater price one has to pay, the greater and more numerous the enemies, the more the overcomer is admired, and the more he deserves praise from his fellow men and those who live after him. From this point of view Joseph certainly deserves a lot of praise for overcoming. His enemies were those in his own house, those from whom he had reason to expect love and understanding. And when he was sold into Egypt as a slave it seemed that he could not go lower, until by misrepresentation he was sent to prison for a long term. But in spite of being subjected to such cruelties and injustices Joseph never lost sight of his purpose to do right. And God never forsakes people who are determined to follow after righteousness. With this determination and God's help there was no combination of earth's forces that could keep him from overcoming. To those in Joseph's class the Lord has said, "And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron." (Rev. 2: 26, 27.) It is said that "righteousness exalteth a nation," and in Joseph we learn that it is as true of individuals as it is of nations. Though he was humbled and severely tried, his exaltation came in time for him to enjoy it as the fruit of his sufferings. "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal. 6: 9.)

Context of the Lesson

The time of this lesson overlaps that of the former lesson. Joseph was born in Haran, as were ten of his half brothers. Benjamin, his only brother, was born while his parents were on their journey from Haran to Canaan, at a place called Ephrath. (Gen. 35: 16-19.) The half brothers of Joseph, grouped with their mothers, are as follows: by Leah, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebu-

lun; Leah's handmaid, Zilpah, Gad and Asher; Rachel's handmaid, Bilhah, Dan and Naphtali. Reuben was the first-born, so was entitled to the birthright, which carried with it the double portion, the right to rule, and the priesthood. But on account of Reuben's sin with his father's concubine, Bilhah, these blessings were taken away from him. (Gen. 35: 22.) The double portion was given to Joseph, the right to rule to Judah, and the priesthood to Levi. (1 Chron. 5: 1; Gen. 49: 3, 4.)

After the death of Rachel, Jacob moved on to the south and settled in Hebron, twenty miles south of Jerusalem. This place is said to have been the dwelling place of Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 35: 27), though Isaac lived in or near Beersheba, which was only a few miles to the south of Hebron (Gen. 26: 33; 28: 10). How old Joseph was when the family returned to Canaan is not known, but we do know that Isaac, his grandfather, was still living, and continued to live until within one or two years of the time when Joseph was made ruler over Egypt.

When Jacob threw away the gods of the east at Bethel, and openly and formally accepted the faith of Abraham, the one God whom Abraham had worshiped, the national religion of the great nation of Abraham's seed was determined. "If Abraham was the first preacher of God and his righteousness, the honor is due Jacob of first having established the great patriarch's belief as the accepted faith of the Hebrew race." But Canaan was not suited to the development of that nation, so God set about to move the people to a place better adapted to their growth and schooling. Joseph was destined to play a leading role in that drama. And the events of our lesson are connected with the part he played.

The Historical Background

Authorities differ as to the dates in this lesson the same as in the former lesson, but it seems most reasonable to say that Joseph was born 1745 B.C. and died 1635 B.C. at the age of one hundred and ten years. (Gen. 50: 26.) He was seventeen years of age when he was sold into Egypt, at which time his father, Jacob, was one hundred eight, and his grandfather, Isaac, was one hundred sixty-eight years old. (Gen. 37: 2.) Thirteen years later he was made ruler over all Egypt, second only to Pharaoh, being thirty years old. (Gen. 41: 46.) And then nine years later the family moved to Egypt. There had been seven years of plenty and two years of famine when Joseph made himself known to his brothers and sent for his father. (Gen. 45: 6.) At this time Jacob was one hundred thirty years old. (Gen. 47: 9.)

Shechem is one of the places connected with our lesson. The word means *shoulder*. It was located thirty-five miles north of Jerusalem, between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. It is on the watershed and the springs east of the town flow into the Jordan, while those in town and west flow into the Mediterranean. It is said there are seventy-five never-failing springs in the town and immediate vicinity. It was here that Jacob bought his first piece of land in Canaan, and which later went to Joseph. (Gen. 33: 18, 19; Josh. 24: 32.) Undoubtedly it was in this place that the brother' were making headquarters when Joseph went to see about them. It was about fifty miles north from Hebron.

Dothan is the place where Joseph found his brethren. It is sixteen miles on farther north, being twelve miles north of Samaria. The word Dothan means *two wells*. It is "situated at the south end of a plain of the richest pasturage. . . . On the present line of travel from East-Jordan to Egypt." McGarvey says in this plain "a number of jug-shaped cisterns answering to the pit in which Joseph was placed were found by his party.

When Joseph was sold into Egypt he was bought by Potiphar, who was "captain of the guard." Smith's *Bible Dictionary* says he was "chief of the executioners," and that his living quarters were in the prison. Geikie states that this prison was located at Memphis and was "called by them the White Castle." Memphis was situated on the western bank of the Nile River in that portion known as "Lower Egypt." It was about twenty miles from Memphis that Joseph found his wife, Asenath. She was the daughter of Potipherah, a priest who lived at On. Perhaps this word meant *the sun*, which was the chief object of worship there. The town is called Heliopolis, and one time Beth-shemesh. (Jer. 43: 13.) This is said to have been "no great distance from the land of Goshen."

Passing from places of interest in the lesson, some customs which play a part in this lesson will be of interest. The coat which Jacob made for Joseph, which contributed to his being hated by his brethren, was one of extra length and perhaps highly colored. The ordinary coats were sleeveless and came only to the knees. This one had sleeves to the wrists, reached to the ankles, and possibly made of fine Egyptian linen. "Though not necessarily implied in the Hebrew words used, it may have been of 'many' colours, for in the tomb of Beni Hassan, Semitic visitors are seen dressed in robes of white, red, and blue, apparently made of a patchwork of separate small pieces." "This sort of robe was worn only by princes, by the opulent and noble, by kings' sons, and by those who had no need to toil for their living." It has been suggested by some that Jacob intended by this robe to indicate that Joseph was to have the birth-right.

It was a very common thing for caravans of traders to be on the highway to Egypt, and carrying just such products as these Ishmaelites are said to have carried. Great quantities of such were needed in embalming, and for the making of incense. Geikie says some of these "have been found in a list of 200 drugs named in the temple laboratory of Efu; for each temple had its own laboratory and apothecary."

And the twenty pieces of silver which the brothers got for Joseph is the usual price for male slaves between five and twenty years of age, and from manuscripts of that day it is known that Syrian slaves were prized more than any others.

"The character of Joseph is wholly composed of great materials. . . . We trace in it very little of that balance of good and evil, of strength and weakness. . . . Joseph's character is the least marked by wrong and indecision. His first quality seems to have been the greatest resolution. He not only believed faithfully, but could endure patiently, and could command equally his good and evil passions. Hence his strong sense of duty, his zealous work, his strict justice, his clear discrimination of good and evil. He was easily moved to tears, even weeping at the first sight of his brethren after they had sold him. His love for his father and Benjamin was not

enfeebled by years of separation, nor by his great station. . . . The last characteristic to make up this great character was modesty, the natural result of the others." Errett says, "The character of Joseph approaches perfection more than any other in the Old Testament. . . . Joseph proved to be an obedient son, gentle, affectionate, truthful, frank, and free from the recklessness and rebelliousness by which the lives of his older brothers were characterized. When sold into slavery, there was no abandonment of his soul to evil. . . . He is the same honest, faithful, conscientious, God-fearing man with the gold chain of the King of Egypt about his neck that he was with the galling fetters of the slave and the criminal upon his limbs. Always and everywhere he feared God, served his fellows, and wrought righteousness. Unsubdued by adversity, unconquered by temptation, uncorrupted by wealth and power, gentle, patient, forgiving, strong, brave, energetic, true to God and true to himself, his character stands out before us without a flaw. Free alike from the infirmities of the weak and the excesses of strong characters, he stands before us as one of the few glorious creations in which we are permitted to see what human nature is capable of becoming under the blessing of God and the sway of genuine piety."

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Joseph is one of the favorites with children, and they will love to learn and tell stories about him. And there should be a central point around which all these stories are built, and an aim toward which they should lead. God's care for those who love and serve him is one of these central points. And God's reward for those who overcome temptations to remain faithful to him is another good theme. These are abundantly illustrated in the life of Joseph. Obedience to parents, and rendering service to aged parents, is well illustrated in the fact that Joseph brought word to Jacob concerning the location and condition of his sons and flocks.

It will be well to have the children learn all they can about Joseph with the view to having them make a list of all good things they can find in the life and character of Joseph. As they name them the teacher can write them on the board. Then they may be asked to name one thing evil in his life. Nothing serious will be found. From this the teacher may pass to a lesson on the fact that God is keeping a record of the things we do, good and bad. Will there be a long list of good and very little bad? Will there be a long list of both good and bad? Or will there be a long list of bad, and very little good on our record page? If Joseph could refrain from hating his brothers for selling him into slavery, we can refrain from hating those who say ugly things about us and do unkind things to us.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

No other Old Testament character provides better or richer material for lessons to these departments than Joseph. Joseph was this age when he was sold by his brothers, when he was tempted by his master's wife, and when he was unjustly put in prison. You are not trying to adapt lessons of an aged saint to children of your age group. These are lessons from a real flesh and blood boy of seventeen years of age.

The steps by which Joseph advanced, by which he became the number one overcomer, are clear and can be appreciated by these young people. It will be well to write these on the board, or have the students to copy them for further study. (1) He was not discouraged and downcast by adverse circumstances. (2) He did his best wherever he was. (3) He made friends by his readiness to help. (4) He trusted God and was never ashamed to acknowledge him to all, regardless of where he was. (5) He was modest, and waited for others to suggest his advancement. (6) He was patient and waited for God's good time to clear him of false accusations or to reward him for service well rendered. (7) He made good use of little opportunities, and so was ready for the great ones when they arrived.

One lesson which should be put over is that Joseph was a boy just like boys of today. We are apt to get the idea that he knew he was being used of God for some great work, and that God gave him special help to be good and pure. But Joseph wondered why his brothers sold him; he wondered how they could be so heartless.. He wondered why his father did not come, or send, for him. He knew his father was rich and could comb all Egypt for him. He did not know that his father had been deceived by the bloodstained coat. No doubt he wondered why a woman could be so wicked and hard-hearted as his master's wife. He may have wondered if there was such a thing as justice in Egypt when he was put in prison. No, he did not see the hand of God in any of these things until later. (Gen. 45: 5.) So he had to meet his temptations and endure his hardships with no more advance information concerning the pattern in which each was a part than we have today.

Young People and Adult Departments

As Joseph grows to maturity he provides examples of what people in these departments should be. He might well have concluded that his father and family cared nothing for him, that no one would ever know whether his life in Egypt was good or bad, and so might have abandoned himself to a life of sensuality, gratifying the appetites and desires of the flesh. But this he refused to do on the ground that it would be (1) a sin against his master who had entrusted everything in the house to him, expecting him to be faithful to his trust; and (2) on the ground that it would be a sin against God. (Gen. 39: 8, 9.) Joseph remembered God was in that distant land, and that God watched him and recorded his deeds there the same as in his homeland. Young people need to remember that when they go to some distant city for a vacation. Business men need to remember it when they go to the city to market, and to conventions.

Humility in the possession of great power is another lesson to learn from Joseph. When Pharaoh made him second in the kingdom, and made him acting ruler of the land and all its affairs, he did not lose his head. Sometimes brethren lose their head when they get a little advancement in the office and a raise in salary. They cannot longer associate with tried and true friends, but must go higher in society for their associates. Men who have been asked to serve as elders and deacons have lost their head and gotten drunk on the power which these offices give them. Little souls indeed! If Joseph could remain humble when he was elevated from prison

to throne, surely we ought to keep our heads when we are slightly elevated. His elevation gave him a larger opportunity to serve; he used it wisely.

Parents should get the lesson that partiality in dealing with children is a serious fault. Isaac and Rebekah made that mistake. (Gen. 25: 28.) Jacob should have learned from their mistake not to show a preference for one child above another. He had to learn the hard way. Parents can save themselves a lot of grief if they will be admonished by these examples.

Forgiveness is another lesson for us to learn from Joseph. Though his brothers sold him into slavery and caused him to have to spend several years in prison, he seems not to have been bitter against them. And when he saw that God was using him to save his people from starvation he forgave his brethren and fed them with the same generosity with which he cared for his aged father.

Golden Text Explained

Our Golden Text is the language of Pharaoh to Joseph when the latter was taken from prison where he had served an unjust sentence for several years. What joy and satisfaction this must have brought to Joseph. The dreams of his childhood are now to be realized. Had he kept these in mind? Had he thought all along that if only he could be true and faithful to God he would win out at last? Whether such thoughts as these gave him strength or not, his elevation was the result of his faithfulness. Egypt was the greatest nation on earth at the time, and to be second in that nation was the greatest reward Pharaoh had to offer. But, as great as was that, Joseph enjoyed more distinction and reaped a greater reward for his faithfulness in his relationship to God. It is better to be a servant of God than it is to be the ruler of all men.

Topics for Discussion

1. Purity of character will not exempt one from sorrow and suffering. But the saint is happier in the midst of hardships and misfortunes than is the sinner in his seeming hour of triumph. Joseph was happier in his purity and innocence in the Egyptian prison than were his brothers enjoying the freedom of fertile valleys of Canaan under the remorse of wrongdoing.

2. Joseph's suffering made possible the happiness of many. The suffering of Jesus has made, is still making, and will continue through eternity to make millions happy. If it be God's will that we suffer that others may be happy we should rejoice that we can be used of God for such noble ends.

3. Unless God miraculously enabled Joseph to interpret the dreams, there is not a miracle wrought in all Joseph's experiences. Yet God was working in all his experiences to bring about his purposes. If our history could be written by an inspired man today, do you think much of it might read like this bit of Old Testament history?

4. In Joseph we can learn the following lessons: (1) The best way to overcome evil is to return good for evil. (2) To regard our sorrows and sufferings as discipline for our good, and means of saving others. (3) How to regard our greatest opportunities. Joseph valued his position as ruler of Egypt more as an opportunity to assist God's people than as an opportunity to gain honor, power, and

wealth for himself. (4) What true forgiveness is. Not a mere willingness to overlook the sin provided the sinner will keep away from us, but to accept and treat the sinner as if the sin had never been committed.

Lesson VII—February 16, 1947

MOSES, A SERVANT OF GOD

The Lesson Text

Ex. 3: 2-8

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

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

4 And when Je-ho'vah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Mo'ses, Mo'ses. And he said, Here am I.

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

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

7 And Je-ho'vah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in E'gypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the E-gyp'tians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Ca'naan-ite, and the Hit'tite, and the Am'or-ite, and the Per'iz-zite, and the Hi'vite, and the Jeb'u-site.

Num. 12: 7, 8

7 My servant Mo'ses is not so; he is faithful in all my house:

8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches; and the form of Je-ho'vah shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Mo'ses?

Deut. 18: 15

15 Je-ho'vah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

Acts 7: 22

22 And Mo'ses was instructed in all the wisdom of the E-gyp'tians; and he was mighty in his words and works.

Heb. 11: 23-26

23 By faith Mo'ses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith Mo'ses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pha'raoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of E'gypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward.

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 7: 20-31.

Daily Bible Readings

February 10. M.....	The Birth of Moses (Ex. 2: 1-10)
February 11. T.....	Moses Flees to Midian (Ex. 2: 11-15)
February 12. W.....	God Appears to Moses (Ex. 3: 1-12)
February 13. T.....	Moses Sent to Pharaoh (Ex. 4: 18-22)
February 14. F.....	Moses Delivers Israel from Egypt (Ex. 12: 37-42)
February 15. S.....	Moses Receives the Law (Ex. 20: 1-17)
February 16. S.....	The Death of Moses (Deut. 34: 1-8)

TIME.—1571 to 1451 B.C.

Places.—Egypt and the Wilderness.

Persons.—God and Moses.

Lesson Subject Explained

Moses is one of the greatest men who ever lived. (Jer. 15: 1.) And his greatness lay in the fact that he was a servant of God. Jesus taught that true greatness does not consist in ruling, but in serving. (Mark 10: 42-44.) So well did Moses serve that he is used as an illustration by the Holy Spirit to teach us the faithfulness of Jesus. (Heb. 3: 1, 2.) He rendered such fine service that God saw fit to say that "Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken." (Heb. 3: 5.) Paul loved to style himself as a servant of God, and Jesus Christ. (Tit. 1: 1; Rom. 1: 1; Phil. 1: 1.) And how much more humble that sounds than such titles as Reverend and Father, and Archbishop, etc. Men who love the preeminence and wear such titles have not the mind and disposition of Jesus, and stand condemned. (Matt. 23: 8-12; 3 John 9.) If men as great as Moses and Paul could be satisfied to be called a servant, none of us poor frail people of today should desire anything better. Let us be sure we deserve to be called *servants* of the Lord.

Context of the Lesson

Our last lesson was about Joseph. He died 1635 B.C., just sixty-four years before Moses was born. Again, it must be remembered that Bible scholars differ as to these dates. Geikie gives the date of Exodus as 1314 B.C., and of course the birth of Moses eighty years earlier. (Vol. 2, p. 93.) And the time which the children of Israel spent in Egypt has been the subject of considerable discussion. This statement, "Now the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years" (Ex. 12: 40), it seems, should be plain enough to settle the matter. But Paul says the law was given 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham. (Gal. 3: 17.) If this statement be true, the former is not. Adam Clarke says the Samaritan Pentateuch (the five books of Moses revised by Samaritans) reads thus: "*Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, and of their fathers, which they sojourned in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt, was 430 years.*" Whether this is the way our text should read or not, it is undoubtedly the truth, as can be demonstrated by the ages of several men as given in various scriptures. Abraham was seventy-five years old when the promise was made to him. (Gen. 12: 4.) From that time to the birth of Isaac was twenty-five years. (Gen. 21: 5.) Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born. (Gen. 25: 26.) And Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt. (Gen. 47: 9.) Adding twenty-five, sixty, and 130 gives us 215 years from the promise to the time the

children of Israel went to Egypt. But from the promise to the giving of the law was only 430 years, which leaves 215 years from the time they went to Egypt until they were delivered. Joseph was thirty years old when he was made ruler. (Gen. 41: 46.) He was thirty-nine when the children of Israel went to Egypt. (Gen. 45: 6.) He lived to be 110 years of age. Thirty-nine subtracted from 110 leaves seventy-one, the number of years from the time the children of Israel went to Egypt until the death of Joseph. To this add eighty, the age of Moses when the children of Israel left Egypt, which gives 151. Subtract this from 215, and the result is sixty-four, the number of years from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses. During this short time Egypt enslaved the children of Israel, and much suffering, unbearable suffering, was the result.

The Historical Background

The time of the deliverance from bondage is given as 1491 B.C. The incident in our text (Num. 12: 7, 8) is dated 1490 B.C. And the next (Deut. 18: 15) is 1451 B.C., which is the year of the death of Moses.

The places of this lesson are of unusual interest, and the material is so abundant that it is difficult to decide what to use and what to leave out. According to Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, Moses was born at Heliopolis, just a few miles north of Cairo, Egypt. Another name for the city is On. This is the city where Asenath, Joseph's wife, lived. (Gen. 41: 45.) It was an important center for the worship of the sun-god, and Joseph's father-in-law was a priest. With this system of worship Moses must have been well acquainted, not only because he was born there, but because he very likely got most of his education there. According to Geikie, there was a great university there. And his description of the "shady cloisters" and "lecture rooms for the students, and quiet houses for the professors and priests, in their many grades and offices," and cottages for the temple servants, the library and writing chambers with their hosts of scribes, the gatekeepers, laundrymen, and cooks sounds like the description of some great university of our time. One library of that period contained 20,000 books, "and we even yet possess some priestly papyrus rolls dated from it." This was at Thebes.

When Moses killed an Egyptian and had to leave Egypt, it is said that he went to the land of Midian. This land was that which was inhabited by the descendants of Abraham by Hagar and Keturah. Midian was a son of Abraham by Keturah. (Gen. 25: 2.) And the descendants of Ishmael were also called Midianites. (Judges 8: 24.) So Moses went to receive shelter from his distant relatives. Their land was perhaps the whole of the Arabian peninsula. However, that part to which Moses fled must have been the southern end around Mount Sinai, for it is said that he led Jethro's flock to the back of the wilderness and came to Horeb, or Sinai. If the reader wishes a good description of this country, he should read *Lands of the Bible*, p. 445, by McGarvey.

It was in the vicinity of Sinai that Moses beheld the burning bush. Sometimes the word Sinai is used, and other times Horeb. Though scholars make a distinction, for our purposes they are two words for the same mountain. McGarvey says the mountain rises abruptly, a naked and almost perpendicular mass of granite, 1,800 feet high above the plain and 7,359 feet above sea level. It is a huge

block of granite about two miles in length and one in breadth, with a narrow valley on either side, and a spacious plain at the north-western end.

In our text we have the expression "the angel of Jehovah." This expression may sometimes be used of a created angel, but usually refers to the second person of the Godhead, the divine Word which was made flesh, Jesus Christ. Hagar called this angel Jehovah. (Gen. 16: 7, 13.) Abraham was kept from killing Isaac by this angel, and it was this angel who made the promises to Abraham. (Gen. 22: 11, 15-18.) Jacob wrestled with this angel one night. (Gen. 32: 28, 30; Hos. 12: 3-5.) And it was this angel who talked with Jacob at Bethel. (Gen. 31: 11, 13.) And it was this angel who accompanied the children in their wilderness wanderings, and to him reference is made many, many times where only the word Jehovah is used. Read Ex. 23: 20, 21; 32: 34 to 33: 16; Acts 7: 38 and compare with verses 30-34 for further study on this interesting subject.

Moses was of the tribe of Levi. His father's name was Amram, which means "*kindred of the lofty One*"; his mother's name was Jochebed, which means "*whose glory is Jehovah.*" (Geikie.) Miriam was his sister and perhaps twelve years older than he. And Aaron, his brother, was about three years his senior. He has been described as a man of "quick decision, wise authority, boundless patience, thoughtfulness, and tact." In Smith's *Bible Dictionary* we have the following: "All that is told of him indicates a withdrawal of himself, a preference of the cause of his nation to his own interests, which makes him the most complete example of Jewish patriotism. He joins his countrymen in their degrading servitude. (Ex. 2: 11; 5: 4.) He forgets himself to avenge their wrongs. (2: 14.) He desires that his brother may take the lead instead of himself. (Ex. 4: 13.) He wishes that not he only, but all the nations were gifted alike: *Enviest thou for my sake?* (Num. 11: 29.) When the offer is made that the people should be destroyed, and that he should be made a great nation (Ex. 32: 10), he prays that they may be forgiven—if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. (Ex. 32: 32.) His sons were not raised to honor. The leadership of the people passed, after his death, to another tribe. In the books which bear his name, Abraham, and not himself, appears as the real father of the nation. In spite of his great preeminence, they are never 'the children of Moses.'"

The life of Moses conveniently falls into three periods of forty years each. The first is from birth to the time he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. The second is from that time to his call to deliver the children of Israel from bondage. And the third is that part of his life given to the task of taking the people from Egypt to Canaan. Forty years he was schooled in all the wisdom of Egypt, but subjected to the temptations which riches, power and political influence, the corruption of such social and political environment can bring to bear on a man. And during this period he was continually subjected to the seductive influences of a false religion. If there was anything other than what his mother taught him to protect him from all these temptations during this time, we know nothing of it. What ten-year-old boy of today could hold to what his mother taught him in spite of all that Moses had to lead him astray from the faith? But with his mother's teaching as a basis he refused all that Egypt had to offer, turned his back upon wealth.

power, and the satisfaction of all the desires of the flesh to become a slave and a wanderer. "Faith triumphed over sight; and Moses elected himself to toil, dishonor, and suffering here, that he might attain to rest, glory, and joy hereafter."

The second period of his life was as completely different from the first as day differs from night. "If his faith, in Egypt, was in danger of *wearing* out under the constant abrasion of royal and idolatrous associations, it must have been in danger of *rusting* out—of dying of mere inaction—in this tame life of exile." What must have been the thoughts of Moses who expected to lead Israel when he was given a herd of sheep to lead about in search of grass! If ever a man had a right to be discouraged and give up, Moses had it. But he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

The third period of the life of Moses was filled with burdens and responsibilities the like of which few, if any, men before or since his day have had to bear. More than two million souls, ignorant, superstitious slaves, inclined to evil of every sort and kind, were put into his care and under his control. They murmured continually: they accused him of trying to destroy them while he prayed to God to spare them rather than make him a great nation; they accused him of bringing them into a wilderness to starve rather than into a land flowing with milk and honey. But through it all he was meek and gentle. "It was by the steady control of a strong and stormy nature that he won a just reputation for meekness, and it is saying much to say of such a man that only a few times, among the keen and perpetual provocations of forty years, did he betray anything of this impulsiveness, and that only once in all his life did he call down the divine disapprobation on his conduct." "With his eyes undimmed and his natural force unabated, in a glorious prime of a grand manhood, with a mighty work faithfully done, he surrendered his charge with his life, and in his death, as in his life, abandoned all that was dear to his own heart in this world, that God might be honored and that others might be blessed."

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Every child knows something about Moses. No Bible storybook ever left out this man. Stories concerning his birth, his mother hiding him until he was too old to keep him safely, his being placed in an ark in the river, being found and adopted by the king's daughter are all of absorbing interest to children. They will love to go over them again. So it will be well to spend some time with random questions to bring out what each child knows about the central figure of this lesson.

If you have a sand table, or cutout material, the children will love to build the scene of Moses before the burning bush in the vicinity of Mount Sinai, with his back to his sheep, answering the call of God to be the shepherd of two million souls in bondage.

Moses was asked to take off his shoes when he stood before the Lord on holy ground, made holy because of the presence of the Lord. Children need to be impressed with the thought that God is present when we meet to worship, and that instead of taking off our shoes to show reverence, we ought to be quiet and sober. They should never talk during service; they should never make a playhouse of

the church building after the service is dismissed, running up and down the aisles and climbing over pews. A few lessons along this line at this age may improve the tone of worship in the years to come.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The lesson on reverence above will be good for these departments too.

The time and work which Moses put into preparation for service will be a good lesson for these ages. Forty years of training and schooling in the courts and universities of the greatest nation on earth to give him the head training he needed, and then forty years of solitude and reflection to give him the heart training he needed for a great work. With only the head training he was ambitious and self-reliant, and would deliver Israel by his own efforts and in his own way. (Ex. 2: 11-15.) Boys and girls are apt to think they will be ready for any job or responsibility when they have finished college. Forty years of heart training made a very different man of Moses, but one whom God could use. So a good education plus a sober, humble, prayerful heart will make of each of us a useful servant of God.

The choice which Moses made furnishes excellent material for many lessons to boys and girls of this age, and there is no better statement of it than the last division of our text. It was a choice between the flesh and the spirit; between the seen and the unseen; between honor and dishonor; between toil and self-denial; between ease and luxury; between poverty and wealth; between suffering and pleasure. From the worldly point of view he made a great mistake. "Standing by Moses in Egypt, his choice may seem to be foolish and absurd; but standing by the glorified Moses, on the Mount of Transfiguration, we know that his choice was the only wise one." Moses is not the only one ever called on to make such a choice; all of us have to make it. "We must choose between the flesh and the spirit; between the pleasures of sin and the reproach of Christ; between luxurious indulgence and self-denial; between the ephemeral treasures and delights of earth and the eternal delights and treasures of heaven."

Young People and Adult Departments

There is no better lesson for these departments than the one in the preceding paragraph. This choice has to be made over and over again. If we could make it once and never be troubled with the problem again as long as we live, it would be much easier. But we may sincerely make the decision today, and tomorrow be found enjoying the things we rejected the day before.

It would be good for these departments to make a study of the entire life of Moses and list as many characteristics as possible that contribute to his greatness, such as meekness, unselfishness, humility, preference for things heavenly, and many others. When the list is complete let each one measure himself and ask, What lack I yet?

Golden Text Explained

Just what is included in the "wisdom of the Egyptians" is not too clear. Yet we do know that they had a very well developed system of education for a select few. "He was taught the whole

range of Greek, Chaldee, and Assyrian literature. From the Egyptians especially he learned mathematics." The Egyptians are said to have had "six books on medicine, which embraced anatomy, pathology, therapeutics, and treatment of diseases of the eye; so common on the Nile." Clement of Alexandria describes a religious service in which scribes took part. "The first was required to know by heart thirty-six of the forty-two books of Hermes. . . . The second, those of the books of Hermes which treated of astrology; the third, to be an adept at hieroglyphics, geography, the structure of the earth, the phenomena of the Nile, and the details of measures and offerings." (Geikie.) The Greeks borrowed many of the Egyptian principles in politics, geometry, astronomy, and physics.

Moses was "mighty in his words and works." Jesus "began both to do and to teach." (Acts 1: 1.) We are to love not only in word, but in deed. (1 John 3: 18.) Words without works inspired by love for God, truth, and others are worse than worthless. (1 Cor. 13: 1-7.)

Topics for Discussion

1. Moses was great enough to lead two million souls from Egypt to Canaan because he was little enough to accept the job of leading a few sheep to pasture for forty years. Let us not despise the little things of life if they be honorable.

2. The youth who will rule tomorrow is the youth who today is storing up resources of knowledge and wisdom, of self-reliance and courage. It is said that Milton spent thirty-four years "of solitary and unceasing study" gathering the material in his immortal work of *Paradise Lost*; and that "Pasteur gave our generation much, because for thirty years he isolated himself and got much to give." No one can give much to the world without planning and working hard and long toward that end.

3. Joseph went to Egypt as a slave and worked his way to the throne; Moses was adopted into the royal family but gave it up to be a slave. Joseph endured affliction to gain prosperity; Moses gave up prosperity to endure affliction with his people.

4. Moses could not enjoy wealth, honor, and social pleasures while his parents, brother, and sister were in slavery. He was no better than they; he would not have been as good as they if he had not done what he could to relieve them of their affliction.

Lesson VIII—February 23, 1947

JOSHUA, A MAN OF DECISION

The Lesson Text

Deut. 31: 14, 15, 23; 34: 9-12

14 And Je-ho'vah said unto Mo'ses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Josh'u-a, and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may give him a charge. And Mo'ses and Josh'u-a went, and presented themselves in the tent of meeting.

15 And J6-ho'vSh appeared in the Tent in a pillar of cloud: and the pillar of cloud stood over the door of the Tent.

23 And he gave J6sh'u-a the son of Nun a charge, and said. Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Is'ra-el into the land which I swear unto them: and I will be with thee.

9 And Josh'u-a the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Mo'ses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Is'ra-el hearkened unto him, and did as Je-ho'vah commanded Mo'ses.

10 And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Is'ra-el like unto Mo'ses, whom Je-ho'vah knew face to face,

11 In all the signs and the wonders, which Je-ho'vah sent him to do in the land of E'gypt, to Pha'raoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land,

12 And in all the mighty hand, and in all the great terror, which Mo'ses wrought in the sight of all Is'ra-el.

Josh. 24: 14, 15

14 Now therefore fear Je-ho'vah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in E'gypt; and serve ye Je-ho'vah.

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve Je-ho'vah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Am'or-ites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Je-ho'vah.

Judges 2: 6-8

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

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

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

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Josh. 24: 22-28.

Daily Bible Readings

February 17.	M.....	Joshua Successor to Moses (Deut. 34: 9-12)
February 18.	T.....	Joshua Encouraged (Josh. 1: 6-9)
February 19.	W.....	Joshua Leads Israel into Canaan (Josh. 3: 14-17)
February 20.	T.....	Joshua Captures Jericho (Josh. 6: 12-21)
February 21.	F.....	Joshua Stays the Sun (Josh. 10: 12-15)
February 22.	S.....	Joshua's Farewell Address (Josh. 24: 1-13)
February 23.	S.....	The Death of Joshua (Josh. 24: 29-31)

TIME.—About 1553 to 1443 B.C.

PLACES.—Moab, Shechem, Bochim.

PERSONS.—God and Joshua.

Lesson Subject Explained

Joshua was a very remarkable character, even if we compare him with what a man should be in our day. But when we consider the fact that he was born and reared in slavery, with no educational advantages, very little religious training, we are made to wonder how outstanding he would have been under better circumstances and in more favorable environment. He was a man of decision, not stubbornness. An ignorant slave can be stubborn, self-willed. Webster defines decision as follows: "The quality of being decided: firmness in deciding; the power or habit of promptly and definitely deciding, esp. on a course of action." He was not one to "stay on the fence," unable to make up his mind what to say or do. And the fine thing about Joshua is that when he made a decision as to a course of action he was right. These two characteristics made him the great leader he was. (1) He was quick to make up his mind.

(2) He was right in his decisions. This was made possible because of his deep, abiding desire to know and do the will of the Lord.

There is no greater need in the church today than men of decision, whose decisions are determined by the knowledge of God's will and the desire to do God's will. Leadership—capable, efficient, and active leadership—is the crying need of the churches today.

Context of the Lesson

The first mention of Joshua is in Ex. 17: 9. Before the children of Israel got to Sinai, when they were at Rephidim, the Amalekites attacked them. Moses appointed Joshua to be the commander of the army to meet the enemy. Whether this appointment was by inspiration or whether Joshua had the qualities of a leader to that extent that Moses had spotted him among the throng is not known. But the appointment was a wise one, for he did his job well and retained the position until he was promoted to take the place of Moses.

Between that time and the time of our lesson nearly forty years have elapsed, and no doubt Joshua had grown much, through application to duty and experience, in his ability to lead people. He had proved his faith in God when with Caleb he dared to make a minority report as to the possibilities of entering Canaan. (Num. 13.) Even in the face of an angry, infuriated mob, ready to stone him, he exhorted the people not to rebel against Jehovah, but to believe that if God was with them they could take the land in spite of giants. (Num. 14.) And through the long, weary wanderings of forty years only he and Caleb were faithful to the Lord in every respect, so that they were the only two who were twenty years old when they left Egypt who were permitted to go into Canaan. He was the only man allowed to go up to Mount Sinai with Moses from that place where the Lord appeared to the seventy. (Ex. 24: 9-14.)

Another interesting thing is the fact that Moses did not appoint one of his own family, or at least one of his own tribe, to be his successor. If Moses had appointed his son to take his place, "the foundation of hereditary monarchy in his family" would have been laid. If he had appointed one of his tribe, Levi, that tribe would have had both religious and political authority. It has never been wise for religious leaders to have the power to rule, lest they become despotic and persecute all who do not accept their religious views. Herein is the danger of Roman Catholicism. The Pope claims the right to exercise both temporal and religious authority. And history abounds with proof that temporal authority has been used to force submission to religious authority. There are countries even today where priests are the "power behind the throne," and invariably these are the backward nations of earth. Let no one think that Catholicism has so reformed in this enlightened age that such would not happen again. *It is happening now.* But Catholicism is not alone incapable of exercising both temporal and religious rule. No religious party is capable, nor should it seek the power, to rule. And any religious party which does seek temporal power is no part of the kingdom of our Lord who said, "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18: 36.)

The Historical Background

The time of the first two scriptures in our lesson text is 1451 B.C. The time of Josh. 24: 14, 15 and Judges 2: 6-8 is 1443 B.C.

The date of the birth of Joshua is not known, nor is the date of his death. He lived to be one hundred ten years of age. (Josh. 24: 29.) Some scholars think he was about the same age as Caleb. We know that Caleb was born forty years before Moses sent him and others to spy out the land of Canaan. (Josh. 14: 7.) If they were about the same age, Joshua was eighty years old when he assumed command, crossed the Jordan, and took Jericho. That would have given him thirty years to conquer the land, divide it among the tribes, and enjoy the fruits of his labors. (*Hours with Bible*, Geikie, Vol. 2, p. 433.) But the tables we are following in Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, based on Ussher, give Joshua's birth 1553 B.C. and Caleb's birth 1530 B.C. According to that, Joshua died in the third year after Caleb received his inheritance.

It is said that the people remained faithful to God during the life of Joshua, and of the elders who outlived him. These elders were less than twenty years old when they left Egypt, for all over that age died in the wilderness. (Num. 14: 28-33.) That would make them sixty, or less, when they entered Canaan. If the average life was eighty to ninety years, it would follow that the people were not faithful to God more than thirty or forty years, and less than that if Joshua and Caleb were the same age.

The children of Israel left Egypt the fifteenth day of the first month (Ex. 12); they entered Canaan the tenth day of the first month (Josh. 4: 19), which was five days less than forty years since leaving Egypt. They kept the Passover four days after crossing the Jordan, and the manna ceased the next day—exactly forty years from the Passover in Egypt. (Josh. 5: 10-12.)

The first place of interest in our lesson is Moab. It was "in the plains of Moab" where Moses gathered the people to renew their covenant with God, and to deliver his farewell message. (Deut. 29: 1.) "This plain . . . extends from the Jordan eastward about seven miles, and is terminated by the mountains which rise from its eastern edge as a lofty and rugged bluff about 3,000 feet high. It extends southward to the head of the Dead Sea, and its northern terminus is marked by a westward curve of the mountains reducing the width of the (Jordan) valley at this point to about half what it is below. The length of this wide plain from north to south is about eight miles. The whole plain of Moab, then, is about eight miles long and seven miles wide. Four streams of water, fed by springs in the mountains, make their way across the plain and empty into the Jordan, thus rendering this a most admirable camping place for the great host of Israel." (McGarvey.) This land was inhabited by the descendants of Moab, the son of the eldest daughter of Lot. (Gen. 19: 37.)

The next place of interest is where Joshua chose to deliver his farewell address, a city mentioned in our studies several times already this year—Shechem. Shechem was at the time the most important city in the country, and of all the important cities it was the most centrally located. It nestled under the precipitous end of Mount Gerizim, with Mount Ebal in front of it. These mountains will be remembered as the mount of blessing and the mount of cursing, where the people assembled to hear the reading of the law with its blessings and cursings when they entered Canaan. It was the political center of the nation, while Shiloh, only eighteen miles to the south, was the religious center. It was a peculiarly suitable

place for what Joshua had in mind to do to impress the people with the importance of keeping the law, their covenant with God. For it was here, after the law had been read, several years ago that it was written on the plastered side of a great altar. (Josh. 8.) Shechem also held memories of the patriarchs, for it was here that Abraham made his first encampment in the land of Canaan (Gen. 12: 6); here was where Jacob first lived when he returned from Paddan-aram (Gen. 33: 18-20); and here the mummy of Joseph had been buried (Josh. 24: 32). Shechem lived on until Jerusalem was made the capital of Judah and Samaria was made the capital of Israel. It is probably the Sychar of John 4: 5, 6, near which Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water from the well which Jacob dug hundreds of years before.

Bochim is the next place to claim our attention. Little is known of the place. But this is where the angel of Jehovah met Israel and charged them with unfaithfulness to their covenant, and where he told them he would not drive out the rest of the inhabitants of the land. When the people of Israel heard these things, they lifted up their voices and wept. So the place was called Bochim, which means *weepers*. There seems never to have been a town by that name; simply a *place* where the angel gathered the people for a message.

The place of Moses' death, and where Joshua received his charge, and where he was commissioned to take the place of Moses are other items of interest in this lesson. In Deut. 32: 49 we read, "Get thee up into this mountain of Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho." And in Deut. 34: 1 we read, "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho." Here we have three names with which to deal. Some say that Abarim and Pisgah refer to the same mountain range, while others say that Abarim refers to a chain of which Pisgah is but a part. All are agreed that Nebo is a point, or summit, on Pisgah or Abarim.

From the description given in the Bible one would expect this mountain to be easy to locate, but such is not true. Smith's Bible *Dictionary* says, "No one has yet succeeded in pointing out any spot which answers to Nebo." (Article on Nebo.) But McGarvey claims he located a knob which met "all the requirements of the scripture text." Those interested may read *Lands of the Bible*, p. 373.

There are some terms used in the lesson which are of interest. God told Moses to bring Joshua before the "tent of meeting" to receive his charge. This "tent of meeting" was the tabernacle, called tent of meeting because that is the place where God said he would meet his people. (Ex. 29: 42-46.) It was there where God promised to meet Moses and give him the instruction he needed from time to time. (Ex. 30: 6, 36; Num. 17: 4.)

It is also said in our lesson that the "pillar of cloud" stood over the door of the tent of meeting. This is the cloud which was with the children of Israel through the wilderness. The purpose of this cloud was fourfold. (1) It signified the presence of God. (Ex. 33: 9, 10; Num. 12: 5.) (2) It served to guide the people by day. (Num. 9: 15-23.) (3) At night it was a pillar of fire to give them light. (Ex. 13: 21.) From this passage it appears possible that they sometimes traveled at night. (4) It served as a covering from the hot desert sun. The sick, the children, and the aged needed some-

thing to shelter them from the scorching rays of the sun. To this David evidently refers in the following: "He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light in the night." (Psalm 105: 39.) And likely the prophet had this in mind when he wrote Isa. 4: 5, 6.

Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim, so a descendant of Joseph. His name is the Hebrew form of Jesus and means saviour. His work, though temporal, resembles the work of Jesus, and is taken by some as typical. He led his people into Canaan, the land of rest from bondage and wanderings; so Jesus leads his people into heaven where they find perfect rest. Joshua divided the land and gave the people their inheritance; so Jesus will give the faithful an eternal inheritance.

Joshua seems never to have married. And, like Moses, he was entirely unselfish, making no provision for himself. When all others had received their inheritance, Joshua asked the people to allow him to have Timnath-serah, where he built a city. (Josh. 19: 49, 50.) It is a sad commentary on human nature that he had to *ask*, and the Lord had to *command* the people to give him this. And because of the great service he had rendered one would think the people would appreciate him enough to give him one of the best portions in Canaan. But the contrary is true. Timnath-serah was a barren hill, covered with boulders, where little vegetation grew. But Joshua was willing to be satisfied with the poorest inheritance of any. This is true humility, worthy of the greatest reward.

The most outstanding fact concerning Joshua is that he spent 110 years in every condition from slavery to leadership of two million souls, performing the most difficult task of dividing the land of Canaan equitably, and not to please some powerful clique or tribe, and through all this he never at one time acted in such way as to bring a single stain on his name; never did he incur the displeasure of God. Caleb is the only other man who has such a record, and he did not have the responsibilities that Joshua had. He was not a negative character, refraining from doing evil by doing nothing. He was a man of decision, action, continually before the public. He refrained from evil by doing good. The secret of his power and success lies in the fact that he decided early in life, and was determined throughout all his life, that, "as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah."

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

It will be well for the teachers of these departments to open their lessons with some interesting stories from the life of Joshua. His first battle when he won because Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses (Ex. 17: 8); the battle he won because the sun stood still (Josh. 10: 12); the city he took by marching around it thirteen times (Josh. 6); and how the Gibeonites deceived Joshua (Josh. 9: 3) are all packed full of interest for children of this age.

From our lesson text his courage, faithfulness to the Lord, talking with God will serve to impress them and build in them the determination to grow into such character.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The courage and faithfulness of Joshua will be good lessons for these ages. And the high point for these departments will be the

lesson of decision. Joshua was what he was because early in life he decided to live right, to serve God, and make a contribution to the welfare of his fellow man. Boys and girls of this age should be led to make the decision to live for Jesus. Boys in these departments are apt to think the church is for women and old people. They should be made to see that the greatest men of all time are the men who have lived for God. Joshua was a man of action, a war hero. What our military heroes are to our nation Joshua was to Israel, and more too, because he was God's servant. Make these boys see that one can be great, accomplish great things in all honorable lines of activity, and still live for the Lord.

God has power to force us to serve him, but he allows us to choose whether we will serve him or the gods of this world. He wants willing servants. Our text says for us to choose "this day" whom we will serve. Teachers in these departments should never lose the evangelistic note as long as there is one in the class who is not a Christian. You must not allow this fine opportunity to slip without making the most of Joshua's choice to serve God.

Young People and Adult Departments

There is no better lesson to keep before these departments than that of choosing each day to serve Jehovah. It is a daily affair. We cannot dispose of the matter by making one choice, and then forgetting all about it. Every day we must choose between right and wrong.

Joshua's stainless character in spite of a busy life filled with great responsibilities provides a wonderful opportunity to teach these ages the importance of extreme care to be always on our guard against the tempter. Achan (Josh. 7: 20, 21) may have been an ordinarily good man, but he made one mistake and brought disgrace and death upon himself and family. Joshua refrained from making that one mistake. Men sometimes take liberties, when they are away from home in great cities, to do things they would not do back home. One of these things may be the one mistake which will bring suffering to you and your family. Joshua determined he would not make such mistakes. He was a man of decision, who lived by his decision, and serves as a splendid example for all of us today.

Golden Text Explained

The decision to live for God is personal. Each one must make that decision for himself. But all of us have influence, especially in our own families. So Joshua said, "As for me and my house." Of what that house consisted we do not know. No mention is made of Joshua's marriage, or that he had a wife. He could have meant his servants, or any who may have been under his care and keeping. If he had a wife and children, of course they would be meant. He could not make the decision for them, but he could use his influence to guide them into making that decision. Of Abraham it was said, "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice." (Gen. 18: 19.) All parents have the obligation of leading their children to decide to live for the Lord. It is a sin against children to bring them into the world and not give them the proper teaching, guidance, and

protection against the sinful influences of this world. It is worse than bringing children into the world and turning them loose at the age of four or five to get along the best way they can.

Topics for Discussion

1. One man wielded sufficient influence to hold a nation in the path of righteousness as long as he lived. Be careful of your influence. In which direction does it work?

2. Religious experiences have great power for good. The elders who outlived Joshua, and "who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel," remained faithful to God. They saw the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan; they ate the manna; they saw water brought from the flinty rock; and they saw Sinai rocking and reeling, and heard the voice of God. These experiences held them in line. Worship at home and in public makes impressions upon children's minds which last and which give them strength to resist evil.

3. Joshua was faithful to his charge. He had no miraculous assistance which we have not. Can we say in the words of Charles Wesley:

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
Who gave his Son my soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.

"To serve the present age.
My calling to fulfill—
O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will.

"Arm me with jealous care,
As in thy sight to live;
And O, Thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give.

"Help me watch and pray,
And on Thyself rely,
Assured, if I my trust betray,
I shall forever die."

Lesson IX—March 2, 1947

GIDEON, A MIGHTY MAN OF VALOR

The Lesson Text

Judges 6: 11-18; 7: 15-21

11 And the angel of Je-ho'vah came, and sat under the oak which was in Oph'rah, that pertained unto Jo'ash the A'bi-ez'rite: and his son Gid'e-on was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Mid'i-an-ites.

12 And the angel of Je-ho'vah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Je-ho'vah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.

13 And Gid'e-on said unto him. Oh, my lord, if Je-ho'vah Is with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying. Did not Je-ho'vah bring us up from E'gypt? but now Je-ho'vah hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Mid'i-an.

14 And Je-ho'vah looked upon him, and said. Go in this thy might, and save Is-ra-el from the hand of Mid'i-an: have not I sent thee?

15 And he said unto him, Oh, Lord, wherewith shall I save Is-ra-el? behold, my family is the poorest in Ma-nas'seh, and I am the least in my father's house.

16 And Je-ho'vah said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Mid'i-an-ites as one man.

17 And he said unto him. If now I have found favor in thy sight, then show me a sign that it is thou that talkest with me.

18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and lay it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

15 And it was so, when Gid'e-on heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped; and he returned into the camp of Is-ra-el, and said, Arise; for Je-ho'vah hath delivered into your hand the host of Mid'i-an.

16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers.

17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outermost part of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do.

18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Je-ho'vah and for Gid'e-on.

19 So Gid'e-on, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands.

20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands wherewith to blow; and they cried, The sword of Je-ho'vah and of Gid'e-on.

21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shouted, and put *them* to flight.

Golden Text.—*"Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor."* (Judges 6: 12b.)

Devotional Reading.—Judges 6: 36-40.

Daily Bible Readings

February 24. M.....	Gideon Visited by an Angel (Judges 6: 11-18)
February 25. T.....	Gideon Worshiped God (Judges 6: 19-24)
February 26. W.....	Gideon's Sign (Judges 6: 36-40)
February 27. T.....	Gideon's Victory (Judges 7: 19-23)
February 28. F.....	Gideon Pacifies the Ephraimites (Judges 8: 1-9)
March 1. S.....	Gideon Made Judge (Judges 8: 22-28)
March 2. S.....	Gideon's Death (Judges 8: 33-35)

Time.—1252 to 1205 B. C.

Places.—Ophrah, Valley of Jezreel.

Persons.—God and Gideon.

Lesson Subject Explained

The messenger of God called Gideon a "mighty man of valor." The word valor means "strength of mind or spirit which enables a man to encounter danger with firmness; personal bravery." But meeting the enemy with firmness leaves us to wonder with what degree of firmness. The text supplies that information in the word "mighty." He was possessed of valor to an extraordinary degree. When we remember that the people were hopelessly outnumbered, and that they had been robbed and plundered after this fashion for seven years, and the people had reached the point where they were resigned to their fate, the fact that Gideon was willing to undertake to do battle with the enemy with all the men he could muster marked him as a man with high courage. But when his army

was reduced to the pitifully small number of three hundred men to fight 120,000 well armed soldiers (Judges 8: 10), and his weapons consisted of a water pitcher and a light, and he was still willing to charge the enemy with full confidence that somehow the victory would be his, we immediately and instinctively agree that he was a "mighty man of valor."

Context of the Lesson

Our last lesson ended with the death of Joshua which occurred in 1443 B.C. The events of this lesson happened about 1245 B.C. So the reader can see that we have a period of two hundred years between the lessons, sufficient time for people to make considerable change in their habits and attitudes towards God. After the death of Joshua the people remained faithful until the death of the elders who had seen the mighty works of God in bringing the people from Egypt to Canaan. But when these elders had died, the people forgot God and worshiped the gods of the Canaanites, who were left in the land to prove the children of Israel. (Judges 2: 20-23.) God allowed their enemies to oppress them because of their sins. The first oppressors were from Mesopotamia, and the oppression lasted eight years. Othniel, the son-in-law of Caleb, led in their defeat, and they had rest for forty years. (Judges 3: 7-11.) After Othniel's death the people went again into idolatry, and the next enemy consisted of a combination of Moabites, Ammonites, and Amalekites, who enslaved the people for eighteen years. Ehud delivered them this time, and they had rest for eighty years. The Philistines ravaged the tribe of Benjamin for a time, and Shamgar relieved them. Then following another period of idolatry God permitted Jabin and Sisera, of Hazor, to afflict his people. And this time Deborah and Barak delivered the people from the enemy.

After a period of forty years the Midianites were allowed to oppress the people. Along with them were the Amalekites and the children of the east, probably Ishmaelites. They poured across the Jordan like locusts, devouring and destroying everything in their path. The children of Israel hid in the hills until the invaders had satisfied themselves and left, and then the people tried to live on what was left. This was done seven years in succession, until it is said that Israel "was brought very low." (Judges 6: 1-6.) Gideon was beating out wheat in a wine press, instead of on the threshing floor, so the enemy would not see him and take his wheat from him, when the angel of the Lord appeared unto him to appoint him and encourage him to lead the people in their deliverance.

Seemingly the apostasy of the people was complete. If Gideon was not an idolater, he was not raising any objection to his father erecting an altar to Baal and keeping an Ashera, which was "a rough wooden pillar—part of the stem of a tree—the symbol of the goddess of fertility." (Geikie.) This was connected with the worship of Ashtoreth, Astarte. That Gideon was an idolater himself is suggested by his actions soon after his great victory, when he made an ephod of the gold earrings of his enemies, put it in his own city, "and all Israel played the harlot after it there: and it became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house." (Judges 8: 27.)

The Historical Background

Very little can be said concerning the time of this lesson. The dates at the beginning of the lesson include the seven years the

people were oppressed by the Midianites and the forty years' rest they had "in the days of Gideon." (Judges 8: 28.) It is said that Gideon "died in a good old age." (Judges 8: 32.) Ussher gives the date of his death at 1205 B.C. Other scholars differ, some of them widely.

The first place of interest in our lesson is Ophrah, the home town of Gideon. It was west of the Jordan, in the division of land which belonged to the half-tribe of Manasseh. It is spoken of as Ophrah "of the Abiezrites." (Judges 6: 24.) The Abiezrites were the descendants of Abiezer, who was one of the children (grand-children) of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. (Josh. 17: 2.) The town was probably near Shechem, for Gideon maintained a home there for his concubine, the mother of Abimelech, who slew the seventy sons of Gideon. (Judges 8: 29 to 9: 1.)

The next place is the valley of Jezreel, where the Midianites were defeated by the three hundred of Gideon. Jezreel is the Hebrew form of Esdraelon, a Greek word. (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.) However, the late maps show the valley of Jezreel to slope towards the Jordan, and the plain of Esdraelon going toward the Mediterranean Sea, being drained by the river Kishon. That they were considered the same is seen from this statement in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*: "The great plain of Esdraelon extends across central Palestine from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, separating the ranges of Carmel and Samaria from those of Galilee." McGarvey describes the valley of Jezreel as beginning about the city of Jezreel and extending towards the northeast for about twelve miles along the foot of a mountain called Little Hermon. The southern boundary of the valley runs southeast along the foot of Mount Gilboa, about the same distance to the Jordan. "Thus the valley between the two spreads out like a half-opened fan as it extends toward the east." At the head of this valley the mountains are about four miles apart. Gideon and his men were camped on the south side of the valley, by the spring Harod, which means *trembling*, and may well have gotten its name from the condition of the majority of Gideon's army. (Judges 7: 1.) The Midianites were on the north side of the valley, returning from their foraging on the country, and were laden with the spoils of war.

This particular section of Palestine is very fertile, and for that reason, as well as for the fact that it was so accessible from several directions, fast traveling Arabs from that day to more modern times have made the cultivation of that section very unprofitable. This section of Palestine from the Jordan to the Mediterranean has been the scene of more battles perhaps than any other. One authority says: "Warriors out of every nation which is under heaven have pitched their tent in the plain of Esdraelon, and have beheld the various banners of their nations wet with the dews of Tabor and Hermon." Here Deborah and Barak fought their battle; Gideon defeated the Midianites; Saul was defeated here and died on Mount Gilboa near by; and at Megiddo Josiah was defeated by the Egyptians; Nebuchadnezzar quartered his armies there once; the Crusaders and Saracens fought in this plain; and Napoleon defeated the Turks there in 1799.

Gideon was the fifth of the judges which ruled Israel, and is said by all to have been the greatest character of all the judges. His name means *tree-feller* or *hewer*. He had a reputation for being a

dangerous man to his enemies as is revealed by the conversation which took place between two Midianites, and overheard by Gideon and his servant. (Judges 7: 13, 14.) "Gideon is the noblest of all the judges. Courage, constancy, and caution are strongly marked in his character. The youngest son of an obscure family in a small tribe, he humbly shrinks from the task imposed on him—not from cowardice or indolence, but from conscious weakness. Men who are worthy to do such work as his are never forward to begin it, nor backward in it when they are sure it is God's will." (A. Mac-laren.)

Gideon was an humble man; he did not care to take honor to himself. He heard the two Midianites talking about a dream. In giving the interpretation of the dream one of them said, This is nothing save the sword of Gideon. When Gideon told it to his men he said, The sword of Jehovah and Gideon. And the interpreter said, God has delivered Midian into the hand of Gideon. When Gideon reported this he said, Jehovah hath delivered Midian into your hand, that is, into the hands of the three hundred. (Judges 7; 14, 15, 18, 20.)

When the battle was over, and the kings and princes were slain, and all were rejoicing over the great victory and the freedom they had been denied for seven years the people wished to show their appreciation for the fine service Gideon had rendered. So they went to him to make him king, and after him his sons were to rule. But Gideon said, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: Jehovah shall rule over you." Perhaps Gideon rose to his highest peak of humility and reverence for God at this point. (Judges 8: 22, 23.)

But in keeping with the times Gideon could be harsh and cruel to his enemies. The cities of Succoth and Penuel had refused to give food to his men when they were pursuing the enemy. He swore he would punish them, and with the thorns of the wilderness and briars he "taught"—tore—the men. (Judges 8: 16, see verse 7.)

He was a diplomat. Being of the tribe of Manasseh, a small tribe, he could hardly hope to please the tribe of Ephraim, a large tribe and always jealous of the ruling tribe. So they "did chide with him sharply" because he did not call them to the fight with Midian. But since two of the princes of Midian went their way and were captured by the Ephraimites, Gideon told them they had done a much bigger thing in capturing them than he had done, and "their anger was abated." (Judges 8: 1-3.) That sounds like a quarrel between two boys, or groups of children; but there are plenty of Ephraimites among church leaders today.

But like many other good men who have rendered a fine service. Gideon, either in ignorance or through lack of respect for the authority of the law of God, stepped aside from the path of righteousness in his declining years. Some time after the victory had been won Gideon took the gold earrings of the enemy and made an ephod. An ephod was a special garment, a coat, made for priests. See Ex. 39: 2-7 for a description of it. The making of this ephod undoubtedly implied the introduction of a new system of worship contrary to that which was scripturally carried on in the tabernacle at Shechem. And the people either worshiped this ephod, or an image clothed in it, as many authorities think. Certainly we know that "all Israel played the harlot after it." And playing the harlot

means that they forsook God, their lawful spiritual husband, and worshiped another which was not lawful. And for this sin Gideon was responsible. Following such a great victory, his influence over the people was such that he could have led them to destroy utterly every idol in the land. As it was, he either refused to use his influence to keep them from idolatry, or he made the ephod, set it up in his city, and encouraged the people to forsake God and play the harlot. To be charitable, we would say that he had no idea the people would worship the ephod; but when they did, he thought they would not prolong the practice, and when they did that, he was powerless to stop the thing for which he was responsible. Many practical lessons can be drawn from this, but space forbids.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This lesson provides a wonderful opportunity for use of the sand table or cutouts. From the description of the lay of the land in the historical background the teacher can lay out the battlefield. Place three small paper tents on the south to represent Gideon and his three hundred men, and then many paper tents on the north side of a very small stream flowing toward the larger stream, Jordan, to represent the 120,000 men in the army of the Midianites. Tell them how Gideon gathered 32,000 soldiers, and how God said that was too many lest they think they had won the victory instead of God. Describe the two tests Gideon made and which caused all but 300 of his men to be sent away. From this you can draw the following lessons: (1) The people were worshiping idols which could not deliver them in times of trouble, and now God wishes to demonstrate his superiority over the idols, and he will do it by delivering them from their enemies. (2) Gideon had unshakable faith in God to send nearly all his men home and attack such a great army with so few men with no weapons except water pitchers and lights. (3) This faith which Gideon had gave him the courage he needed for this battle. While your children know nothing of the battles of life ahead of them, they can be given the faith in God, and his willingness to help them, that will make them able to meet their enemies in afterlife. One of your main objectives is to build faith in God and in Jesus Christ in the hearts of your pupils.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Here is another story of heroic action so popular with these ages. Gideon had developed courage, such that the angel called him a "mighty man of valor" before his battle. Such a person was needed for such a time. God uses for his purposes those who have prepared themselves; and preparation means work and study, self-denial and service in the little opportunities that come our way daily. Often young people dream of a day to come with an opportunity to do something really big, and outstanding, and worth while, and all the time they are haughtily spurning the opportunities for commonplace, run-of-the-day service that will prepare them—and without which they can never be prepared—for that big worth-while service they are dreaming about. Gideon had a reputation for valor; he had demonstrated his ability to meet the enemy, or the Midianite

soldiers would never have connected him with their dream. (Judges 7: 13, 14.) So young people must be willing to use the time they now have doing to the best of their ability whatever is at hand, for (1) such activity prepares one for greater service; and (2) God uses those who prepare themselves.

Young People and Adult Departments

The teachers of these classes should give a lot of time to the preparation of every lesson. It is not enough to read what is in this book, or the Adult Quarterly, and feel that you have made sufficient preparation. Read all the Daily Bible Readings. Read all the chapters preceding our lesson in Judges to get a correct picture of the conditions under which Gideon lived and served. Give some time each day to reading on the lesson, and then as you go about your work meditate upon these things; and when a rich, practical lesson comes to your mind write it down lest it get away from you. Such a course may not give you much time for picture shows, golf, or bridge, but this course will make you a blessing to your class and an honor to God.

You can use Gideon as a good example of putting God first. He told his soldiers to cry, "For Jehovah and for Gideon." If there is any lesson young people and men in business need today, it is this one. God must be first in our thoughts; he must often be on our lips to praise him, to thank him for his mercy and goodness, and to ask his direction on us; he must be first in our deeds. We must do things for him. It is not enough to go to church, to Bible school, with a well-learned lesson. During the week we must think of him and do things which will honor him. In a Godless age and in a business world where the principles of Christ are disregarded it will take courage equal with that of Gideon. And you, as a teacher and leader of your class, have the opportunity to encourage and inspire to courageous Christian activity which puts God first in all things.

Golden Text Explained

"Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." The assurance of the presence of Jehovah with his servant will result in the following: (1) Conviction that one's course is right. God will not be with us in that which is wrong. So when God assured Gideon that he was with him, it was equal to saying to Gideon that he was right in his course of action. (2) God's presence with even the weakest and most insignificant person makes a majority when compared with all the might of the world and the devil. God and I are a majority in any battle. (Rom. 8: 31.) (3) God's presence gives courage to the weak. Israel had been overrun seven years, afraid to defend their country. But when God said, "I am with you," they were not afraid of the enemy, though greatly outnumbered. The assurance of God's presence in times of illness and death has been a comfort and encouragement to millions. (Psalm 23.)

God both recognizes and uses the characters we build. He recognizes the valor of Gideon. It is a source of encouragement when others recognize our ability and attainments which have cost time, effort, and sacrifice. Especially is this true when young people have done something noble, or when they are engaged in a conflict

in which they need to be given encouragement to turn the tide of battle in their **favor**.

Topics for Discussion

1. Gideon began his work by throwing down the altars of Baal. (Judges 6: 25-27.) The worship of this heathen god had brought all the trouble on Israel, and as long as the cause of the trouble remained the trouble would continue. So if you wish to get rid of sorrow and suffering, get rid of the sin which is the cause.

2. The hand that could smite the altar of Baal could bring honor to God. So the person who has the courage to quit sin, to deny himself ungodliness in this world, may be assured that he can be used of God for great good.

3. The law that curses when disobeyed will be found to bless when obeyed. This has been demonstrated ever since Eden, and only the foolish doubt it; what must be said of those who ignore it in life?

4. Divine wisdom as to methods is often foolish in the sight of men. What general of today would think of winning a battle with a few men armed with water pitchers and lights? But could a better way have been chosen to demonstrate that God won the victory instead of men?

Lesson X—March 9, 1947

SAMSON, THE STRONG MAN

The Lesson Text

Judges 13: 2-7; 16: 28-31

2 And there was a certain man of Zo'rah, of the family of the Dan'ites, whose name was Ma-no'ah; and his wife was barren, and bare not.

3 And the angel of Je-ho'vah appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not; but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing:

5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come upon his head; for the child shall be a Naz'i-rite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to save Is'ra-el out of the hand of the Phi-lis'tines.

6 Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible; and I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name:

7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing; for the child shall be a Naz'i-rite unto God from the womb to the day of his death.

28 And Samson called unto Je-ho'vah, and said, O Lord Je-ho'vah, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Phi-lis'tines for my two eyes.

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house rested, and leaned upon them, the one with his right hand, and the other with his left.

30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Phi-lis'tines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead that he slew at his death were more than they that he slew in his life.

31 Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zo'rah and Esh'ta-ol in the burying-place of Ma-no'ah his father. And he judged Is'ra-el twenty years.

Golden Text.—*“And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and Jehovah blessed him.”* (Judges 13: 24.)

Devotional Reading.—Judges 15: 14-20.

Daily Bible Readings

March 3. M.....	Samson a Nazirite (Judges 13: 2-6)
March 4. T.....	Samson's Parents (Judges 13: 8-14)
March 5. W.....	Samson Kills a Lion (Judges 14: 5-9)
March 6. T.....	Samson's Riddle (Judges 14: 10-18)
March 7. F.....	Samson and Delilah (Judges 16: 1-9)
March 8. S.....	Delilah Betrays Samson (Judges 16: 18-22)
March 9. S.....	The Death of Samson (Judges 16: 28-31)

Time.—1157 to 1120 B.C.

Places.—Zorah and Gaza.

Persons.—God and Samson.

Lesson Subject Explained

Samson was the world's strongest man. But when that is said one has said just about all that can be said for him. But Israel had to be taught a lesson and their enemies were ripe for judgment, so God raised up a man who could do both. We must remember that Israel was little more than a half-civilized collection of tribes of mountaineers scattered along the hills of Palestine. There was little serious observance of the law of Moses, and the ark of God and the priesthood meant very little to the average Israelite. In fact the great majority had forgotten God and were worshiping gods of the Philistines. God wanted to teach Israel that he was able to give strength to any and all who would live for him, and as long as they lived for him; but when they ceased to live for him, God would forsake them. So he endowed Samson with supernatural strength. In his personal character he shared all the vices and follies of his race and age. He was morally weak just as they were weak. He frolicked with danger like a genuine barbarian. He was gigantically strong in body, though weak in mind, just as long as he kept his Nazirite vow. The country rang up the valley and over the hills with his fame, and the Philistines trembled at his coming. He killed lions as ordinary men would kill rabbits; he caught foxes by the hundreds; he carried off the gates of the city, and he wrecked a great stadium filled with his enemies. God did not endorse his attitudes and actions, but God did use this morally weak and physically strong man to teach Israel a needed lesson and bring judgment on the oppressor.

Context of the Lesson

Between the victory of Gideon and the death of Samson was a period of about one hundred and twenty-six years. It embraced the judgeship of Gideon of forty years, that of Abimelech of three years, the quiet career of Tola for twenty-three years, of Jair for twenty-two years, and then thirty-eight years of Philistine oppression. The chronology of events with reference to these judges is admittedly difficult, but the best explanation seems to be the following: “During this troubled period Eli was judge. His career of high priest and judge is supposed to have begun twenty years before the death of

Jair, the two thus overlapping, Jair being on the east of the Jordan, and Eli in the southern portion of Canaan. Eli outlived Jair, it is supposed, some twenty years. Samson is supposed to have begun his active career two years before the death of Eli, and to have died twenty years later. Two years after Samson began his career, judging the west of Canaan, Samuel began his as judge, succeeding Eli. He is supposed to have outlived Samson twenty-one years. While these events were taking place in Canaan, on the east of the Jordan, Jephthah defeated the Ammonites, after they had oppressed Israel eighteen years, he being judge for six years after his victory. Ibzán succeeded him, judging seven years. Elon judged ten years, overlapping Samson's administration three years. There are many features of this chronology which are doubtful, but it is perhaps as correct as we can obtain." (F. Johnson.)

Smith's *Bible Dictionary* suggests that it is possible that Eli and Samson were cojudges for a while, perhaps twenty years. That Samson was ever judge in the sense that others of this period were is doubtful. There is nothing to suggest that he had the mental ability to act as judge. Along this line Adam Clarke says, "Many suppose that he (Samson) and Eli were contemporaries, Samson being rather an *executor of divine justice* upon the enemies of his people, than an *administrator* of the *civil* and *religious* laws of the Hebrews. Allowing Eli and Samson to have been contemporaries, this latter part might have been entirely committed to the care of Eli." But of one thing we may be sure, Samson lived at a time when the spiritual and national life of the children of Israel was at the very lowest.

The Historical Background

Sufficient has been said about the time of this lesson in the above paragraphs, except to add the weight of Geikie's scholarship in the following: "Samson appears to have lived about a hundred years before David, when things were almost at their lowest in Israel."

The first of the places in our lesson is the birthplace of Samson, Zorah. This was a little town allotted to the tribe of Dan. (Josh. 19: 40, 41.) It was located about twenty miles due west of Jerusalem. Of the places mentioned in the scripture in connection with Samson McGarvey says, "Looking due northeast across the valley (of Sorek), which is here nearly a mile wide, you see, perched high on the slope of the opposite ridge, the small villages *Sur'a* and *Eshu'a*, the ancient Zorah and Eshtaol, the former the birthplace and home of Samson, while the space between the two is where he first began to show his amazing strength. . . . Somewhere within the view was the village of Delilah, the betrayer of Samson, who dwelt in the Valley of Sorek. . . . Among the hills southwest of Bethshemesh, rising from the southern side of the Valley of Sorek, is the village of *Tibneh*, which is identified, both by its name and its locality, with Timnath, the Philistine village in which dwelt Samson's first love. It is about 740 feet above the sea and 350 feet above the Valley of Sorek. Samson, in going to it, went down 700 feet to get into the valley, and then went up 350 feet to Timnath. A rocky hill covered thick with large boulders, and possessing so little soil that it is now given up to the growth of brushwood, though it would produce vines as well, lies between the valley and Timnath, and it was possibly while cross-

ing this on his way that Samson met and slew the lion." For a beautiful description of the Valley of Sorek see *Lands of the Bible*, by McGarvey, p. 500.

The next place of interest is Gaza. This word means "the strong," or "fortress." And it lived up to its name both in Jewish history and that of later times. It is said that Alexander the Great laid siege to the city for five months before he could take it. And the Jews seemed never to be able to hold it long at any one time. It has had an unusually long life. The first mention of it is in Gen. 10: 19, mentioned as a border city of the Canaanites. Joshua was unable completely to subdue the city of Gaza. (Josh. 11: 22; 13: 3.) Judah finally took Gaza (Judges 1: 18), but did not hold it long as we find it back in the possession of the Philistines in Judges 3: 3.

Gaza is located in a plain next to the Mediterranean Sea. This plain skirts the sea for thirty miles and extends towards the east for sixteen miles. The city is on the route which leads from Syria to Egypt. Going south, all travelers loaded with supplies to get across the desert, and those coming from the south were in need of replenishing their supplies after crossing the desert. So Gaza always enjoyed a brisk trade.

Gaza was the home of one of the two most famous temples of Dagon, the national god of the Philistines. This god was represented with the face and hands of a man and the tail of a fish. This is the city where the Philistines tried to keep the ark of God, and where their god Dagon was unable to stand in the presence of the ark. (1 Sam. 5: 1-5.) This is the city to which Samson was finally taken when his hair had been cut off; it is where he was kept as a slave and as a demonstration of the superiority of Dagon over Jehovah, until Samson's hair grew out and God gave him back his strength and let him slay more Philistines in his death than he had slain in all his life.

The character of Samson is very disappointing. He is an example of brawn, not brains; of brute strength, not beauty of soul. There is little agreement as to the meaning of his name. Geikie gives it "The Destroyer," and not "The Sun-hero" as some imagine. Adam Clarke says the name probably means "little sun, or little servant." There is not anything about him to give one the impression that he was a saint. His passions were strong and apparently uncontrolled. He had no moral elevation or religious fervor. He makes no effort to get his people to renounce idolatry and return to Jehovah their God. He consorted with women of bad reputation and character. The best thing that can be said about him is that he did keep his Nazirite vow for a number of years. But even that is spoiled when we remember that he gave away his secret and broke his vow in a moment of moral weakness, satisfying the lusts of his flesh in the lap of an immoral woman. He traded his God-given power for the lewd caress of a sinful woman. One writer says, "Samson, the fool of women all his life."

In the hour of his death he came nearer being what one could wish he had been all his life. In his prayer he recognized God as the source of his strength. He showed some humility when he prayed very earnestly, saying, "Only this once" strengthen me. But this is almost spoiled when he gives the reason, saying, "That I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." His real

motive was personal satisfaction, to wreak vengeance on those who had done him injury. Contrast this with the prayer of Elijah when Israel had forsaken God. (1 Kings 18: 36, 37.) If only Samson could have prayed for strength that Israel might know that Jehovah was their God and able to do greater things than Dagon, and more worthy of love and devotion than the gods of the enemy.

God intended that Samson should be separated to him even from his birth. A Nazirite was one separated to God in a peculiar way. (Num. 6: 1.) Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist are the only men usually considered thus separated for life, though Samson is the only one actually mentioned in scripture as a Nazirite. It is interesting to note that Samson's mother was told to observe certain rules before the birth of the child. Scientists tell us now that smoking and drinking on the part of an expectant mother will not have any effect on the child. If that be true, on what ground can we justify God's action in this respect? Samson did seem to have some idea of loyalty to his vow, and he refrained from strong drink and from cutting his hair.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The stories about Samson are both amusing and instructive. And it will be well for the teachers of these departments to gain the interest of their pupils by beginning on the amusing side. Carrying away the gates of the city in which he had been trapped by his enemies, and burning the wheat fields by tying foxes' tails together with a firebrand attached will be of interest to them.

The fact that Samson's mother was to abstain from wine and strong drink and that he was to follow this same rule because he was to be used of God gives the teacher a fine opportunity to impress these children with the idea that they are to keep their bodies in condition to serve God. No, they are not likely to have those habits now, but they may be saved from the blighting effects of these habits in later years by building within them proper ideals and attitudes.

Do right for right's sake is a final appeal, but not every one can be reached by it. For that reason the Lord has given us many examples of people suffering for their sins. Samson affords the teacher a splendid example for this lesson. As long as he obeyed God his enemies were helpless before him. But when he disobeyed God, he was helpless before his enemies. Do your best to build within your pupils a genuine fear of sin, because the way of the transgressor is hard (Prov. 13: 15), and the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6: 23).

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The pupils of these departments need the same lessons suggested above, only they may be developed more fully. Proper care and use of the body should be stressed. Paul says the body is not for fornication. (1 Cor. 6: 13.) But you may generalize and say the body is not for *sin*, but for the Lord. Our bodies must be given a holy sacrifice. (Rom. 12: 1.) The poison of strong drinks, narcotics, and nicotine should be avoided. Children in these departments are liable to begin to use such things, and if the teacher will refrain

from their use, and make the proper tactful approach, many pupils can be saved from such habits. One cannot accomplish good by being fanatic in his attitude towards any of these things, but fact and illustrations can be brought which will wield a great influence.

These pupils will likely raise the question, Why did God use such a character as Samson in spite of his low moral standards? Will he do such today? In the first place it must be remembered that possession of the Holy Spirit in miraculous measure does not keep one from sin. Peter was baptized with the Holy Spirit, yet he sinned. (Gal. 2: 11.) Paul was baptized in the Holy Spirit, and yet he had to keep his body under subjection just like we do. (1 Cor. 9: 26, 27.) Samson's possession of the Spirit of God enabled him to do feats of superhuman character, and had nothing to do with determining his moral character. Next, Samson was used for beginning the delivery of Israel from Philistine oppression; his work had nothing to do with saving people from sin. God has always used men irrespective of their character for political purposes, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, etc. He does the same today. But it would be a great mistake to think that God did then, or would now, use people in his work of saving souls from sin who lived on the low moral plane on which Samson lived.

Both boys and girls should get some good lessons from Samson's experience with Delilah. Girls should learn that they may wield a great influence over men. If Delilah had been a God-fearing woman, how different would have been the story; and how different Samson's career and death! Teachers should impress the girls with the desire to use their influence over boys for good, never for evil. And boys should remember this influence women have over them and be sure to associate only with those whose influence is good. It is dangerous for one to expose himself to evil influence. (Prov. 7: 4-23.)

Young People and Adult Departments

In these departments there are mothers and young women who plan a home and children of their own. They should be taught that preparation in the form of clean habits is necessary. Samson's mother—unnamed in scripture—was told to refrain from certain things before the birth of her child. Mothers should refrain from strong drinks (beer included) and from smoking for two reasons. First, contrary to some scientists today, and a bit on the old-fashioned side, it is altogether possible that such habits in the mother will influence the child. Next, there can be no doubt that such habits in the mother will greatly influence the child as it grows up. If Christian women do not hold the line against these sordid habits and strive to keep their children from them, to whom can the world look for the better things? And since there is no double standard of morals in the Bible, men ought to learn the lesson of keeping themselves free from habits which will render them less serviceable to God.

The teen age has no monopoly on moral weakness. David was not a boy when he played the fool over a woman. Samson had been judging Israel for many years when he laid his head in the lap of Delilah. Grown men, men with grown families, are not exempt from temptations. This lesson gives the teacher the opportunity to sound the warning and build within the hearts of his class the

fear of sin, and to exhort to watchfulness and sobriety. (1 Pet. 5: 8, 9.)

Mistakes of adults, and especially leaders in the church, are so hurtful to the church because the enemies of God use them to blaspheme, and to keep others out of the church. Someone has said, "The faults of Christians are the bulwarks of unbelief." Samson's mistake led to his humiliation, weakened the cause of Jehovah immeasurably, and gave comfort and encouragement to many Philistines to continue in their false religion. And so the mistakes of Christians today give comfort to God's enemies and encouragement to sinners.

Golden Text Explained

Samson, like Isaac and Samuel, was a child of promise to a barren woman. Who can measure the joy of this unnamed woman as she realized she was to be used of God to make a contribution to the deliverance of Israel! She gave him an example of abstinence that he might grow to be healthful and strong. No doubt her joy increased as the child grew, and she saw signs of Jehovah's blessings upon him. Children should grow up with such attitudes and habits that God can bless them. Parents should give the children such examples and training as will help them grow up under the blessings of God.

Topics for Discussion

1. Since God had Samson's mother refrain from strong drink before the birth of her child, it will be well for prospective mothers (parents) to cultivate sober habits in view of the time when they will have children.

2. "To dally with temptation is to play on the brink of hell." Samson exposed himself to temptation needlessly. One's intentions may be pure, and he may have all confidence in himself to resist temptation, yet it is foolish to dally with temptation.

3. The greatest slave is that one who is a slave of passions. Samson was stronger than all the Philistines combined, but he was miserably weak before his physical desires. Paul says one who allows his belly (appetite) to be his god is an enemy of Christ. (Phil. 3: 19.)

4. When Samson lost his eyes, he saw his sin. We sometimes have to be robbed of our dearest possession in order for us to see we have been idolatrous. Samson's weakness was beautiful women. When he could no longer see, the temptation was removed. Jesus said it is better to enter into the kingdom having one eye than to have two eyes and be cast into hell, teaching us that we would better part with our dearest possession than to allow it to take us to hell. (Mark 9: 43-48.)

5. Delilah was most dangerous when honeyed words dropped from her lips. The world's praise is more harmful than its censure. The church is safer under persecution than it is when it enjoys the praise of all men.

6. Samson's life gives us a picture of Israel. When he kept God's law, he was strong. But when he disobeyed, he was weak and overcome by his enemies. So was Israel. Israel had its Delilahs in the

gods of other nations, and, like Samson, Israel laid its head in their laps and traded loyalty to God for love of the world. Human nature does not change much.

Lesson XI—March 16, 1947

SAMUEL, A MAN LOYAL TO PRINCIPLE

The Lesson Text

1 Sam. 3: 1-9; 12: 1-5

1 And the child Sam'u-el ministered unto Je-ho'vah before E'li. And the word of Je-ho'vah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision.

2 And it came to pass at that time, when E'li was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, so that he could not see),

3 And the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Sam'u-el was laid down to sleep, in the temple of Je-ho'vah, where the ark of God was;

4 That Je-ho'vah called Sam'u-el: and he said, Here am I.

5 And he ran unto E'li, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And Je-ho'vah called yet again, Sam'u-el. And Sam'u-el arose and went to E'li, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 Now Sam'u-el did not yet know Je-ho'vah, neither was the word of Je-ho'vah yet revealed unto him.

8 And Je-ho'vah called Sam'u-el again the third time. And he arose and went to E'li, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And E'li perceived that Je-ho'vah had called the child.

9 Therefore E li said unto Sam'u-el, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Je-ho'vah; for thy servant heareth. So Sam'u-el went and lay down in his place.

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 gray-headed; 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 hast 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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*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.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 10: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

March 10. M.....	The Birth of Samuel (1 Sam. 1: 12-20)
March 11. T.....	Samuel Given to Jehovah (1 Sam. 1: 21-28)
March 12. W.....	Samuel Begins to Prophesy (1 Sam. 3: 1-14)
March 13. T.....	"Here I Raise My Ebenezer" (1 Sam. 7: 11-14)
March 14. F.....	Samuel Prayed to Jehovah (1 Sam. 8: 4-9)
March 15. S.....	Samuel Anoints Saul as King (1 Sam. 10: 1-8)
March 16. S.....	Samuel Anoints David (1 Sam. 16: 10-13)

Time.—1170 to 1060 B.C.

Places.—Ramathaim-zophim, Shiloh, Gilgal.

Persons.—God and Samuel.

Lesson Subject Explained

Being given to God from the time he was able to be away from his mother, Samuel spent all of his life in the service of God, and in what may rightly be called the public service of God. He had every opportunity to learn to be dishonest and ungodly in his transactions with the people he served. Eli was high priest. He had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were "base men" both morally and in the way they served the people as priests. (1 Sam. 2: 12.) Children are often influenced by older people, especially by people in the line of work the child plans to follow. So Samuel was subjected to a great temptation to follow after the ways of these base sons of Eli. But he was loyal to the principles of righteousness as he was taught by his mother and the aged Eli.

Then when Samuel was on his own, when Eli was dead, and, the affairs of both church and state rested in the hands of Samuel, he had opportunity to become rich by taking a large fee for his services. But still he realized that he was the servant of his people, and that he lived only for their welfare and the glory of God. And at the end of a long service he challenged them to prove him guilty of taking one thing which did not belong to him, and no one accused him.

And when the people refused to have him and his sons to rule over them and demanded a king in his place, he was hurt deeply. Undoubtedly Samuel thought his long and righteous rule over the people and the splendid service he had rendered entitled his sons to some consideration. But the people refused to have his sons, and rather bluntly told him so. (1 Sam. 8: 1-9.) But in spite of all this Samuel was still loyal to God and the people, and he would not sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for the people, and would teach them the good and the right way. (1 Sam. 12: 23.) This was putting loyalty to principle above self and selfish interests.

Context of the Lesson

Samuel stands at the dividing line between two great periods of Bible history. The period of *conquest* began with the giving of the law of Moses on Sinai and closed with the crowning of Saul as first king of Israel. This was a period of 396 years, from 1491 B.C. to 1095 B.C. In this period part of the work of Moses was done; Joshua was wholly in this period; and the work of Gideon and Samson falls within this period. And most of the work of Samuel is in this period, though he lived long enough to anoint both Saul and David. The next division of Bible history is called the period of *power*. It begins with the crowning of Saul and ends with the death of Solomon, covering 120 years, 1095 B.C. to 975 B.C. The time of this period was taken wholly by the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, each reigning forty years.

Deborah and Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah repulsed the Midianites and Ammonites on the east of Canaan, and quieted the Canaanite tribes on the north. Samson made fitful efforts to break the power of the Philistines on the southwest, but they were powerful and their invasions continued. Eli became both judge and priest, but he ruled with a weak hand, and politically and morally the nation was at a very low ebb. A wise head and a strong arm were needed,

and the child Samuel grew up to fill that need. He was the last and greatest of the judges, the first of the prophets, and the connecting link between the period of the judges and of the monarchy.

It may be well to say something of the books of Samuel. Originally the books were one. Later the material was divided into two books. Then for a time the two books of Samuel and the two books of Kings were called the Four Books of Kings. The books of Samuel are named for him not because he is the author, or writer of them. The author is unknown. They bear his name because he is the central figure in the first half, and the kings he anointed are prominent in the last half of the books. It is generally admitted that the material for much of the books was taken from the writings of Samuel, called the "history of Samuel the seer." (1 Chron. 29: 29.)

The Historical Background

There is nothing in the text to indicate the age of Samuel when his mother left him in Shiloh with Eli that he might grow up in the service of God in the sanctuary. But according to Ussher the date is fixed at 1165 B.C., making Samuel between five and six years old. It is said that he was taken there at the time he was weaned. (1 Sam. 1: 23, 24.) And it was not uncommon for mothers to wean children at that advanced age.

There is considerable difference of opinion as to Samuel's age when he received his first revelation from God. According to Adam Clarke, who usually follows Ussher, the date was 1142 B.C. This would make Samuel twenty-eight years of age. Josephus says he was only twelve years old at that time. These figures probably represent the two extremes.

The next part of our lesson text records a speech made by Samuel immediately following the anointing of Saul to be the first king of Israel. The date for this is 1095 B.C.

Samuel's birthplace was Ramathaim-zophim, often called simply Ramah. (1 Sam. 8: 4.) In fact 1 Sam. 1: 1 is the only place where the full name appears. It means "the two high places of the watchmen," and suggests that the city was built on a hill with two peaks. Of its location very little can be known with certainty. But the best opinions obtainable favor a city five or six miles north of Jerusalem. There is a place at the present time called *Neby Samwil*, meaning the *prophet Samuel*, which is accepted as his birthplace. A mosque has been erected there and "his sepulchre is still revered by Jews, Moslems, and Christians."

Another place of prominence in connection with Samuel is Shiloh. This was only twelve miles from Ramah, so his mother did not have to go far from her son when she left him with Eli, nor did she have far to go to see him, though one may infer from the record that she went to see him only once a year. The word Shiloh means *rest*. When the ark of God was carried across the Jordan, it was placed in Gilgal, but as soon as sufficient territory was taken for the ark to be safe, it was moved to Shiloh, and there it remained until the days of Eli, when it was captured by the Philistines. (1 Sam. 4: 5-11.) After this Shiloh "sank into insignificance." Jeremiah refers to it as an object lesson concerning what people who disobey God may expect. (Jer. 7: 12.) "Not a single relic remains there at the present day. A few broken Corinthian columns of the Roman

age are the only antiquities now to be found on the site of Shiloh." There is, however, a small town there at present called Seilun. The only thing which might be taken as an indication of the past glory of Shiloh "is an open, level court, 412 feet by seventy-seven feet; partly hewn out from the rock, which is probably the spot on which the tabernacle stood." Another writer says this court was hewn out of a rock ridge on the slope of a hill, leaving rock walls on both sides of the court, indicating that level space had to be provided for something just the size of the tabernacle. There seems to be little doubt that this conclusion is right, and that this is the location of Shiloh where the tabernacle was situated when Samuel was carried there by his mother.

Gilgal is the place of the second section of our lesson text. The word Gilgal means *rolling*. It was given this name because it was there all the males born to Israel while in the wilderness were circumcised, and Jehovah said to Joshua, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." (Josh. 5: 2-9.) And it was here that Israel first ate of the produce of the land of Canaan; and here the manna ceased to be given; here also they ate the passover for the first time in Canaan. This place, for there seems to have been no city, was headquarters for Joshua during his conquest of central Canaan. It was near the Jordan, less than six miles according to Josephus, and on the west side.

Samuel was one of the very few in his day who rose above the ignorance and idolatry and the moral corruption so common among the people. Of him A. Maclaren says, "This white flower blossomed on a dunghill." Geikie describes conditions in these words, "The state of things, both religious and political, must have impressed itself deeply on a mind trained under such influences. The profligacy of Eli's sons; the dissolution of morals in the community at large; the too general prevalence of a licentious and gross idolatry; the weakness of Eli as judge and his unfitness for the times, could not fail to be noted." Tarbell says, "Politically and morally the Israelites had sunk very low during the time of the judges. When Samuel was born, the tribes were scattered, disorganized, and degenerate. He was raised up to save them from being engulfed in the heathenism of the people by whom they were surrounded."

The name Samuel means *asked of God*. And this brings to mind the story of how his mother prayed for a child, was accused by the high priest, Eli, of being drunk, but was promised a child when she proved she was not drunk. Having asked of God a son, Hannah promised to give him to God all the days of his life. The fact that she vowed that no razor would ever come upon his head is taken usually to mean that he was a Nazirite, and certainly his life was in harmony with all that was required of Nazirites so far as moral character is concerned. It would be difficult to find anything wrong in his life. He was able at a ripe old age to challenge the people to point to one thing wrong in his public life as prophet and judge among them. Few men who serve the public for any length of time could afford to make such a proposition. "In view of a power almost absolute, and opportunities for self-aggrandizement ever recurring, and the general propensity of those in power to rob and oppress, this is a remarkable testimony at the close of a long official life. Here is a character that deserves to be studied in these days of political

corruption. It is a noble picture of disinterested patriotism, unsullied righteousness, and unflinching loyalty to the King of Israel. It reinvigorates one's faltering faith in humanity to contemplate such an instance of lifelong devotion to truth and righteousness, under the greatest difficulties, with every temptation to an opposite course, and the largest liberty to abuse the power lodged in his hands." (Errett.)

His purity of life, his loyalty to God and his people, and his long life of unselfish devotion to betterment of social and religious conditions may be accounted for because of two things. First, his mother's influence, or, with more charity to Elkanah, we may say to his home influence. Though it was of very short duration, yet his parents saw him once a year at least and continued to be interested in him, to pray for him, and advise him to be pure and faithful. But Hannah's desire for a child, her vow to give him to God, and the fact that she brought him up to regard that vow and live in harmony with it must have been a great factor in the making of the man he was in later life. Geikie says, "But it must have been preeminently the sacred influence of his mother's character that made him what he was, if we may judge from the fact that her memory remained dear to him to the close of his long life, that even in old age we find him still wearing a 'coat' like the one she had brought him year by year in his childhood." He reaches this conclusion by the fact that when the witch at Endor called Samuel up for Saul, she said she saw an old man coming up covered with a mantle, and a word is used which describes the peculiar garment Hannah made.

The second influence which made Samuel what he was is found in his being reared in the house of God. Eli was a good man in many respects, and no doubt well qualified to teach Samuel the law and what it required of him. He was young enough to be most impressionable. Being kept busy studying the law and applying it in his everyday life in the sacred place where God was worshiped, there was every probability that he would grow up to live a righteous and holy life. If parents would remember these things today and profit by them in the rearing of their children, there would be an improvement in the average family.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Few characters afford better lessons for children of these departments than Samuel. What if Samuel had refused to become what his mother promised God he would be? Samuel no doubt believed his mother knew what was best and was willing to be led by her in that direction. Here is an opportunity to teach boys and girls to have confidence in their parents and to look to them for direction in determining what course they shall take in life. Also Samuel affords an unusually fine example of boys and girls beginning early in life to prepare to live for God. Many children in these departments are not old enough to obey the gospel, but they are old enough to understand that they should do so in the future, and that to live the best and most profitable life they must begin as early as possible to lay the foundation.

Samuel's purity of life in refusing to take things from others by oppression or as a bribe will give you an opportunity to teach these children respect for the rights and property of others. Taking little things which belong to others is all too common among boys and girls. They must be led to have a conscience against doing such things. Being honest when only God is looking is the best safeguard in the world against wrongdoing.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Boys can do things in the public assemblies of the church. Samuel was no older than some of the boys in these departments when he began to serve in the tabernacle. He was Eli's helper. Elders of churches today should make the boys feel that they are needed to carry on the work and worship of the church.

Boys and girls of this age often get the idea that they must "sow wild oats" or "climb fool's hill" in order to have a good time. They feel they have missed something if they do not indulge in some worldliness. Samuel is proof that one does not have to go through a period of worldliness to get the most out of life. We can have a good name but once in this life. Samuel kept his good name all through life; never did he do anything to tarnish his name, or bring reproach upon that of his parents. To indulge in sin will cause one to lose his good name, and our sins will be remembered against us long after we have repented of them, and they will cause people to hesitate to place confidence in us. We ought to live like Samuel and never have the job of trying to regain a lost good name.

Samuel was respectful of Eli, his teacher and overseer. Young people need to cultivate respect for their elders. They should be led to be thoughtful of old people and do deeds of kindness often. It is well for groups of this age to take flowers to aged shut-ins and to sing and read the Bible for them on Sunday afternoons.

Young People and Adult Departments

Youth should make preparation to fill the places of old people. Too often young people feel they need no preparation, but Samuel began early to prepare for his work.

Aged leaders should expect youth to take their places. Not only should they expect, but they should train the youth to take their places. Instead of brooding over the wrong of being rejected and young Saul being put in his place, Samuel loved Saul, anointed him, treated him generously, counseled with him, prayed for him, and helped him every way possible to make good in his office. Elders sometimes hold to their positions, refusing to allow the church to select younger material to work with them, and the church suffers for lack of leadership. Samuel is a rebuke to such selfish characters, and an example of magnanimity which elders will do well to imitate.

Samuel challenged those who did not want him in office to point out a wrong in his life. What a challenge! What a clear conscience Samuel must have had! Can elders of churches make such a challenge? Can preachers challenge their hearers with such freedom? What a powerful influence such blamelessness had on the people! What a power for good if leaders of churches today could make such a challenge!

Golden Text Explained

Samuel felt that it would be a sin against Jehovah if he should fail to pray for the people. For whom are we to pray? (1 Tim. 2: 1, 2.) How often do we pray for them? Are there those who never pray for others? Prayer helps them for whom we pray, and it keeps us right with God.

Samuel would not only pray for the people, but he would instruct them in the good and the right way. This was said after the people had refused to have Samuel, or his sons, rule over them, and demanded a king like the nations around them. Samuel knew they were taking a step further in worldliness, so would need his prayers. He knew that being more like the nations about them would involve them in situations which would be dangerous to say the least of it, so he knew they would need instruction in the right way. Furthermore he knew the curse of God against departing from the right way, and he did not wish to see the people suffer that curse, so he pledged himself to give them teaching which would keep them in the good and right way.

Topics for Discussion

1. The child's religion is largely determined by his human guides. What child knows how to establish and operate a church? What child knows how to determine what items of worship should be included? For this and much more children depend on human guides. How many parents and church leaders realize the responsibility of walking circumspectly before children?

2. Saul gained a higher position politically than Samuel, but he never enjoyed a greater degree of love and respect of the people than Samuel. This should teach us how vain and empty are positions and titles as compared to unselfish devotion. Saul had the title and *ruled* the people; Samuel had *unselfish devotion* and *served* the people. Samuel enjoyed the love and respect of his people, and was acceptable to God; Saul lost the respect of people and forfeited his right to heaven through stubborn disobedience to God.

3. Samuel's response to God's call was, "Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth." This was his attitude all through life. He promised to obey before he knew what he was to do.

Lesson XII—March 23, 1947

DAVID, A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

The Lesson Text

1 Sam. 13: 13, 14; 16: 19-23; 17: 41-49

13 And Sam'u-el said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of Je-ho'vah thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would Je-ho'vah have established thy Kingdom upon Is'ra-el for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: Je-ho'vah hath sought him a man after his own heart, and Je-ho'vah hath appointed him to be prince over his people, because thou hast not kept that which Je-ho'vah commanded thee.

19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jes'se, and said. Send me David thy son, who is with the sheep.

20 And Jes'se took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul.

21 And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly: and he became his armorbearer.

22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favor in my sight.

23 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.

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 J6-h5'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'tine 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.

Golden Text.—*"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will."* (Acts 13: 22b.)

Devotional Reading.—1 Sam. 18: 6-9.

Daily Bible Readings

March 17. M.....	David Saul's Armor-Bearer (1 Sam. 16: 14-23)
March 18. T.....	David Kills Goliath (1 Sam. 17: 41-49)
March 19. W.....	David and Jonathan (1 Sam. 18: 1-9)
March 20. T.....	David Flees from Saul (1 Sam. 20: 35-42)
March 21. F.....	David Made King (2 Sam. 2: 1-11)
March 22. S.....	Nathan Reproves David (2 Sam. 12: 7-15)
March 23. S.....	David's Charge to Solomon (1 Kings 2: 2-9)

Time.—1085 to 1015 B.C.

Places.—Bethlehem, Socoh.

Persons.—God and David.

Lesson Subject Explained

In our lesson text and the Golden Text we have the two passages of scripture where it is said that David was a man after God's own heart. Critics of the Bible have pointed to David's sin with Bathsheba, and have said that a man capable of such could not be a man after the heart of the God described in the Bible. It is one proof of the inspiration of the Bible that it tells the faults of its heroes as well as their good points. If the Bible had been written by men unaided by inspiration, the ugly story of David's sin would have been omitted; or if included at all it would have been toned down to a mere social blunder.

Two explanations have been made. McGarvey says, "These words are not spoken concerning the whole life of David, in which there

were some things not at all after God's own heart; but they had reference to David's character when chosen to be the successor of Saul." (*Commentary*, Acts 13: 22.) It is true that the words were spoken of him at that time. But it is also true that it was said of him at that time, according to Stephen, that "shall do all my will." The statements must be taken in their setting. Saul was rebellious; he refused to make right his mistakes. The kingdom was taken from him for these reasons. (1 Sam. 13: 13, 14.) But David was a man who was submissive to God, and who would confess his sins and turn away from them. In this respect he was a man after God's heart.

Adam Clarke says, "But in what sense was he *a man after God's own heart*? Answer: (1) In his strict attention to the law and worship of God. (2) In his admitting, in the whole of his conduct, that God was King in Israel, and that he himself was but his vicegerent. (3) In never attempting to alter any of those laws, or in the least change the Israelitish constitution. (4) In all his *public official conduct* he acted according to the divine mind, and fulfilled the will of his maker: thus he was *a man after God's own heart*. In reference to his *private or personal moral* conduct, the word is never used."

The Lord said that David's conduct with Bathsheba was displeasing to him. (2 Sam. 11: 27.) And it is further stated that "David did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." (1 Kings 15: 5.) For that sin there is no justification, and no attempt is here made, but until men can point to more than one mistake in a man's life they have but little grounds for criticism.

Context of the Lesson

In passing from Samuel to David we skip Saul, the first king of Israel. He was crowned in 1095 B.C., reigned forty years, holding the throne much of the time in spite of the fact that God had rejected him and David had been anointed. Saul had little regard for the law and for things spiritual. He had not been on the throne but a few years, perhaps two or three, when he offered a burnt offering, for which Samuel rebuked him and left him. (1 Sam. 13.) His failure to obey God in the matter of destroying the Amalekites is another instance of his arrogant and rebellious self-willed spirit. At that time Samuel left Saul to see him no more as long as he lived. (1 Sam. 15.) The date given this incident is 1079 B.C. Some years after that Samuel is sent to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, perhaps about 1063 B.C. The service of anointing was a very interesting one. Jesse had seven sons attending the feast. When Samuel looked on Jesse's first son, Eliab, he thought surely this was the one God would choose. But the Lord said, "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." And one after another until seven sons had passed before Samuel, but none of them had been chosen by Jehovah. When Samuel asked if that were all, Jesse said he had a son keeping sheep, indicating that he was not worthy of consideration. But Samuel refused to sit down until this eighth son had come. When David came in, Samuel saw

"he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon." And Jehovah told Samuel to anoint him, and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him from that day forward. But for what he had been anointed neither he nor his father and brothers seemed to know at this time.

About this time Saul was afflicted. His servant said his affliction was caused by an evil spirit. David was sent for to play on his harp for the relief of Saul. But when David slew the giant and the people were singing his praises, Saul became jealous of him. His jealousy ripened into hatred, and he tried for years to murder David. (1 Sam. 18 to 27.)

The Historical Background

The date of David's birth is uncertain. The date of his death is well known, 1015 B.C. "According to Josephus, David was seventy years old when he died." (Geikie.) If he was that age when he died, his birth was in 1085 B.C. Adam Clarke, who follows Ussher's chronology usually, says that Samuel's rebuke of Saul for offering the sacrifice, at which time were spoken the words of the first section of our lesson text, was in 1093 B.C. If so, Saul had been king between two and three years only when he was bluntly told that the kingdom would be taken away from him.

The second section of our lesson text is dated 1063 B.C. At this time David was a man of twenty-two. Usually he is thought of as being a mere lad in this story, and in the one in which he fought the giant. But at this time he is said to have been "a mighty man of valor, and a man of war, and prudent in speech, and a comely person; and Jehovah is with him." (1 Sam. 16: 18.) This is the statement of a servant of Saul. So David had evidently had occasion to distinguish himself in war, as well as in speech and playing the harp. A mere lad in his teens could not have had such a reputation.

The third section of our lesson is said to be in this same year. On this occasion Saul told David he was but a youth (1 Sam. 17: 33), but yet David said he had slain a lion and a bear. And David was large enough for Saul to put on him his great armor, though he refused to use it because he had not "proved" it, or was not accustomed to the use of it. Errett does not venture a guess at his age at that time, but says he was "not the half-grown lad he is generally taken to have been. (*Evenings with the Bible*, Vol. I, p. 291.)

David was born in, or near, Bethlehem. The meaning of this word Bethlehem is "House of Bread." It is one of the oldest towns in Palestine, being known first as Ephrath. (Gen. 35: 19.) Sometimes the two names were combined. (Mic. 5: 2.) In spite of the fact that David was born there, and that our Lord was to be born there, the town never gained any prominence at all. It was not made one of the cities of refuge. Rachel, Jacob's beloved, was buried at or near Bethlehem, and the patriarchs were more familiar with it than with Jerusalem. David moved his father and mother from there into Moab when his life was being sought by Saul. (1 Sam. 22: 3, 4.) If David ever thought of Bethlehem, or longed for anything connected with the city, nothing is said of it with one exception. He was near that place when being hunted by Saul and, being thirsty, expressed a desire to drink water from the well of Bethlehem, which was by the gate. Three of his "mighty men"

loved David enough to risk their lives to fulfill his desire; and when they had brought the water, David poured it out upon the ground, saying it would be like drinking the blood of the men who brought it. (2 Sam. 23: 15-17.) Those who care for more information will enjoy reading what McGarvey says in his book, *Lands of the Bible*, page 217.

The next place of interest in our lesson is the site of the battle where David slew Goliath. It is said that the Philistines gathered at Socoh, and that the battle was between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim, "Bound of blood." (1 Sam. 17: 1.) McGarvey gives an interesting description of the battleground. "To meet this description (1 Sam. 17: 1-3), a place in the valley of Elah must be found below Socoh, which has on each side a mountain slope suitable for the camp of an army. Again, it must be where the valley is wide enough to admit of Goliath's daily advance into it with his challenge. And finally, it must be where a brook flows along the valley, a brook with smooth, round stones in its bed, and nearer Saul's side of the valley, so that David would cross it in starting to meet the giant. Now, precisely such a place is found a short distance north of Socoh, and nowhere else in this valley." He then points out how this place meets all the demands of scripture description, saying he picked up five smooth stones which would serve David's purpose exactly. This valley was about fifteen or twenty miles southwest of Jerusalem, and nearly west of Bethlehem.

As to the character of David, little can be said in the space allotted. He is said to have been "ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon." Adam Clarke thinks the *ruddy* means red hair. It is said that he was prudent in speech. The Lord said David never disobeyed him except in the case of Uriah and Bathsheba, though he did sin in his "foolish" act of numbering the people. (2 Sam. 24: 10.)

Speaking of his character, Smith's *Bible Dictionary* says, "In the complexity of its elements, passion, tenderness, generosity, fierceness—the soldier, the shepherd, the poet, the statesman, the priest, the prophet, the king—the romantic friend, the chivalrous leader, the devoted father—there is no character in the Old Testament at all to be compared with it. Jacob comes nearest in the variety of elements included in it. But David's character stands at a higher point of the sacred history, and represents the Jewish people just at the moment of their transition from the lofty virtues of the older system to the fuller civilization and cultivation of the later. ... In a sense more than figurative, he is the type and prophecy of Jesus Christ. Christ is not called the son of Abraham, or of Jacob, or of Moses, but he was truly the 'Son of David.'"

For convenience the life of David may be studied in four divisions: (1) As a shepherd. (2) As a courtier, when he played for Saul and was Saul's armor-bearer, and when he became the friend of Jonathan. (3) As an exile, when he was running from Saul to save his life. (4) As a king, seven years and six months in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

David found the kingdom in a discouraged and disorganized state. During his reign the kingdom came to include all the territory promised to Abraham, and he enjoyed the respect and fear of the nations round about him.

Some of the faults of David were: (1) He had several wives and concubines, one of them being not of Israel, Maacah, the mother of Absalom, who gave David so much trouble. (2) He allowed the wicked, cruel Joab to influence him too much. (2 Sam. 3: 39; 1 Kings 2: 5, 6.) (3) He made the mistake of numbering the people, perhaps planning some unauthorized military campaign. (4) His sin with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah.

His greatest contribution to the world is the book of Psalms. David was the first, and by far the greatest, of Hebrew poets. His Psalms are poems expressing his inmost feelings on various occasions. Love and thanksgiving, penitence and sorrow find expression often.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Hours should be spent by all teachers in preparation to teach this lesson. Teachers should know David; it is not enough to know a few things about the man. The life of David occupies a larger space in the Old Testament than that of any other man. The story of Abraham is told in fourteen chapters, while sixty-one are devoted to the life of David.

Primary and junior children will be interested especially in David's fight with the lion and the bear, and the teacher may use such stories to catch their attention for the lessons in your quarters. The word David means *beloved*, or *darling*. He was the youngest, the baby, of the family, which may account for that name. The love and attention which the baby gets in our homes might be used as a means of catching the interest. Abstract principles and cold facts will have little appeal to these children.

We have two stories in this lesson which will appeal to these ages. First, we have the story of Samuel anointing David. Anointing was done by pouring oil, usually from a horn, on the head of the person. Usually the purpose of the anointing was stated as the oil was poured, but in David's case it was not. Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed before they began their work. The fact that God passed by the older boys and picked the youngest will be of interest to them.

The second story of interest is that of the battle between David and the giant. This has long been a favorite with children. In many localities children know nothing of a sling, so it will be well for the teacher to make one to show the class. A piece of leather two inches wide and three or four inches long with small holes punched in the center of each end and strings, cords, two or three feet long tied in each end. It is best to cut a hole in the middle of the piece of leather the size of a nickel, or quarter, to help hold the stone in place. Contrast this with the great sword Goliath had. With such a sling David killed the bear and lion, which illustrates his accuracy. On this point see Judges 20: 15, 16.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

A good way to get a response from students in these departments is to assign one daily Bible reading at the head of the lesson to each of seven students for a special report. In each of these references there is a story of interest. The children will enjoy telling the

stories, and more of the life and character of David can be brought before the class in this way.

The first division of our lesson text teaches a lesson these departments will appreciate. Saul and his house could have enjoyed the kingdom forever had he obeyed God. But his foolish disobedience cost him and his sons the honor and the glory which came to David. Obedience brings happiness; Disobedience brings sorrow and suffering. Teen-age boys and girls need to have this held before them constantly to help them live right, and to give them the strength and courage to say, "No," and mean it.

If Saul's army had engaged the Philistines in battles and won, they might have thought they did it of their own strength. But when David won the battle with a sling and stone, all knew that God had a hand in it. Sometimes young people can be used of God with more telling effect, and with more glory to himself, than if older people were used. God has a place for youth, and work for them to do. They can honor the Lord by doing their part; they will rob him of much glory if they take a back seat and do nothing.

Young People and Adult Departments

People never get too old to profit from the lesson on the benefits to be derived from obedience, and the punishment and suffering that come to all who disobey. Saul and David can be used to good advantage to teach this lesson. Saul failed because he did not do that which Jehovah commanded him. On some occasions Saul did things God commanded him not to do, but in our text he simply failed to do what he was commanded to do. Most church people observe the "thou shalt nots" of the law of the Lord—they refrain from the evil which God forbids; but where the average Christian fails is where Saul failed—they fail to do what God commands. We must realize that this is as great a sin in God's sight as doing the things he has forbidden.

It would be well for the teacher of these departments to assign one or more to study the life of David to see how many good things they can find; then appoint others to list as many weaknesses and mistakes as possible. When the lists are written on the board, ask each one present to examine his own heart to see how many of both mistakes and good points he has found. This will help them to realize that these Bible characters were human, and that they had the same trials we have, and that we may fail or succeed just like they did.

Golden Text Explained

"David the son of Jesse." This suggests David's ancestors. Jesse was the son of Obed, who was the son of Boaz and Ruth, the Moabitess. (Ruth 4: 18-22.) So David was the great grandson of a foreign-born woman, but a very splendid character. His kinship with the people of Moab may have made it possible for him to find shelter for his parents when their lives were endangered by the fury of Saul.

"A man after my heart." The way David desired to live is expressed fully and with feeling in Psalm 101, and serves as a good comment on this portion of the text.

"Who shall do all my will." Saul was self-willed, headstrong. Jehovah was looking for a man who would put self in the background,

forget his personal ambitions and glory, and be willing to find his happiness in doing the will of the Lord. David was such a man. We must learn to find our happiness in living for the Lord. Blessed is the man who can have a good time doing the will of God.

Topics for Discussion

1. David's triumph over Goliath is no proof that we can do fanatical and unreasonable things for God today. He had good grounds for believing he could win. His past experience in killing a lion and a bear and the possibility of accuracy to a hairsbreadth were sufficient reasons for his undertaking. (Judges 20: 15, 16.)

2. God has always used weak and foolish things to put to shame and confound the wise and mighty of this world. (1 Cor. 1: 26-29.) This was done in the deliverance of Israel from bondage, in settling them in Canaan; Jesus used that method in the establishment of his kingdom; God is still using frail, earthen vessels to save the world.

3. Samuel was a great man of God, yet if left to his human judgment, he would have selected and anointed Eliab, the eldest son of Jesse. He was using the world's yardstick. Too many of us today use the world's yardstick when we determine our pleasures, our recreation, our business methods, and sometimes our church policies and habits. Our only hope is in learning to judge things and value them from God's viewpoint.

4. David was taken from the lowliest occupation and placed in the highest position. The humility that becomes a king can be learned only in lowly stations. Those who are ashamed to serve in lowly stations are not fit to be used in high positions.

Lesson XIII—March 30, 1947

SOLOMON, THE WISE MAN

The Lesson Text

1 Kings 1: 28-31; 3: 4-9; 6: 11-13; 10: 23-25

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 swear 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.

4 And the king went to Gib'e-on to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt-offerings did Sol'o-mon offer upon that altar.

5 In Gib'e-on Je-ho'vah appeared to Sol'o-mon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Sol'o-mon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great lovingkindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great lovingkindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as if it is this day.

7 And now, O Je-ho'vah my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9 Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people,

that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?

11 And the word of Je-ho'vah came to S61'0-m0n, saying,

12 Concerning this house which thou art building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute mine ordinances, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I establish my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father.

13 And I will dwell among the children of Is'ra-el, and will not forsake my people Is'ra-61.

23 So king S51'6-m0n exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom.

24 And all the earth sought the presence of S6r6-m0n, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

25 And they brought every man his tribute, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, and armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

Golden Text.—“Yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” (Matt. 6: 29.)

Devotional Reading.—1 Kings 10: 1-13.

Daily Bible Readings

March 24. M.....	Solomon Made King (1 Kings 1: 32-37)
March 25. T.....	Solomon Asks for Wisdom (1 Kings 3: 4-9)
March 26. W.....	Solomon's Wise Judgment (1 Kings 3: 23-28)
March 27. T.....	Solomon's Power and Wealth (1 Kings 4: 20-28)
March 28. F.....	Solomon's Wisdom Displayed (1 Kings 4: 29-34)
March 29. S.....	Solomon Builds the Temple (1 Kings 7: 48-51)
March 30. S.....	Solomon's Apostasy (1 Kings 11: 5-13)

Time.—1033 to 975 B.C.

Places.—Jerusalem and Gibeon.

Persons.—God and Solomon.

Lesson Subject Explained

The term “the wise man” belongs to Solomon as preeminently as the term “the strong man” belongs to Samson. And we shall see that Solomon's wisdom was no more a guarantee of his morals than was Samson's strength a pledge of his good morals. God gave Samson more than human strength for a definite purpose, but did not endorse his manner of life; so God gave Solomon more than human wisdom, but this gift is no proof that God endorsed the way he lived.

In the dream which Solomon had God said to him, “I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.” (1 Kings 3: 12.) And the writer further describes his wisdom, “And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; . . . and his fame was in all the nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of birds, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.” (1 Kings 4: 29-34.) “Solomon, then, was a many-sided student, and his genius showed

itself in many various forms. He lived before the days of specialists. The region of knowledge was so limited that a man could be master in many departments. Nowadays the mass has become so unmanageable that, to know one subject thoroughly, we have to be ignorant of many, like the scholar who had given his life to the study of the Greek noun, and, dying, lamented that he had not confined himself to the dative case! Practical wisdom, which had its field in doing justice between his subjects; shrewd observation of life, with wit to discern resemblances and to put wisdom into homely, short sayings; poetic sensibility and the gift of melodious speech; and, added to these manifold endowments, interest in, and rudimentary knowledge of, natural history and botany, make the points specified as Solomon's wisdom."

Context of the Lesson

David's reign was a stormy, turbulent reign. There were wars against enemies within and without. And some of the enemies within were David's own sons. Absalom and Adonijah. Absalom came so near succeeding in his effort to take the throne that David had to leave Jerusalem until the rebellion could be put down. The death of Absalom for his rebellion seemed not to be a lesson to Adonijah, for when David was old, and not expected to live much longer, he influenced Joab, the head of the army, and Abiathar, the priest, to help him get the throne. David was careless about naming his successor, though he had secretly told Bathsheba that her son Solomon would be the next king. Zadok, Benaiah, and Nathan, men of influence and faithful to David, heard of the plot of Adonijah to steal the throne, and they told Bathsheba to go to David with the news. David was stirred out of his stupor by the news, and showed something like his old self in the fight to save the throne for Solomon. He ordered that Solomon be put on his own mule and ride down to Gihon where Zadok and Nathan would anoint him king over Israel, and then on his return to the city Solomon was to sit on the throne in the place of David. In reality David abdicated to Solomon that the throne might be made absolutely sure to him. As they returned from Gihon a crowd gathered and shouted, "Long live king Solomon." So loud was the shout that Adonijah and his henchmen heard it as they were feasting in preparation to anoint him that he might take over the government. Knowing that his effort was a failure, even if he failed only by minutes, Adonijah fled to the altar and took hold of the horns until Solomon swore that he should not die for his effort to take the kingdom. With a show of magnanimity unusual to such ambitious characters in those days, Solomon said, "If he shall show himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth; but if wickedness be found in him, he shall die." (1 Kings 1: 52.)

The Historical Background

Solomon was born in 1033 B.C. He died in 975 B.C. He was between eighteen and nineteen years of age when he became king in 1015 B.C. He well said, "I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in" when he worshiped God in Gibeon shortly

after he was made king. It took Solomon seven years to build the temple, and the dates given are 1011-1004 B.C.

Jerusalem, one of the places of interest in our lesson, was one of the last places in Canaan to be taken by the Israelites. It was not until the days of David that the mountain fortress was taken and held. (2 Sam. 5; 1 Chron. 11.) This was after David had been king in Hebron for seven years, about 1048 B.C. Soon thereafter David built a tabernacle for the ark which he brought from Baale-judah (2 Sam. 6: 2), or Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam. 7: 2), which had not been in the original tabernacle at Gibeon for many years. And until the temple was built Jerusalem, with the ark of God, had to divide honors as being the religious capital with Gibeon, which had the old tabernacle. Solomon saw fit to offer sacrifices at both places. But that Jerusalem would be the central city, the home of the king, and finally the seat of the true worship of Jehovah was never doubted after David took it and built his palace there.

Gibeon finds a place in this lesson only because the old tabernacle built by Moses in the wilderness was there, and to it Solomon went to offer sacrifices. And while there he had the dream mentioned in our lesson. Gibeon is less than ten miles north of Jerusalem, and a very little to the west. It was from this place that the Gibeonites came to Joshua and represented themselves as being from a distant land and wished to make a covenant of peace with the Israelites, and succeeded in their deception. (Josh. 9.) This is the place where Joab killed Amasa, and where several years later he paid for his crime in spite of the fact he was holding to the horns of the altar in the tabernacle. (1 Kings 2: 28.) The tabernacle was brought from Nob to Gibeon. It may be impossible to trace exactly the route which the tabernacle took from the time it entered Canaan until the temple was built, but it seems to have been planted first at Gilgal (Josh. 4: 19), then to a place between Ebal and Gerizim (Josh. 8: 30-35), then back to Gilgal (Josh. 9: 6; 10: 15, 43), next to Shiloh (Josh. 9: 27; 18: 1), then to Nob (1 Sam. 21: 1-6), and then to Gibeon. There seems to be no record of its final disposition, though we are not told that it was ever moved from Gibeon.

"In the Kidron Valley, which separates Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives on the east, there are today two springs called the Virgin's Fountain and the Well of Job. The Virgin's Fountain lies in a cave about a thousand feet south of the southeastern angle of the temple area. Its waters flow southwest through the famous rock tunnel to the upper pool of Siloam, at the mouth of the Tyropoan Valley. This is believed by the majority of scholars to have been Gihon, where Solomon was anointed king. The word *Gihon* is derived from a verb which means *to burst* or *bubble forth*, and the Virgin's Spring is intermittent." The place where Adonijah was holding his feast and where he intended to be anointed king was about a thousand feet farther down, where the Valley of Hinnom joins the Kidron on the west, and is known as the Well of Job. This was "by the stone of Zohelath, which is beside En-ro-gel." (1 Kings 1: 9.) These places were not very far apart, for when Solomon was anointed king the shouts of the people could be heard by Adonijah and his crowd.

The word *Solomon* means *the peaceful one*. David had been a man of war, and his reign was very turbulent. He longed for peace, and worked for peace. Perhaps he had hopes that his son would

enjoy the peace for which he had worked. It is also suggested that the name may have been given because he felt that he had made peace with God after his shameful sin with Bathsheba and the loss of their first child. The name was appropriate. Solomon was a man of peace, and his reign was characterized by peaceful relations with the nations round about, though the peace may have been bought at a most fearful price in some instances, since he made alliances by marriages with foreigners which were contrary to the law of God. Nathan, the prophet, gave him the name "Jedidiah, for Jehovah's sake." (2 Sam. 12: 25.) This name means *Beloved of Jehovah*.

"Gifted with splendid abilities, and, at least in his earlier life, enthusiastically loyal to the ancient religion, his career was to show the most striking contrast of qualities; a wisdom perhaps never equaled on the throne, and a sensuality like that of Louis XV; a zeal for Jehovah which took outward form in the erection of the temple, and a weakness toward his harem that introduced idolatry for the first time in Jerusalem; a statesmanship which filled the land with prosperity, and a love of splendor which laid such burdens on his people as prepared the way for the dissolution of his kingdom at his death."

The wisdom and wealth of Solomon are given special mention in our lesson. What is usually called Solomon's prayer for wisdom has been misunderstood by many. Solomon went to Gibeon to worship because the old tabernacle was there, and it was considered as "the great high place," one among the many where Solomon worshiped and which was contrary to the law of God. (1 Kings 3: 3.) To make a thousand burnt offerings consumed a few days. And while he was there Jehovah appeared to him in a dream, and all that is contained in 1 Kings 3: 5-14 is what Solomon dreamed—not what actually happened in Gibeon. Verse 15 says, "And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream." In this dream Jehovah taught Solomon what he wanted him to know, and what he wanted him to be. No doubt Solomon was impressed greatly by this dream, and surely he considered it from God, and started out to make it a reality in his life. And God did give him the wisdom he dreamed he asked of the Lord. Teachers have had difficulty in explaining how a character who prayed for wisdom and manifested such a fine spirit could so soon forget God and sink so deeply into sensuality. The answer is that he was not capable of what is usually attributed to him at Gibeon. The whole thing was a dream in which God taught him what he should do, and the paths in which he should walk. Though sincere for a while in his efforts to judge his people righteously, he soon forgot their rights and oppressed them to keep up his harem and the magnificence of a court which appealed to his pride. His degree of wisdom is sufficiently treated in the first part of this lesson.

As to his wealth, he surpassed any in Israel before or after his day. All the drinking vessels were of pure gold. Silver was in Jerusalem as stones, as plentiful and cheap. The weight of gold that came to him in one year was 666 talents, about twenty million dollars of our money. And besides this there was the wealth he gained from his "traffic of the merchants" and of kings and governors. (1 Kings 10: 14, 15.) He made him a throne of ivory and overlaid it with pure gold. He had a navy which brought in great loads of valuables from other countries. There were a number of small na-

tions which paid tribute each year to him. But in all the mention of his wealth one will look in vain to find some spiritual wealth; it is all material. It ministered to his pride and that of his people.

Solomon would not be warned by the trouble which his father had with a few more than a dozen wives—Geikie says David had sixteen wives. "True to his character as the type of a great eastern monarch, Solomon determined to outshine them all; partly, no doubt, to secure the friendship of princes by matrimonial alliances, but still more for royal magnificence. Seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines testified at once to his pride, his wealth, and his sensuality." He allowed his wives to bring in their idols; he built temples for their idols; and then finally openly worshiped those idols in some of the most degrading and debasing forms of idol worship known to the heathen world.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Children often wish they could have been born of rich parents. David was of a poor family, and through adversity learned to depend upon Jehovah. Solomon was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and never knew the meaning of poverty or adversity. David's life, in spite of his mistakes, was lived for God, and he was pleasing to God when he died. But Solomon gave himself over to the lusts of his flesh, departed from God and went after idols, and seemingly died an apostate. Wealth can be used for great good, but few ever so use it, especially those who inherit it and do not have to work for it. This can be used to plan in the minds of children the value of spiritual things over that of material. This is an age of materialism, even in the church. We are putting more and more emphasis on appearances. As long as numbers are being brought into the church and our church houses compare well with our religious neighbors, the average church member thinks the church is doing well. Children need to know that Christianity is not composed of numbers and fine houses. The eternal values are spiritual and unseen; they are within.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Solomon was not much older than your boys when he was anointed king over one of the greatest nations on earth. Under the guidance of God he was equal to the task of ruling the people and guiding them into an era of prosperity never known before or after his day. Young people are capable of doing great things. It is the teacher's opportunity and responsibility to guide them and inspire them to do great things for God. In this dream which Solomon had, humility and dependence upon God have a large place. They should have a large place in the heart of every person. Boys and girls in your departments are liable to forget the value of such things. They need to know that God can use the humble and dependent, but has no place for the proud and independent.

Though not a part of the lesson text, these boys and girls need to know that Solomon failed to walk in the wisdom which God gave him when he married women of other nations. Read 1 Kings 11 for an account of his foreign marriages and their effect on him. Teachers

need to keep before these young people the dangers of marrying people who are not Christians and who are not spiritual-minded.

Young People and Adult Departments

These departments should have the lesson just mentioned above. Some of them will be marrying and others have children, in whose marriages they should be intensely interested. We are too prone to think that *our* children can disregard such warnings and still go right; that they can be perfectly safe even though they do marry out of the faith. They are perhaps no wiser than Solomon, yet in spite of his wisdom he fell.

James says if we lack wisdom we should ask of God, and he will give it. (James 1: 5.) Though he will not likely give it to us in the degree in which he gave it to Solomon, he will nevertheless give us what we need. We usually look upon this incident in the life of Solomon as being wholly miraculous. There is perhaps an element of the miraculous, but Solomon devoted himself to study and activity in his duties of judging the people, and through these natural channels much of his wisdom came. God gives us our daily bread, but through natural channels. Let us apply ourselves faithfully and ask of God. God gives to those who are willing to use that for which they are asking.

Another lesson for adults is the fact that Solomon had an over-indulgent father. David never exercised much control over his children. Absalom tried to steal the throne, and so did Adonijah. Solomon never learned what it meant to be denied something he wanted, so did not know how to do without that which was not good for him. Parents should teach their children lessons of self-denial; to distinguish between good and evil, and choose the good and deny themselves the pleasure the evil will bring.

Golden Text Explained

Jesus made very few references to Solomon. Here he refers to his glory. His glory consisted of his *wealth* and *wisdom* and *position*. He was king over one of the greatest nations of the earth. He built a temple, though not as large as several of other nations of his day, yet it was as magnificent as any of them. He was a great scholar, and kings and queens of all the earth came to him to hear his wisdom. (1 Kings 4r 29-34.) But his wisdom was of this world; he had little heavenly wisdom. His wealth was wholly of this world. His piety was a utilitarian piety, "never unmixed with considerations of state policy." The lilies of the field were arrayed in colors which God gave them. Solomon's life was colored by the pride and pomp of this world, and by sensuality unbecoming one of his position. So in spite of all his glory he was not acceptable in the sight of God.

Topics for Discussion

1. The hardships and sufferings of David proved a better schooling for a king than the luxury in which Solomon was reared. Farms and ranches still produce a high percentage of the men who carry on the affairs of both state and church.

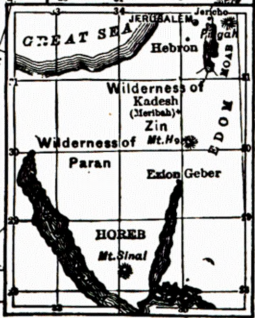
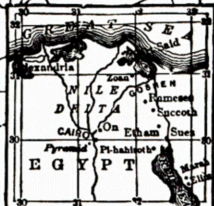
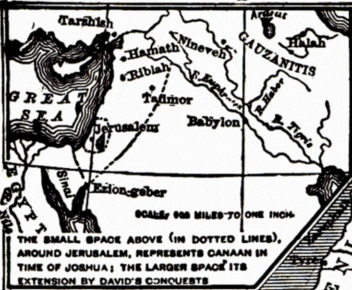
2. David yearned for holiness; Solomon asked for wisdom. David longed for communion with God; Solomon built a great nation

and a large harem. David was spiritually-minded, but Solomon was concerned with things of this world.

3. The queen of Sheba went fifteen hundred miles to get wisdom. "We are flooded with appliances, and many of us would not cross the road to get Solomon's wisdom, but would do much to be invited to feast at his table." Even Solomon did not value his own wisdom as highly as he did the pleasures of this world.

4. "All earthly good is exalted by being put second, and degrading as well as corrupted by being put first. They who know no higher good than earth can yield know not the highest good of earth; they who put worldly prosperity and treasure second find them far more precious and sweet than when they ranked them as first."

5. Solomon is proof that a man can fall from grace and die in his apostasy. It is very probable that he died as a worshiper of idols. It was in his old age that he went with his wives into idolatry. (1 Kings 11: 4.) He turned from his righteousness and (if) he died in his wickedness, his former righteousness will not be remembered for him in judgment. (Ezek. 33.)



RADIAL KEY MAP OF
CANAAN
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Indicates a City of Refuge.

SECOND QUARTER

SOME GREAT MEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Aim.—To study the lives of some of the great men mentioned in the New Testament who labored in the preparation for the establishment of the church, and who worked in the church as faithful servants of God, and to gather inspiration from their examples for service today.

Lesson I—April 6, 1947

JOHN THE BAPTIST

The Lesson Text

Luke 1: 57-63

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

58 And her neighbors and her kinsfolk heard that the Lord had magnified his mercy towards her; and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him Zach-a-ri'as, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, what he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

Matt. 3: 1-6

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

2 Return 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.

John 1: 19-23

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.—*"Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."* (Matt. 11: 11.)

Devotional Reading.—Matt. 11: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

March 31. M.....	The Prophecy of John (Mai. 4: 4-6)
April 1. T.....	The Promise of John (Luke 1: 8-17)
April 2. W.....	The Birth of John (Luke 1: 57-66)
April 3. T.....	The Preaching of John (Matt. 3: 1-12)
April 4. F.....	John Baptized Jesus (Matt. 3: 13-17)
April 5. S.....	Messengers from John (Matt. 11: 2-11)
April 6. S.....	John Beheaded (Matt. 14: 1-12)

Lesson Subject Explained

The name of the man we study today was John. The angel said to Zacharias, "Thou shalt call his name John." (Luke 1: 13.) The apostle John said, "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John." (John 1: 6.) It is worthy of note that the apostle John does not one time use the term *John the Baptist*. That term occurs only fifteen times in the New Testament. Luke and Mark use it four times each, and Matthew uses it seven times; it does not occur in Acts. In Mark 6: 14, 24 we find the term *John the Baptizer*. *The Emphatic Diaglott* renders it *John the dipper*. (Mark 6: 24, 25.) The Greek word is *baptistes*, and is defined as "one who baptizes." So this man John was called the dipper, or baptizer, because that was his work or mission in the world. John himself said that God sent him to baptize in water. (John 1: 33.) Those who think he was a member of a religious denomination which wears that name are sadly lacking in information.

Context of the Lesson

Politically the world had been in a state of terrible unrest. The Holy Land had been overrun and subjected by the Romans. Judea was at that time (since 43 B.C.) merely a Roman province. That bloody line of Herods was in power under the Roman emperor. Religiously the country was in a worse condition. Hypocritical Pharisees and materialistic Sadducees with a sprinkling of political-minded Herodians made up the ruling forces in religious affairs. For about four hundred years it seems there had been no revelation from God, and perhaps no angelic visitors to the leaders of the people as was the case in days of old when the people were more faithful to God. But there were people in Israel who were faithful to the Lord. Of Zacharias and his wife it is said, "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Zacharias was a priest, humbly and faithfully performing all the duties of his office according to his ability.

While Zacharias was performing his duty of burning incense in the temple, the angel, Gabriel (meaning God is mighty), appeared to him to say that his desire for a son was to be fulfilled. That son was to be great in the sight of the Lord; he was to be a Nazirite, drinking no wine or strong drink; and he was to be filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. He was to turn many people to the Lord; and prepare the way for the Messiah. (Luke 1: 13-17.) All this was too much for Zacharias to believe without some tangible evidence, so he asked how he would know it was all true. To fulfill his request and to rebuke him for his unbelief the angel said, "Thou shalt be silent and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass." When he returned to the congregation of worshipers outside the temple and made signs instead of speaking, they perceived he had seen a vision. And when his duties were finished, he and his wife, Elisabeth, returned to their home in the hill country to await the fulfillment of the Lord's promise.

Golden Text Explained

Of all those born in ages past, none were greater than John. These are the words of our Lord. What an appraisal! What a rec-

ommendation! When men are introduced as speakers to an audience, it is customary to make some commendatory remarks. The weaknesses and failures are forgotten; the good things are enlarged upon. This weakness of man often paints an untrue picture. But our Lord knows man perfectly, and he does not misrepresent, either for good or bad. Truly John was a great man, or Jesus would never have made this statement. He did not live as long as Adam, Moses, or David. He was not loved by the people, nor was he appreciated as much as some of the older prophets, but that was no fault of John. By the Lord's measuring rod, which is the one to be used in judgment, he was greater than any before him.

The least in the kingdom is greater than John. Not that he is holier or more devoted to duty than was John; not that he touches and influences more lives for good than did John. But that his privileges, blessings, and honors are more than John enjoyed. John foretold the coming of the kingdom; we lead people into the kingdom. John was not a member of the kingdom; we are citizens of that heavenly kingdom. John pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who would die for sin; we offer people a Christ who has died and now saves from sin. John called people to repent, to turn back to the old covenant which had only blood of animals and a worldly sanctuary; we call people into a spiritual covenant which has the blood of Christ and a heavenly sanctuary into which Jesus himself entered with his own blood for the people.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"She brought forth a son. . . . The Lord had magnified his mercy towards her" To be barren was counted a great curse by Hebrew women. When Rachel had borne her first son, she said, "God hath taken away my reproach." (Gen. 30: 23.) And Mary said to Elisabeth that the Lord had "looked upon the low estate of his handmaid." (Luke 1: 48.) So God magnified his mercy in that he took away the reproach of Elisabeth and exalted her to be the mother of the forerunner of Christ.

"The eighth day, . . . they came to circumcise the child" The covenant of circumcision was made with Abraham when he was ninety-nine years old. Every male was to be circumcised on the eighth day after birth. Even those who were bought with money were to be circumcised. And later all male proselytes were circumcised. Those who refused to be circumcised, and on whom it was neglected, were to be cut off from Israel. (Gen. 17: 1-14.)

"He asked for a writing tablet." "The tablets in use generally at the time were usually made of wood, covered with a thin coating of wax; on the soft layer of wax the words were written with an iron stylus."

"Preaching in the wilderness." The word wilderness here suggests the country districts as distinguished from the cities, and not the dry arid regions. (John 3: 23.) So long had the people been without revelation from heaven that they went from the cities into the country districts to hear God's spokesman. What a contrast to present-day conditions!

"The kingdom of heaven." Matthew is the only New Testament writer who uses this expression, the others using the term kingdom of God. Matthew uses kingdom of God three times. In Matt. 19:

23, 24 we have proof that the two terms mean the same thing. It is called kingdom of heaven because of its heavenly nature, and kingdom of God because God is the supreme ruler.

"His raiment of camel's hair." This was a very coarse cloth commonly worn by prophets. (Zech. 13: 4.) The leathern girdle was worn to give strength to the body, for protection to the abdomen, and to hold the loose-flowing garment of camel's hair.

"His food was locusts and wild honey." In Lev. 11: 20-23 we learn that the Jews could eat locusts and other similar insects. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* lists ten different kinds of insects of the locust family. Locusts were ground, mixed with flour and water, salted, made into cakes and cooked; sometimes they were fried in butter. Doctor Kitto ate locusts in the East and said they tasted something like shrimp. Honey was plentiful in the land of Palestine.

"Confessing their sins." Jesus is the only person John ever baptized who was not a sinner. People who claimed they had no sins to be forgiven John refused to baptize. (Matt. 3: 7.) This proves that John baptized people for the remission of their sins. (Mark 1: 4.)

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness." John was not seeking personal glory, he was just a voice. This is suggested by the practice of eastern monarchs sending a crier before them into the country and villages announcing his arrival so their subjects might have opportunity to see them. John was the crier for heaven's king.

The Historical Background

Chronology.—With reference to the time of these happenings one writer says, "Annunciation to Zacharias, October, 6 B.C. Annunciation to Mary, March, 5 B.C. Visit of Mary to Elisabeth, perhaps May, 5 B.C. Birth of John the Baptist, June, 5 B.C." John began his preaching in A.D. 26. He was beheaded by Herod late in A.D. 27 or the early part of 28.

Geography.—The wilderness of Judea included a district of wild country west and south of the Dead Sea. It was this district which afforded David many of his hiding places from King Saul, and it was admirably suited for hiding because of its many hills and caves. Hebron was in the edge of the wilderness, and is thought to have been the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth and the birthplace of John.

The incidents of the last division of our lesson text are said to have taken place in Bethany "beyond the Jordan." (John 1: 28.) That means it was east of the Jordan River, so not the city with which we are familiar as the home of Lazarus and his sisters where Jesus spent much of his time. Of this place scholars know nothing for sure, though there are many opinions. The King James Version has the name Bethabara, but this city is too near the Sea of Galilee. Origen is supposed to have made the change from Bethany to Bethabara, according to A. Clarke.

Character.—The name John is a short form of the Hebrew word *Johanan*, which means "to whom Jehovah is gracious," or according to another, "whom Jehovah has graciously given." And certainly John was a gracious gift from God to Zacharias and Elisabeth, who had all but lost hope of ever having a child.

"As a preacher, John was eminently practical and discriminating. Self-love and covetousness were the prevalent sins of the people at large: on them he enjoined charity and consideration for others. The publicans he cautioned against extortion, the soldiers against violence and plunder. . . . The brief history of John's life is marked throughout with the characteristic graces of self-denial, humility, and holy courage. So great indeed was his abstinence that worldly men considered him possessed. . . . His humility was such that he had again and again to disavow the character and decline the honors which an admiring multitude almost forced upon him. To their questions he answered plainly, he was not the Christ, nor the Elijah of whom they were thinking, nor one of their old prophets."

"Stern, wild, and passionate, shaggy with his camel's-hair garb, unkempt and unshorn, no reed shaken by the wind, no courtier in soft raiment was John the Baptist, the prophet of impending wrath. John's mind was like his shaggy garment and his food—unusual, simple, primitive. His thoughts passed through no medium of public opinion that would tone them down to words conventionally correct. They went forth from him as they came to him, immediate and unsoftened by any thought of politeness or propriety."

"The key-word of his preaching was repentance—*metanoia*, which signified self-detachment from evil and direction of the mind and will upon God. This message was hurled forth with the force of moral certitude and winged with noble enthusiasm. Jewish society cherished the prejudice that descent from Abraham gave an inherent right to participate in the divine kingdom. John, however, made it plain that race feeling was no reasonable ground of assurance, for society must ultimately rest on conscience. As for the blood tie, God could dispense with it, and, if it were necessary, could raise up children to Abraham from the stones of the desert."

John died because he dared to tell Herod that he had no right to take his brother Philip's wife away from him and live with her. This made Herod's wife, Herodias, angry and as soon as she had an opportunity she saw to it that John did not have another chance to embarrass and torment her on account of her sins. When her daughter, Salome, had danced so well before the king that he promised her anything she might ask, even to half the kingdom, her mother promptly demanded that she ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. This Herod reluctantly gave her, and so ended the life of the greatest prophet among men. (Matt. 14: 1-12.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

It will be well for teachers of these children to assign certain children the duty of preparing and telling the story of Zacharias' experiences in the temple when the angel told him he was to have a son by Elisabeth. It would be interesting for the teacher to construct a pasteboard model of the temple, with its holy place and most holy place, without a top, to show where Zacharias was serving at the altar of incense when the angel appeared to him. It will be interesting to have one of the boys make a "writing tablet" like Zacharias used to write his son's name. One can be made by pouring sealing wax on a smooth piece of pine. Simply heat the wax and pour it

on the board while it is hot enough to spread evenly, and let cool. The children will enjoy writing the word John on it with a nail.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The rugged life John lived in the rough, unsettled portion of the land of Palestine, with the primitive food it afforded, will be of interest especially to the boys of these departments. His courage in preaching, denouncing the people for their sins, and his practical lessons on right living will be of interest. Impress them with the truth that people are prone to go away from God when they do not follow the teachings of the Bible. The Jews followed their traditions; they forgot the teachings of Moses and other great prophets. Perhaps they thought the world had outgrown the teaching of Moses and the prophets. So people today who think the world has outgrown Jesus and Paul need a John to rebuke them and call them back to humble, self-denying obedience to the teaching of the gospel.

These departments will be interested in, and get instruction from, the story of Zacharias asking the angel for proof that the promise of a son was true. He was deprived of his powers of speech until the birth of the son. Perhaps he was deprived of his hearing also, for "they made signs to his father" as to what his name was to be. If he could have heard, there would have been no necessity for making signs. God expects us to believe his word, and those who require physical signs and proof of his truthfulness have very little faith. And God does not have to speak twice to tell the truth. Though a commandment may occur but once in the gospel, it is as binding upon us as one which occurs many times. Use this opportunity to build in their minds confidence in, and respect for, God's word.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lesson above will be worth-while for these departments. All need faith, and more faith, in God's word. The fact that God has said something ought to be all the proof we need that it is true. Though scientists of every age contradict the plain statements of God, we must take God's word for the truth. But it is encouraging to know that scientists have never demonstrated the falsity of any Biblical statement. They hold many theories contrary to God's word, but have never demonstrated any of them to be true.

Both these departments should make a study of the promise of the kingdom and its fulfillment. John said that the kingdom was at hand. Did he tell the truth? John said he was to prepare the way for the king of that kingdom. Was there any need for all such preparation if the kingdom was not to be established until the second coming of Christ? Was there any need for the people of John's day to repent in preparation for the coming of the kingdom, if the kingdom was not to come until the second coming of Christ?

The humility of John as taught in the last section of our lesson text furnishes a fine opportunity for the teacher to impress the students with the need of such trait of character. John could have enjoyed a lot of personal attention and praise if he had allowed the people to believe he was one of the prophets, or the Messiah. He would not have had to lie; he could have allowed the people to reach their own conclusions. But he openly disavowed that he was any-

thing other than a voice—an impersonal thing, worthy of no especial honor.

Topics for Discussion

1. Since the least in the kingdom is greater than John with respect to blessings, privileges, and honors, does he not have increased responsibilities? Will not more be required of him because of these greater blessings and honors?

2. People often say that the reason the preaching of Jesus and his apostles was so powerful, and attracted so much attention, was that they performed miracles. John performed no miracles (John 10:41), yet his preaching attracted as much attention as that of Jesus and his apostles. There is power in the word of God when lived and preached in its purity and simplicity.

3. It is interesting to think of the men God has prepared for his use on special occasions for special purposes. God schooled Moses forty years in the court of Pharaoh and another forty in the solitudes of the wilderness of Midian. God raised up Samuel from his birth and kept him in the temple all his life to make him the character needed for such a time and work. God filled John the Baptist with his Spirit from his birth and schooled him in the solitudes of the deserts until time for his work to begin. (Luke 1: 80.) Paul was separated from his birth to preach the gospel. (Gal. 1: 15.) Timothy was kept in the care of godly parents to make him a faithful preacher. (2 Tim. 1: 5.) Is it possible that God still works in similar ways to provide workers? Is God limited to miraculous means to provide workers, or may he use natural means and yet control the outcome?

Lesson II—April 13, 1947

PETER, A MAN OF ACTION

The Lesson Text

John 1: 40-42

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).

Matt. 14: 27-31; 26: 69-75

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?

69 Now Peter was sitting without in the court: and a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Je'sus the Gal-i-lae'an.

70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and saith unto them that were there, This man also was with Je'sus of Naz'a-reth.

72 And again he denied with an oath, I know not the man.

73 And after a little while they that stood by came and said to Peter, Of a truth thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech maketh thee known.

74 Then began he to curse and to swear, I know not the man. And straight-
way the cock crew.

75 And Peter remembered the word which Je'sus had said, Before the cock
crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

John 21: 5-7

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.—*“And he said unto him, Lord, with thee I am
ready to go both to prison and to death”* (Luke 22: 33.)

Devotional Reading.—Matt. 4: 13-22.

Daily Bible Readings

April 7. M.....	Peter Brought to Jesus (John 1: 35-42)
April 8. T.....	Jesus Calls Peter (Matt. 4: 18-22)
April 9. W.....	Peter Confesses Jesus (Matt. 16: 13-20)
April 10. T.....	Peter Fails to Walk on the Sea (Matt. 14: 22-33)
April 11. F.....	Peter Denies Christ (Matt. 14: 66-72)
April 12. S.....	Peter Preaches on Pentecost (Acts 2: 14-21)
April 13. S.....	Peter Raises Dorcas (Acts 9: 36-43)

Lesson Subject Explained

The apostle Peter was the leader of, and spokesman for, the group of men whom Jesus gathered around him during his personal ministry, and to whom he gave the responsibility of carrying the gospel to the whole world. He was the first to respond either in word or deed. As in our lesson text for today, when he realized the Lord was near, he wished to go to him and asked for the privilege of walking to him on the water. This was not to satisfy his love of display, or to put on a show before the other disciples; it was his intense desire to be near the Lord in the storm. When Jesus asked the disciples about their faith in him, it was Peter who made the answer for the group. (Matt. 16: 13-18.) And he gave voice to such a conviction on another occasion as readily. (John 6: 67, 68.)

It was Peter who first spoke when they were on the mount of transfiguration, though he knew not what he was saying. (Matt. 17: 4.) Men of such impulsive and prompt action do not always do the most reasonable and sensible thing. It was Peter who went into action in an effort to defend his Lord against arrest by the mob in Gethsemane. (Luke 22: 50.) And here again is an illustration of the fact that men of quick action do not always do the best and the right thing. And it was Peter who rushed first into the empty tomb where only a few hours before the body of our Lord lay in death. (John 20: 6.) He was the leader on Pentecost and afterward. His impetuous spirit which moved him to prompt and decisive action made him the leader of any group with which he worked. Truly, he was a man of action.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of John 1: 40-42 we find John the Baptist being questioned as to whether he was the Christ, or Elijah, or that prophet

who was to come. He had humbly denied being either; he was merely a voice crying in the wilderness, but the One for whom he was preparing the way was so much greater than he that he was unworthy to unloose his shoe. He was sure he had seen him, for when he was baptizing him there came from heaven the Spirit upon him and remained, and that was the sign God had given John whereby he would know the Christ. Among the crowd listening to John was Andrew, Peter's brother, who went to find Peter just as soon as he learned that Jesus to whom John pointed was the Christ.

In the context of Matt. 14: 27-31 we have the record of Jesus feeding the multitudes with five loaves and two fishes so they might have strength to go from the desert place where they were gathered to their homes. When he had sent them away, he went into a mountain and spent most of the night in prayer. In the "fourth watch," which was between three and six A.M., he went to his disciples who were caught in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. Not expecting Jesus at such a time, nor thinking he would be walking on the water, they thought they saw a ghost. The words, "Be not afraid," from a familiar voice at such a time must have sounded good to them. It brought comfort no other voice on earth could have brought.

The context of Matt. 26: 69-75 tells of Judas leading the enemies of Jesus to Gethsemane where he betrayed his Lord with a kiss. Peter had tried to defend his Lord in the best way he knew to do it. Jesus had rebuked him for his unwise action, which was contrary to all the principles of righteousness he had taught Peter and other disciples for three years. Peter was both confused and afraid, so he followed a long way off as Jesus was led away to trial. John asked the doorkeeper to let Peter come into the courtyard where the trial before the Jews was being conducted. But instead of staying with John and Jesus, Peter went over to a fire around which the servants of the Jewish authorities were gathered. It was while in this bad company that he was subjected to his first temptation to deny his Lord.

The context of John 21: 5-7 contains better news than the foregoing. Though Jesus had been crucified, the report has been made that some of the women have seen him and are sure he is alive. Then he appeared unto some of the apostles, it seems to Peter first of all. (1 Cor. 15: 5; Luke 24: 34.) Then he had appeared to the group when Thomas was absent, and a week later to them all and removed the doubts from the mind of Thomas. These appearances took place in and around Jerusalem. But the one of our lesson took place in Galilee. Why did the disciples go to Galilee? Some say it was because they had given up hope and had gone back to their trade as fishermen. But from Matt. 28: 16 we learn that Jesus appointed that they should go there. And it was while waiting for him in Galilee that Peter suggested that they go fishing. And when they had toiled all night without success, Jesus came to the shore and suggested that they cast the net on the right side of the boat.

Golden Text Explained

To understand our Golden Text it is necessary to read verses 31 to 34. Jesus told Peter Satan had asked for the privilege of sifting him as wheat. The margin reads, Satan obtained you by asking. Is it possible that Satan must obtain permission to bring great trials

upon God's servants? He did so in the case of Job and Peter. But Peter was full of self-confidence; he was boastful, making statements beyond his ability to prove. From this text and its setting we should learn: (1) How little we know of what we will do in the future, and under any given set of conditions. (2) That we should not boast of what we will do, and what we will not do. (3) How much our Lord knows about us and what he will do to save us from evil and harm. Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith fail not. "What a friend we have in Jesus!" (4) We should learn that it is not impossible for leaders to fall, and fall quickly. (5) We should be reminded of the truthfulness of Paul's warning, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10: 12.)

Helps on the Lesson Text

"He findeth first." Andrew thought first of his brother, and set out immediately to bring him to Jesus. This is a fine example for personal workers today to start with those whom they love and by teaching and persuasion to bring them to Jesus to be saved.

"We have found the Messiah . . . Christ." The word *Messiah* is Hebrew and *Christ* is Greek, and the words mean *anointed*. Hebrew kings were anointed with oil for their offices. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, not to a temporal throne, but to a spiritual throne.

"Thou art Simon: . . . thou shalt be called Cephas." The word Simon means *hearer*. Jesus did not immediately change the name from Simon to Peter, for he is called Simon for a long time after this. But he would in the future develop a character worthy of the name Peter, which means a *stone*. This is not the same word Jesus used when he said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." The word rock in that statement is from *petra*, which is in the feminine gender. This word is *petros*, masculine gender.

"Bid me come unto thee upon the waters." It should be noticed that Peter did not ask for the satisfaction of idle curiosity simply to see if he could walk on water; he asked for the privilege of being with Jesus. This is the action of impulsive love, and it was pleasing to Jesus.

"He was afraid." Peter walked on the water as long as his faith lasted. And it seems his faith lasted as long as he looked to Jesus. But when he took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the wind-tossed waves, his faith wavered, and he began to sink. When we set out to do things, we need to look to him from whom our strength comes. Looking at the difficulties all about us will only weaken and finally destroy our faith and bring final utter failure.

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" A rebuke, but oh, so gentle. It is an implication that if he had not doubted he could have walked all the way to Jesus and back to the boat. As if the Lord had said, It was a noble venture, Peter, and it will be worth a lot to you in life to remember that success comes only to those whose faith does not fail.

Sitting without in the court." The main part of the house was built next to the street. "Admission into the courtyard was gained by a passage through the side of the house, which formed the vestibule or porch; this was closed toward the street by a heavy gate, having

in it a small wicket for the use of visitors, kept by a porter or other servant."

"He *denied with an oath*. . . . *Then began he to curse and to swear.*" Peter was in the company of men who were in the habit of lending strength to their statements by swearing and cursing. Peter was not accustomed to doing such. But he did like those around him in an effort to convince them that he was more like them than he was like Jesus. "Evil companionships corrupt good morals." (1 Cor. 15: 33.)

"He *went out, and wept bitterly.*" Sin never brings happiness into our lives for long. Sin and suffering are inseparably wed, and what God hath joined man cannot separate. "He rushed from that evil company into the night, a broken-hearted man, that no human eye might witness his anguish, that alone with his conscience and God he might wrestle out repentance. Wept bitterly. Tradition asserts that all his life long Peter hereafter never could hear a cock crow without falling on his knees and weeping." (*Pulpit Commentary*.)

"*Cast the net on the right side of the boat.*" This is evidence of the superhuman knowledge of Jesus. The story was told and circulated before the death of eyewitnesses. If it had not been true, it would certainly have been challenged.

"*That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved*" The writer was humble, never making mention of himself by name. But it is better to be known as one whom Jesus loves than to be known as king, or the richest man on earth.

The Historical Background

Chronology.—Nothing is known of the date of Peter's birth. "It is uncertain at what age he was called by our Lord. The general impression of the Fathers is that he was an old man at the date of his death, A.D. 64, but this need not imply that he was much older than our Lord. He was probably between thirty and forty years of age at the date of his call."

The date of the events recorded in John 1: 40-42 is A.D. 26. The date for Matt. 14: 27-31 is A.D. 27 or 28. The date for Matt. 26: 69-75 and John 21: 5-7 is A.D. 29.

Geography.—The place where Peter first met Jesus is "Bethany beyond the Jordan," meaning east of the Jordan River, about which city little is known for certain.

The place where Peter walked on the water, and where he later threw himself into the water to swim to meet the Lord before his companions, was the Sea of Galilee. It is called the Sea of Tiberias in the context of our lesson. (John 21: 1.) This name occurs only one other time. (John 6: 1.) Clarke says, "Herod Antipas built this city (Tiberias) near the Lake of Gennesaret, in the best parts of Galilee, and called it *Tiberias*, in honor of *Tiberius*, the Roman emperor." And Smith's *Dictionary* says the sea was called *Tiberias* because of the lake on whose shores it was built. The lake was called Chinnereth in Num. 34: 11. This also was the name of a town on its shore. (Josh. 19: 35.) And in Matt. 14: 34 it is called Gennesaret after a very beautiful and fertile plain at its northwestern angle.

This sea is "pear-shaped," and is fourteen miles long and nine miles wide. "Its most remarkable feature is its deep depression, being no less than 700 feet below the level of the ocean. . . . On the east the banks are nearly 2,000 feet high, destitute of verdure or foliage, deeply furrowed by ravines. . . . The scenery has neither grandeur nor beauty. . . . It is bleak and monotonous, especially when the sky is cloudless and the sun high. . . . The great depression makes the climate of the shores almost tropical. . . . In the summer the heat is intense. . . . The water of the lake is sweet, cool, and transparent. . . . The lake abounds in fish now as in ancient times. . . . A mournful and solitary silence now reigns along the shores of the Sea of Gennesaret, which were in former ages studded with great cities, and resounded with the din of an active and industrious people. Seven out of the nine cities referred to above are now uninhabited ruins; one, Magdala, is occupied by half a dozen mud hovels; and Tiberias alone retains a wretched remnant of its former prosperity." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

Character.—"The blunt, rude fisherman who became so passionately devoted to Jesus and who denied his friend in such a gust of cowardice was the sort of man other men inevitably follow. He had an intense humanity which we see so clearly in Luther. His very looking at men drew them to him. He was a man's man, and he had ready access to the typical man about him. His worst moments, when they came, were the reverse side of a vigorous virility which needed to be mastered and chastened and disciplined, but which was his greatest individual asset.

"There was a flush about the mind of Peter, there was a magnetic gleam about his personality, there was a warmth about his presence, all of which made definite and sure appeal, and when these things felt the guiding touch of the Master upon them they began to reveal new and high potencies. Characteristics which have made the leader of many a rough gang effective were built into the plans of the Founder of a new and better kingdom for the world."

We rarely ever think of Peter that we do not think of his sin in denying the Master. But there is something greater about him than his sin, and that is his penitence. Sinful Peter is one man, and Penitent Peter is another man. And many who have kept his company along those worn steps to sin, and have justified their sin because he sinned, have left him to trace the tear-washed path of penitence alone to a restoration and reformation perhaps unequalled, and certainly unsurpassed, in any age of the world.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Teachers in these departments will find the incidents on the Sea of Galilee of special interest to their pupils. Peter's courage and daring to walk on the storm-tossed waves, the readiness of Jesus to help us in time of trial and danger, and his power to provide for our needs, as suggested by having the men cast the net on the right side, are lessons of interest to them. Also the fact that Jesus forgave Peter and was glad to see him after Peter had denied him indicates that he is still willing to forgive us our sins. It is also an example

which these children will appreciate, teaching us to forgive one another and treat each other as if no wrong had ever been done.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

These boys and girls are reaching that point in life when they should be thinking what they are going to be and do throughout life. The way Andrew was impressed by Jesus, his going to find Peter to bring him to Jesus, and their final decision to become followers of Jesus furnish grounds for a lesson on the value of an early decision, both for the service of Jesus in this life and the following of an occupation in keeping with the principles of Christianity and one conducive to right living and regular church attendance.

In this age they are likely to be too self-confident. Peter furnishes abundant material to prove the foolishness of such disposition. Yet his quick, impulsive action will be inspiring to them, and is a good example to follow, provided they take care to avoid the dangers.

Peter's attempt to walk on the water may be used to teach them the need of a strong and active faith in this walk of life. The doubter is doomed before he starts. When one takes his eyes off the Lord to look upon the waves of worldly pleasures, of unrighteous business principles, and any number of other things both teachers and pupils can name, they will sink in failure.

Young: People and Adult Departments

As Andrew went first for Peter to bring him to Jesus, so each person in the church must have others on their hearts and make every effort possible to save them *from sin* and *unto righteousness*. The church without personal workers who have a passion to save certain persons will not grow.

Peter was sure he would not forsake the Lord. People in these departments have no other thought than to be faithful to the Lord, and would likely express themselves like Peter did when Jesus suggested that he would deny him. If Satan could do that to Peter, who can doubt he has the power to do us the same way? Surely we all need to be impressed with the need to pray as Jesus taught his disciples, "And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." (Matt. 6: 13.) These classes should make a special study of Peter's denial, his period of bitter weeping, and his restoration. Compare the devil's methods here with the way he dealt with Job, and with Judas. Do you know of modern examples which seem to be similar cases? Will the Lord grant such a request of Satan today? What assurance do we have that we would be able to endure such a sifting? (1 Cor. 10: 13.)

Topics for Discussion

1. When Peter had known the Lord but a short while, he was impressed with the power and divinity of our Lord and asked him to depart. (Read Luke 5: 1-10.) In our lesson Jesus demonstrates in almost identical fashion his power and divine knowledge, and Peter hastens to go to him. Why the difference? During about three years of association, and through the bitter experience of his denial of Jesus, Peter had learned that close to Jesus is a good place for a

weak and sinful man to be. If Peter had stayed close to Jesus during his trial, there would never have been a denial made, and there would have been no bitter tears of sorrow.

2. How many reasons can you give why Peter could not be a pope, or even an insignificant priest, today? Was Peter the leader that he was among the apostles by divine appointment, or by reason of inherent characteristics? What qualities did Peter have which contributed to his power to lead and influence people?

3. How many thoughts are suggested in our lesson today which may be used as evidence that Jesus is divine, and that the Bible is an inspired record?

Lesson III—April 20, 1947

JAMES, A COMPANION

The Lesson Text

Luke 8: 51; 9: 54, 55

51 And when he came to the house, he suffered not any man to enter in with him, save Peter, and John, and James, and the father of the maiden and her mother.

54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said. Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them.

Mark 1: 19, 20; 3: 17

19 And going on a little further, he saw James the son of Zeb'e-dee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending the nets.

20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zeb'e-dee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him.

17 And James the son of Zeb'e-dee, and John the brother of James; and them he surnamed Bo-a-ner'ges, which is, Sons of thunder.

Acts 12: 1-3

1 Now about that time Her'od the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

3 And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And those were the days of unleavened bread.

Golden Text.—*“He took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray.”* (Luke 9: 28b.)

Devotional Reading.—Mark 14: 32-42.

Daily Bible Readings

April 14. M.....	James Called (Matt. 4: 19-22)
April 15. T.....	James Associated with Peter and John (Matt. 17: 1-8)
April 16. W.....	James' Indignation (Luke 9: 51-56)
April 17. T.....	James at the House of Jairus (Luke 8: 49-56)
April 18. F.....	James' Request of Jesus (Mark 10: 35-40)
April 19. S.....	James in Gethsemane (Matt. 26: 36-46)
April 20. S.....	James Beheaded (Acts 12: 1-6)

Lesson Subject Explained

Four of the Lord's apostles were partakers in the fishing business, Peter, Andrew, James, and John. They were called at the same time. Andrew and John found Christ first (John 1: 35-42), and immediately went to find their brothers and bring them to Jesus. But Andrew seems not to have been as closely associated with Jesus as the other three. Jesus took Peter, James, and John into closer

companionship with him than he did Andrew. These three were allowed to be with him on several occasions when his glory was revealed, and when he was in prayer and needed comfort and sympathy. James was the Lord's companion at the raising of Jairus' daughter, at the transfiguration, and during the agony suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane. Our Lord was human, as well as divine, and it seems that he enjoyed the sympathy and comfort which came from kindred hearts. James was among the very few men of his day who imbibed enough of the Lord's spirit and captured sufficient of his vision and ideals as to enable him to lend comfort and strength through companionship to his Lord.

Context of the Lesson

While Jesus was feasting at Matthew's table, a man named Jairus went to get him to come to the aid of his little daughter who lay at the point of death. (Matt. 9: 18.) On the way to the house of Jairus Jesus healed a woman, which incident must have delayed him to the point of causing Jairus to wonder about his interest in helping him. Finally, before the crowd which inevitably followed Jesus could reach the home of Jairus, messengers came to tell Jairus to trouble Jesus no further because the girl had died. Jesus encouraged him to believe instead of fearing, and they hurried on to the house, where they found mourners, both real and hired, weeping and bewailing the girl. Into that death chamber Jesus allowed none but Peter, John, and James, and the parents.

In the context of Luke 9: 54, 55 we find Jesus leaving Galilee and going toward Jerusalem. And because "his face was as though he were going to Jerusalem," the people of Samaria rejected him. The Jews and Samaritans had no dealings with each other. (John 4: 9.) However the Samaritans did receive Jesus courteously when he was going northward from Judea into Galilee. (John 4: 39-42.) The rivalry and jealousy between the two peoples sprang from religious differences. The Jews thought people should worship in Jerusalem, while the Samaritans thought in Mount Gerizim was the place to worship. (John 4: 20, 21.) So when the Jews were going to Jerusalem to worship, the Samaritans were hostile toward them; but when they were going through on any other business, or going northward back to Galilee, they were not hostile. This was not long before time for the Passover, so they knew Jesus and his disciples were going to Jerusalem to worship, and they were not courteous. James and John wished to call down fire from heaven to consume them.

In the context of Mark 1: 19, 20 we learn that Jesus had just changed his residence from Nazareth to Capernaum. This we learn by reading parallel passages. (Matt. 4: 13-22.) We also learn from other passages that this meeting with the fishermen is not the first, for these are the men whom John the Baptist introduced to Jesus some months before. (John 1: 35-42.)

From the context of Mark 3: 17 we learn that Jesus had healed a man with a withered hand in the synagogue and had defended his right to do so. Soon after that he had performed numerous miracles, including the control of unclean spirits. This was a good way to inspire confidence in the men whom he was soon to appoint as his apostles. But before his appointment of men to serve as apostles he went up into a mountain and continued in prayer all night. (Mark

3: 13-19; Luke 6: 12-16.) If the Son of God needed to pray before undertaking difficult tasks fraught with grave responsibilities, how much more do we need to pray!

From the context of Acts 12: 1-3 we learn that the church had enjoyed a period of expansion. Saul, the persecutor of the church, had been converted; the gospel had been sent to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius; a great Gentile church had been established in Antioch, where the name Christian was first given and worn; and the gospel had been well planted in Samaria. Growth and expansion were seen on every side. This was not all pleasing to the Jews. Herod was anxious to please the Jews, and to do so he attempted to kill off some of the main leaders.

Golden Text Explained

The mountain into which Jesus went with his disciples to pray, and to be transfigured before them, is generally conceded to be Hermon. It is the highest mountain in Palestine, being 9,400 feet above sea level. There are said to be three great peaks of this mountain, and either one of them would have afforded all the opportunity for solitude the Lord required for his purpose on this occasion.

"It was evening, and, as we have suggested, the evening after the Sabbath, when the Master and those three of his disciples, who were most closely linked to him in heart and thought, climbed the path that led up to one of the heights of Hermon. In all the most solemn transactions of earth's history, there has been this selection and separation of the few to witness God's great doings. Alone with his son, as the destined sacrifice, did Abraham climb Moriah; alone did Moses behold, amid the awful loneliness of the wilderness, the burning bush, and alone on Sinai's height did he commune with God; alone was Elijah at Horeb, and with no other companion to view it than Elisha did he ascend to heaven. But Jesus, the Saviour of his people, could not be quite alone, save in those innermost transactions of his soul: in the great contest of his first temptation, and in the solitary communings of his heart with God. These are mysteries which the outspread wings of angels, as reverently they hide their faces, conceal from earth's, and even heaven's vision. But otherwise, in the most solemn turning points of this history, Jesus could not be alone, and yet he was alone with those three chosen ones, most receptive of him, and most representative of the church. It was so in the house of Jairus, on the mount of transfiguration and in the Garden of Gethsemane." (Edersheim.)

Helps on the Lesson Text

"*Wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven?*" James and John wished to do this because these Samaritans had refused to receive Jesus into their village. This was a grave insult to the Lord, and these disciples, fresh from the scene of the transfiguration where they had received a new and more glorious conception of the divinity of Jesus, felt it was so much out of line with the dignity of their Lord that these Samaritans were not fit to live any longer. They may have gotten their idea of calling fire down from heaven on their enemies from 2 Kings 1: 9-14, where we find the record of Elijah doing that. But Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who "committed

himself to him that judgeth righteously" and refused to retaliate for any wrongs done him, rebuked these "sons of thunder" and went to other cities.

"*And going on a little further, he saw James.*" From the context we learn that Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee. He had just asked Peter and Andrew to leave their business to become his disciples. Not far from where Peter and his brother were fishing were James and John, another pair of brothers. His call to them was, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Edersheim says, "The expression 'Follow me' would be readily understood as implying a call to become the *permanent* disciple of a teacher. Similarly, it was not only the practice of the Rabbis, but regarded as one of the most sacred duties, for a master to gather around him a circle of disciples. Thus, neither Peter and Andrew, nor the sons of Zebedee, could have misunderstood the call of Christ, or even regarded it as strange."

"*And they left their father.*" These men gave up everything to follow Jesus. (Mark 10: 28.) They had a good business, making enough money to pay servants to help them, and Jesus made no promise to them that he would pay them a salary equal to what they were making in their fishing business. Yet they left their families and business to follow him. What a contrast to the cost of the average discipleship today. How many would be willing to pay such a price for the honor and privilege of being a follower of Jesus today? If such were required today, how many followers would he have?

"*Now about that time Herod the king.*" This was Herod Agrippa I. He was the son of Aristobulus and Berenice, and the grandson of Herod the Great, who killed the babies of Bethlehem. He was thrown in prison by Tiberius, but freed by Caius and given certain provinces over which to rule. Later, in A.D. 39 and 41, he received other provinces, "so that his entire dominions equaled in extent the kingdom of Herod the Great." He died in A.D. 44.

The time referred to in this verse is just before the Passover Feast in A.D. 44.

"*Killed James the brother of John with the sword.*" James is here called the brother of John, but more often in earlier history it is the reverse, John is called the brother of James. (Mark 5: 37; Matt. 17: 1.) This likely denotes a growth on the part of John in the matter of leadership in the church.

James was killed with the sword. "Among the Jews there were four kinds of deaths: (1) *stoning*; (2) *burning*; (3) *killing with the sword*, or *beheading*; (4) *strangling*. The third was a Roman as well as a Jewish mode of punishment. *Killing with the sword* was the punishment which, according to the Talmud, was inflicted on those who drew away the people to any strange worship. . . . James was probably accused of this, and hence the punishment mentioned in the text." (A. Clarke.) "The Jewish law laid down that if seducers to strange worship were few, they should be stoned; if many, they should be beheaded." (Smith.)

The Historical Background

Chronology.—Of the date of the birth of James we know nothing. He first met Jesus in A.D. 26; he received his formal call in 27;

he was ordained as an apostle in 28; he witnessed the transfiguration in 28; it was in the fall of 29 that he wished to call down fire on the village in Samaria; he witnessed the establishment of the church in 30; and died in 44.

Geography.—The place of the healing of the daughter of Jairus, where James was honored by being one of three allowed to witness the miracle, was undoubtedly Capernaum. This was a city on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, in the most crowded and prosperous district of Palestine in that day. It was the home of our Lord (Mark 2; 1) after he left Nazareth to carry on his public ministry; it was the home of the Roman army in northern Palestine, and as such was said to have been a very wicked city. Jesus pronounced a curse upon it (Matt. 11: 23), and so complete was its destruction that modern travelers are very much divided as to its location.

The context of Mark 1: 19, 20 says the place of these incidents was "by the sea of Galilee." McGarvey says it was near Capernaum. Smith's Bible *Dictionary* says Zebedee, the father of James, lived in Bethsaida, which was another city on the western shore of that sea. This was the home of Peter and Andrew. (John 1: 44.) This town also came under the curse of the Lord as not living up to its opportunities. (Matt. 11: 21.) So we read, "Its name and all memory of its site has perished, no positive identification can be made of it." (Smith.)

The place of the death of James was Jerusalem. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her!" (Matt. 23: 37.)

Character.—Little is known of the character of James, except that he and his brother were called "Sons of thunder." This name, like Peter, had a meaning relative to his character. But whether this name suggests power and activity, or whether it suggests a desire for vengeance, is not easy to determine. James had ambition to be high in the organization of the kingdom which he expected Jesus to establish on this earth, for he, through his mother, asked for a high position. (Matt. 20: 20, 21.) He was a man of courage, daring to live for his Lord and preach his gospel in Jerusalem in spite of the danger to which he finally fell. He was the first of the apostles to pay the supreme sacrifice for Jesus, while his brother was the last to die. Scholars are inclined to accept a tradition which says his prosecutor was so moved by the confession James made during his trial that he too confessed faith in Christ. Then James and his prosecutor were taken off together to be killed. While on the way the prosecutor asked James to forgive him, and James kissed him, saying, "Peace be to thee," after which they were both beheaded. This story is told by Eusebius, who is usually very reliable; he got the story from Clement of Alexandria who dates back to A.D. 195.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments ·

Children in these departments will readily respond to the idea of being helpers and companions of Jesus. James gave up all to become the helper and companion of Jesus, and your children can get the idea and form the resolution never to love anything of this

world so much that they would not be willing to give it up to help Jesus.

From this it will be easy to lead them to see that doing things for people in need is doing those things for Jesus. (Matt. 25: 40.) So gathering and carrying flowers to the sick, saving their nickels and dimes for the orphans, and many other things they can do will make them helpers and companions of Jesus in his great work just as much as was James.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Boys and girls usually become Christians when they are in these departments. You likely have some in your classes who have not yet obeyed the gospel. You have a fine opportunity to use the response of James to his call to follow Jesus to lead these young people to accept the call of the Lord today. James did not wait until there would be no cost attached to obeying the call; he did not wait for a convenient time: his response was immediate, and he did not look back with regrets. If you will take time to exhort and persuade your boys and girls to become Christians, you can have the joy of seeing them respond to your teaching and exhortation. There is no greater joy in this world.

James and John wished to call down fire from heaven upon those who rejected Jesus. They had the spirit of revenge and retaliation. This spirit is foreign to Christianity. You may use this material as an opportunity to bring a good lesson on the loving, forgiving, non-resisting character Jesus would have us be.

Young People and Adult Departments

The teachers of young people have a fine opportunity in this lesson to lead their pupils to heed the call of the mission fields for workers, and for people to support full-time workers in those fields. Christian young people need to go into mission fields of the north, both east and west, establish homes and businesses and do their part teaching others, and supporting teachers full time in those fields. Surely James, who gave up his business completely, would have been willing to move his business into another section of the country to carry on the work of the Lord. There are many young people who can be fired with the vision and the zeal to do that much for Jesus. The reason no more have done that is simply because no teaching has been done at the right point in the lives of young people.

Adults who do not have the ability to go out and preach may see in James an example of sacrifice to follow. James gave up his business, but these people can give their business to the Lord by seeing to it that the profits, above the necessities of life, are used in the Lord's work. The only way those profits can be taken to heaven is to use them in the Lord's work. Profits kept and enjoyed, and in which people learn to trust, though willed to the Lord's work at death, will not be counted by the Lord as properly used.

Topics for Discussion

1. Each disciple of the Lord is to be a fisher of men. It is generally thought the preachers only have that duty. But each Christian according to his ability and opportunity must work at

the task of bringing other people to Jesus. If each one would save one each year, millions could be saved in a very few years.

2. James served the Lord seventeen years. His brother, John, served the Lord for about seventy years. But that does not make James a failure and John a great success. The length of time we spend in the Master's service does not determine whether we have been a success or failure; but rather how we serve while we are permitted to live on earth will determine our standing in the last great day.

3. The prejudice of the people in that Samaritan village who refused to receive Jesus was their own undoing. They did not deprive Jesus of any good; their rejection did him no harm. But they lost infinitely by not receiving them into their village. Their sick could have been healed, the lame made to walk, the deaf to hear and the dumb to talk. And these works would have produced faith in their hearts that would have led to their salvation. But their prejudice made all these things impossible. So today people who refuse to accept Christ are doing so to their own hurt; they rob themselves of innumerable blessings in this life and of eternal happiness in the world to come. The Lord pitied them, but passed on to other cities. So the Lord today does not destroy those who reject him, he pities them and goes on to work on others, hoping their stubborn will may yet be melted by his kindness and long-suffering.

Lesson IV—April 27, 1947

JOHN, THE BELOVED

The Lesson Text

Matt. 4: 21, 22

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.

Luke 9: 28-36

28 And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, that he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray.

29 And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling.

30 And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Mo'ses and E-li'jah;

31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Je-ru'sa-lem.

32 Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: but when they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they were parting from him, Peter said unto Je'sus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Mo'ses, and one for E-li'jah: not knowing what he said.

34 And while he said these things, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him.

36 And when the voice came, Je'sus was found alone. And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen.

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

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 Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus 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 Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 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 Si'mon Is-car'i-ot.

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

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son!"* (John 19: 26.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 1: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

- April 21. M..... John Called (Matt. 4: 18-22)
- April 22. T..... Jesus Loved John (John 13: 21-30)
- April 23. W..... John at the Trial of Jesus (John 18: 15-18)
- April 24. T..... John at the Crucifixion (John 19: 25-27)
- April 25. F..... John Visits the Tomb of Jesus (John 20: 1-10)
- April 26. S..... John in Prison with Peter (Acts 4: 1-4)
- April 27. S..... John Imprisoned on Patmos (Rev. 1: 1-10)

Lesson Subject Explained

Five times in his record of the gospel John speaks of himself as that one whom Jesus loved. The first time is in connection with the supper where it is said that the disciple whom Jesus loved was reclining in his bosom. (John 13: 23.) The second time the expression is used to describe the one who was standing by the mother of Jesus at the crucifixion. (John 19: 26.) The third time we find it used was when the women told the news of the resurrection to Peter and that disciple whom Jesus loved. (John 20: 2.) The fourth occurrence of the expression is to tell who recognized the Lord on that early morning when he came to his disciples on the Sea of Galilee. (John 21: 7.) And the last time the expression is used is in the last conversation which the writer records, where Peter asked what was to become of that disciple whom Jesus loved. (John 21: 20.) And here he identifies this one with that one who leaned on the Lord's breast at the supper, and in verse twenty-four he tells us that this is the disciple who "wrote these things." Some years ago the president of the United States recognized certain politicians as "My good friends." These men counted it a high honor to be the good friend of the president and to know that he was willing to call them that publicly. How infinitely greater it must have been to be the one whom Jesus loved. Peter was the leader of the group, and James was usually mentioned in the list before John indicating, perhaps, that he was more of a leader than John, but neither of them had a more enviable position than John, the beloved. Only one other man shared this honor with John. When Lazarus was about to die, his sisters sent word to Jesus that "he whom thou lovest is sick." And when he wept at the grave, the Jews said, "Behold how he loved him." (John 11: 3, 36.)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of Matt. 4: 21, 22 we learn that Jesus had recently moved his home from Nazareth to Capernaum. (Matt. 3: 13.) This city was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, on which sea two pairs of brothers, Peter and Andrew and James and John, were fishing for a living. And as Jesus walked by the sea he saw them engaged in this business, and told them to put out into the deep for a draught. Weary from fruitless toil all night long, they felt it not worth the time to try again, but at the Master's word they would do it. They were amazed at the result, for they caught more than the boats could take to shore. Then Jesus said, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." (Luke 5: 1-11.)

In the context of Luke 9: 28-36 it is said that Jesus and his disciples had been in Caesarea Philippi, where Peter had made the good confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16: 13-20); and that Jesus had foretold his suffering at Jerusalem, which Peter thought could never happen to him, and for which he was severely rebuked (Matt. 16: 21-28; Luke 9: 22-27). Dwelling upon such thoughts had surely done something for the morale of the group, and the transfiguration of Jesus would put confidence and hope in their hearts.

Too much is crowded into the context of John 13: 21-26 to mention. The busiest week of the life of our Lord had just been spent in Jerusalem in constant controversy with his enemies. Then Jesus would have a few hours with his disciples and keep the Feast of the Passover. Peter and John had been sent into the city to make preparation in the home of one who was friendly to Jesus. And during the supper Jesus had girded himself with a towel and washed the feet of his disciples to teach them the lesson of humility which place seekers so much needed. Then when he resumed his seat at the table, he revealed the fact that one of them would betray him to his enemies.

From the context of John 19: 26, 27 we learn all those predictions which Jesus made concerning his treatment in Jerusalem had come true. Judas had betrayed him, the Jews had condemned him, and Pilate had allowed them to force him to sentence Jesus to death by crucifixion. He had borne his cross toward Calvary until he fell and another was compelled to carry it the rest of the distance. Jesus had been nailed to his cross, and was hanging between heaven and earth as if he were fit for neither. It was during the first three hours of his agony on the cross that he uttered the words of our lesson text. He had already asked the Father to forgive them, for they knew not what they did. (Luke 23: 34.) And he had promised the sympathetic thief that he would go with him that day to Paradise. (Luke 23: 43.)

Golden Text Explained

When Mary brought the baby Jesus to the temple for the first time, an old man named Simeon, who had been allowed to live until he could see the Lord, took the baby in his arms and, among other things, told Mary, "This child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul." As she stood by the cross, supported in her deepest sorrow by a small group of friends, this

prophecy of Simeon was fulfilled. "Christ yearned over his mother whose heart was being pierced by his agony, and with filial anxiety entrusted her, not to those brothers of his—whatever was the degree of relationship to him—who, nevertheless, did not believe on him, but to the disciple whom he loved."

The implication of the word *woman* instead of *mother* in this verse has been much disputed. He used the same term in the beginning of his ministry. (John 2: 4.) In neither place can it be thought to imply any disrespect on the part of Jesus for his mother for that would be a sin, a violation of one of the commandments to honor mother. The first use of the term at Cana was certainly to let her know that she was not entitled to obedience from him in matters pertaining to his work. She was not the mother of his divine nature and must not expect to control him in his work. His Father alone could do that. So here his use of the term *woman* is to remind her of the termination of their human relationship. She was no longer his mother; he was no longer her son. He was now her Lord and Savior; she was his blood bought and washed servant. But out of his human love for her and his anxiety for her welfare he would give her a son who would care for her and be the comfort to her that only a believer in him could be. What a wonderful example of human love and devotion in spite of his own personal agony and suffering on the cross! Surely it behooves each of us to be careful for the happiness of her who brought us into this world and cared for us when we were unable to care for ourselves.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Straightway left the boat and their father" Straightway means immediately, without delay; there was no lack of decision, and no division of their affection. Next, they left two things, or made a twofold sacrifice. In leaving their boat they gave up their business. A machinist could as well afford to leave his machine shop as a fisherman could leave his boat. Then in leaving their father they broke their home ties; they put Jesus before home and parents. (Matt. 10: 37, 38; Luke 14: 25-27.)

"The fashion of his countenance was altered" Whether Jesus assumed the form and glory of Deity or was changed for the moment into what the resurrected and heavenly form will be is much disputed, and perhaps we can never know. "It was the divine glory within him manifesting itself through his humanity; and yet not that glory of Deity which no man hath seen or can see; but such a manifestation that the disciples might in some degree behold the glory and majesty of Deity through the veil of his flesh." (*Pulpit Commentary*.) This splendor and glory even imparted something to his garments, making them so white and dazzling that no fuller, tailor, could improve on them.

"Moses and Elijah; who appeared in glory." Moses died and was buried. (Deut. 34.) Elijah was taken up into heaven without experiencing death. (2 Kings 2.) They both appeared in glorious forms, or bodies, indicating that whether we die or live unto the coming of the Lord and are changed (1 Cor. 15: 51), we shall be in the same glorious bodies, and these shall be like that of our Lord (Phil. 3: 21; 1 John 3: 2). Moses was the lawgiver and Elijah was the representative of the prophets. Their presence here, their going

away and leaving Jesus, and the voice of God saying, "This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him," teaches us that the law and the prophets were fulfilled in Christ, and that we are no longer to hear them as our authority in religion, but we are to hear Christ and be subject to him. (Acts 3: 22, 23.)

"*He it is, for whom, I shall dip the sop.*" McGarvey says, "It was a mark of special respect and courtesy to thus dip a sop and hand it to a guest." Clarke says, "It is probable that the rest of the disciples considered it as given to Judas that he might hurry to do some work . . . and not to finish his supper in the regular manner."

"Then *entered Satan into him.*" "At that moment, as though goodness was turned into wrath, and the conflict with evil closed, the incarnated fiend resolved that he would wait no longer. . . . The evangelist clearly saw what he thus described—he saw the malign and unrelenting expression on Judas' face; he suspected that some devilish plot was hatched, some hideous purpose finally formed. It is the evangelist's way of saying what he personally saw and afterwards concluded. Up to that moment of supreme forbearance the character was not irretrievably damned, but *now* he had sinned against knowledge and love, and even Jesus gives him up." How did Satan enter Judas? In one of two ways: (1) Judas became demon possessed as was the case with many of that day, so as to be wholly under the control of the devil. (Mark 5: 1-9.) (2) Judas resigned himself fully to the influence of Satan, and hardened his heart to do, regardless of consequences, what he was being tempted to do.

"*Judas had the bag.*" Judas was the treasurer of the group. (John 12: 6.) People made contributions to Jesus and his disciples for their support while they gave their time to their work of teaching and preaching. (Luke 8: 3.)

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—As to the date of the birth of John we have no certain information. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* says he was about the same age of Jesus. Adam Clarke thinks he was about twenty-five years old when he was called to be a disciple, A.D. 27, which would have made him at least six years younger than Jesus. The date of his death is uncertain, but it is agreed by all that he lived to be about one hundred years old. He wrote his gospel about A.D. 86, and the book of Revelation about A.D. 96 or 97. The date for Matt. 4 is A.D. 27; for Luke 9, A.D. 28; and for John 13 and 19, A.D. 29.

GEOGRAPHY.—The place of the events of Matt. 4: 21, 22 was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, treated in the preceding lesson.

As to the place of the transfiguration we find this interesting note in *Pulpit Commentary*: "Tradition, based on the fairly early authority of Cyril of Jerusalem, and of Jerome (fourth century), speaks of the mountain at Tabor, but the solitude evidently necessary for the manifestation would have been sought for in vain on Mount Tabor, a hill which rises abruptly from the plain of Esdraelon, not very far from Nazareth to the southeast, for the summit of Tabor at that time was crowned with a fortress. The mountain most probably was one of the lower peaks of Hermon, at no great distance from

the fountain source of the Jordan and Caesarea Philippi, in which district we know Jesus and his companions had been teaching only a few days before."

The place of the last supper was in Jerusalem. But we have an interesting fact in that Jesus told Peter and John to ask for the *guest-chamber* and they would be shown a *large upper room*. The guest-chamber, *kataluma*, was a place on the ground floor where pack animals were unloaded; it was a service porch. The upper room, *anagaion*, was the place of honor, where the Lord and his disciples could be to themselves and not be disturbed by people passing through.

The place of the crucifixion, where John was given the care of Mary, is not known with certainty. It was called Golgotha, the place of a skull. It was outside the city. (Heb. 13: 12; John 19: 20.) Edersheim thinks it was just outside the Damascus gate north of the city.

CHARACTER.—John has been called the apostle of love. He did have a heart of love for his Master, a love which caused him to give about seventy-five years of his life wholly to him. He was so loyal to Jesus that he forbade a man who walked not with them to cast out demons (Mark 9: 38); and wanted to call down fire upon people who rejected Jesus (Luke 9: 54). But he so far conquered this spirit of vengeance that he was willing to make a trip to Samaria to lay his hands on some of the people that they might receive the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8: 14-17.) John was capable of intolerance and persecution, but under the guidance of the meek and lowly, the merciful and long-suffering Christ he was transformed into the apostle of love.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The loyalty of John to Jesus and his mother is a fine lesson for these departments. The other sons of Mary did not believe in Jesus, so he did not wish to leave his mother in their care. He could depend on John, and the record tells us that "from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home." Tradition tells us that he braved the persecutions in Jerusalem to stay with Mary and care for her there rather than go to safer places. John was so loyal to Jesus that he wanted to call down fire on people who rejected Jesus. From this the lesson can be taught that we should not allow our loyalty to cause us to do wrong.

At the last supper John sat next to Jesus, and part of the time reclined on his breast. In this John enjoyed both the place of honor and the affection of the Lord to a degree not enjoyed by the other apostles. Each child should strive to live in such way, and do such things for Jesus, that he will be entitled to the honor and affection of Jesus.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

It will not be out of place to stress in this lesson, as in the last, that we should answer the call of Jesus early in life and follow him as long as we live on earth. John was young when he began following Jesus, and he lived to be about one hundred years old. During that long period he never saw cause to regret his early choice; and

late in life he wrote his letters encouraging young people to live for the Lord.

John loved the Lord devoutly, yet he was not effeminate. Boys of this age are inclined to think one must be weak and effeminate to be a gentle, humble, and lowly Christian. But John was a man's man, willing to suffer even unto death without wavering. Yet he was gentle and tender, even affectionate in his love for Jesus, and later for the mother of Jesus.

To strengthen the faith of these young people a study of the transfiguration should be made. First, are the records of Matthew, Mark, and Luke true? Peter refers to the events as being something to strengthen his faith. (2 Pet. 1: 16-18.) These records were written while the eyewitnesses were still alive, so if they were not true, they would have been denied. Next, the records being true, Moses and Elijah were called from the other world for a talk with Jesus; they still live, they are not unconscious. So there must be a place where departed spirits live while awaiting the resurrection. Next, Moses and Elijah had departed this life hundreds of years before this event. Therefore life after the death of the body is much longer in duration than life on this earth; hence we ought to attach more importance to it, and make the most careful and prayerful preparation for it.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lesson above is good for these groups too. Some of them are old enough that they do not have many years at best to stay here, and they should double their efforts to be faithful and useful in the Master's kingdom these few remaining years that they make their salvation just as sure as possible.

It would be well to assign someone the task of making a special study of the transfiguration and the lessons it teaches, and write a paper, or make a report to the class.

Another special report which would be helpful is on the Passover supper. A good work to consult is *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, by Edersheim, Vol. II, Chapters IX, X.

Topics for Discussion

1. Jesus said of his betrayer, "Woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born." (Mark 14: 21.) If, as some claim, this life is all, and there is no hereafter, how could this statement be true? And if the universalist is right, and all will be saved regardless of his life here, how could that statement be true?

2. Did Judas eat the Passover meal? Did he stay in the room until Jesus had instituted the Lord's supper? Put the four accounts together for a clear picture of the events of that evening. Consult *Fourfold Gospel*, by McGarvey and Pendleton, pages 651-657.

3. How early in his ministry did Jesus know that Judas would betray him? (John 6: 64, 71.) Can you harmonize this foreknowledge of Jesus with the thought that Judas was responsible for his actions, and that he would suffer for them. Remember that foreknowledge is not foreordination. Jesus knew the Jews would crucify him (Matt. 16: 21), yet they are rebuked by the apostles as the murderers of Jesus (Acts 2: 23; 3: 14, 15).

Lesson V—May 4, 1947

MATTHEW, THE PUBLICAN

The Lesson Text

Matt. 9: 9

9 And as Je'sus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Mat'thew, sitting at the place of toll: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

Luke 5: 27-32

27 And after these things he went forth, and beheld a publican, named Le'vi, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he forsook all, and rose up and followed him.

29 And Le'vi made him a great least in his house: and there was a great multitude of publicans and of others that were sitting at meat with them.

30 And the Phar'i-sees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with the publicans and sinners?

31 And Je'sus answering said unto them. They that are in health have no need of a physician; but they that are sick.

32 I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"* (Matt. 11: 19a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 10: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

April 28. M.....	Matthew Called (Matt. 9: 1-9)
April 29. T.....	Matthew Formerly Called Levi (Mark 2: 13, 14)
April 30. W.....	Matthew Makes a Feast (Luke 5: 29-32)
May 1. T.....	Matthew One of the Apostles (Luke 6: 12-19)
May 2. F.....	Matthew a Publican (Luke 5: 27, 28)
May 3. S.....	Mentioned After the Resurrection (Acts 1: 12-14)
May 4. S.....	Jesus Eats with Publicans (Mark 2: 15-17)

Lesson Subject Explained

Matthew was a publican, which means a tax collector. He alone styles himself "the publican," though Luke mentions the fact that he was a publican. The word was a "title of infamy" and Matthew does not hide it, though the other evangelists show courtesy by omitting it. "The publicans, properly so called, were persons who farmed the Roman taxes, and they were usually, in later times, Roman knights, and persons of wealth and credit. They employed under them inferior officers, natives of the provinces where the taxes were collected, called properly portitores, to which class Matthew no doubt belonged. These latter were notorious for impudent exactions everywhere; but to the Jews they were especially odious, for they were the very spot where the Roman chain galled them, the visible proof of the degraded state of their nation. As a rule, none but the lowest would accept such an unpopular office, and thus the class became more worthy of the hatred with which in any case the Jews would have regarded it." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

Since the office of publican was so despised by the Jews, and especially the upper and ruling classes, we can appreciate the courage of Jesus in calling Matthew to be his disciple, and in eating with the publicans and sinners. He had the courage to do right regardless of whether it was the popular thing to do. His utter disregard for

public opinion suggests two things: (1) that the accepted standards of his day were both unrighteous and unholy, and (2) that he realized he had sufficient power to succeed in spite of the opposition, and that he could give to his kingdom such power and leadership to survive and grow in spite of such ideals.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of Matt. 9: 9 we learn that Jesus had been in the country of the Gadarenes healing and teaching. It was there he drove a legion of demons from one man. Leaving that country, at the request of the people themselves, he returned, by water, to "his own city," Capernaum. When the people heard he was in town, they brought a man sick of palsy to him to be healed. As usual, the rulers among the Jews were incensed and more determined to get rid of Jesus, but the common people were made to fear and glorify God. And as Jesus left the house where this miracle was performed he saw Matthew sitting in his place of business and called him to be his disciple.

Each of the first three evangelists place the call of Matthew, or Levi, between the story of the healing of the paralytic and the feast which Matthew gave and to which many of the publicans were invited, which was attended by our Lord and for which he was severely criticized by the leading Jews. Mark uses the name Levi the son of Alphaeus. (Mark 2: 14.) Some think he has in mind another person, since Matthew is nowhere else spoken of as the son of Alphaeus. But since the call of Matthew and Levi is by all three records placed between the healing of the paralytic and the feast given by Matthew, and since we have no other mention of two persons being called at that time, it is reasonable to conclude that the two names refer to the same person. And it was common for men to have two names, as Simon and Peter, John and Mark, Joseph and Barnabas, Saul and Paul.

Golden Text Explained

Our Golden Text should be studied in connection with the preceding verse to which it stands in contrast. "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon." In these verses Jesus was showing the inconsistencies of the Jews and their criticisms. They criticized John because he had no part with them in their social life. John had no taste for such things. He lived alone in the desert too long to have any desire for social companionship. His work was to call a nation to repentance, not to set an example for people of succeeding ages to follow in social as well as religious life.

But Jesus came taking part with the people in their social activities. If they did not like John for being unsocial, surely they will appreciate Jesus for being social. But they had no more use for him than they had for John. When they got what they wanted in John, they did not want what they got. Jesus would be social, but he would also be pure in his social activities, and that excited their jealousy and malice. Jesus would not play favorites and play up to the rich, and "bow and scrape" to the self-constituted leaders, so they set themselves to invent malicious falsehoods. According to them he was a glutton and a winebibber.

The unsympathetic will not be pleased, regardless of what is done. There are some who were "born in the objective case, and the kickative mood"; they are determined to find fault. The Jews did not like John, so they picked out his austerity and asceticism as targets for criticism. They had no use for Jesus, so they picked out his freedom in social activities as the point to assail. And if he had not been socially inclined, they would have found something else in him to criticize. Their tribe is yet in existence, even in the church. Such disposition is to be prayerfully avoided.

The charge that Jesus was the friend, in the sense of constant companion and associate, of the publicans and sinners was as untrue as their charge that he was a glutton and winebibber. The bosom friends of Jesus were such characters as Lazarus and his sisters. When he longed for human sympathy and companionship, he did not go to the publicans and sinners. But his work of healing the sin-sick of this world led him to people of all social levels. He justified his action on the ground that a physician must make contact with those who are sick. (Matt. 9: 12.)

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Jesus passed by from thence." This refers to his leaving the house where the paralytic was healed, going from there among the people where he would have opportunity to do good.

"Sitting at the place of toll" Booths were built, some of branches of trees simply as a shade from the burning sun, while others were of more substantial material. These booths were conveniently located with reference to the trade the particular publican gathered. If he gathered his tax from fishermen, or other occupations related to the sea, his booth was near the water. If he gathered his tax from produce being carried across the country, he was situated at the edge of town on the highway. If his tax was taken from the farm produce locally, his booth was at the market place. Matthew seems to have collected his taxes from those whose occupations were connected with the sea, for Mark tells us that Jesus was going along the seaside when he called Matthew. (Mark 2: 13.)

"Follow me. And he arose, and followed him" Those who wish to present a dramatic picture of Matthew's response to the Lord's call usually present him as leaving the tax booth at a moment's notice and never coming back to it. But this would not have been the right thing to do. He had money for which to account to his superior and books of record to put into shape and turn over to his successor. But he did make a definite, clear-cut decision at the time, a decision from which he never wavered, and surely he lost no time in unnecessary delay, nor fooled away his time at unimportant matters.

"He forsook all" Matthew does not mention his sacrifice, but Luke does. This is just another instance of the humility of the writers of the Bible, and another indication that the book was written by good men. And if written by good men, it is true, for good men would not work up such a perfect scheme of deception and foist it upon the world.

"A great multitude of publicans." Not being acquainted with their system of taxing, it might appear that Luke was exaggerating the number of publicans who attended Matthew's feast. But when we learn how many different kinds of taxes people had to pay, and

how many men were used to gather the tax, the word *multitude* for that rich district around Capernaum, where both land and sea products were taxed, seems not out of place. What was called regular dues consisted of ground, income, and poll tax. Then there was import and export duty. There was a tax on all that was bought and sold, something like a transaction tax. And there was a tax on every separate item as wheels, axles, etc. One had to pay a tax to cross a bridge, enter the market, or handle pack animals. Modern scholars have not been able to identify all the names of things which records say were taxed, according to Edersheim. Ad valorem duty amounted to as much as five per cent, and tax on articles of luxury was twelve and one-half per cent.

"Pharisees and their scribes murmured" This murmuring seems to have taken place while the feast was in progress. Did Matthew invite them? It is not at all probable that he did. But according to authorities on customs of that day, anybody and everybody who wished could attend a feast regardless of where it was given, or by whom given. The uninvited could not partake of the feast, but they often carried on conversation with those who were eating, and while they were eating. Simon, the Pharisee, gave Jesus a feast, and a sinful woman brought a cruse of ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus, wept until she could wash his feet with her tears; and Jesus carried on a conversation with her. (Luke 7: 36-50.) So the Pharisees attended this feast and stood around criticizing Jesus to his disciples. How human! Why did they not address their remarks to Jesus? Not many people today have the courage to criticize others to their face, but make a lot of noise delivering their criticism to others.

"Jesus answering said unto them." If the Pharisees thought they could criticize Jesus to his disciples without a reply from him, they were sadly mistaken. With one withering blast of sound logic and sarcasm Jesus silenced them for that time. People in good health do not need a physician. Why should he spend his time with the Pharisees when they did not realize their need of a physician? He came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Why waste time with the Pharisees when they would not be convinced they were unrighteous? Those who today think Jesus never took time to debate his cause know little more about him and his methods than did these Pharisees.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Nothing is known of the date of Matthew's birth. It has been suggested that Jesus would not appoint a group of aged men to be his apostles, for both the responsibility and the physical exertions would be too much for them. If any weight is to be given that consideration, we would conclude that Matthew was not much older than Jesus. His gospel was written some time before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Scholars used to think it was the first gospel written, but Mark is now conceded to have written first. Most present-day authorities in such matters say this gospel was written about A.D. 58 to 60.

Matthew received his call to discipleship in A.D. 27. He is mentioned in the Bible three times by the name of Levi, and five times as Matthew. The last mention is when he is said to be among the apostles in Jerusalem while waiting for the Holy Spirit. Of his

work in the spread of the gospel and the growth of the church nothing is revealed.

GEOGRAPHY.—Again we must say there is little to be known as a certainty with reference to the place where Matthew lived. We can safely say that he lived in Galilee, for the record says Jesus was in that section while this feast and other things in the context were transpiring. (Matt. 9: 1; Luke 5: 1.) He was walking by the sea when he called Matthew from his place of toll, and that could mean nothing else than the Sea of Galilee when in that section. But whether he lived in Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin, or some other city on, or near, the lake would be a mere guess.

CHARACTER.—The name Matthew means *a gift*, some say, *a gift from Jehovah*. The word Levi means *he who cleaves to the old ways*, according to *Pulpit Commentary*. Leah, Jacob's wife, named her third son Levi because she believed Jacob would love her more, since she had borne him three sons, than he loved Rachel. She said, "This time will my husband be joined unto me." (Gen. 29: 34.) The name Levi is from a Hebrew word which means *to adhere*.

But what of Matthew's character? Again, we do not know with certainty; but if he was even similar to the average publican, tax collector, there was not much good in him. One writer said before a man could become a publican he must do two things. First, he must "sell" his country. The publican was the servant and agent of that mighty Rome which had robbed the Jews of their freedom and planted the iron heel upon their necks. He was the embodiment and representative of that foreign tyrant. For a Jew to become a taxgatherer, to wear the Roman livery, to become the hireling of the Roman government, was to commit the greatest apostasy; it was to sin against that glorious blessed future foretold for the Jewish nation by seer and Psalmist; it was to become the tool of the oppressor.

"And to become a publican, in the second place, a man had to sell his conscience. The publican's trade was a dishonest trade. . . . The taxes of a town or district or province would be sold to the highest bidder, and that highest bidder was then allowed to squeeze out of the people of his district what money he could. It was a system that encouraged corruption and extortion. The more the publican wrung out of the people, the quicker he grew rich."

However, there was one publican who was not this kind of man. Zacchaeus was chief publican. That is, he had bought a large concession from Rome and was then selling, or subletting, tax districts or concessions to ordinary publicans like Matthew. (Luke 19: 1-9.) So it is possible for Matthew to have been an honest man in spite of his disreputable office. Certainly our Lord saw within him the possibilities of a representative of the gospel. It is also probable that Jesus had known him for some time and had been talking with him about becoming a disciple. It is hardly reasonable that Jesus called him the first time he ever saw him, and that Matthew followed Jesus without more than two words, "Follow me," passing between them. Whatever Matthew had been in his past life, he had learned enough from the teaching of Jesus, and had been so influenced by it, that he was fit to be a disciple at the time of the call, and possessed sufficient worth within to be material fit for an apostle.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The feeling of sympathy is easily stirred in children of these departments. It should be stirred and cultivated often, for sympathy for the oppressed and unfortunate is a Christlike trait. Why Matthew got into the tax collecting business, disreputable as it was, no one knows. But once in it he was hated and despised by all Jews. He had about the same chance of being loved by Jews as a dogcatcher has of being loved by boys who have lost their dogs. But Jesus, being able to read the hearts of men, knew Matthew was capable of better things. He could call Matthew and so render a great service to him, and to the world through him. But if he called him, he would bring down upon his head the criticism and hatred of the Jews. He was willing to pay the price, for he would not allow prejudice and unrighteous standards to keep him from doing what was right. The sympathy Jesus had for the unfortunate caused him to suffer many things he could have avoided.

To add interest the teacher can lay out a scene on the sand table with the publican's booth near the sea, with men paying their taxes on fish; others in ships on the sea weighing anchor near by to pay their tax on their imports.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Matthew presents a fine opportunity to teach a lesson on choosing occupations. In the first place young people should not choose an occupation that is dishonorable. Strictly speaking, it is legal to sell beer and whiskey, but one can never be worth anything in the church who has such an occupation. People generally do not respect them as being worth anything to the community, but rather an enemy to helpless women and children who go to bed hungry because all the breadwinner's income went for liquor instead of bread. Next, young people ought to choose an occupation which will make it convenient for them to attend all services of the church on Sunday. One will find it difficult enough to grow spiritually who takes advantage of all the means of growth provided in these periods of worship; but one who is denied these means of spiritual growth is likely to grow lukewarm and finally become discouraged and quit. These principles are vital to the proper guidance of young people, and the teacher should take advantage of every opportunity to impress them upon youths so they will choose wisely the occupations they will follow through life.

Young People and Adult Departments

Read the lesson presented above; it is good for these groups. If one has a business which is disreputable, is he willing to quit it that he may follow Jesus? Matthew had that love for, and faith in, our Lord that he was willing to do that.

The Jews, who criticized John for being unsocial, then criticized Jesus for being inclined to partake in social events, are a good example of what church members ought not to be. Example of this can be supplied by those in the class, and it is possible that some examples might be found close enough to home to correct some

situation hindering the church. Frank, open, but kind, discussion of such situations will do good.

The Jews who offered their criticism of Jesus to his disciples, and to our Lord's back, are another fine example of what church members should not be. It is sometime necessary to offer criticism, but it should be done kindly and face to face with the one being criticized.

It would be worth while for one in the class to be assigned a special report on Roman tax methods. What was taxed, how much was the tax, how it was gathered, and the character and method used by collectors will all be of interest in these days of high taxes.

Topics for Discussion

1. Should a man's occupation be taken into consideration when his worth to the church and community is being determined?
2. If Christ's teaching could make a Christian and an apostle out of a publican, are we justified in refusing, or neglecting, to work among outcasts today?

Lesson VI—May 11, 1947

MARK, THE USEFUL MINISTER

The Lesson Text

Acts 12: 12, 25; 15: 36-39

12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying.

25 And Bar'na-bas and Saul returned from Je-ru'sa-lem, when they had fulfilled their ministration, taking with them John whose surname was Mark.

36 And after some days Paul said unto Bar'na-bas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and *see* how they fare.

37 And Bar'na-bas was minded to take with them John also, who was called Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pam-phy'l'i-a, and went not with them to the work.

39 And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other, and Bar'na-bas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cy'prus.

Col. 4: 10

10 Ar-is-tar'chus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you. and Mark, the cousin of Bar'na-bas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him).

2 Tim. 4: 11

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

Phile. 24

24 And so do Mark, Ar-is-tar'chus, De'mas, Luke, my fellow-workers.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is useful to me for ministering."* (2 Tim. 4: 11b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Mark 1: 1-8.

Daily Bible Readings

May 5. M.....	Mark the Evangelist (Acts 12: 11-19)
May 6. T.....	Mark Goes to Antioch (Acts 12: 20-25)
May 7. W.....	Mark Turns Back (Acts 13: 13-16)
May 8. T.....	Paul Refuses to Take Mark (Acts 15: 36-41)
May 9. F.....	Mark a Cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4: 7-11)
May 10. S.....	Mark Reconciled to Paul (2 Tim. 4: 9-11)
May 11. S.....	Peter Called Mark "My Son" (1 Pet. 5: 12-14)

Lesson Subject Explained

In the New Testament there are three Greek words which are translated by our word minister. The first, *leitourgos*, means a subordinate public administrator, whether civil or sacerdotal. It is applied to ruler (Rom. 13: 6); it is used of Christ (Heb. 8: 2); and of Paul in his relation to Christ (Rom. 15: 16).

The second word, *diakonos*, is the word from which we get our word deacon and is used in a general sense of any who serve. Paul and Apollos were deacons in this sense. (1 Cor. 3: 5.) Even Christ is spoken of as a deacon in this sense. (Rom. 15: 8; Gal. 2: 17.) Then it is used in the special sense of one who has certain qualifications for serving in the church. (1 Tim. 3: 8-13.)

The third word, *huperetees*, is the term used in our lesson to describe the work of Mark and his relation to those he served. The word literally means *an under-rower*. It contains the idea of actual and personal attendance upon a superior. It was used of the attendant in the synagogue (Luke 4: 20), whose duty it was to take care of the building, produce and replace the books employed in the service, and generally to wait on the officiating priest or teacher." It is used of Mark as the attendant of Barnabas and Saul. (Acts 13: 5.) However in our Golden Text the word *diakonos* is used of his ministering to Paul.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of Acts 12: 12 we have the record of the death of James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, and the imprisonment of Peter by Herod. But an angel of the Lord delivered Peter, taking him past the first and second guards, departing from him when he was in the street. Then Peter went to the home of Mary who was Mark's mother.

The context of Acts 12: 25 shows that Barnabas and Saul (Paul) were in Jerusalem at this time. They had been working with the church in Antioch, nearly two hundred miles north of Jerusalem, and they were told by the prophet Agabus that there would be a great famine over all the world in the days of Claudius. So they determined to send relief to the brethren in Judea, and Barnabas and Saul were entrusted with the delivery of the money. (Acts 11: 27-30.) It was when they had fulfilled this mission that they took Mark with them to Antioch.

Paul and Barnabas had been on one missionary journey in the southern part of what is now called Turkey and had returned to Antioch. While they were there a dispute over the necessity of circumcision and the keeping of the law of Moses came to a head. It was decided to take the matter to Jerusalem for the consideration of the apostles and elders. When that matter had been settled in harmony with the way Paul had been preaching it, Paul suggested

to Barnabas that they go on another missionary journey. Barnabas was ready for another journey, but wished to take Mark again. To this Paul objected because he had started on the first journey, but for some unrevealed reason he turned back at Perga in Pamphylia. (Acts 13: 13.)

It is fairly well agreed by scholars that Paul was freed from his first imprisonment of which we read in the last chapter of Acts, and that his imprisonment mentioned in his second letter to Timothy was at a later date. Only Luke was with him. Demas had left him for the love of this world, Crescens had gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia; these were missions in the interest of the church on which Paul had no doubt sent them. Paul longed to see and enjoy the service of both Timothy and Mark before his departure which he knew was just at hand, so he urged Timothy to "give diligence to come shortly unto me." (2 Tim. 4: 9.)

In the letter which Paul wrote to Philemon, concerning his slave Onesimus, Mark is mentioned as sending his salutation. This letter was written before the second letter to Timothy, about the time he wrote Colossians, A.D. 62. At that time Mark was with him in Rome. Demas was with him at that time, but had forsaken him when Second Timothy was written.

Golden Text Explained

In order to understand fully the meaning of this Golden Text we must remember that Mark had started to go on a missionary journey with Paul, and, for some reason Paul did not think worthy. Mark turned around and went back home. (Acts 13: 13.) For this display of cowardice or fickleness Paul refused to allow him to start with him on the second journey. Undoubtedly Paul thought he was still unstable as he was before, so would leave them in the pinch again. It is very probable that Paul thought he would never be able to overcome his weakness, and, for that reason, was through with him so far as working with him was concerned. But Barnabas, Mark's kinsman, either had more patience with him, or more insight as to his real character, and he was willing to give him another chance.

It was in A.D. 45 when Mark turned back from the missionary work. The language of our Golden Text was written in about A.D. 66. So Mark had had plenty of time to overcome any weakness he had, and to prove to be a profitable minister of the gospel. It was a commendable thing in Mark to try again. Failure is bad; but to fail and be content to be a failure, and be recognized by all as a complete failure, is inexcusable. Mark was not that kind. The very fact that he wanted to go on the second missionary journey with Paul and Barnabas is an indication that he was not content to be looked upon as a failure; he was asking for another opportunity, and undoubtedly he was determined to make good this time and erase the stain of failure on his reputation. He evidently made good with Barnabas. The news got to Paul that Mark had made good. Then Paul used him in his first imprisonment at Rome. And now he has proved himself so faithful and profitable to Paul that Paul actually sends word for him to come to him in his second imprisonment. What a triumph for Mark! What an encouragement all through the ages to those young men and young women, who have

studied and failed in early life, to try again. "By the grace of God he had been made anew, the strain of weakness had been eradicated, the worthless became profitable, the fickle steadfast, the coward a hero. Yes, the Jesus who took hold of Peter the blasphemer, and turned him into Peter the man of rock; the Jesus who took hold of Saul the persecutor, and changed him into Paul the apostle; the Jesus who took hold of Onesimus the thief, and turned him into Onesimus the brother, took hold of this timid, unreliable, inconstant Mark, and changed him into a faithful man and a brave disciple." And that same Jesus is at work with boys and girls, men and women today. He is as powerful today as then, he is as willing today as then to help us if we will be as determined as was Mark to make good.

Another fine lesson suggested in this Golden Text is the fact that Paul was willing to admit that Mark made good. It is all too human for us to refuse to recognize that one has made good, especially if we have predicted that he will be a failure. If we admit that he has made good, when we predicted he would fail, we virtually admit we were wrong. Some men are not big enough to make that admission. Paul was big enough and generous enough to admit that Mark had made good. He was humble enough about it that he recorded it in his letter so it could be used as an encouragement to the weak and wavering, and to be an example to us that we might help the weak like Barnabas did rather than refuse to use them any more like Paul did.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"The house of Mary the mother of John." There is every indication that this Mary was a woman of some wealth. Her house was large enough to be used by the early church as a place to meet. They were there in a prayer meeting when Peter was released from prison. And if Mark was the "young man" who lost his covering to the mob the night of the betrayal in Gethsemane (Mark 14: 51, 52), and since Mark is the only one who mentions the incident and does not call a name, most scholars think it was he, the linen robe he had indicates quite a degree of wealth. The fact that Mark's home was a meeting place of the leaders of the church gave him an unusual opportunity to grow into the work.

"Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem." Since Barnabas is mentioned first, we conclude that he was the more prominent of the two at this time. This same order is observed in the first part of their first missionary journey. (Acts 13: 1, 2, 7.) But after they left the island of Cyprus we read of "Paul and his company" (Acts 13: 13); and "Paul and Barnabas" (Acts 13: 50).

"Barnabas was minded to take with them John also, who was called Mark." The reason for this dispute has already been mentioned. But the reason why Barnabas wanted to take Mark is very likely explained in the next verse of our text. Mark was a cousin of Barnabas. The King James Version says "sister's son to Barnabas," or nephew. Regardless of which is right, there was blood relationship, and it is surely for that reason that Barnabas was willing to give Mark another chance. If Mark was the son of Barnabas' sister, and this sister had the influence she seems to have had among the leaders, it is entirely possible that she encouraged her brother to oppose Paul's decision.

"*There arose a sharp contention.*" Some have supposed Paul and Barnabas became angry and that they had an ugly fuss about whether they would take Mark with them. This is surely a mistake. We can hardly conceive of these two good men losing sight of the fact that they were Christians. They had worked together so long, and had learned to love each other too deeply for them to be ugly towards each other, or for them to have malice in their hearts over this matter. The Greek word here translated *sharp contention* does not imply an ugly temper. It is used in Heb. 10: 24, "Let us consider one another *to provoke* unto love and good works." Barnabas had sufficient reasons for taking Mark; Paul had logical reasons for not embarrassing the cause through a weak and unstable representative; there were strong positive statements of their feelings and intentions in the matter; their positions were irreconcilable; they parted and chose other partners for work. There were two pairs where there had been but one, and two missionary teams where there had been but one, and twice the amount of work done. It would have been better if the separation could have been made according to a plan worked out through prayer and wise foresight as to the needs of the fields. Many congregations in large cities today are established because "*there arose a sharp contention,*" and twice as much work is done in the city as before. It is sad that the expansion comes in the way it does; but God often works good even out of our mistakes.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Since Mark was called a "young man" when Jesus was thirty-three years old, it is reasonable to suppose that he was not more than twenty years of age. Nor do we know any more about the time of his death. Tradition says he went to Egypt and preached in Alexandria, that he died there, and that in A.D. 827 his body was removed to Venice, where the Senate "adopted the emblem of St. Mark—the lion—for their crest; and when they directed anything to be done, they affirmed that it was by the order of St. Mark."

The date of the events of Acts 12: 12, 25 was A.D. 44; for Acts 15: 36-39 the date is A.D. 53; for Col. 4: 10 and Phile. 24 the date is A.D. 62; and for 2 Tim. 4: 11 the date is A.D. 66.

GEOGRAPHY.—The place of all the events of this lesson which are recorded in Acts was Jerusalem. And it is reasonable to suppose they all took place in the home of Mary. Since she was a relative of Barnabas and had sufficient room to care for him and his friends when he was in town, it is most reasonable to say that Paul and Barnabas were there when they were debating whether they would take Mark along on the second missionary journey.

The place of all the other texts was Rome, and the location in Rome was the prison. Gibbon estimates the population of Rome at that time at one million two hundred thousand. "One half of the population consisted, in all probability, of slaves. The larger part of the remainder consisted of pauper citizens supported in idleness by the miserable system of public gratuities. There appears to have been no middle class and no free industrial population. Side by side with the wretched classes just mentioned was the comparatively small body of the wealthy nobility, of whose luxury and profligacy

we hear so much in the heathen writers of the time." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

CHARACTER.—Something has already been said of the character of Mark. While he was young he was unstable. "Mark stands as a representative of the man who does not know his own mind, the unstable man, the wavering man. His impulses are all for good; but they are not being directed toward the same good."

His environment was good, giving him every opportunity to learn of Jesus and the gospel. His mother was a woman of means; his relative Barnabas was a leader in the church; and he had opportunity to learn from Peter, for Peter calls him "my son." (1 Pet. 5: 13.) As late as A.D. 45 he was this weak, unstable man. He must have been at least thirty-five years old. His opportunities all his life and the fact that he was a mature man certainly gave Paul ground for thinking he would never make good.

But good environment, good teaching, and good examples added to a good background of godly parents usually win. Mark responded to these influences and overcame his weakness, so much so that he became known as the "lion man." He wrote one of the accounts of our Lord's life and death, perhaps with the help of Peter, whose influence scholars think they can see in the book. If one is recommended by the company he keeps, Mark surely deserves much commendation. He worked in missionary efforts with Paul, Barnabas, and Peter. He was not afraid of danger in late life, going to Paul when he was in prison, risking his own life in order to serve and encourage the aged apostle.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This lesson presents another opportunity to encourage children to desire to be helpers of others, a thing which appeals to these ages. Paul, Barnabas, and Peter were great men in the early life of the church. We would call them the outstanding preachers of their day. Mark had the privilege of being their helper. How would these children like to be helpers of three of the greatest preachers of today? Would they think it an honor?

When given a job to do, never disappoint those you are helping. Mark disappointed Paul, and it took him many years to regain his confidence. Whether the task be little or big, insignificant or important, do it well, keep on working until it is thoroughly done. If it is a little job well done, a bigger and more important task will be given. But if we fail even in a little job, no one will want to give us any more opportunities.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

How many students in your class have tried and failed, and then tried again? This is a rather common experience. Whether we win or lose, succeed or fail, is not the biggest consideration. Is there a willingness to try, and a determination to keep on trying? That is the most important thing in the making of character. Mark had that determination. And it must have been a strong determination or Barnabas would never have broken with Paul whom he loved so much. Teachers of these young people have the opportunity of

helping to build into them this willingness and determination. It is good to get over facts, to pour information into their minds; but it is also good to encourage and inspire, to fire them with a zeal to do something for their Lord who has done so much for them. This is a time when they are forming purposes and making plans for life; this is the teacher's richest opportunity.

Young: People and Adult Departments

From the age of fifteen to twenty-two is a period Sunday school workers call the "big leak." It is the time when young people quit attending; they even quit the church. College, entering a business for themselves, and many other things contribute to this leak. These are the Marks; they have started, but turned back when the way was hard. How many do you have in your class? How many of that age connected with church families who ought to be attending your class? What are you and your class doing to reclaim them?

Barnabas was great to pick up those who were discouraged, and those who needed help in any way. He helped Paul get acquainted in Jerusalem when it could have cost him something in reputation (Acts 9: 26, 27); he introduced Paul to the great missionary church at Antioch (Acts 11: 25, 26). Now he helped Mark get back on his feet and try again. Adults can use their time to much better advantage helping the young and giving them another lease on their Christian life than by criticizing and saying they never did think this or that boy or girl would ever amount to much. Be a Barnabas to the young; give them another chance.

Topics for Discussion

1. Was Mark's failure good for him? Does the good one gains from such experiences pay for the harm which the church suffers because of the failure of one of its members?

2. Was Barnabas more in the right in their contention than Paul? If Mark had failed again, would that have proved that Barnabas was altogether in the wrong?

3. The difference Paul had with Peter over eating with Gentiles (Gal. 2: 11-21), in which Barnabas took sides with Peter, was only a few months after this contention between Paul and Barnabas. Did this contention have anything to do with the decision and action of Barnabas on that occasion?

4. What good came from the break between Paul and Barnabas? Can good come from church divisions today? Does the good which comes outweigh the harm done the church in the community? Could the separation of Paul and Barnabas have been accomplished in a better way? Can incompatible spirits in a church be used to establish the work in other parts of the city to prevent strife? Is this a better way than to try to keep them together until they break in a disgraceful manner?

Lesson VII—May 18, 1947

LUKE, THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN

The Lesson Text

Acts 16: 16-18

16 And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.

17 The same following after Paul and us cried out, saying, These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation.

18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Je'sus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour.

Col. 4: 12-17

12 Ep'a-phras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Je'sus, saluteth you, always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

13 For I bear him witness, that he hath much labor for you, and for them in La-od-i-ce'a, and for them in Hi-e-rap'o-lis.

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.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas salute you.*” (Col. 4: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 1: 1-3.

Daily Bible Readings

May 12. M.....	Luke the Beloved Physician (Col. 4: 10-17)
May 13. T.....	Luke a Companion of Paul (2 Tim. 4: 9-11)
May 14. W.....	Luke a Fellow-Worker with Paul. (Phile. 21-24)
May 15. T.....	Luke a Writer of the Gospel (Luke 1: 1-4)
May 16. F.....	Luke Writes Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1: 1-5)
May 17. S.....	Luke Joins Paul (Acts 16: 10-15)
May 18. S.....	Luke with Paul at Troas (Acts 20: 7-12)

Lesson Subject Explained

Fishermen left their nets and ships to become followers of Jesus. And Matthew, the publican, left his place of toll and gave up his hopes of becoming a rich man, as were most of the publicans of his day, to become a follower of the Lord. And, now, we find Luke giving up his practice of medicine to become a fellow worker with the apostle Paul in extending the boundaries of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. According to Pliny “the practice of medicine was the most lucrative of all the professions of his day.” If this be true, the measure of Luke’s sacrifice is increased considerably. This may also explain why Luke could retire from his profession and give his full time to laboring with Paul. And this may well serve as an example to wealthy men of today to retire from their professions at which they have accumulated considerable wealth, and devote the balance of their days and their wealth to the extension of the borders of the kingdom of our Lord.

Paul spoke of Luke as the “beloved physician.” No doubt Luke was a man beloved by all who knew him, but this expression

obviously reveals Paul's personal attitude towards Luke. Physicians were not as plentiful then as now, and it was not easy for Paul to find one in every city where he went. And since he was a Jew, it was not every Greek or Roman city that had a physician who would attend Paul. Further, Paul preached Christ, which was foolishness to the Greeks (1 Cor. 1: 23), for which he was persecuted in most cities. It would be most difficult for a persecuted man to find a physician with sufficient courage to minister to him when the majority of the people of his city had thrown Paul out of town. But when Luke was with him, Paul knew he was in good hands. Also, Paul had a "thorn in the flesh," as we learn from his second letter to the church at Corinth. (2 Cor. 12: 7.) There is no way of knowing just what this thorn was, but it is certain that it was some ailment in the flesh. It is not wild speculation to suppose this needed attention, and that Luke was able to give Paul the attention he needed. No wonder Paul referred to him as "the beloved physician." When all others left Paul, some of necessity and others for pleasure, Luke was still with him, and no one doubts that he stayed until the end came at the executioner's block. And for this Luke was beloved of Paul.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of Acts 16: 16-18 we find Paul and Barnabas having a sharp contention over whether they would take John Mark along with them on a second missionary journey. Not being able to come to an agreement, Paul chose Silas and started out to visit the churches established on the first missionary tour. These churches were in the south central part of what is now known as Turkey. At Lystra a young disciple named Timothy joined the party and proved to be a real companion in Paul's labors and sufferings. The Holy Spirit did not allow Paul and his company to get either to the right or to the left, but guided them directly to Troas, where Paul saw in a vision a man standing over in Macedonia calling for help. It is here that Luke enters the picture, as we learn from these words, "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: 10.) Here for the first time we find the personal pronouns *we* and *us* used with reference to the missionary company. So Luke joined the company at Troas, and from there they went into Europe for the first time to preach the gospel at Philippi. Lydia, a seller of purple, a woman of the city of Thyatira, back in Asia, was the first person converted by Paul in Europe. Philippi was a Gentile city; there being no synagogue there, it was necessary for Jews to gather for worship "without the gate by a river side."

Our text in Col. 4: 12-17 is a part of a letter written by Paul to the church at Colossae. This was written during his first imprisonment in Rome, where he was allowed to have his own hired house and enjoy a considerable amount of liberty in entertaining visitors. (Acts 20: 30, 31.) Several fellow laborers joined Paul in sending salutations to the church at Colossae, showing that Paul was allowed the company of his helpers in the gospel. Luke was one of his companions during this imprisonment.

Golden Text Explained

We have already noted the fact that Luke was a physician, and that that profession was said to be very lucrative at that time, perhaps more than any other profession of that day. We have also given some reasons why Luke was so beloved of Paul. It may be added here that Adam Clarke says the Greek word here used and translated physician "must not be restricted to *physician*, in the sense in which we use that word; he was surgeon, physician, and dispenser of medicines, etc., for all these were frequently combined in the same persons." He also says the word signifies a *healer*. From Tarbell's *Teachers' Guide* we read, "It is interesting to recall that a physician in the Roman world was a man of culture." And when we learn that Luke was versed in several lines of the medical profession, as named above, we are made to realize that he was a man of wide learning. There is a tradition that Luke was a slave; that he was owned by a rich man, who, noticing his unusual intelligence, sent him to the university where he was trained for his profession.

Luke is an example of how a man may make his profession honor and glorify God. In the first place the profession must be of an honorable nature. A bootlegger or a saloonkeeper could not use his profession to glorify God. But farmers, merchants, school teachers, mechanics, and many other professions can be used to the glory of the Lord. Neither is it necessary for a man to do as Luke did to use his profession to honor God. People are needed in many cities where the church is weak, and in many others where the church has never been established. Men who follow professions which make it easy for them to establish themselves quickly in business may leave their present places of abode and move into these cities to strengthen the church by giving of their time, influence, and money to build it up. Who would criticize Luke for giving up his business, perhaps in Troas, and going with Paul as a fellow laborer and as his personal physician? Did he do an unreasonable thing? If the Lord was pleased that he did such, would he not be pleased for men to do such today? Was it Luke's duty to God to give up his business and attend Paul as a helper and physician? If it was, may it not be the duty of some today to make such a sacrifice?

Helps on the Lesson Text

"As we were going to the place of prayer." When the apostles went into a city to begin work, they looked for religious people. Usually they went to the synagogues where they found Jews who were already believers in God, and in expectation of the Christ. So most of the records of conversions in Acts are records of religious people being led to the truth. We ought not, therefore, tire of preaching the gospel to people who are already religious, but who do not know the truth, and have not obeyed the gospel as revealed in the New Testament.

"Maid having a spirit of divination." The Greek word here translated divination is *python*, and A. Clarke translates, "Having a spirit of Python." Python was, according to fable, a huge serpent, that had an oracle on Mount Parnassus, famous for predicting future events; Apollo slew this serpent, and hence he was called *Pythius*,

and became celebrated as the foreteller of future events; and all those who either could or pretended to predict future events were influenced by the spirit of *Apollo Pythius*."

"Brought her masters much gain." This statement reveals the character of the men who owned and used this unfortunate girl. They were greedy for money; they craved an easy living rather than work with their own hands at an honorable profession. They had a very low regard for womankind. They should have shielded her from abuse by this demon as much as possible, but instead of that they made capital of her, and that in public. They were unusually coarse.

"These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation" Why would the devil tell the truth? It was to his interest to do so. Every one knew this girl was possessed by a demon. If Jews heard this statement and got the idea that Paul was associated with this girl and her base owners, they would not listen to Paul because the law of Moses condemned all who had anything to do with familiar spirits. (Lev. 19: 31.) And if the Gentiles got the idea Paul was associated with this girl, they would think he was a servant of the same god, or system of gods, they worshiped, and hence no need to turn from their idolatry. So the only way Paul could save the cause of the Lord was to drive the demon out.

"Paul . . . turned and said to the spirit." Notice that Paul did not address himself to the girl, but to the spirit. The girl was not a lunatic; she was not a mean girl. She was under the power and control of a demon, an evil spirit, one of Satan's angels or helpers. There are those who claim that there was no such thing as demon possession. They think people were sick or had epileptic fits, and that through ignorance of the times their condition was attributed to demon possession. But Luke was a physician. If this girl had been physically or mentally ill, he would have recognized it immediately. Verse eighteen says the girl followed Paul and his company "many days." So Luke had plenty of time to observe the actions and the condition of the girl. He reported it as a case of demon possession. This is unusually strong proof, aside from the fact that Luke was inspired, that demons actually took possession of people and lived in their bodies and controlled their words and actions.

"Who are of the circumcision." This statement refers to the fellow laborers of Paul mentioned above who were Jews. Then he mentions Epaphras, Luke, and Demas who were also with him. There are some who think Luke was a Jew, that he was one of the seventy sent out by the Lord to preach (Luke 10: 1), and that he was one of the two with whom the Lord talked on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35). But if these conjectures were true, it does seem that Paul would have included Luke in the list of those "who are of the circumcision" instead of listing his name with that of Epaphras and Demas who we know were not Jews.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—"As to the age and death of the evangelist there is the utmost uncertainty. It seems probable that he died in advanced life; but whether he suffered martyrdom or died a natural death;

whether Bithynia or Achaia or some other country witnessed this end, it is impossible to determine amidst contradictory voices. That he died a martyr between A.D. 75 and A.D. 100 would seem to have the balance of suffrages in its favor." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

Luke was with Paul in Philippi in A.D. 53. He was with Paul during his first term in prison, and the letter of Colossians was written in A.D. 62. There is another mention of Luke, though not included in our lesson text, in 2 Tim. 4: 11: "Only Luke is with me." This Paul wrote just before his death in A.D. 66.

GEOGRAPHY.—It is generally agreed that Luke joined Paul's party at Troas, and that likely he was a physician of that city. The full name of that city was Alexandria Troas, but sometimes called by either Alexandria or Troas. "The former part of the name indicates the period at which it was founded. It was first built by Antigonos, under the name of Antigoneia Troas, and people with the inhabitants of some neighboring cities. Afterwards it was embellished by Lysimachus, and named Alexandria Troas. Its situation was on the coast of Mysia, opposite the S. E. extremity of the island of Tenedos. Under the Romans it was one of the most important towns of the province of Asia. It was the chief point of arrival and departure for those who went by sea between Macedonia and the western Asiatic districts; and it was connected by good roads with other places on the coast and the interior. . . . The Romans had a peculiar feeling connected with the place in consequence of the legend of their origin from Troy." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

Luke includes himself as one of the party which went from Troas to Philippi, but when the party left that city he leaves himself out of the party, saying, "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis, . . . they came to Thessalonica." (Acts 17: 1.) So we conclude that Luke stayed with the new church in Philippi. This, it will be remembered, was Paul's second missionary journey. And some four or five years later Paul made a third journey which took him into Macedonia. Luke named some of Paul's fellow laborers, and then said, "But these had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days." (Acts 20: 5, 6.) From the use of the personal pronouns, *us* and *we*, it is clear that Luke stayed in Philippi from the time Paul established the church there on his second journey until he returned on his third journey.

CHARACTER.—Little is said about Luke in the New Testament. In fact his name occurs only three times. (Col. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 4: 11; Phile. 24.) However it is known that he wrote the third record of the gospel and Acts. The arrangement of the material and the style in which he wrote indicate that Luke was a highly educated man. There are two outstanding qualities which must not be overlooked. One was his sacrifice of his profession and the income therefrom to go on extended journeys to labor in the gospel with Paul. The other is his unselfish devotion to Paul. When there was little danger connected with being with Paul in Rome, Demas and others attended him. But when there was danger of being put to death with Paul, we hear Paul saying, "Only Luke is with me." "Luke answers perfectly that figure of friendship. He was a friend for far and near; time and distance made no change: for summer and winter; pros-

perity and adversity made no difference: for life and death; danger could not frighten him from Paul's side. Amongst the faithless, faithful only he. At the risk of death he remained by Paul's side, ministering to him both in body and in soul to the very last." (Tarbell.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

No one furnishes a better example of helping others than Luke. And that is one of the primary aims of these character studies to lead children to be helpers of others. Luke's life was a beautiful life because he lived for others. Living for others made him like Jesus, and this thought will appeal to children of these departments. Let them suggest things they can do to help others in the home, the community, and the church.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Young people in these departments are beginning to think about what they are going to do during life. Some will be inclined to the medical profession. Why not lead them to give their lives to the work of the medical missionary? It is not unreasonable to think of Paul and Luke going into a city, and Luke ministering to the needs of the sick, opening the way for Paul to teach them the truth. When the church serves as it should in a community, the people of that community will give more attention to the teaching of the church. In many foreign countries very little is known of medical science. Young people could do no better than plan to go where the gospel has never gone to take both the science of better living and the plan of salvation. There is no better way to be a blessing to a community than to heal their bodies and save their souls. And if you as a teacher can fire some young people with this vision and the zeal to spend their lives in this way, you will share in the blessings which will come as a reward for such work.

Young People and Adult Departments

The progress of civilization may be measured by some of the events of this lesson. In that day a girl could be owned by coarse, covetous men who were mean enough to make money through her unfortunate condition. That could not be done in our country without falling into the hands of the law. Perhaps members of the class can think of other things which mark the progress of humanity as well as this.

Enduring friendship is a beautiful thing. Solomon said, "A friend loveth at all times; and a brother is born for adversity." (Prov. 17: 17.) David and Jonathan have been used as an example of enduring friendship. (1 Sam. 18: 1.) But Paul and Luke enjoyed a friendship as close and as lasting as that of David and Jonathan. No doubt Luke's love for Paul was not solely because of his personal attachment to him, but through serving Paul as he did he was also rendering a service to God, and to the people whom Paul served. Possibly this element made the friendship as lasting as it was. Not only can the ties of friendship be made stronger and more lasting by this religious element, but home ties may be made more enduring.

If we remember that it is our religious duty to live together in the home in peace, some little troubles would never grow into serious troubles which divide homes.

Topics for Discussion

1. It is rather common for physicians to think that their work of ministering to the needs of the sick relieve them of the duty of attending church. It is a fact that God commands us to visit the sick, but may we do so much of any one thing God commands that we will not be expected to do anything else he has commanded?

2. Would it be scriptural and worth while for churches to finance the schooling of young men and women who are willing to prepare themselves to be medical missionaries? Do you think more young people would prepare for such work if they had more encouragement from the preachers and teachers in the church?

Lesson VHI—May 25, 1947

STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

The Lesson Text

Acts 6: 5-15; 7: 54-60

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Proch'o-rus, and Ni-ca-nor and Ti-mon, and Par-me-nas, and Nic-o-la-us a proselyte of An'ti-och;

6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them.

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Je-ru'sa-lem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

8 And Stephen, 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 Stephen.

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 stedfastly 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 Stephen, 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 stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*” (Acts 7: 59.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 8: 1-3.

Daily Bible Readings

May 19. M.....	Stephen Full of Faith (Acts 6: 1-6)
May 20. T.....	Contends with the Libertines (Acts 6: 8-15)
May 21. W.....	Stephen Makes His Defense (Acts 7: 1-7)
May 22. T.....	Stephen Reviews Israel's History (Acts 7: 11-23)
May 23. F.....	More History of Israel (Acts 7: 31-41)
May 24. S.....	Effect of Stephen's Speech (Acts 7: 47-53)
May 25. S.....	Stephen Stoned (Acts 7: 54-60)

Lesson Subject Explained

The subject of our lesson today was the first man to seal his testimony for Jesus Christ with his blood. He was the first martyr. The word *martyr* occurs only three times in the King James Version. (Acts 22: 20; Rev. 2: 13; 17: 6.) It occurs only once in the American Standard. (Rev. 17: 6.) In the other two references the word is translated *witness*, which is the usual translation of the word in its many occurrences in the New Testament. “It was not until after the age of the apostles that the Greek word *martur* signified ‘martyr,’ though we see it in its transition to that meaning in Acts 22: 20 and Rev. 17: 6.”

Stephen was the first, it seems, to see clearly the difference between the law of Moses and the law of Christ. He was the first to understand that the law of Moses with all its ceremonies in the temple were done away in Christ. Evidently he was the first to preach this so plainly that the Jews were stirred to a jealous fury. And it is possible that the arguments made by Stephen made a lasting impression on Paul, for Paul took up where Stephen laid down the work of making the Jews understand and the Gentiles appreciate the fact that the law of Moses was no longer binding and that its ceremonies were no longer necessary. Paul helped take the life of Stephen for preaching that doctrine, and finally lost his own life for preaching the same thing. He has been called the forerunner of Paul. “Not only was his martyrdom (in all probability) the first means of converting St. Paul, his prayer for his murderer not only fulfilled in the conversion of St. Paul—the blood of the first martyr the seed of the greatest apostle, the pangs of remorse for his death amongst the stings of conscience against which the apostle vainly writhed (Acts 9: 5)—not only thus, but in his doctrine also he was the anticipator, as, had he lived, he would have been the propagator, of the new phase of Christianity, of which St. Paul became the main support.” (Smith's Bible *Dictionary*.)

Context of the Lesson

The church was established on the first Pentecost day after the resurrection of our Lord. Devout Jews from every nation under heaven were gathered in Jerusalem for that feast. Three thousand of these Jews were converted to Christ the first day, several thousand more the next day, and so on the number grew. Many of them stayed in Jerusalem learning more of the gospel from the apostles and enjoying the fine spiritual fellowship. Many of them had to have financial assistance, so brethren of means gave their money;

some sold their property and put their money into the treasury. (Acts 4: 36, 37.) Some widows were being overlooked in the daily ministrations, so there was a murmuring among the Grecians who were suffering. To overcome this murmuring and restore complete harmony, seven Grecian Jews were selected and by the apostles appointed to see after these widows. Stephen was the first, perhaps most prominent, among those chosen. He not only had ability to serve tables, but he was an able gospel preacher, and was soon giving his time to that more important work.

His work of preaching led him naturally among his own Grecian Jew friends. He went to their synagogue to preach the gospel. He incurred the wrath of the leaders. They hired men to swear lies against him that they might have sufficient evidence to demand the death sentence. When the witnesses had testified, the high priest asked Stephen if these things said by the witnesses were so. With that as an invitation to make his defense, Stephen, inspired by the Holy Spirit, began preaching the gospel. His speech at first reading may seem like a simple historical recitation of God's dealings with the Jews. It was Stephen's purpose to show that the temple in Jerusalem was not essential to true worship, and that the law of Moses was no longer the standard of authority. "He showed that God's blessing rested on the faith of Abraham, though he had not so much as to set his foot on the land of promise (verse 5); on the piety of Joseph, though he was in exile in Egypt (verse 9); and on the holiness of the burning bush, though in the desert of Sinai (verse 30). He dwelt in detail on the lawgiver in such a way as to show his own unquestionable orthodoxy, but he quoted the promise concerning 'the Prophet like unto Moses' (verse 37), and reminded his hearers that the law, in which they trusted, had not kept their fathers from idolatry (verse 39, etc.). And so he passed on to the temple which had so prominent a reference to the charge against him, and while he spoke of it he alluded to the words of Solomon himself, and of the prophet Isaiah, who denied that any temple 'made with hands' could be the place of God's highest worship." (Conybeare and Howson.)

Then, as if realizing that his arguments were not convincing or that the Jews were not giving them consideration, Stephen lashed out with a personal indictment justly deserved by his hearers. "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 of 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." Then follows our lesson text.

Golden Text Explained

As Stephen was being stoned to death, he called upon the name of the Lord. In the King James Version we read that he was "calling upon God." In the Greek there is no word for God or Lord. In the *Emphatic Diaglott* it reads, "And they stoned Stephen, as he was invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." This statement, or request, was made to Jesus because Stephen had just seen, through the opened heavens, the Lord Jesus standing at the right hand of God. (Acts 7: 56.) In other passages Jesus is said

to be *sitting* on the right hand of God, but here he was *standing*. Perhaps this denotes the interest Jesus was showing in Stephen in his most severe trial. It should be comforting to us to know that Jesus is interested in us, and that he is watching us in times of trial.

There is a striking similarity between what Stephen said in his dying moments and the sayings Jesus uttered while on the cross. With reference to those who crucified him, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23: 34.) Stephen said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Again, Jesus said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23: 46.) And Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." We can hardly read these accounts without concluding that Stephen was consciously following the example of his Lord. And that is Christianity! And what a beautiful thing it is. Did ever any other religion cause its devotees to pray for their enemies? How much more beautiful it is to pray for those who stoned him than to curse and revile them. Surely Christianity is from a higher source than man.

Another thing of interest is the fact that Stephen directed his prayer on this occasion to Jesus. Jesus is therefore divine and a proper object of our worship. Jesus appeared to the apostles when they were all present except Thomas. When he was told that the Lord was alive, Thomas said he would not believe until he had seen and felt the prints of the nails. When Jesus appeared to Thomas, Thomas said, "My Lord and my God." (John 20: 28.) This was certainly an act of worship on the part of Thomas. Jesus allowed it without any reproof. Both these instances are the strongest proof that Jesus is divine and that it is proper for us to worship him.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." To be full of faith means to have a strong faith, an active faith manifesting itself in faithful service to God. To be full of the Holy Spirit does not necessarily mean possessing the Holy Spirit in a miraculous measure, though some of these men could work miracles. (Acts 8: 6-8.) But they were men whose lives were controlled by the Spirit to such a degree that they were of unusually good reputation among the people.

"They laid their hands upon them." "Among the Jews it was customary to lay hands on the head of a person who was set apart to any particular office." (Barnes.) The laying on of hands did not always signify the imparting of powers, for the leaders of the church at Antioch laid hands on the apostle Paul, and they certainly could not have imparted anything to him as he had already been baptized with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13: 1-3.)

"Synagogue of the Libertines, . . . of Cilicia and Asia." Whether only one synagogue is intended here or one for each name is difficult to determine. It is said there were 480 synagogues in Jerusalem, some of them built by Jews of foreign lands to be used by them when they were in Jerusalem for the feasts. The synagogue of the Libertines was one built and used by Jews who had been slaves, but had been set free and had been given their Roman citizenship. The word Libertine means a freed man. Since Paul was from Tarsus in Cilicia and this synagogue was for them of Cilicia, Stephen was preaching to Paul, and no doubt was debating with him as he was a leader in the Jew's religion. (Gal. 1: 13, 14.)

"We have heard him speak blasphemous words." In verse eleven the false witnesses said he ceased not to speak words against *this holy place*, meaning the temple, and the law. No doubt Stephen had said something about the law of Moses being fulfilled in Christ, and that the ceremonies of the law were no longer binding. It did not take much wrestling of this statement to make it sound blasphemous to zealous Jews. Religious prejudice could easily cause them to view his statements as such. And Stephen no doubt had said that God could be worshiped in other places than the temple; he argued such in his sermon. A zealous, prejudiced Jew could easily construe that to mean disrespect for what he considered a holy place. They further charged that they had heard him say that Jesus would destroy the temple. This was a perversion of what Jesus said. Jesus said the temple would be destroyed (Matt. 24: 1, 2), but he did not say he would do it; neither did Stephen say Jesus would destroy it.

"Saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." "It is not meant that there was anything *miraculous* in the case of Stephen, but it is an expression denoting his calmness, and dignity, and confidence in God; all of which were so marked on his countenance, that it impressed them with clear proofs of his innocence and piety." (Barnes.) But if there was any miraculous element in this incident, its parallel may be found in the shining of the face of Moses after he had been in communion with God. (Ex. 34: 29, 30; 2 Cor. 3: 7, 13.)

"Gnashed on him with their teeth." They allowed their animal passions full play, and they snapped and bit at him like vicious wild animals. Such is the end of religious prejudice.

"Saw the glory of God and Jesus standing." Stephen did not say he saw God; no man has seen God. (John 1: 18.) But he did say he saw Jesus. He called him the Son of man. The fact that he called him the Son of man suggests that the human nature of our Lord had been made immortal, incorruptible, as we shall be in the resurrection. (Phil. 3: 21; 1 John 3: 2.)

"At the feet of a young man named Saul." This is the first mention of the apostle Paul in the New Testament; he is mentioned here because of his prominence in Acts later. He seems to be in charge of the stoning, though he threw no stones. He said he was consenting to Stephen's death. (Acts 22: 20.) He gave his vote against the saints (Acts 26: 10), suggesting that he was a member of the Sanhedrin which condemned Stephen and others.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Of the date of Stephen's birth we know nothing. As to the date of his death scholars differ. Adam Clarke gives the date as A.D. 31, one year after the church was established. Tarbell suggests that it must have been in A.D. 36 or 37, since the Jews condemned and killed him without the consent of Pilate, a thing they dared not do with Jesus. Pilate was deposed at that time and another procurator had not been appointed.

GEOGRAPHY.—All the events of this lesson took place in, and just outside, the city of Jerusalem. The trial before the Sanhedrin and the sermon delivered by Stephen were in the temple. "It is evident, for that vivid expression which is quoted from the accusers' mouths, 'this place,' 'this holy place,' that the meeting of the Sanhedrin took place in the close neighborhood of the temple. Their ancient and

solemn room of assembly was the hall Gazith, or the 'Stone Chamber,' partly within the temple court and partly without it. The president sat in the less sacred portion, and around him, in a semicircle, were the rest of the seventy judges." (Conybeare and Howson.)

The stoning took place just outside the city, according to rabbinical tradition, beyond the Damascus gate north of the city. This is most likely the place of the crucifixion of Jesus. A later tradition, however, says Stephen was stoned just outside the city on the east and on the way to the Mount of Olives.

CHARACTER.—Stephen was a man of courage. He undoubtedly could see the hate and malice mounting against him. He knew these Jews were capable of such a crime as murder in the name of their religion. A man described as being "full of wisdom" could not have failed to sense the danger of plain preaching on this occasion. His rebuke was not a reckless statement made in the heat of debate to be regretted later. Stephen counted the cost and resolved to pay the price of telling these Jews the truth. It took courage of the very highest type to do it, and Stephen had that brand of courage.

It has been said that "Stephen was undoubtedly the chief human agent in the conversion of Paul. . . . The love of truth, the courage of conviction, and patience of consecration which had been so conspicuous in Stephen's life were redoubled in the ministry of Paul. The gospel flamed from his lips until, pursuing the crimson path of the protomartyr, he laid his head upon the block and followed him." There is much in the life and character of Paul that reminds us of Stephen. Stephen was the first Christian debater, defending the cause from the polemic platform. Paul used that method to good effect on many occasions.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Faithfulness and loyalty are two words to stress in these departments. Stephen was faithful to the trust the Lord and his fellow workers put in him. He was loyal to his convictions; loyal to his Master, willing to give all his strength while he lived; willing to give his life to do his Master's will. It is impossible to be more loyal than that. Even Jesus could do no more for his Father than that. When Stephen became a Christian, he promised to serve the Lord faithfully. He kept his promise. Children can be taught to regard their promises as sacred obligations; never make a promise you do not intend to keep, and which you will not keep regardless of the cost.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Courage is the word to stress in these departments. These children admire courage in their hero characters. And if ever there was a man of courage, Stephen was that man. Even the apostle Paul did not manifest any more courage than did Stephen on this occasion. Young people occasionally get into company where they are afraid or ashamed to confess Christ, or do right when all others are doing wrong. They should remember that they have promised the Lord they will do right everywhere regardless of the cost. It would have been an easy thing for Stephen to keep quiet,

when he saw the mob gathering, or to have changed the subject to something agreeable to all. He might have prolonged his life had he done such. But these Jews needed the truth he had; they could not be saved without it. Stephen had the courage to give them what they needed though they did not want it, would not have it.

Young People and Adult Departments

Sacrifice is the word to stress in these departments. Jesus is the perfect example of sacrifice. He was rich, but became poor that we might be rich. (2 Cor. 8: 9.) He was on equality with God, but emptied himself, humbled himself, and died on the cross that we might live. (Phil. 2: 5-11.) Jesus said if we are not willing to make sacrifices, we are not worthy of him and cannot be his disciples. (Matt. 10: 35-39.) Stephen was a worthy disciple of the Lord in that he gave his life for his Master. None of us are called on to do that. Would we be willing to do it? Many are not willing to make the least sacrifices of time and money that they may save souls and build up the kingdom of the Lord. Each member of the church should make a practice of making at least one real sacrifice each week. It may not amount to much in time or money, but as times goes on the amount should be increased, until finally we have learned to make real sacrifices and enjoy making them. The teacher would render a great service both to the Lord and to those in his class if he would take the lead in this and get as many as possible to follow his example of making at least one sacrifice each week.

Topics for Discussion

1. What did Stephen ask Jesus to receive? (Acts 7: 59.) There are those who believe man is wholly mortal, and that he is unconscious between death and the resurrection. If something went from Stephen to Jesus, what was it?

2. Since Stephen asked Jesus to receive his spirit, what does this do for the Catholic doctrine of purgatory? "Stephen's calm committal of his spirit to his Lord is so palpably inconsistent with the doctrine of the state of purgatory, or sleep, between death and the judgment, that Roman Catholic theology exempts all martyrs from purgatorial discipline."

3. Study the implication of the statement of Stephen that he saw the *Son of man* on the right hand of God. Is there a reason why he did not call him the Son of God? Is Jesus still the Son of man after his death in the same sense that he was the Son of man before his death?

4. Was Stephen wise in debating with the Jews after he saw they were getting angry? Would it be right for us to debate religious subjects as he did, even though our opponents get angry because they cannot meet the issues? Do changes of times and customs make it wrong to follow the example of inspired preachers of the gospel?

Lesson IX—June 1, 1947

PHILIP, THE EVANGELIST

The 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 continued 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.—*“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”* (Acts 8: 12.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 8: 32-40.

Daily Bible Readings

May 26. M.....	Philip One of the Seven (Acts 6: 1-6)
May 27. T.....	Philip Goes to Samaria (Acts 8: 1-8)
May 28. W.....	W. Philip Preaches in Samaria (Acts 8: 9-13)
May 29. T.....	Angel Directs Philip to the Eunuch (Acts 8: 26-37)
May 30. F.....	Philip Baptized the Eunuch (Acts 8: 34-40)
May 31. S.....	Philip Entertains Paul (Acts 21: 7-14)
June 1. S.....	Philip the Apostle (John 1: 43-51)

Lesson Subject Explained

Philip was one of the seven chosen to see that the Grecian widows were not neglected in the daily distribution of food. (Acts 6: 1-6.) In this work he was a deacon, which simply means that he was a servant of the church. Whether these seven were deacons in the same sense, with the same qualifications, as those mentioned in 1 Tim. 3: 8-13 has been a subject of considerable argument. The work they were appointed to do was certainly of the same character and we may truthfully say they were deacons of the church.

But two of the men not only had the qualifications for that service, they were well qualified to do other types of work in the church. Stephen was a preacher of ability. So was Philip. After the church at Jerusalem had been scattered by the persecution which arose immediately following the death of Stephen, the work to which these men were appointed was no longer needed. Philip, like thou-

sands of other church members, fled from the city to other parts of the country where they might be safe from the zeal of Saul of Tarsus. Philip then turned his attention to preaching the gospel, on account of which he was known as Philip the evangelist. His evangelistic work continued for many years, for when Paul was on his last missionary journey and on his way to Jerusalem he stayed several days in the home of "Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven." (Acts 21: 8.) This was in A.D. 58 or 59.

The word evangelist means a proclaimer of good tidings, one who announces salvation in Christ upon its terms and conditions. The evangelist is distinguished from teachers in Eph. 4: 11. The work of the evangelist is to preach the gospel to people who have not heard or obeyed, while it is the work of the teacher to instruct and guide in spiritual growth those who have become Christians. One person may fill both offices, but the meanings of the words admit of that distinction.

Context of the Lesson

Stephen's sermon had fallen on hostile ears and he had made the supreme sacrifice for his Lord; he had been buried by devout men, perhaps among the Jews not members of the church who respected Stephen as a man and were not in sympathy with the mob who took the law into their hands to lynch him. Stephen's death was the spark that started a great fire of persecution. It is said, "And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church." Saul was the leader in this work of persecuting the church. He "laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison." All of this had the effect of scattering the church, but did not destroy it. On the contrary the church increased in numbers. A head of ripe wheat may be hit with a stick, scattering the grains in every direction, and to all appearances destroying completely the head of wheat. But in a few weeks there will be stalks of wheat coming up all around the old parent stalk. So Paul succeeded in scattering the church to the four winds, but he lacked a lot of destroying it. In a little while churches began to spring up and grow all around the old parent church.

Philip was among those who were scattered. His work of serving in the Jerusalem church was ended. Having no further duties along that line, he was free to turn his attention to other work he was prepared to do. He had the ability to preach the gospel, and in addition he had been given the power to confirm the word he preached by performing miracles. He might have reasoned that plain preaching was the cause of the persecution in Jerusalem, and to avoid persecution in Samaria he would put on the soft pedal and not preach anything there which the people did not wish to hear. But Philip was an evangelist worthy of the name and of the trust which was given him. He preached the gospel in all its fullness and simplicity. If it was acceptable to the people he was glad, but if some were offended and blasphemed, there was nothing he could do about it. His duty was to preach the word.

Golden Text Explained

The first lesson suggested by the Golden Text is that believers were baptized. "When they believed, . . . they were baptized." The idea of baptizing, rather sprinkling, infants arose hundreds of

years after the time of Philip, and does not have the sanction of apostles, or any other inspired men. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16: 16.) It is the believer who is to be baptized. And until a child has arrived at the age and mental development to understand the gospel, believe in Christ as the Son of God, realize the difference between right and wrong, be conscious of wrongdoing, and feel the need of turning to the Lord for forgiveness, that child is not a fit subject for baptism. Philip baptized "both men and women," not infants.

Next, Philip preached concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. He did not review some popular book; he did not use his pulpit to campaign for his favorite candidate for a public office; nor did he tell his hearers how the government ought to conduct its affairs with other nations of the world. He told them about the kingdom of God. And what did he tell them about the kingdom? He was among those who "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2: 42), so he must have preached the same thing about the kingdom that the apostles preached. If all preachers, including some brethren, would limit themselves to what the apostles said about the kingdom of God, there would be no division over the matter today. The apostles preached that Christ had been made King. (Acts 2: 30-36.) They preached that we are translated into the kingdom. (Col. 1: 13.) And they preached that they were partakers with us in the kingdom. (Rev. 1: 9.) And furthermore they preached that the kingdom they had received was not a temporary affair, but that it was something that could not be shaken. (Heb. 12: 28.)

Philip also preached concerning the name of Jesus Christ. If he continued in the apostles' teaching, he must have told these Samaritans that salvation is in the name of Jesus Christ, and can be had in no other name under heaven. (Acts 4: 12.) He told them that if they ever enjoy that salvation in the name of Christ, they must be baptized into that name. Jesus told the apostles to baptize the believers "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28: 19.) So according to Jesus, the way to get into that name is to be baptized into it. And Paul told the people at Ephesus to be "baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." And no doubt Philip told them that Jesus had, following his humiliation and suffering, been given a name that "is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2: 9-11.) It is no wonder that many, both men and women, were baptized on account of Philip's preaching concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"*The city of Samaria*" This does not mean a city whose name was Samaria, for no such city at that time existed. Samaria was a *region*. The ancient city Samaria, the capital of that region, had been destroyed by Hyrcanus, so completely as to leave no vestige of it remaining. . . . Herod the Great afterwards built a city on the same site and called it *Sebaste*, i.e., *Augusta*, in honor of the emperor

Augustus. Perhaps this city is intended, as being the principal city of Samaria." (Barnes.)

"And the multitudes gave heed . . . when they heard, and saw the signs." Philip had been given the power to work miracles for the confirmation of the word he preached. (1 Cor. 12: 4-11; Mark 16: 19, 20; Heb. 2: 3, 4.) This power could not be used merely for physical comfort, for Paul had to leave Trophimus behind, though he had power to heal sickness. (2 Tim. 4: 20.)

"Unclean spirits . . . came out, . . . palsie, and . . . lame, were healed." Here Luke makes a distinction between the sick and those possessed by demons. It is also said that the unclean spirits came out, "crying with a loud voice." The healing of the sick was not attended by such loud outcrying. Just as sure as Luke is a faithful, competent witness, people of that day were possessed and controlled by unclean spirits, demons.

"Simon . . . used sorcery, and amazed the people." The word sorcery is the translation of the Greek word *mageuoon*, from which we get our word magician. The word was used with reference to people who used the knowledge of magic arts to impose upon others. Among them were astrologers, soothsayers, necromancers, and fortunetellers. All such were condemned by the law of Moses. (Lev. 19: 31; 20: 6.)

"Simon also himself believed." The genuineness of Simon's faith has been doubted, and some positively deny it in order to sustain their doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy. If Simon's faith was genuine, he was a child of God. He later sinned and was in a lost condition. (Verses 20-23.) This being true, the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy is false. That his faith was genuine and that he was a child of God is evident from two reasons. First, it is said the Samaritans believed. Their faith was genuine. Simon *also* believed. The word *also* indicates that he did the same thing they did. If their faith was genuine, so was his. Second, when Peter told him how to get forgiveness of his sin, he told him what a child of God must do for forgiveness. If Simon was never a child of God, on account of his faith not being genuine, then Peter should have told him to repent and be baptized for the remission of his sin. Since Peter told him what a child of God must do, we are forced to conclude he was a child of God.

"Angel of the Lord spake unto Philip." Angel sometimes refers to a human messenger, but here there is no reason to think this was not a heavenly messenger performing the service Paul says they do. (Heb. 1: 14.) When the angel worked to bring about the salvation of the man, he did not appear to the man to be saved. Direct operation of God through angels is not taught in the New Testament. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. (2 Cor. 4: 7.) The angel told Philip, the earthen vessel, to go to the man with the saving message, the gospel.

"A man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority." Smith's Bible Dictionary says this man was not a Jew, but an Ethiopian who was a proselyte to the Jewish religion. Barnes and others think he was a Jew who, on account of his superior financial ability, was the treasurer for the queen.

"The Spirit said unto Philip, Go near" The doctrine of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart to save a man is not taught

here, or elsewhere. The Spirit had a part in the conversion of this man, but his part was not to do a direct work of grace in the heart. The Spirit directed the preacher to the man to be saved, and guided the preacher in preaching the gospel to him. Any doctrine that excludes the human agency of preaching the gospel to save the lost is a false doctrine. Philip began at the scripture the man was reading and "preached unto him Jesus." The man heard the gospel, believed and obeyed it, and was saved.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Of the dates of Philip's birth and death we know nothing. The first mention of his name is in connection with his appointment as a deacon in the church at Jerusalem to see that the Grecian widows were not neglected. That was in A.D. 31. His preaching in Samaria was about a year later. The last mention we have of him is when Paul visited in his home in Caesarea on his way to Jerusalem at the close of the third missionary journey, which was in A.D. 58 or 59.

GEOGRAPHY.—We have already mentioned the fact that there was no city named Samaria at the time Philip was preaching in that region. Adam Clarke supposes the city was Sychem. The people of Samaria accepted the law of Moses, at least in part; they expected the Messiah, and were glad to see and hear him when he passed through their country (John 4: 39-42); and they called Jacob "our father" (John 4: 12). They were Jews mixed with Assyrians who were brought into the land after the ten tribes were carried into captivity. (2 Kings 17: 24.)

Gaza was one of the five great cities of the Philistines. It was near the Mediterranean Sea, thirty-five miles west of Hebron, and forty miles southwest of Jerusalem. The city had a population of 15,000 to 18,000 when McGarvey visited it about 1880, but he says there is evidence that the old city "stood nearer the sea and that it was a far more substantial city than the present Gaza is or ever has been. It was a walled city and existed in the days of Abraham." About two miles southwest of Lachish (ten miles northeast of Gaza), according to McGarvey, "the road crosses *Wady el Hasi*, a perennial stream, which Robinson supposes to have been the 'certain water' in which the eunuch was baptized by Philip." Since the angel said for Philip to go unto the way that leads to Gaza, which is desert, some have thought there was not sufficient water in which to immerse the eunuch. However this word desert refers to Gaza, and not to the way that leads there. Zephaniah said, "For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation; they shall drive out Ashdod at noonday, and Ekron shall be rooted up." (Zeph. 2: 4.) All these cities mentioned belonged to the Philistines, and this is the prophecy of their destruction. Gaza was destroyed by Alexander the Great, and was not rebuilt in the same location.

CHARACTER.—Very little is known of the character of Philip. Along with the other six men chosen to serve the church he is said to have been a man "of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom." (Acts 6: 3.)

We may judge that he was not as narrow in his views about who was worthy of church membership as some of the preachers, and even apostles, of his day. He went to Samaria to preach the gospel.

The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. (John 4: 9.) It took a miracle to get Peter to preach the gospel to a Gentile. (Acts 10.) And the Jews generally hated the Samaritans as much as they did Gentiles. So we may conclude that Philip had a larger vision of the world-wide nature of Christianity than others of his day. As Stephen was the forerunner of Paul in teaching that the law of Moses with its ceremonies in the temple had been done away in Christ, so Philip may be viewed as the forerunner of Paul in preaching the gospel to others than the Jews.

Philip must have been a good man in his home, for he reared four daughters who gave themselves to the work of prophesying. (Acts 21: 9.) They seem to have been of that class of which Paul said they are "careful for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit." (1 Cor. 7: 34.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This is a good lesson to illustrate with a sand table. A small stream of water winding its way down to the sea; a road crossing the stream with a body of water just off the road; a carriage constructed of pasteboard standing near by; and two men going down into the water for the baptismal service, properly constructed, will make a beautiful layout which will catch the attention of these children. Impress them with the position of this man to be baptized. The treasurer of a great nation, yet he takes out time to read his Bible, to listen to a preacher of the gospel, and to be baptized in obedience to the gospel. Doing God's will is the most important thing in one's life, regardless of how important a position he may fill in life. Presidents and kings are not too great to obey the gospel of Christ. And yet none of us are so unimportant but that it is our duty to obey the gospel. The great and the small have to do the same thing to be saved.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Philip should serve to encourage us to preach the gospel to every creature. Young people in these departments need to get the broadest vision possible of their obligation to take the gospel to all. While there are social distinctions between the races and colors of people which should be maintained, there are no distinctions to be made in preaching the gospel. The yellow, black, and red men have as much right to the gospel and all its blessings as do the white men. Philip would preach the gospel as readily to the hated Samaritan or the dark-skin Ethiopian as to the Jew. It took love for lost souls and courage to disregard the strong race prejudice of his people to do what Philip did.

Young People and Adult Departments

This is a missionary lesson. Churches need to be mission-minded. The church at Jerusalem had to have a great persecution to scatter it to get it to do the mission work the Lord wanted done. There are churches today which nothing less than persecution could cause to go elsewhere; but even then they might not go preaching the gospel.

Some people are too busy to read their Bibles. This Ethiopian was a business man. He held a greater position, a more responsible position, than the average church member, yet he took time to read his Bible. The righteous man meditates on the law of the Lord day and night. (Psalm 1: 2.) Reading the Bible helps us to keep our meditation acceptable to the Lord. (Psalm 19: 14.) More reading and more meditation will make more righteous people in the church.

Topics for Discussion

1. From a good encyclopedia learn what you can about sorcery, soothsaying, and necromancy. In what country did they have their origin? Does fortunetelling belong to this class of activities? Does the science (?) of astrology belong to this classification? What did Moses say about such things in his day?

2. From a study of several cases of conversion in the New Testament, what do you find to be the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion, and how is that work done? Do angels play any part today as the angel did in the conversion of this Ethiopian?

3. If Philip had been preaching for some prominent denominations of our day, could he have baptized this Ethiopian on the simple confession of his faith, or would he have had to wait for a vote of the church?

4. If no one had ever preached anything other than Philip preached, had not required anything more of people than Philip required of this man to become a Christian, and had not told people to join anything more than Philip had this man join, would we have such things as denominations? The gospel only makes Christians only. If you want something more than a Christian, something more than the gospel will have to be preached.

Lesson X—June 8, 1947

BARNABAS, THE GENEROUS

The Lesson Text

Acts 4: 36, 37; 11: 22-26; 13: 1-3; 15: 25, 26

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.

25 It seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Bar'na-bas and Paul,

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.”* (Acts 11: 24.)

Devotional Reading.—Acts 15: 36-41.

Daily Bible Readings

June 2. M.....	Barnabas Sold His Field (Acts 4: 32-37)
June 3. T.....	Barnabas Introduces Saul (Acts 9: 26-30)
June 4. W.....	Barnabas' Exhortation (Acts 11: 19-26)
June 5. T.....	Barnabas and Saul Sent Out (Acts 13: 1-3)
June 6. F.....	Barnabas and Saul Go to Jerusalem (Acts 15: 1-5)
June 7. S.....	Barnabas and Paul Disagree (Acts 15: 30-40)
June 8. S.....	Barnabas Endorsed (Gal. 2: 1-10)

Lesson Subject Explained

It was no uncommon thing for people to be given a surname in the days of Barnabas. These surnames were usually significant, having a meaning connected with their work or character. Simon was by the Lord surnamed Peter, which means a rock. This word referred to the rocklike character into which Peter would grow. James and John were surnamed “Sons of thunder.” (Mark 3: 17.) This name was given them because they had “a burning and impetuous spirit, which twice exhibits itself in its unchastened form (Luke 9: 54; Mark 10: 37), and which, when molded by the Spirit of God, taking different shapes, led St. James to be the first apostolic martyr, and St. John to become in an especial manner the apostle of love.” So Joseph was given the name of Barnabas, which means son of exhortation, because of his unusual powers of exhorting people to accept the Lord and to lives of holiness.

The word *generous* in our lesson subject describes his disposition of mind with reference to people in destitute circumstances. Many people stayed in Jerusalem, following Pentecost, until they had to have help to buy food and clothing. A number of brethren who had some property sold it and gave the money to the apostles, who, through deacons, made distribution to each one as the needs arose. It seems that there were a large number of people of this generous disposition, for the record says, “For as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold.” (Acts 4: 34.) Barnabas is singled out for special mention because of his prominence in later activities of the church, going on missionary journeys with Paul. And it was well to give the name of one man among the many who had the right motive in giving, since Luke planned to mention the names of Ananias and Sapphira, who did not do the right thing about giving the money they got for their property.

Context of the Lesson

The context of our first paragraph is suggested in the above paragraph, in the fact that as many as had property were selling it

so that there might not be need among the disciples gathered in Jerusalem. In describing the spirit of the people it is said, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

In our study of Philip and his work we saw how some, when scattered from Jerusalem, went north into Samaria, preaching as they went. The ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Acts, through verse eighteen, tells of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and of the house of Cornelius, and Peter's report of the latter conversion. Beginning with Acts 11: 19 the writer picks up the thread again to tell us how the church in Jerusalem was scattered following the death of Stephen. Some went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. Phoenicia was a very small country, said by some never to have included more than twenty-eight miles in length and one to five miles in width, along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. By others it is said to extend 120 miles along that seashore. Tyre and Sidon were its principal cities. Cyprus was an island west of Phoenicia and south of Cilicia, in the Mediterranean Sea. And Antioch was in Syria, north of Palestine. In these sections the gospel was being preached to Greeks, Gentiles, as well as to Jews. This was a departure from the examples set by the "old regulars" down in Jerusalem, so it was decided to send Barnabas to see about it.

A prophet named Agabus foretold a famine "over all the world," and in preparation for this the church at Antioch determined to send relief to the brethren in Judea. The collection was made, and the money was sent to Jerusalem by Barnabas and Saul. Then Acts 12: 1-24 is thrown into the narrative, and at verse twenty-five the thread of the story is picked up again, telling us of the return of Barnabas and Saul from Jerusalem after they had completed their mission. On this trip they took John Mark to Antioch with them.

The context of Acts 15: 25, 26 is the story of the Jerusalem conference. Paul and Barnabas had finished one missionary journey. And when they returned to Antioch they found brethren being disturbed by the question of whether Gentiles should be circumcised "after the custom of Moses." It was decided to send Paul and Barnabas, with other men of influence, to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders of that church about this question. Of course it was settled just like Paul had been preaching it. And then it seemed good to the apostles to send a letter to all the churches which were disturbed by that false doctrine that they might know the truth, and good men were chosen to go along with Paul and Barnabas to deliver that message.

Golden Text Explained

"For he was a good man" "It is not said that he was a man of distinguished talents, or learning; that he was a splendid or imposing preacher; but simply that he was a pious, humble man of God. He was honest and devoted to his Master's work. We should not undervalue talent, eloquence, or learning in the ministry; but we may remark that humble piety will often do more in the conversion of souls than the most splendid talents. . . . There is nothing on this earth so mighty as *goodness*. . . . Perhaps the expression, 'he was a good man,' means that he was a man of kind, amiable, and sweet

disposition." (Barnes.) There is no substitute for goodness. If when one dies it can be said, "He was a good man," that is enough. Jesus went about doing good. (Acts 10: 38.)

"Full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." This need not be taken to mean that Barnabas was baptized in the Holy Spirit; there is no indication that he was. Neither is it necessary to conclude that he possessed the Holy Spirit in miracle-working measure. It means that he was living under the influence of the Spirit, being guided and controlled in his life by the Spirit. He was bearing the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5: 22, 23.)

To be full of faith means that he had a great faith, a strong faith; that his confidence in God was unbounded. He trusted the promises of God. He did not depend on his own strength but looked to God for help and guidance. Such faith gives people calmness in times of storm. A great faith gave him power in his exhortations.

"And much people was added unto the Lord." This is the result of the labors of a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. When churches today look for a preacher, they usually ask about nearly everything else except his piety and faith. Is he a good mixer? Does he take well with young people? Is his wife a good worker among women? Does he drive a good automobile? Does he call names of denominations in the pulpit? Maybe these things should be considered, but it so happens that none of these things are mentioned in the passages of scripture which describe good and great preachers of the first century. Paul said, "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching." (1 Tim. 4: 16.) Barnabas took heed to himself in that he was a good man, and that he bore the fruit of the Spirit in his life. He took heed to his teaching in that he contended for the faith, that he was full of faith which comes by hearing the word of God.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"A Levite, a man of Cyprus." A Levite was a descendant of Levi, one of the sons of Jacob. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. Levi had three sons, Kohath, Gershon, and Merari. Aaron was a descendant of Kohath, and was the first high priest. All priests were of the family of Kohath, and all high priests were of the family of Aaron. The Levites were helpers of the priests, working under their direction.

"And the report concerning them." This was the report of the man of Cyprus and Cyrene who were preaching the gospel to Greeks. A great number of them had turned to the Lord, and the church at Jerusalem, not being thoroughly convinced that Gentiles could become Christians without being circumcised, were disturbed by the reports they were hearing.

"They sent forth Barnabas." Since men of Cyprus were doing the preaching to Greeks, and Barnabas was also of Cyprus, it would be well to send him. The Lord's disciples were to be as "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10: 16), and the church was using wisdom in the selection of a man to check on the activity of these preachers. Furthermore, Barnabas was a man who would deal wisely with whatever situation he found in Antioch. And when he returned to make his report of what he found, he was a man on whom all the church at Jerusalem could depend. Churches today should be wise in the selection of its servants.

"Went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul" When Saul tried to preach in Jerusalem, and tried to get acquainted with the disciples in that city, he would have failed had it not been for Barnabas, who "took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how ... at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus." (Acts 9: 27.) How Barnabas knew of Paul's activities in Damascus we do not know. And whether Barnabas had had any more association with Saul than the other leaders in the church we do not know. Barnabas was of a disposition to feel kindly towards all, and to give every one an opportunity. When Paul refused to give Mark another chance, Barnabas broke with his best friend in order to give a young man one more chance to make good. "It is a great gift to be able to pick up and patch up men. Barnabas knew how to do it. . . . Christianity can never forget the work of Barnabas." (A. T. Robertson.)

"Disciples were called Christians." Adam Clarke says the Greek word here translated *were called* "signifies in the New Testament, to *appoint, warn, or nominate, by divine direction.* ... If, therefore, the name was given by *divine appointment*, it is most likely that Saul and Barnabas were directed to give it; and that, therefore, the name *Christian* is from God, as well as the grace and holiness which are so essentially required and implied in the character."

"Prophets and teachers." In the New Testament the word prophet does not necessarily mean one who foretells future events. "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation." (1 Cor. 14: 3.) But this added idea is in the word, that one had to have the "gift of prophecy," one of the nine gifts of the Spirit imparted by the laying on of apostles' hands. (1 Cor. 12: 8-11; Acts 8: 14-18.) So one who edified, exhorted, and consoled as he was moved by the Spirit to do so was a prophet. Then there was a class of people in the church known as teachers, distinguished from prophets and evangelists. (1 Cor. 12: 28; Eph. 4: 11.) But what that distinction was is hard to say. Some say that prophets were inspired, but teachers were not; that teachers taught that which prophets revealed. We cannot with certainty say that teachers were not inspired, but it is possible that it was the work of the prophet to reveal and the work of the teacher to instruct, though both were inspired to the extent that no mistakes might be made in teaching the doctrine.

"Separate me Barnabas and Saul." The Holy Spirit spoke through some of the prophets to tell the group to separate these men, or set them apart, to the work. And through fasting, praying, and laying of hands on them they were separated or appointed to the work of taking the gospel to regions where Christ was not known.

"Men that have hazarded their lives." We have no record of Barnabas hazarding his life to preach the gospel before this time, but Paul had been in danger of death often. (Acts 9: 23-25.) Paul said he did not hold his life of any account as dear unto himself (Acts 20: 24), and this disposition should be cultivated in each one of us. When one's life is dearer to him than the Lord and his cause, he is not worthy of the Lord and cannot be his disciple.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The first mention of Barnabas is in connection with his sale of property and giving the money for the care of the needy.

This was during the first year of the life of the church, so in A.D. 30. Barnabas was sent to Antioch in A.D. 43, and two years later, A.D. 45, he and Paul started on their first missionary journey. In A.D. 53 Barnabas and Paul went to Jerusalem about the question of circumcision.

GEOGRAPHY.—Antioch was founded by Seleucus Nicator in 300 B.C. "This metropolis was situated where the chain of Lebanon, running northwards, and the chain of Taurus, running eastwards, are brought to an abrupt meeting. Here the Orontes River breaks through the mountains; and Antioch was placed at the bend of the river, partly on an island, partly on the level which forms the left bank, and partly on the steep and craggy ascent of Mount Silpius, which rose abruptly on the south." It was made a free city by Pompey. "Jews were settled there from the first in large numbers, were governed by their own ethnarch, and allowed to have the same political privileges with the Greeks." Antioch was the capital of the province of Syria, and was one of the most famous cities of the world. It has been called the "second birthplace of the church." It continued to be a great church center long after Paul left, and was one of the five great centers when the church went into the great apostasy.

Our earliest history of Cyprus shows the island to belong to an Egyptian king. Later it became a part of the Persian empire. For a short time in the third century before Christ it was under Greek influence, but soon went back to the Ptolemies of Egypt. In 58 B.C. it became a Roman province "under circumstances discreditable to Rome." Jews settled in the island about the time of Alexander the Great. And disciples from Cyprus were among the first to preach the gospel to Gentiles in Antioch.

CHARACTER.—Barnabas was picked out by Luke as a good example of generosity; he was among the most generous in the church at Jerusalem.

Barnabas was powerful in his ability to move people by exhortation. Paul was a great teacher, so he and Barnabas made a great team. Paul taught the people, and Barnabas exhorted them to accept Christ.

Barnabas was a lover of men, especially those who were having difficulty. He gave Mark the second chance to make good. He helped Paul when he was friendless.

Barnabas was not subject to jealousy. When he and Paul first started to work together, they were spoken of as "Barnabas and Saul," indicating that Barnabas was considered the leader. But Saul soon assumed the role of leader and Barnabas humbly took second place. It takes a great character to do that.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Unselfishness is a good word to use around which to build this lesson. Children need lessons along this line. Barnabas not only gave his property for the poor in Jerusalem and lived out of the common fund but when the famine came he took up a collection in Antioch for the poor. So it was not just once that he showed his unselfishness; he lived that way. Children can be taught to save

their pennies and dimes for orphans; they can help buy flowers for classmates who are in hospitals; and they can be taught unselfishness in the home. There are few characteristics more beautiful than unselfishness and few that mar an otherwise fine character more quickly and completely than selfishness.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Selfishness is so prevalent in the world today and it is so nearly universal, that the generosity and unselfishness of Barnabas should be stressed in these departments. It would be well for teachers to plan things for these boys and girls to do as groups that will cultivate the spirit of unselfishness among them.

Barnabas was a good man. What constitutes a good man? Ask the students to name the things on the positive side, write them on the board. Then ask them to name the things which a person should not do to be good, and write them on the board. Encourage discussion among them on qualities which they are not sure should be on the positive or negative side. They will enjoy this more than a lecture on goodness by the teacher. And the teachers may suggest qualities for their discussion to determine on which side they should be placed.

Young People and Adult Departments

Generosity is a good word to use and stress in these departments. These people are the money-makers, and to them the church looks for its financial power. It is easy for men to get the dollar habit when the contribution plate is passed, and they seem satisfied because they are putting in "folding money." But the church can never do much as long as the majority of its men have this bad habit. Teachers can take a load off the preacher, help the elders finance a greater work, and bring a blessing to the givers if they will encourage more generous giving in their classes.

People in these departments can do a lot of good by being like Barnabas in giving encouragement to others in time of trial. Young people start and fail like John Mark. They can make good if given the proper encouragement and guidance, as Barnabas gave Mark. Are there members of the church who have failed? Have you tried to get them to make a new start? Why not make a list for your class and ask for volunteers to visit them and try to get them to make another start. Such work will bring people back to the church, and it will add life and enthusiasm to your class and to the church generally. Do not do it to make a name for your class, neither do it in the name of your class; but use the opportunity which your position and contact with your class afford to reclaim those who are out of the way.

Topics for Discussion

1. What we give away, we keep; what we keep for ourselves, we lose. "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it." (Mark 8: 35.) Barnabas had much to enjoy because he gave away all.

2. Barnabas laid up treasures in heaven when he gave. Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell his property and give to the poor and he would have treasure in heaven. (Matt. 19: 21.) Treasures laid up in heaven can never be destroyed or taken from us. (Matt. 6: 19-21.)

3. "For we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out." (1 Tim. 6: 7.) What we have at death is just so much unused power for good for which we must answer. While it is true we cannot carry anything out of this world with us, we can send it on to the next world before us by using it for God and the church while we live.

Lesson XI—June 15, 1947

PAUL, A GREAT PREACHER

The Lesson Text

Acts 9: 1-9; 13: 9-12; 2 Tim. 4: 6, 7

1 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And asked of him letters to Da-mas'cus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Je-ru'sa-lem.

3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Da-mas'cus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven:

4 And he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Je'sus whom thou persecutest:

6 But rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Da-mas'cus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

9 But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

6 For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.

Golden Text.—"Whereunto I was appointed a preacher and an apostle." (1 Tim. 2: 7a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 26: 24-29.

Daily Bible Readings

June 9.	M.	.....	First Mention of Paul (Acts 7: 54-60)
June 10.	T.	.....	Saul Persecutes Christians (Acts 8: 1-3)
June 11.	W.	.....	Paul Converted (Acts 9: 1-9)
June 12.	T.	.....	His Name Changed to Paul (Acts 13: 4-12)
June 13.	F.	.....	Paul Stoned (Acts 14: 19-28)
June 14.	S.	.....	Paul's Speech at Athens (Acts 17: 22-31)
June 15.	S.	.....	Paul Before Agrippa (Acts 26: 24-29)

Lesson Subject Explained

Whatever else may be said of Paul we must not lose sight of the fact that he was a preacher of the gospel. That was his primary

purpose in life. "But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood." (Gal. 1: 15, 16.) From this we learn that God planned even from the birth of Paul that he should be a preacher of the gospel, and that his work should be principally among the Gentiles. Paul lost no time after his conversion, but began to preach Christ, and, though not known by face to the people of Judea, he was known as the one who "now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc." (Gal. 1: 23.)

Paul looked upon the privilege of preaching Christ as a gift, not as a duty and a burden. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. 3: 8.) "I thank him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to his service; though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." (1 Tim. 1: 12, 13.) He viewed his preaching as a trust from God for which he was grateful. "But in his own seasons manifested his word in the message, wherewith I was intrusted according to the commandment of God our Saviour." (Tit. 1: 3.)

Paul's last message to his child in the faith was an exhortation to "preach the word" in season and out of season, for very soon people will not endure sound doctrine, but will be turned aside unto fables. (2 Tim. 4: 1-4.) There was nothing so important to Paul as was the preaching of the gospel. It was to him God's power to save the lost, and since all men were lost, he felt keenly the necessity of preaching the gospel to all men.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of Acts 9: 1-9 we have the stoning of Stephen. Chapter eight begins with the record of "a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem" that began the day Stephen was killed. And Saul of Tarsus, who consented to his death, is presented as the leading figure in that persecution. Then we are told of the scattering of the church, and where some of them went, preaching the gospel as they fled. Philip went to Samaria, where a church was established. And from there the Lord sent him to the south, towards Gaza, where he preached to the Ethiopian nobleman. When he had converted that man, he preached at Azotus and in all the cities until he reached Caesarea, where he made his home. (Acts 21: 8.) And in chapter nine the historian returns to his story about the persecution and its leader.

In the context of Acts 13: 9-12 we learn that Barnabas had gone from Antioch to Tarsus to get Saul as a helper in the work. They had stayed with the church in Antioch until the Holy Spirit directed that Barnabas and Saul be separated and sent out to do the work for which they were destined. Through prayer and fasting they were appointed to go forth to regions where the gospel had never gone. Since Barnabas was a native son of Cyprus, it was natural that they should go there for their first work. It was while they were in that island that Paul rebuked the sorcerer. It was there too, as our text

indicates, that Saul was called Paul by the inspired historian, which name he wears from that time to the day of his death.

The last division of our lesson text, 2 Tim. 4: 6, 7, is a part of the last letter Paul wrote before he was beheaded. He was then in prison in Rome for the second time, and he knew that "the time of my departure is come." He had given Timothy, his child in the faith, instructions, and had exhorted him to live by them. He had warned him of departures from the faith on the part of the people, and of the dangers of preachers following the people because of the pressure of public opinion. He had told Timothy that his duty was to preach the word, to reprove and rebuke those who taught otherwise and practiced other things than those revealed in the gospel.

Golden Text Explained

In the verse preceding our Golden Text Paul had affirmed that there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus. Then he affirmed that this mediator had given his life a ransom for all, and that the testimony concerning that ransom was to be borne in its own times. *Whereunto*, that is to the bearing of this testimony, Paul had been appointed a preacher and an apostle. So Paul's mission in life was to bear witness to the facts above mentioned, that there is one God, that Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and man, and that Jesus gave his life a ransom for all.

Paul had been separated, or set apart, to the preaching of the gospel. He says he was appointed to be a preacher of the gospel. This word appointed has about the same meaning as the word separated. Since he had that appointment from God, Paul felt that he could not be pleasing to God unless he preached the gospel. "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." (1 Cor. 9: 16.) So whether Paul was accepted in peace or persecuted; whether he met with friends or foes; whether he was paid or had to work with his own hands for his support, Paul preached the gospel. Preaching the gospel was not Paul's occupation, a means of making a living. Preaching the gospel was Paul's very life. He would preach it as long as he lived. Death was the only thing which could stop Paul from preaching the gospel. Putting him in prison did not stop him, it merely gave him another kind of audience. When he was brought before judges and kings to plead for his liberty or life, he forgot himself and preached the gospel to his judges.

He was appointed not only as a preacher, but as an apostle. The word apostle means *one sent*, a messenger. He said he was "called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God." (Rom. 1: 1.) Though Paul was not one of the original twelve apostles appointed by Jesus while he was here on earth, but was as one born out of due time (1 Cor. 15: 8), he affirmed, "In nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles," and that the signs of an apostle were wrought by him, and that the Lord gave him apostolic authority for building up and not casting down (2 Cor. 12: 11, 12; 13: 10.) The Lord appeared unto Paul that he might be qualified as an apostle, for apostles had to be eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Christ. (Acts 1: 21, 22; 22: 14; 26: 16-18.)

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Breathing threatening and slaughter" This form of expression was used to describe any vehement and hostile affection of the mind. Paul's one consuming passion was the destruction of the church. He lived it; he thought it; he breathed it. It became a part of him.

"Went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters." Jews of every nation recognized the authority of the high priest and the Sanhedrin over them. The authority of the high priest over all Jews has been compared to that which the Pope of Rome exercises over all Roman Catholics. These letters were from the high priest unto the synagogues of Damascus, introducing Paul as a special representative, and empowering him to work with the leaders of the synagogues to question people concerning their faith. Any who could not make an orthodox statement would be subjected to a severe cross-examination. Unless they could satisfy the prosecutor they were bound and taken to Jerusalem.

"A light out of heaven." This light appeared about noon. (Acts 22: 6.) It must therefore have been brighter than the sun. To try to guess what the light was, as many have tried to do, is foolish. That it was miraculous is granted by all who believe in God and Jesus as his Son, and that Jesus appeared unto Paul. The light was blinding in its effects on Paul.

"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." In persecuting Christ's followers Paul was persecuting Christ himself. In the judgment Jesus will say, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." (Matt. 25: 40.) Paul says, "And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ." (1 Cor. 8: 12.) The hard things we say about brethren today, the social cuts we give those who cannot dress as well as we, our refusal to feed the orphan, all these are sins against Christ himself.

"The men . . . stood speechless, hearing the voice." In Acts 22: 9 Paul says, "They heard not the voice of him that spake to me." Critics of the Bible have used this seeming contradiction as proof that the Bible is not inspired. We often use the word *hear* with two distinct meanings. A person calls to me and I say, "What did you say? I did not hear you." If I did not hear him, why did I ask him to repeat what he had said? I heard the sound of his voice, but did not understand what was said. So the men with Paul heard the sound of the voice that spoke to Paul, but they did not hear, in the sense of understanding what was said.

"Saul, who is also called Paul." This is the last time the apostle is called Saul and the first time the word Paul occurs when used of him. The word Saul means *asked* or *sought*. The word Paul either means *little* or *wonderful*. Adam Clarke argues at length to prove the latter meaning.

"O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil." This is part of what Paul said to a man who was seeking to turn another away from the faith. Was Paul harsh and unkind in his treatment of this man? May we use such language today? Some have said that Paul could use such language because he was inspired and knew the heart of this man, but since we are not inspired we ought not use such language. There is no indication that Paul relied on inspiration to determine the character of this man. Elymas was de-

terminated to keep the proconsul from becoming a believer. As such he became an active enemy against the Lord and the best interests of a soul. It did not take miraculous power in Paul to know what he was trying to do. A preacher would be very dull indeed today who could not see that such action and speech were that of an enemy. And such a rebuke would be as much in place today as it was when Paul administered it.

"I am already being offered." The word offered is used in the sense of *poured out as a drink offering*. See the margin. The present tense, I am being, suggests that he was already sentenced to death and was simply awaiting the execution of the sentence.

"I have fought the good fight." With Paul the Christian life was a battle. Christ was the Captain, the gospel was his sword, certain Christian graces were his armor, and it was his duty to endure hardness as a good soldier, keeping himself free from worldly entanglements. In another picture he views the Christian life as a race track. He is the runner; he has laid aside sin as weights that hinder his progress; he runs according to the rules of the course that he may strive lawfully; and he will win a prize, not because he is the best runner, but because he runs patiently to the end. (1 Cor. 9: 24-27.)

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—It is usually thought that Paul was born between A.D. 1 and A.D. 5. It is thought he was converted three or four years aft'r the establishment of the church. Adam Clarke gives the date of his conversion as A.D. 33, which is three years after the church was established. His first missionary journey began in A.D. 45; the second journey began in A.D. 53; and the third journey began in A.D. 56. It was in A.D. 65 or 66 when he wrote his second letter to Timothy.

GEOGRAPHY.—The city of Damascus is said by Josephus to have been founded by Uz, the grandson of Shem. If this be true, it is one of the oldest cities in the world. It was between fifty and sixty miles east of the Mediterranean Sea; it was 112 miles south of Antioch; and 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem. It was situated in a fertile plain thirty miles in diameter, the plain being watered by the river Barada, or Abanah, of 2 Kings 5: 12. Damascus has always been a large city, having as many as 150,000 population. Damascus was at one time under the rule of David. (2 Sam. 8: 5, 6.) Isaiah foretold the ruin of Damascus, saying, "They shall be as the glory of the children of Israel." (Isa. 17: 3.)

CHARACTER.—"Whatever Paul was, he was with his whole heart. His sublime devotion to Christ, his desire to become like Christ, his zeal in serving Christ, are everywhere and always manifest. He is wholly controlled by his faith, faith in God, in the unseen and spiritual, and faith in himself as a commissioned apostle to the Gentiles, called of God. He was a strong, heroic, masterful character, and yet a man of sensitive temperament and wide and tender sympathies. He possessed the power of arousing the enthusiasm and love of others. . . . Great in mental gifts was Paul, in his clearness of insight into the truth, in his grasp of essentials, and great in soundness of judgment, his delicacy of tact and courtesy, his loftiness of motive, his steadfastness of purpose, his indomitableness of will, his untiringness of zeal, his perfect fearlessness and self-poise, his

sublime patience, his intense feeling and deep enthusiasm, his contagious friendliness and this complete sacrifice of self. . . . We see him, not a saint, but a man, with human weaknesses, impulsive, unyielding at times, of quick and vehement temper, and we see this man in many ordinary situations, pressed on every side, yet not straightened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed. He represents human nature at its best, the nature toward which all may strive, for he could well say to the Corinthians, 'Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ.'"

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The lesson of kindness to others as the way to be kind to Jesus is a good lesson for these departments. These are not old enough to understand the details of Paul's conversion, the miracles attending it, or his rebuke of Elymas. But they can learn to be good to others in order that they may be good to Jesus. They can get this lesson from the Lord's statement, "Why persecutest thou me?" Paul did not know he was persecuting the Lord. He thought he was only persecuting men and women who lived contrary to the law of Moses. Let your pupils suggest as many ways as they can in which they may be good to the Lord, and how they may mistreat the Lord.

They can also appreciate the fact that the Lord was ready to receive Paul at the end of a long and faithful life. You can lead them to resolve in their hearts that they will live for Jesus here that they may be allowed to live with him in heaven.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The power of truth is a good lesson to get over to these departments. Paul was determined to rid the world of the very idea of Jesus of Nazareth being the Christ, the Son of God. But Paul and his high priest did not have the power to stop the spread of the truth. Instead of conquering the truth, he was conquered and controlled for the balance of his life by that very truth. The Roman empire was not strong enough to suppress that truth. Hundreds of thousands died for the privilege of confessing that truth, but their death did not stop the onward triumphant march of that great living truth. Scientists, philosophers, scoffers all have separately and combined tried to stop the progress of the gospel, but still it is unbound, unfettered, going into every nation under heaven. Preachers of the gospel may be jailed, but "the word of God is not bound." (2 Tim. 2: 9.)

The conversion of Paul may be presented to these departments. What did Paul do to become a Christian? What he had to do is what we must do today, for he said Jesus saved him, and made an example of him for all who thereafter believed on the Lord to life everlasting. (1 Tim. 1: 15, 16.)

Young People and Adult Departments

Both lessons above may be used in these departments. People need greater faith in God and in the power of his word. And they need always to be reminded of the requirements of the gospel in

becoming a Christian. It will do two things for them. First, it will give them confidence and assurance. Each time one studies the lesson on how to be saved, and compares that with what he has done to become a Christian, he sees afresh that he has done just what the Lord requires of all. This gives us assurance that we are children of God. Next, studying this lesson will better equip us to teach the lesson to others. It will be good to have different members of the class stand and tell others what one must do to be saved. Let class members ask questions, or argue that confession or baptism is not necessary, so the one giving the lesson will become familiar with the problem.

Topics for Discussion

1. Of what value is the conversion of Paul in proving the resurrection, and therefore the divinity, of Jesus Christ? Along with the resurrection of Jesus, the conversion of Paul is one of the strongest proofs of the truth of Christianity. Something happened to Saul of Tarsus. A man of his character was not to be changed in a moment by something that was not genuine.

2. The fact that Paul died in the faith, and that he died for the faith, and that he advised his young friends, Timothy and Titus, to preach the same thing he had preached, though he knew such a course would bring death upon them, proves that he was sincere in his faith, or that he was a thoroughly evil man who wished his friends to suffer needlessly.

3. The fact that Paul was separated unto the preaching of the gospel from his birth (Gal. 1: 15, 16), and the fact that the preaching of the gospel resulted in the establishment of the church, proves that God planned as far back as the birth of Paul that the church was to be established. Hence God did not plan for Jesus to establish a temporal throne in Jerusalem, but changed his mind when the Jews rejected him, and built the church instead. The church was in the eternal purpose of God; Jesus came to purchase the church with his blood; and Paul and others were to establish the church in communities by preaching the gospel.

Lesson XII—June 22, 1947

TIMOTHY, A YOUNG PREACHER

The Lesson Text

Acts 16: 1-3; 17: 14, 15

1 And he came also to Der'be and to Lys'tra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Tim'o-ty, 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.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent forth Paul to go as far as to the sea: and Si'las and Tim'o-ty abode there still.

15 But they that conducted Paul brought him as far as Ath'ens: and receiving a commandment unto Si'las and Tim'o-ty that they should come to him with all speed, they departed.

Phil. 2: 19-24

19 But I hope in the Lord Je'sus to send Tim'o-thy 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.

23 Him therefore I hope to send forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me:

24 But I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly.

2 Tim. 1: 3-5

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.

Golden Text.—“*Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season*” (2 Tim. 4: 2a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Tim. 2: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

June 16. M.....	Timothy Accompanies Paul (Acts 16: 1-5)
June 17. T.....	Timothy Taught by Lois and Eunice (2 Tim. 1: 3-10)
June 18. W.....	Timothy Left at Berea (Acts 17: 10-15)
June 19. T.....	Timothy at Ephesus (Acts 19: 21, 22)
June 20. F.....	Timothy in Corinth (1 Cor. 16: 10-12)
June 21. S.....	Visits Paul in Prison (Phil. 1: 1-11)
June 22. S.....	Paul's Charge to Timothy (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)

Lesson Subject Explained

It is very probable that Timothy was converted by the apostle Paul on his first missionary journey. Paul was at Lystra in A.D. 46. It was there that Paul healed a cripple and the people wished to worship him and Barnabas, thinking they were the gods Mercury and Jupiter. (Acts 14: 8-12.) Paul refers to Timothy as his son, saying, “For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord.” (1 Cor. 4: 17.) He calls him “my true child in faith” (1 Tim. 1: 2), and “my beloved child” (2 Tim. 1: 2). From these references we conclude that he was one of Paul's converts. It was seven years from the time of Paul's first visit to Lystra until he returned on his second missionary journey, so Timothy had some time to grow up. During this time Timothy had been doing some church work, probably preaching in Lystra and Iconium, for it is said he “was well reported of by the brethren.” How old he was must remain unknown, but surely we are safe in saying he was at least in his early twenties. When Paul is old and refers to himself as “Paul the aged” he refers to Timothy as being a youth. (1 Tim. 4: 12.) At that time, A.D. 64, Timothy had been with Paul eleven or twelve years. He must have been in his early to middle thirties, so could be very well referred to as a youth by a man as old as Paul.

Timothy entered the work at an early age. It is possible that he never knew anything else but to be a preacher of the gospel. He hardly had time to become settled in any other profession. It is a fine thing for boys to make up their minds early in life to preach the gospel. They can plan their schoolwork, and their work between school terms, to make a contribution to their life's work. Churches, and teachers of classes in the churches, can help boys by

encouraging them, giving them opportunities for development, aiding them financially to go to school, paying them well for work between school terms. They can do such work as taking a religious census of the town, distributing literature, and other things an older preacher can give them to do. Paul made Timothy, and Barnabas made Mark. Preachers are not born; they are made.

Context of the Lesson

Paul had finished his first missionary journey, had gone to Jerusalem with Barnabas to settle the question of circumcision and the keeping of the law of Moses. After the conference had settled the question, Barnabas and Paul planned to go on another tour of preaching. Barnabas wished to give Mark another chance, but Paul refused because Mark had not proved dependable on the first journey. So sharp was the contention that they parted. Barnabas took Mark and went to Cyprus, and Paul chose Silas as his companion, and they went back over the territory Paul visited on his first journey. As they went among the churches they confirmed them in the faith and encouraged them to faithfulness and steadfastness.

In the context of Acts 17: 14, 15 we learn that Timothy had joined the missionary party, and that Luke joined them in Troas. From there they had gone to Philippi, where one of the best churches of Paul's labors was established. Their next place to preach the gospel was in Thessalonica, where another good church was established. Then they went to Berea, where the people save special attention to the preaching, searching the scriptures daily to see if Paul and his companions were teaching the truth. When Paul's enemies from Thessalonica came to Berea, it was thought best for Paul to leave for other places of labor. But Timothy and Silas remained there for a while.

In the context of 2 Tim. 1: 3-5 we learn that Paul was in prison. He asked Timothy to be not ashamed of him as a prisoner. (2 Tim. 1: 8.) He also says that Onesiphorus was not ashamed of his chain, but, when in Rome, sought him and refreshed him, for which service Paul prayed the Lord would grant him mercy in the day of judgment. (2 Tim. 1: 17, 18.) Paul's reference here to his chain suggests that this letter was not written during his first imprisonment when he was allowed the liberty of his own hired house. (Acts 28: 30, 31.) It is evident also that Paul wrote this letter during his second imprisonment, for both Mark and Timothy were with him during his first imprisonment. Timothy joined Paul in writing the letters written from prison (Phil. 1: 1; Col. 1: 1), and Mark was mentioned as being with them and sending greetings to the church (Col. 4: 10). But neither Timothy nor Mark was with Paul when he wrote this second letter. (2 Tim. 4: 11.)

Golden Text Explained

"Preach the word." Paul had absolute confidence in the word of God as having power to save people from sin. To him the gospel was the power of God unto salvation. (Rom. 1: 16.) The word of God was living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword. (Heb. 4: 12.) The gospel was the begetting power by which people were brought into God's family. (1 Cor. 4: 15.) Paul had no con-

confidence in a mutilated, or perverted, gospel, so he declared the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20: 27.) He pronounced a curse on man or angel who would pervert the gospel. (Gal. 1: 7-9.) Paul had no confidence in human philosophies to save the soul. He warned the church, saying, "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. 2: 8.) Paul considered men who preached anything other than the word of God as the enemies of God and of souls. He left Timothy at Ephesus to charge certain men not to teach anything other than the gospel. He said elders should be able to convict false teachers and stop their mouths because they were overthrowing whole families by their false doctrines. (Tit. 1: 9-11.) He taught that false doctrines come from the devil and cause men to fall away from the faith. (1 Tim. 4: 1-4.)

"Be urgent in season, out of season." This means for us to preach the gospel at all times and in every place where it is possible for us to do so. There are times when the opportunity is better than others, but whether opportunities are great or small, preach the word. We are inclined to preach only at stated times and stated places. We will preach *at the church house* and at the *regular hour set for worship*. But in our association with lost men and women the word is never mentioned, and no effort is made to save their souls. Preachers are tempted to preach only when they are being paid to do so. When on vacations or between meetings, they may not take advantage of opportunities to preach the word. This is not being urgent in season and out of season.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Timothy, the son of a Jewess." Timothy's mother was named Eunice, and his grandmother was Lois. These were Jews who got away from Palestine, in a district where Jews were in the minority. Marriage with Gentiles was forbidden, but at this time the law was disregarded by so many at this point that no discipline was suffered on account of it. His father was a Greek, therefore a Gentile.

"Him would Paul have to go forth with him" Mary had been a great disappointment to Paul, but Paul did not judge all young men by Mark and refuse to try another. So he looked for another who would be more faithful. Since Timothy had a good background in the association and teaching of his mother and grandmother, and since he was well reported of by all the brethren in that district, Paul decided to give him a trial and took him with him.

"He took and circumcised him" This was not because Paul thought circumcision necessary for Jews, but because there were so many Jews who would refuse to listen to him preach if they knew he was uncircumcised. To them he would be nothing more than any other heathen. And since his mother was a Jewess, it could be done as a Jewish custom and not as a sign of acceptance of the law and all its ceremonies. But Titus, another companion of Paul, he refused to have circumcised to satisfy the demands of the Jews, because neither his father nor his mother was a Jew. (Gal. 2: 3.)

"Silas and Timothy abode there still." Paul's enemies were determined that he should leave those parts. It was no longer wise for

him to stay; his life was worth too much to the cause for him to lose it there. So he went by the sea route to Athens, but Silas and Timothy stayed. Being young men and not being in the lead in the fight, hitherto they had not been the objects of such intense hatred as was Paul. So they stayed to encourage and help the young church until it was able to take care of its own affairs.

"I have no man likeminded." Timothy entered more completely into Paul's life, having the same attitude and disposition with reference to the preaching of the gospel, than any of the rest of Paul's helpers. He was the best disciple, learner, Paul had.

"They all seek their own" It is difficult for us to divorce ourselves from this world sufficiently to put the interest of the church and of lost souls before our own interests. Many of Paul's helpers thought more of their own ease, safety, and comfort than they did of the salvation of lost souls and the best interests of the church. Timothy was one who, like Paul, was so unselfish that he thought of others before he thought of himself.

"Whom I serve . . . in a pure conscience." Paul says his service of God extends back through his forefathers. He was from a long line of faithful, zealous ancestors. His service was always in a pure conscience. Even when he was persecuting the church, he never one time violated his conscience. *"I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day."* (Acts 23: 1.)

"My remembrance of thee in my supplications" Paul never forgot to pray for Timothy, though he had plenty of troubles of his own. In prison, sentenced to die, though he had done nothing worthy of death, yet he was thinking of others and praying for their welfare. We ought to learn to be unselfish in our prayers.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—We do not know of the date of Timothy's birth, but we have already suggested that he must have been in his late teens or early twenties when converted during Paul's first visit to Lystra. Seven years later Paul returned to find his son in the gospel already worthy of praise for his work and ready to go with him as a fellow laborer in the gospel. Timothy joined Paul's party in A.D. 53. He was left in Ephesus to guard the purity of the doctrines of that church, and Paul wrote him his second letter in A.D. 65 or 66.

GEOGRAPHY.—Little is known of Lystra, the home of Timothy. It was situated about one hundred miles northwest of Tarsus. Lystra was the seat of heathen worship. It was common for a city to be regarded as under the special guardianship of certain gods, and the image of the god to be placed at the gate of the city and the priest of that god was to take care of the worship and sacrifices to that god. Lystra was under the care of Jupiter. When Paul and Barnabas performed a miracle, the people of Lystra thought the gods had come down in human form to visit them.

CHARACTER.—The word *Timotheos*, another form of the word Timothy, means *honoring God*. His name was very fitting, for from youth he lived such a life as was honoring to God. He seems to have been reared by his mother and grandmother, devout worshipers of God. It is probable that his father died while Timothy was young. At least there is no trace of Greek influence in the life and character of the boy. His training was Jewish from first to last, being versed

in the Old Testament scriptures. (2 Tim. 3: 15.) He had a faith as sincere as that which characterized his mother and grandmother. It is doubtful that there was a synagogue for Jews in Lystra, so Timothy got his training in the scriptures at home. We may conclude that his home was a place where God was worshiped often and fervently.

Timothy was faithful and dependable. Paul said he could depend on him to do his work like he wanted it done more than he could any other helper. Timothy stayed with Paul during his first imprisonment, and Paul was confident that he would come to him to help him in his last stay in prison. (2 Tim. 4: 9.)

Timothy suffered "often infirmities," and was told to "use a little wine for thy stomach's sake." (1 Tim. 5: 23.) From this we may conclude that Timothy was a total abstainer from strong drink, for it took an apostolic order to get him to use enough wine for his stomach trouble and often infirmities. Those who try to use this passage as proof that it is not wrong to drink intoxicating liquors lose sight of the fact that Timothy was not using wine until Paul ordered him to do so for his infirmities. If all would refrain from the use of strong drinks until their health demands that they use a *little*, there would be less sorrow and suffering caused by the drinking habit.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Following the example of mother is a good thought around which to build this lesson for these departments. Timothy was taught by his mother, and he followed her example of piety. Children should honor father and mother, and one way to honor parents is to be ready to learn from them, and to follow their examples. To refuse to follow their teaching and manner of life is to embarrass and dishonor them before the community.

These children love rivalry. Mark failed in his trial as Paul's helper, but finally made good as we learned in the lesson devoted to him. But Timothy made good the first time he was given a chance. Timothy was well taught in the scriptures, and so had sufficient background to stand in time of trial.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Dependability is a good word to stress in these departments. To be dependable one must accept responsibilities seriously. Whether the task be little or great, important or unimportant, one must stay with the job until it is done. To fail one time is to destroy one's reputation for dependability. Paul could not look upon Mark as being dependable because he failed one time. Timothy made good from the first; he never did let Paul down, so made for himself a reputation of being dependable. The church needs young people to take certain parts in the service, but there are many who cannot be depended upon to be on time and ready to perform the service. Some young people will stay away from class if they are given a special report to make. They are not dependable.

Timothy was not ashamed of the faith of his mother. Young people often get into situations where they are tempted to deny

their faith and that of their parents. Timothy was willing to be taught by his mother. Young people often think the ways and ideals of their parents have been outgrown, and that it is smart to look for something more modern. But in religion new ideals and doctrines are dangerous. Anything not as old as the New Testament is entirely too modern to have saving power. To accept things from parents simply and solely because they are your parents is not a safe principle to follow. But children will do well to give the teaching and example of parents careful and respectful attention.

Timothy looked to Paul for help and instruction. Youth is not inclined to listen to age. Rehoboam made the greatest mistake of his life by refusing to accept the counsel of the old men who were the associates of his father. (1 Kings 12: 6-11.) Young people could save themselves a lot of grief and suffering if they would take a little advice from age.

Young: People and Adult Departments

Unselfish service to God is a good thought around which to build a lesson for these departments. Timothy might have been able to establish a good business in Lystra, but he chose to give his time and energy to the Lord in carrying the word to people who had never heard it. Instead of seeking his own, as Paul said all people do, Timothy esteemed others better than himself, and gave himself in service to them. In this he was following in the steps of both Jesus and Paul. (Phil. 2: 3-8.)

When Jesus left the earth, he had but few disciples who were dependable. But he gave to them the responsibility of carrying the gospel to the whole world. What if they had failed? The salvation of the whole world depended on the faithfulness of that little band. What if the salvation of the world today depended upon your class? How many of them would be willing to give up a comfortable living to go out to preach the gospel where it has never been preached? Surely such examples as this one of Timothy are given us to move us to faithfulness and dependability.

Topics for Discussion

1. How much does a religious background contribute to the success of a person in Christian service? Samuel was brought up in the tabernacle; Moses was trained until he was eighty years old; John the Baptist was schooled in the solitudes for a stern work; Paul was given the best education his day afforded; Timothy was schooled by his mother and grandmother in the knowledge of God's word and pious respect for it.

2. If continuous teaching and training from childhood in the home are necessary to make successful workers in the Lord's vineyard, how many parents today are making it possible for their children to succeed?

3. What will be the condition of one in the judgment who has brought children into the world and has neglected to give them the background of religious training necessary to meet the trials and temptations of life? To what degree is the negligent parent responsible for the damnation of an unfaithful child?

4. Would daily worship in the home contribute to this background of religious training parents should give their children? To what extent is the lack of home worship responsible for the present youth problem?

Lesson XIII—June 29, 1947

TITUS, A PARTNER OF PAUL

The Lesson Text

2 Cor. 2: 12, 13; 7: 6, 7, 13, 14; 8: 16, 23

12 Now when I came to Tro'as for the gospel of Christ, and when a door was opened unto me in the Lord,

13 I had no relief for my spirit, because I found not Ti'tus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went forth into Mac-e-do'nia.

6 Nevertheless he that comforteth the lowly, *even* God, comforted us by the coming of Ti'tus;

7 And not by his coming only, but also by the comfort wherewith he was comforted in you, while he tola' us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced yet more.

13 Therefore we have been comforted: and in our comfort we joyed the more exceedingly for the joy of Ti'tus, because his spirit hath been refreshed by you all.

14 For if in anything I have gloried to him on your behalf, I was not put to shame; but as we spake all things to you in truth, so our glorying also which I made before Ti'tus was found to be truth.

16 But thanks be to God, who putteth the same earnest care for you into the heart of Ti'tus.

23 Whether *any inquire* about Ti'tus, *he is* my partner and my fellow-worker to you-ward; or our brethren, *they are* the messengers of the churches, *they are* the glory of Christ.

Gal. 2: 1-4

1 Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Je-ru'sa-lem with Bar'na-bas, taking Ti'tus also with me.

2 And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gen'tiles but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain.

3 But not even Ti'tus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

4 And that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Je'sus, that they might bring us into bondage.

Tit. 1: 4

4 To Ti'tus, my true child after a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Je'sus our Saviour.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*Whether any inquire about Titus, he is my partner and my fellow-worker to you-ward.*" (2 Cor. 8: 23a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Tit. 1: 1-4.

Daily Bible Readings

June 23.	M.....	First Mention of Titus (2 Cor. 2: 12-17)
June 24.	T.	Titus Comforts Paul (2 Cor. 7: 5-11)
June 25.	W	Titus Loved the Church (2 Cor. 7: 12-16)
June 26.	T.	Titus' Zeal (2 Cor. 8: 16-24)
June 27.	F.	Titus Accompanies Paul to Jerusalem (Gal. 2: 1-5)
June 28.	S.	Titus Commended (2 Cor. 12: 14-18)
June 29.	S.....	Titus Left in Crete (Tit. 1: 1-9)

Lesson Subject Explained

Titus is another young man, perhaps about the same age as Timothy, whom Paul chose and trained to be his helper in the work of establishing churches. It was not good to establish a church and then leave it in a few weeks to go to another place without some one to stay with it until leadership was developed to care for it. So Paul had such men as Titus, Timothy, Silas, Luke, and a number of others who are mentioned in his epistles as his fellow workers, whom he left with infant churches. Titus was left once in Crete for just such a work. (Tit. 1: 5.)

Paul referred to these helpers as "fellow-workers" (Phil. 4: 3), and "fellow-servant" (Col. 4: 7). To the church at Philippi we read, "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 1: 1.) This shows the humility of Paul and the encouragement he gave these young men who were sacrificing the ease and comforts of home to go with him. To be a partner with the great apostle was a position to be coveted by the young men of the church. Titus was such a faithful worker that Paul entrusted him with some very important missions. He was with Paul long enough, and was such an apt pupil that he did the work like Paul would have done it if he had been there. To the church at Corinth Paul wrote, "Did Titus take any advantage of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?" (2 Cor. 12: 18.) Not only did the actions of Titus conform to those of Paul, but his spirit, or disposition, was the same. Truly he was a real partner who could make both his actions and motives like those of his teacher and leader.

Context of the Lesson

Paul's reference to his arrival in Troas, where he was disappointed because he did not find Titus, was not his first visit to that city, mentioned in Acts 16: 8; this was his visit there on his third missionary journey. After Paul had rested some time in Antioch, "he departed, and went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples." (Acts 18: 23.) Then he went to Ephesus, according to promises he had given them (Acts 18: 21), and stayed there over two years (Acts 19: 8-10). When it was dangerous for him to stay in Ephesus any longer, he went by Troas into Macedonia. (Acts 20: 1.) Here he failed to find Titus, who was to bring Paul word of the state of the church at Corinth. But Titus did join Paul somewhere in Macedonia, as we learn from the next section of our lesson text. And from the context in 2 Cor. 7: 5-16 we learn that Titus was able to bring Paul a lot of comfort and joy by telling him that the church at Corinth had responded in a fine way to his rebukes administered in his first letter; they had corrected the sinful conditions in the church to such an extent that Paul could say, "I rejoice that in everything I am of good courage concerning you." (2 Cor. 7: 16.)

In this same context we learn that Titus had become interested in the collection for the saints which was being made by the church in Corinth, and that he had encouraged them to make it a liberal contribution. And since Titus had been interested in, and had worked with, the church there to get a good collection, Paul decided to send him on ahead of him to finish the work and have the collec-

tion ready when he and his other partners in this work arrived. (2 Cor. 8: 6, 16, 17; 9: 1-5.)

The context of Gal. 2: 1-4 is to be found in Acts 15, where we have the record of the dispute at Antioch over the question of circumcision and the keeping of the law of Moses. There was an element in the church, composed of Jews, who could not conceive of the law of Moses being abrogated; they thought Gentiles should obey the gospel, but they also thought the gospel was simply an addition to the law, and that all Gentiles should be required to keep the law in addition to obeying the gospel. So Paul and Barnabas agreed to go to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders there, to see what they had to say on the question. Titus, it seems, was taken along as a test case. He was a Greek. If the apostles at Jerusalem accepted him as a Christian, worthy to be a partner in gospel work with Paul, certainly that would be a demonstration of the truth that Gentiles did not have to be circumcised.

There is no scripture context for Tit. 1: 1-4. Luke does not record anything in Paul's life after his first imprisonment. No mention is made in Acts of his being in Crete. This visit to Crete with Titus, where Paul left Titus to work with the newly established church, must therefore have been after Paul was released from his first imprisonment, and before he was taken to Rome for the second and last time. This letter to Titus was written from Rome about the time the letters to Timothy were written.

Golden Text Explained

Though Titus had been in Corinth before, it was possible that some might have come into the church since he was there, and so would need some introduction. As he was the bearer of this second letter, it was well that Paul give him a word of recommendation. So Paul said if any inquire about him, wanting to know who he is, this is to say that he is my partner and fellow worker to youward, that is in your behalf.

It must have been a wonderful opportunity for a young man to be associated with a man like the apostle Paul. He was an inspired man. He had apostolic authority. He had the power to work miracles and give others that power. He had a wide acquaintance over a great section of the world. He was a great teacher, so that a young man would have unusual opportunity to study under his guidance the great mysteries of the gospel.

Furthermore the fact that Paul spoke of these young preachers of the gospel as his partners and fellow workers indicates the fine spirit of fellowship they enjoyed with him. Paul did not think of himself as being so much better or greater than they were. He manifested the Christian attitude when he thought of them as his brethren and fellow workers. And their opportunities for working with him as his partners increased their responsibilities before God. No one can have an unusual opportunity without being held responsible for doing bigger and better things. Demas proved unworthy of these superior opportunities, so his name lives only to perpetuate his sham and disgrace, leaving his post of duty for the pleasures of this world.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Came to Troas for the gospel." As has already been mentioned, this was not Paul's first visit to Troas, but this was after he left Ephesus on the third missionary tour. He was in Troas the first time in A.D. 53, while this visit to which he refers here was in A.D. 59. He says he went this time "for the gospel of Christ." The Authorized Version says "to preach Christ's gospel." Paul's mission was to preach the gospel, and wherever he went, far or near, he went there for the sake of the gospel.

"I had no relief for my spirit." Though there was a door of opportunity opened to Paul, he was so troubled in his spirit that he seems not to have entered the door. It was at Troas that another great door of opportunity was opened to Paul on his first visit there, and he and his company went over into Macedonia to preach the gospel. (Acts 16.) What this door of opportunity we have no way of knowing.

The relief of spirit which he sought was to come from a visit with Titus whom he expected to meet in Troas. He knew that he had written a sharp letter to the church at Corinth. He knew they had some very serious conditions in the church. He was anxious to hear what effect his letter had on them. This is a part of the "anxiety for all the churches" which pressed upon him daily, and constituted a part of the burden he carried with him continually. (2 Cor. 11: 28.) If all church members had this same anxious care for the welfare of the church where they worship, churches would enjoy more peace and prosperity.

"He that comforteth the lowly." Here is both praise to God and humility on the part of Paul. He places himself with the lowest of the lowly, and praises God for his constant care of him. In this instance he was comforted by the coming to him of Titus with a message of hope and cheer concerning the improved condition of the Corinthian church.

Not only was Paul comforted, but Titus had been refreshed by the way the church at Corinth had received him and cared for him while he was with them. This was especially gratifying to Paul, since Titus was there as his representative. And since they had been so nice to his representative, Paul was confident that their attitude toward him was right.

"The same earnest care for you." Here Paul gives thanks to God for putting into the heart of Titus a care for the church at Corinth. He speaks of it as the "same earnest care." By this Paul means the same care that he had in his heart. Titus was as much concerned about the growth of the church at Corinth as Paul. This was a wonderful recommendation for this young preacher.

"They are the glory of Christ." If any wish to know about these men who carried the second letter, and who were Paul's representatives in the matter of the special collection for the poor, Paul wanted all to know that they were the messengers of the churches, endorsed by the churches and sent by them. Furthermore they are the glory of Christ. These men are such fine characters that Christ can glory in them. They glorify Christ, and Christ glories in them. Surely this was the highest recommendation it was possible for Paul to give them.

"After the space of fourteen years." This is fourteen years after his conversion. His first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion was the three years mentioned in Gal. 1: 18. He made another in A.D. 43, about seven years after his conversion to take relief to the saints. (Acts 11: 29, 30.) But this visit fourteen years after his conversion would be in A.D. 51 or 52, which is the time of the Jerusalem conference. And this visit mentioned in our text is the one made by request of the church at Antioch in the matter of circumcision.

"Taking Titus also with me." In Acts 15: 2 it is said that Paul and Barnabas took "certain other of them" along to Jerusalem. Here we learn that Titus was one of those certain others who went along. This is the first time, so far as we have any way of knowing, that Titus accompanied Paul in any of his work. He was taken along, for one reason among others, because he was a Greek. If he came back circumcised, the church at Antioch would know Paul had lost his case in Jerusalem; but if he was not circumcised, and still enjoyed the fellowship of the apostles, the church at Antioch would have proof that Paul was right, and that his critics were wrong in the eyes of the apostles at Jerusalem.

"According to the faith of God's elect." God's elect are now the faithful Christians, not the Jews only, as was formerly the case. God has elected, or chosen, the church as his peculiar possession. (Tit. 2: 14.)

"Promised before times eternal." The thing promised is eternal life, which, Paul says, we hope for. And just as sure as God cannot lie, the faithful will have it in the life to come. (Mark 10: 30; Rev. 2: 10.) God's plan to give eternal life to the faithful goes back in the ages, even before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1: 4, 5; 3: 5-9; 1 Pet. 1: 18-20.)

"My true child after a common faith." There was a common faith, and there was a miraculous faith. The common faith came by hearing the word of God. (John 20: 30, 31; Rom. 10: 17.) The miraculous faith was a gift of the Spirit given by the laying on of apostles' hands. It was one among the nine gifts. (1 Cor. 12: 4-11.) Since no apostles are alive today to lay hands on us, it is impossible for us to have the miraculous faith.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—We know nothing of the time of the birth of Titus. He was first in the company of Paul in A.D. 51 or 52 when they went to the Jerusalem conference. He was not with Paul on his second missionary tour, but did go on the third. In A.D. 59 he brought Paul word of the reformation in the church at Corinth. The date of the letter to Titus is given as A.D. 65 or 66.

GEOGRAPHY.—Crete is an island in the Mediterranean Sea, south of Greece. According to Smith's Bible *Dictionary* it is 140 miles long, but Adam Clarke quotes ancient authors as saying it is 270 to 300 miles long. It is about fifty miles wide. It is extremely mountainous, but has many fertile valleys. It came under Roman rule in 67 B.C. It is said by ancient authors that Crete was first settled by people from Palestine. We do know that Jews in large numbers went there shortly after the death of Alexander the Great. There were Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost from Crete. (Acts 2: 11.) Whether any of them carried the gospel back with them or not we have no

way of knowing. Neither is there any record that Paul preached in that island before his first imprisonment. Some think he preached there while he was in Ephesus or Corinth, but this is only a guess. Since he speaks of leaving Titus in Crete, we do know that he visited the island. It seems most probable that he visited there after he was released from prison, but of this we have no positive proof.

CHARACTER.—All we can know of the character of Titus is what we glean from Paul's letters to the churches, and the one to Titus. He is not mentioned in Acts. We infer that he was some older than Timothy, since Paul asks the churches not to despise his youth, and warns Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth." But such he does not say to Titus.

Several expressions in Paul's letter to the church at Corinth suggest traits of his character. He was comforted by the fact that the Corinthians loved Paul. (2 Cor. 7: 7.) He had special joy in being refreshed by the church, which suggests his appreciation for what people did for him. (2 Cor. 7: 13.) His affection was abundantly towards them. (2 Cor. 7: 15.)

Titus was especially interested in putting over that collection for the poor in Judea, and was so dependable that Paul was willing to rest that matter in his hands. He is said to have made the beginning with them in this matter. (2 Cor. 8: 6.) He had the same intense interest in it that Paul had. (2 Cor. 8: 16.)

He was a man who could use authority over other people, for Paul urges him to exhort and reprove with all authority. (Tit. 2: 15.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Here again we have the idea of being helpers of Jesus. When Titus became a partner to the apostle Paul, he really became a helper of Jesus since Jesus was working through Paul. And since the sympathy of children is easily aroused, especially for orphans, you can show his interest in getting a large contribution from the church at Corinth for the poor in Judea. Among those poor people there would be many children, even orphans. Titus was a helper of Jesus to feed those children. Paul told the Corinthians, "We are God's fellow-workers." (1 Cor. 3: 9.) We work with each other helping God carry on the work he wishes to have done in this world. And it is not worth much to teach such lessons unless you plan something for them to do, so they may learn not to be forgetful hearers of the word. (James 1: 22-25.)

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Paul was a Jew and Titus was a Greek, yet they worked together. Paul was in this way practicing what he preached about making no distinction between Jews and Gentiles in Christian service and worship. Young people ought to get a world-wide vision of the church. They ought to learn that the church was not built for America, nor for the white race. Our sympathies and our services should reach beyond national and racial lines. These departments are good places to begin to build world-wide sympathies.

Titus should be used as an example of a young man leaving all that this world has to offer in the way of material gain that he

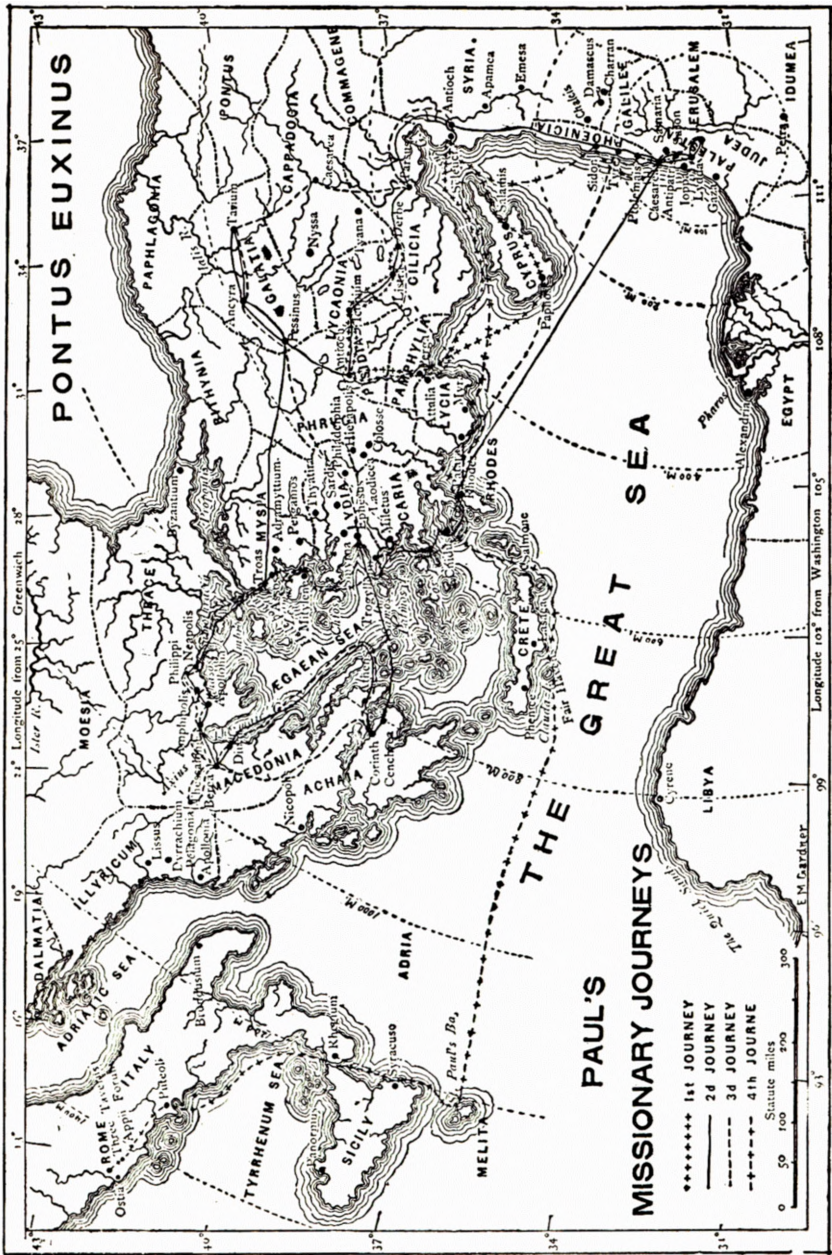
might bring spiritual blessings to many who would never have known of Christ if he had not been willing to make a sacrifice.

Young People and Adult Departments

Titus was a willing worker. Paul said he went to do that work at Corinth of his own accord. (2 Cor. 8: 17.) It seems that Titus wished to have some part in that great work of relieving the poor, and that, though he was not drafted, he picked out a place where he thought some one was needed and went to work. Many people wait until they are asked to work. They would never do anything if the elders, or the preacher; did not lay out the work for them and insist that they do it. People in these departments are old enough to look about them for opportunities to do good. Teachers will do a good work to encourage each one in the class to look for something definite he can do. Be a Titus. Do something good of your own accord. If each one in the church would determine to do something definite each week for the Lord that would honor and glorify the church, it would be impossible to keep that church from growing in the esteem and appreciation of the people. It would soon cause the church to grow in numbers, as well as activity.

Topics for Discussion

1. Paul and Titus got the church at Corinth to pledge a certain amount to the care of the poor a year before time for the collection to be taken. (2 Cor. 8: 10.) Then Paul wrote them to lay by in store on the first day of the week to liquidate that pledge. (1 Cor. 16: 1-3.) Lest they not be ready, Paul sent brethren ahead of him to make up beforehand their *aforepromised amount*. (2 Cor. 9: 1-5.) If this is the way they financed one item of church work, it is scriptural to finance all items that way. If the church at Corinth pledged money, and then gave on the Lord's day to liquidate that pledge, are we not bound by that example?



THIRD QUARTER

SOME GREAT WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

AIM.—To study the traits of character that made women great in Bible time, and to learn how women may become great in the sight of God today.

Lesson I—July 6, 1947

EVE, THE MOTHER OF ALL LIVING

The Lesson Text

Gen. 2: 18-25; 3: 6, 16, 20

18 And Je-ho'vah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.

19 And out of the ground Je-ho'vah God formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20 And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; but for man there was not found a help meet for him.

21 And Je-ho'vah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof:

22 And the rib, which Je-ho'vah God had taken from the man, made her a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

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.

20 And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

1 Tim. 2: 13-15

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve;

14 And Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression:

15 But she shall be saved through her childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And the man called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living."* (Gen. 3: 20.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Cor. 11: 1-3.

Daily Bible Readings

June 30. M.....	Eve Created (Gen. 2: 18-25)
July 1. T.....	Eve Deceived (Gen. 3: 1-8)
July 2. W.....	The Curse Upon Eve (Gen. 3: 14-21)
July 3. T.....	Eve's First Born (Gen. 4: 1-8)
July 4. F.....	Serpent Beguiled Eve (2 Cor. 11: 1-5)
July 5. S.....	Eve in the Transgression (1 Tim. 2: 8-15)
July 6. S.....	A Worthy Woman (Prov. 31: 10-31)

Lesson Subject Explained

The word *Eve* means *life*, and unless we realize that we cannot understand Adam calling her name Eve for the reason that she is the mother of all living. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, reads, "And Adam called his wife's name life, because she was the mother of all living." Adam Clarke says, "It is probable that God designed this name to teach our first parents these two important truths: (1) That though they had merited immediate death, yet they should be respited, and the accomplishment of the sentence be long delayed; they should be spared to propagate as numerous progeny on the earth. (2) That though much misery would be entailed on his posterity, and death should have a long and universal empire, yet ONE should in the fulness of time spring from the woman, who should destroy *death*, and bring *life* and *immortality* to light."

Context of the Lesson

In the context of Gen. 2: 18-25 we find the record of the creation. In six days God created all things. "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.) From this and the record of creation in the first of Genesis we conclude that this universe in which we live was not an old universe revamped, not another one made over, as some claim; this universe was made out of things which had not previously existed. God called the material into existence for the first time and from this newly created material he made the worlds. Following the creation of the world, God began to put life on it. And the highest life came last. Man, both male and female, was created in the image of God. Then God prepared a place for them to live, a garden in Eden, where everything was provided for man's happiness. Only one limitation was placed upon man's activity. Of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil man was not to eat.

In the context of our next text we find Satan using the serpent to approach Eve with reference to eating of the forbidden fruit. Of the serpent it is said that it was more subtle than any beast of the field which God had made. There has been great differences of opinion as to what creature is here referred to as the serpent. Adam Clarke thinks it cannot refer to what we call a serpent, snake, because it never did or can walk erect, and because there is no indication that it ever had organs of speech. He is of the opinion that the ape, "or any creature of the *simia* or ape genus," will more nearly fill the requirements than a snake. His reasoning is plausible, though not conclusive, and is well worth reading if you have access to his commentary.

In 1 Tim. 2 Paul is contrasting the work of men and women. Men are to take the lead in prayers, and if in prayers it would follow that they are to lead in all items of public worship; but women, in contrast with that, are to take a secondary place, a supporting role, and adorn themselves with good works. They are not to teach or exercise dominion over man, but to be in quietness. He then assigns two reasons for giving the woman this place in reference to man, which are stated in our text. Paul also treats of this subject in

1 Cor. 11: 3-16, which the reader will do well to study in this connection.

Golden Text Explained

We have found that the word Eve means *life*, or *living*. Our Golden Text says Adam gave her this name because she was the mother of all living, that is, all living human beings. This settles the question often raised about the number of creations referred to in Genesis. Some think one creation is mentioned in the first chapter, and another and different creation mentioned in chapter two. Races of men cannot be accounted for on the ground that there was more than one creation, but must be accounted for in some other way. Paul agrees with this when he said to the men of Athens, "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." (Acts 17: 26.) Of course this *one* to whom Paul referred is Adam. This is true, even in the most literal sense, for, though we may look upon Eve as the mother of all living, yet she was made from the bone and flesh of Adam, so she too was of the *one* to whom Paul referred.

Luke goes into the matter of the genealogy of Jesus Christ to show that he came from Adam, who came from God. "And Jesus himself, . . . being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, . . . the son of David, . . . the son of Abraham, . . . the son of Adam, the son of God." (Luke 3: 23-38.)

When Eve is mentioned, usually it is to tell of her mistake, from which has resulted much of the world's sorrows and sufferings. She made her mistake, and is rightly chargeable with all the consequences resulting therefrom. But that is not the only act of her life. She was not all bad. She is deserving of more praise than she gets. She is the mother of all living. It ill becomes one to be unnecessarily unkind in speaking of his mother. She bore her sorrows and endured her sufferings, the due reward of her deeds, and gave us Seth through whom our Redeemer came to give us life in the eternal Eden in heavenly bliss.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"*Not good that the man should be alone.*" It seems that the beasts of the field and birds of the heavens had been brought before Adam for him to name them before God said it was not good for man to be alone. All creatures had been made in pairs, male and female, but Adam alone had no companion. It was not good for Adam himself to be alone, to live his life in loneliness and die in despair of ever being remembered or appreciated by his kind. It was not good for God that Adam should be alone, since he could not people the earth without a mate. Nor is it good now for a man to be alone. Paul said if one had sufficient control he might give more time and attention to spiritual work if he lived unmarried (1 Cor. 7: 32-35), but if he married it was no sin. Those who today teach that it is a sin for certain orders of church workers to marry are teaching a doctrine of demons. (1 Tim. 4: 1-3.)

"*A help meet for him.*" The word *meet* does not mean mate, as the passage is often quoted. The word *meet* means fit, worthy. Woman was not created to be man's slave or servant; she was made to be his companion. She is in every way worthy of him. Though

she is the "weaker vessel" physically, it is only because she does not need superior physical strength to bear children, rule the household, and is an added reason why man should be her protector and save her from hard physical labor.

"And the man gave names to all." Names of both man and beast in Old Testament times were significant, revealing something of the nature or properties of what was named. How could Adam give such fitting names? This is an indication of the superior wisdom with which he was created. Men study for years and still are not able to identify the various animals, insects, and birds. Yet Adam, without a university education, was able to name all that came before him. Man lost more in the fall of Adam than a home in a beautiful garden where food was to be had for the picking.

"And the rib, . . . made he a woman." The margin reads, "And the rib . . . builded he into a woman." It is significant that woman was not made from the dust as was Adam. Adam could not have said that she was bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh if that had been done. Neither could Paul have made the argument for the authority of man over woman that he made in 1 Cor. 11: 8 if Eve had been made of the dust of the ground. "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man."

"She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." The word for woman here is simply the word for man with a "feminine termination." So she may correctly be called *she-man*. Being taken out of man, she was a feminine man.

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother." There is a closer relation between husband and wife than there is between parent and child. And because of this intimate relation a man shall leave his parents to make a home for his wife, and they shall be one flesh. Jesus quoted this very passage to prove that a man cannot put away his wife for any cause except for fornication and marry another. And then he concluded, "So that they are no more two, but one flesh." (Matt. 19: 5, 6.)

"The woman saw that the tree was good." Satan convinced Eve that the tree was good for food, appealing to the lust of her flesh; that it was a delight to the eyes, appealing to the lust of the eyes; and that it would make one wise, appealing to the pride of life. John says these are all the temptations the world has to offer. (1 John 2: 15, 16.) And with these very three things Satan tempted our Lord. (Matt. 4: 1-11.)

"I will greatly multiply thy pain" This was part of the penalty Eve was to suffer for her sin. The way of the transgressor is hard, not only on the one that sins, but the sad part of it is that it is hard on others. So every daughter of Eve must suffer in childbirth. They have not inherited the guilt of sin, but the penalty of the sin continues. And as a consequence of her sin woman is to be ruled over by her husband. In lands where the gospel has never gone women still suffer under this rule, but women should be forever grateful to Christ that his teaching makes her lot much easier, for the husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. The woman who has a husband like Christ will find it her delight and joy to be ruled over by him.

"The woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression" In this passage Paul is giving reasons why the woman is not to exercise

dominion over man. First, Adam was created first, then the woman; so man is to be first in authority. Second, Adam was not beguiled, but woman was. When woman took the lead she made a mistake with far-reaching consequences. Paul uses this as proof that the woman should now take second place. And whether or not we see a proper connection here between cause and effect, the Holy Spirit saw it and urged it as sufficient reason for woman not to exercise dominion over man, and with that we ought to be satisfied.

"She shall be saved through her childbearing." Some take this to mean that a Christian woman will be saved from death in child-bearing. This is not true. Eve, together with all her children, will be saved through her childbearing, that through the Savior who was to be brought into the world by woman, without the help of man, salvation was to come to all if *they* continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety. *She* shall be saved if *they* continue. Notice the change from singular to the plural in the pronouns. One woman brought untold misery upon the human family; another woman, without the help of man, brought salvation from that misery to all who live in faith that works by love. Eve and Mary have affected the stream of human experience more than all other women of the world.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The events of this lesson are usually dated 4004 B.C. The last section of our lesson text is thought to have been written in A.D. 64 or 65.

GEOGRAPHY.—For sake of saving space and to keep down repetition in these lessons, the reader is requested to turn to the first lesson in this book, where, on the subject of Adam, the First Man, the location of the garden in Eden is discussed at some length.

CHARACTER.—Of the character of Eve we know but very little. We cannot conclude that she was a mean woman because she violated God's only law prohibiting her from eating of the fruit. The Holy Spirit says she was beguiled. The fact that she was beguiled did not prevent the terrible consequences of her sin being visited upon her and her posterity, but it is a mitigation of the guilt; it is proof that her moral character was not involved.

When Cain was born she said, "I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah." (Gen. 4: 1.) There is in this statement a suggestion of her religious turn of mind. That she expected this son to be her Savior is pressing the words too far, but undoubtedly she looked on this son as the ground of hope for her salvation. She was giving thanks to God for a son through whom her mistakes could be remedied. But in Cain she was disappointed, for he was of the evil one. (1 John 3: 12.) When he killed Abel, she seemed to lose hope. But when Seth was born she said, "God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel." (Gen. 4: 25.) In this we see hope, religious hope, based surely in her faith in the promise God gave her that her seed should bruise the head of the serpent. After the birth of Seth Eve drops from the inspired record, her later fortunes and death not being mentioned.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This lesson will be easy to present with the sand table, by the collection of pictures of animals, birds, and people, and using them

to catch the interest of the children. The goodness of God is a thought to be emphasized. God made man a being in the world. God gave Adam and Eve a beautiful home in which to live; that home was free from all that causes us sorrow and suffering; if they had been obedient, they would have been permitted to enjoy that wonderful home always. Passing from the goodness of God, the lesson of the ingratitude of man may be emphasized. Children who do not obey their parents are guilty of ingratitude, for they ought to obey their parents because they furnish the children with food, clothing, a home for shelter from the elements and all danger, care for them in times of sickness, and sacrifice continually for their welfare. In this way the teacher can cooperate with the parents in making better children, and these lessons will build eternal principles into the character of the children.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

These children are being taught in their classes at school that the world and all creatures therein have come through a long process of evolution into their present state. This lesson will give the teacher an opportunity to teach what the Holy Spirit says on the subject. It would be well to get a sermon by some one on the subject, or a book which treats of this particular theory, and condense the arguments and present them to your class, if you are not qualified in an unusual way to handle the subject. If they are not given some substantial help along this line, they will likely lose faith in the Bible as the inspired revelation of God, and may lose all faith in God, as many have already done.

Another lesson to stress in these departments is the fact that when Eve was given to Adam they became one flesh. And Jesus says when people become one flesh in marriage, they shall no more be two. The marriage tie is lasting. The Bible does not support the idea of trial marriage, but people practice just that when they marry with the idea that if they do not get along well they can separate and marry others. If one thinks these departments are too young for such lessons, let it be remembered these lessons cannot be taught to people who are already in love. If these lessons are taught at all, they must be taught before people are blinded by love. Teach these lessons in these departments so they will be in the heart to guide young people in their courting period.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lessons suggested in the above section will be good for these departments, with slight adaptations. If married people will remember that Jesus says the two shall no more be one, they will overlook each other's faults and will patch up their troubles instead of separating. If they must choose between living together peacefully or going to hell separately for eternity, they will think a long time before separating. The fact that in many sections of the country the number of divorces granted exceeds the number of marriage licenses issued is sufficient proof of the urgent need for such teaching.

The relative place of husband and wife in the home may also be emphasized in this lesson. If the church would do more practical, plain teaching on these lines, there would be fewer divorces among

church people. The epistles of Paul and Peter contain much along this line, especially Eph. 5; Col. 3; 1 Pet. 3; and 1 Cor. 7.

The consequence of sin, of disobedience to God, is illustrated in this lesson in terms which cannot be misunderstood. Though our sins today may not have the far-reaching effect upon others which the sin of Eve had on her posterity, yet they will have a damning effect upon us and upon our children. All who would condemn Eve for her sin should look into their own hearts and lives before they throw the first stone.

Topics for Discussion

1. What similarity is there between the first Adam's wife being taken from his side and the church, the bride of the second Adam, being purchased by the blood taken from his side on the cross? Paul speaks of the first and second Adam in 1 Cor. 15: 45.

2. How does Paul use the relation of husband and wife to teach the relation between Christ and the church? and what lessons does he draw from this figure? (Eph. 5: 22-33.)

3. How does the relationship between man and woman, established by the order of creation and the transgression of Eve, affect the teaching program of the church? What limitations are placed about the teaching work of women on account of these things? See 1 Tim. 2: 8-14; 1 Cor. 14: 33b-36.

Lesson II—July 13, 1947

SARAH, AN OBEDIENT WIFE

The Lesson Text

Gen. 12: 11, 14; 17: 15, 16; 18: 9-15

11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into E'gypt, that he said unto Sa'rai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

14 And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into E'gypt, the E-gyp'tians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sa'rai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sa'rai, but Sarah shall her name be.

16 And I will bless her, and moreover I will give thee a son of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a *mother of nations*; kings of peoples shall be of her.

9 And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said. Behold, in the tent.

10 And he said, I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him.

11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and well stricken in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

12 And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

13 And Je-ho'vah said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old?

14 Is anything too hard for Je-ho'vah? At the set time I will return unto thee, when the season cometh round, and Sarah shall have a son.

15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

1 Pet. 3: 5, 6

5 For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands:

6 As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror.” (1 Pet. 3: 6.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gen. 21: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

July 7. M.....	Sarah the Wife of Abraham (Gen. 11: 27-32)
July 8. T.....	Sarah Barren (Gen. 16: 1-6)
July 9. W.....	Sarah and Hagar (Gen. 16: 7-14)
July 10. T.....	Sarah Promised a Son (Gen. 17: 15-21)
July 11. F.....	Sarah Passed as Sister of Abraham (Gen. 20: 1-7)
July 12. S.....	Sarah Obeyed Abraham (1 Pet. 3: 1-6)
July 13. S.....	The Death of Sarah (Gen. 23: 1-20)

Lesson Subject Explained

Though Christianity has bettered the condition of woman in society immeasurably, the Lord did not see fit to give her the first place of authority in the home. The fact that the Lord did not see fit to make woman the head of the home and give her the right to rule over the husband is proof of the fact that she is not fitted by nature to fill that place, and that it is not the will of the Lord that she should do so. It is, really, one of the blessings of Christianity to her that she is not given that place.

Some of the passages which teach her place in the home and in relation to her husband follow: “Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body.” (Eph. 5: 22, 23.) “Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” (Col. 3: 18.) Aged women are to teach the young women to be “in subjection to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (Tit. 2: 5.) And Peter said, “In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of their wives; beholding your chaste behavior coupled with fear.” (1 Pet. 3: 1, 2.)

Context of the Lesson

In the context of the first section of our lesson text we find Abraham, then called Abram, obeying the call of God to leave Haran to go into the land of Canaan. He took Sarah, then called Sarai, his wife and his nephew Lot. Their first stop in the land was Shechem, where God appeared unto Abraham and told him he would give him all the land in which he now dwelt. From Shechem Abraham moved his family to a mountain on the east of Bethel, between Bethel and Ai, and there he built an altar and worshiped Jehovah. But he was not to find this a land flowing with milk and honey, for there was a great famine in all that land, and it became necessary for Abraham to move his family into Egypt. It was while on that quest for food that the events of our lesson took place.

In the context of the next division we find Abraham anxious about the fact that he was childless, and that all his possessions would go to one not born in his house. But God told him he was to have a son, and that his seed would be as numberless as the stars.

(Gen. 15: 1-5.) Years sped by and the promise was not fulfilled. It seemed impossible of fulfillment because Sarah was barren. So, not being willing to wait upon God, Sarah gave her handmaid, Hagar, to Abraham as wife so he might have a son. Hagar bore him a son when he was eighty-six years old. Four years later God appeared to Abraham, gave him the covenant of circumcision, changed his name from Abram to Abraham, and, as related in our text, promised him a son by Sarah. How much impression this made on Sarah we do not know, but it must not have been much, for a little later God appeared to Abraham and told him that Sarah was to bear a son, and she laughed at the thought of a woman of her age, and barren, becoming the mother of a son. Abraham was affected in the same way, however, when he first heard the good news. (Gen. 17: 17.)

In the context of the last section of our lesson text Peter is giving instruction to wives to be in subjection to their own husbands, that, if they will not listen to the teaching of the word, they may be won by the influence of their godly wives. He then gives instructions as to the dress of wives, emphasizing the fact that women are to give more attention to the adorning of the inward man than they give to the adorning of the outward man. The passage does not forbid the dressing of the hair, or the wearing of gold any more than it forbids the wearing of apparel, but it does teach moderation and modesty in these matters.

Golden Text Explained

Sarah is held up to Christian women of today as an example in the matter of obeying their husbands. Her obedience was manifested in the fact that she called him lord. And she not only called him lord, she conducted herself accordingly; her practice was in harmony with her speech. The word lord simply means master; it is not the term which signifies worship. Sarah recognized Abraham as the master of the house, or home, and that whatever authority she exercised in the home was derived from her relationship to him as her husband, and was therefore subject to his approval.

Christian women are looked upon as being the children of Sarah as long as they have the same attitude of subjection to their husbands which Sarah had towards Abraham. We all are children of Abraham as long as we walk in the steps of the faith which Abraham had (Rom. 4: 11, 12; Gal. 3: 7, 29); so women are the children of Sarah as long as they have the same spirit of obedience to the husband she had. This obedience is expressed in the phrase, "if ye do well." The King James Version puts it "as long as ye do well." That perhaps comes nearer being Peter's idea. You are the children of Sarah as long as you do well in the matter of obeying your husbands.

And are not put in fear by any terror. "If ye do well, and act conscientiously your part as *faithful wives*, ye will at no time live under the *distressing apprehension* of being *found out*, or terrified at every appearance of the discovery of *infidelities*, or improper conduct. Being not guilty of these, you will have no occasion to fear detection." (Adam Clarke.)

On one occasion Sarah's will crossed that of Abraham. When Hagar and her son had become unbearable to Sarah, she told Abra-

ham to send them away. (Gen. 21: 10-12.) This was a harsh way to treat his son and her mother, though she was only a slave. Abraham delayed the matter, probably with no intention of doing what Sarah demanded. But God told him to do as Sarah wished. Abraham would obey God immediately regardless of how difficult it was to do, but there is no indication that he would have done this thing for the sake of Sarah. Whether this act on the part of Sarah was an exception to her general rule of obedience to her husband, or whether she, not being blinded by parental love as was Abraham, could see that Ishmael was not a fit companion for her son and was in no way connected with the promise, we may never know. Undoubtedly Hagar was jealous, proud, insolent, arrogant, and her son badly mistreated the son of promise. But Sarah was not altogether free from human feelings in the matter, and she was determined, whether it pleased Abraham or not, that Hagar and Ishmael must go, and that they should have no inheritance.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"*Thou art a fair woman.*" Sarah was undoubtedly a beautiful woman. But they were going into Egypt, a hotter climate than that in which Sarah had lived, and the women there would be much darker than she. The Egyptian kings would desire her because she was fairer than the native women. To save the situation Abraham suggested that she pass as his sister, and not his wife. It is difficult to see how this would help, as the king would as soon take a man's sister as his wife. This was a half-truth which they told about their relationship. Sarah was the child of Abraham's father, but not the child of his mother. (Gen. 20: 12. See lesson three, first quarter, in this book.) A half-truth is a half-lie in which no one is ever justified; it is deceitful and sinful.

"*But Sarah shall her name be.*" She was formerly called Sarai. Bible scholars are not agreed as to the meaning of the name Sarai. One idea is that it means "my princess" and that it was changed to Sarah which means, not the princess of one family, but the princess of all the families of the earth. But it is more likely that the name is derived from a word which means "to fight," and that its meaning is *contentious*. (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

"*She shall be a mother of nations.*" This is true from two viewpoints, the physical and the spiritual, though the former is here in mind of the Lord. She is the mother of the twelve tribes of the Jews, made into a great nation in Canaan. She is also the mother of the Edomites. Esau, Edom, was her grandson, and his offspring was as numerous as that of Jacob, and they were a nation with a king before the children of Israel became a nation. (Gen. 36: 31.) The Arab tribes of today are among her children.

"*And Sarah laughed within herself.*" She first laughed at the improbability of such a thing; she laughed as one who hears something too good to be true. But soon she laughed for joy that her lifelong desire was to be fulfilled. The things which made it seem improbable were: (1) Their age, ninety and ninety-nine; (2) Sarah was barren; (3) it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So if she was to be a mother, her natural powers would have to be restored by heavenly intervention.

"Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" This suggests that Jehovah was to have a part in this which he did not ordinarily have in the birth of a child. It is also a rebuke, though gentle, of Sarah's lack of faith in God. We might do well to remember in our day that there is nothing too hard for Jehovah. People deny the virgin birth of Jesus. Is that too hard for Jehovah? They deny the efficacy of the blood of Christ to atone for our sins, and they deny the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, as well as the resurrection of our bodies. Are these things too hard for Jehovah?

"Holy women also, who hoped in God." Peter is saying that holy women who hoped in God were more careful about their characters than they were about their dress and jewelry. People who have their hopes set on this world will dress for the world, to appeal to the world, and will follow the fashions of the world in a slavish manner. But women who have their hope set in God will live for him, dress to please him whether that is according to the latest fashions or not.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Isaac was born 1896 B.C. Sarah was ten years younger than Abraham. (Gen. 17: 17.) She was therefore ninety years old at the birth of Isaac. So we conclude that she was born in 1986 B.C. Sarah gave Hagar, her slave, to Abraham for wife 1910 B.C., and fourteen years later she demanded that Abraham send Hagar and her son away without inheritance. Sarah died 1859 B.C. at the age of 127 years. (Gen. 23: 1.)

GEOGRAPHY.—Though Sarah followed her wandering husband much of the time, it seems that she had one place as a fixed residence, Hebron, or Kiriatharba. When she died, Abraham was in Beersheba, and the record says he "came to mourn for Sarah." (Gen. 23: 1, 2.) Hebron is one of the oldest towns in the world which still exist. By the modern residents, Mohammedans, it is now called El-Khulil, which means "the friend," from the fact that they think of Abraham as the friend of God. It was formerly called Kir-i-ath-ar-ba, which some say means "the city of Arba"; while others say the "town of four," named for four brothers, three of whom are named in Judges 1: 10 and Num. 13: 22 as sons of Anak. Also in this last passage we are told that Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. Hebron was situated about halfway between Jerusalem and Beersheba, being about twenty miles from each. "It is picturesquely situated in a narrow valley, surrounded by rocky hills. This, in all probability, is that 'valley of Eschol,' whence the Jewish spies got the great bunch of grapes. (Num. 13: 23.) Its sides are still clothed with luxuriant vineyards, and its grapes are considered the finest in southern Palestine." It was near Hebron that Abraham bought the only land he ever actually owned in Canaan. He bought a field from Ephron, of the children of Heth, for 400 shekels, which is around \$250 in our money. In this field was the cave of Machpelah, where several outstanding figures in Jewish history were buried, Sarah being the first one.

CHARACTER.—"Her character, like that of Abraham, is no ideal type of excellence, but one thoroughly natural, inferior to that of her husband, and truly feminine, both in its excellences and its defects. She is the mother, even more than the wife. Her natural motherly

affection is seen in her touching desire for children, even from her bondmaid, and in her unforgiving jealousy of that bondmaid, when she became a mother; in her rejoicing over her son Isaac, and in the jealousy which resented the slightest insult to him, and forbade Ishmael to share his sonship. It makes her cruel to others as well as tender to her own, and is remarkably contrasted with the sacrifice of natural feeling on the part of Abraham to God's command in the last case. (Gen. 21: 12.) To the same character belongs the ironical laughter at the promise of a child, long desired, but now beyond all hope; her trembling denial of that laughter, and her change of it to laughter of thankful joy, which she commemorated in the name of Isaac. It is a character deeply and truly affectionate, but impulsive, jealous, and imperious in its affection." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The great desire on the part of Sarah for a child, the promise of God to her that she was to have a son, and her great joy in caring for this child are all matters of interest to children. God was interested in the birth and growth of Isaac, and he is still in heaven and has the same interest in people today that he ever had. God is still helping fathers and mothers to bring children into the world, not for the same purpose for which Isaac was brought forth, but for purposes as high and holy. It will give children a greater sense of their own worth and a better appreciation of the purposes in life to know that they were wanted in this world both by their parents and the Lord. If the Lord wanted them here, he surely has a work for them to do, and their appreciation of the blessings of life should lead them to live for the Lord, to do for him whatever he wills.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Sarah was the wife of one of the richest men of the time. He had enough servants in his possession that he could wage a war successfully against neighboring tribes. (Gen. 14.) His great herds and those of his nephew Lot were too much for one section of the country, so it was best that they separate. (Gen. 13.) Sarah had all of this world's goods she could desire, but still she was not happy. Boys and girls of this age are prone to think they would be supremely happy if they only had all the wealth and social position they crave. But these things do not satisfy the soul, and genuine happiness is not to be found in the possession and enjoyment of these things. Sarah longed for a child to be the object of her affection, and through whom she might make a contribution to the happiness of the world. Building a Christian home, and making that home contribute to the happiness of others and to the betterment of the world, is infinitely more to be desired than to be surrounded with wealth and possessed of great social and political power and influence. These latter things are temporal and tend to pride and arrogance which go before a fall; while the former are spiritual and eternal, ministering to our own happiness here and hereafter, as well as the happiness of others, and they are things which bring real success. These are hard lessons for young people to get, and many adults have never learned them. But this is the

period when impressions of this kind must be made if characters are correctly formed.

Young People and Adult Departments

The building of homes, the bearing and rearing of children, the relationship between husband and wife, and between parents and children are all subjects of importance to be brought up for study in these departments. Sarah was a normal woman in her desire for children. Christian women have the duty of bearing children. (1 Tim. 5: 14; Tit. 2: 4.) They are daughters of Sarah in this respect as well as in their obedience to husbands. Sarah's love for her child caused her to give him the very best training for life she could give him. Daughters of Sarah today should learn that, unless economic conditions force them to do otherwise, they should stay in the home with the children, not leaving them in the care of a domestic servant while they tend to social or business careers. Children left to the care of a cheap servant will usually grow up to be a cheap character.

The relationship of husband and wife is suggested in this lesson. Though the wife is to be in subjection to the husband, her first duty and loyalty are to God. And when the husband demands things of her contrary to her conception of her duty to God, she must obey God rather than her husband.

Topics for Discussion

1. Has God's promise to Abraham concerning the land of Canaan been fulfilled, or is it yet to be fulfilled in some distant dispensation? See Josh. 21: 43-45; 23: 14; 1 Kings 8: 56.

2. Did Abraham find satisfaction in his hopes of a better country? (Heb. 11: 13-16.)

3. Did Sarah act contrary to her general rule of obedience to her husband in the matter of demanding that Hagar and Ishmael be sent away? Or was this a matter which involved her conscience and in which Abraham had no right to interfere?

4. Does the husband now have the right to dictate to the wife concerning the details of keeping the house? Who is to determine how much of the family income is to be spent on furniture for the home? and how much for the farm, or the shop? If an agreement cannot be reached through reasoning, what course is to be followed?

5. Paul said women are to be "workers at home." Is there a tendency today for women to get away from this teaching? Are divorces more prevalent among childless families? Is financial independence, by her personal income, good for the average woman? Is it conducive to peace and harmony in the home? _____

Lesson III—July 20, 1947

REBEKAH, A DETERMINED WOMAN

The Lesson Text

Gen. 24: 58-61; 26: 7; 27: 5-13

58 And they called Re-bek'ah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

59 And they sent away Re-bek'ah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.

60 And they blessed Re-bek'ah, and said unto her, Our sister, be thou *the mother* of thousands of ten thousands, and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them.

61 And Re-bek'ah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Re-bek'ah, and went his way.

7 And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, My wife; lest, *said he*, the men of the place should kill me for Re-bek'ah; because she was fair to look upon.

5 And Re-bek'ah heard when I'saac spake to E'sau his son. And E'sau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.

6 And Re-bek'ah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto E'sau thy brother, saying,

7 Bring me venison, and make me savory food, that I may eat, and bless thee before Je-ho'vah before my death.

8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savory food for thy father, such as he loveth:

10 And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, so that he may bless thee before his death.

11 And Jacob said to Re-bek'ah his mother, Behold, E'sau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man.

12 My father peradventure will feel me and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.

13 And his mother said unto him. Upon me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.

Golden Text.—“*And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.*” (Gen. 24: 58.)

Devotional Reading.—Gen. 27: 41-46.

Daily Bible Readings

July 14. M.....	Rebekah's Father (Gen. 22: 20-24)
July 15. T.....	Rebekah Wife of Isaac (Gen. 24: 60-67)
July 16. W.....	Sons of Rebekah (Gen. 25: 19-34)
July 17. T.....	Rebekah and Jacob Deceive Isaac (Gen. 27: 5-17)
July 18. F.....	Jacob Rebekah's Son (Gen. 29: 1-12)
July 19. S.....	The Burial Place of Rebekah (Gen. 49: 28-33)
July 20. S.....	Deborah Rebekah's Nurse (Gen. 35: 1-8)

Lesson Subject Explained

Our characters are a combination of various characteristics, but often one of those characteristics is so predominant that people never see anything in us but that one. If that one predominant characteristic is not good, people may get the idea there is no good in us at all; but if that one is good, we may be looked upon as an unusually fine character, even though we have several less conspicuous characteristics that are not good. People with one outstanding characteristic, whether good or bad, usually attract more attention than the well-balanced character. But in the long run the well-balanced character is the more dependable, and his life will be productive of more lasting good for other people and for the glory of God.

Rebekah had a strong assertive will, even from youth. She was probably in her teens when she made her decision to go with Abraham's servant to become the wife of Isaac. Her simple statement, "I will go," reveals her determination. It did not take her long to make up her mind, and when once made, there was no changing it. She was also determined to see that Isaac got the blessing of his father. She saw no way for him to get it without

resorting to deception. Her determination was stronger in her than her sense of right and justice to others, so she readily stooped to trickery and hypocrisy to accomplish that which she had determined to do. If her character had been well balanced, her sense of justice would not have been overrun by her determination to have her own way, and she would not have been guilty of deception and injustice.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of our lesson we learn of the death of Sarah. Isaac was thirty-seven years old when his mother died. He had been the constant companion of his mother, and his gentle character shows the feminine influence. Now that she is gone he is a very lonely man. His father, according to eastern customs, took matters in his hands to see that his son had a wife from among his own people. He took an oath of his head servant that he would go to Mesopotamia to get a wife for Isaac. Whether Abraham had a revelation from God to do this we cannot know, for it is not said that he did. But Abraham seemed certain that God would "send his angel before" the servant, that the girl would accept the matter as from God, and that she would come to Canaan with the servant. (Gen. 24: 6-9.) Then follows one of the most beautiful stories in all the Bible, a story of the building of a home. The servant found the girl, her parents were willing for her to go if she wished to go, and she was persuaded that the matter was of the Lord, so was willing to go without even ten days' delay.

Isaac was forty years old when he married. After several years passed there was a famine in Canaan, and Isaac, like his father before him, was forced to leave the land for a time. He went into the land of the Philistines, where Abimelech reigned. And, like his father, when he got into this strange land among people who, he thought, had no fear of God, he was afraid his beautiful wife would be taken away from him. So he said she was his sister. He did not have as much right to say that as did his father, for Sarah was the half sister of Abraham; but Rebekah and Isaac were only second cousins.

When Isaac had returned from the land of the Philistines, God blessed him, "and the man waxed great, and grew more and more until he became very great: and he had possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and a great household: and the Philistines envied him." (Gen. 26: 13, 14.) Then followed some incidents which revealed the lovable, nonresisting character of Isaac. About this time Esau married Judith and Basemath, Hittites, women of that land, who "were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah." (Gen. 26: 24, 35.) Isaac was now old and unable to see. He wished to make preparation for his death, so he told Esau to cook him his favorite meat, and he would give him his blessings before his death.

Golden Text Explained

From the words of our Golden Text we are led to believe that the girl had something to say about whether she would accept a certain young man in marriage. However, the details of the arrangements for this marriage followed what we know of the regular customs in that Abraham's servant first asked the father and older

brother if the girl would be allowed to marry his master's son. (Gen. 24: 47-49.) The parents wanted to keep the girl a few days, at least ten, before she departed for Canaan. But the servant wished to go immediately. It was then that the girl was allowed to settle the matter. After the men in the family had decided that the girl would marry, she was allowed to decide the date.

"The selection of the bride was followed by the espousal, which was not altogether like our 'engagement,' but was a formal proceeding, undertaken by a friend or legal representative on the part of the bridegroom, and by the parents on the part of the bride. Thus Eliezer, on behalf of Isaac, propitiates the favor of Rebekah by presenting her in anticipation with a massive golden nose ring and two bracelets; he then proceeds to treat with the parents, and, having obtained their consent, he brings forth the more costly and formal presents, 'jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment,' for the bride, and presents of less value for the mother and brothers. . . . Between the betrothal and the marriage an interval elapsed, varying from a few days in the patriarchal age to a full year for virgins and a month for widows in later times. During the period the bride-elect lived with her friends, and all communication between herself and her future husband was carried on through the medium of a friend deputed for the purpose, termed the 'friend of the bridegroom.' She was virtually regarded as the wife of her future husband; for it was a maxim of the Jewish law that betrothal was of equal force with marriage. Hence, faithlessness on her part was punishable with death (Deut. 22: 23, 24), the husband having, however, the option of 'putting her away' (Matt. 1: 19) by giving her a bill of divorce-ment, in case he did not wish to proceed to such an extreme punishment. . . . The betrothed woman could not part with her property after betrothal, except in certain cases; and, in short, the bond of matrimony was as fully entered into by betrothal as with us by marriage." (Smith's Bible *Dictionary*)

There seems to have been very little importance attached to a formal marriage ceremony. "It is probable, indeed, that some formal ratification of the espousal with an oath took place. . . . But the essence of the marriage ceremony consisted in the removal of the bride from her father's house to that of the bridegroom or his father." This was usually done with considerable show and celebration. But in the case of Isaac and Rebekah it is simply said, "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her." (Gen. 24: 67.)

Helps on the Lesson Text

"*They sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse.*" It is likely that Rebekah was not out of her teens, so the wisdom in sending her nurse, a woman of age and experience. From Gen. 35: 8 we learn that the name of this nurse was Deborah, and that in the meantime she had returned to Mesopotamia for some years, and then was going back to Canaan with Jacob when she died at Bethel.

"*And they blessed Rebekah.*" The blessing consisted of two wishes. First, they wished her a numerous posterity. People who had large families were looked upon as worthy of special favors from the Lord. So when they wished for her to be the mother of millions, they were wishing she would be worthy of the special favors

of Jehovah. Second, they wished her posterity would be victorious in all conflicts with their enemies; that her seed would never be subjected to servitude. The first wish came true. Her seed through Jacob became very numerous. And for a while the second wish seemed not to be fulfilled, for they were in bondage to the Egyptians. But under Moses they were delivered, and in the days of David and Solomon they did possess the gates of those who hated them.

"And Rebekah arose, and her damsels." Not only did Rebekah's nurse go along, but other female attendants. This suggests something of the financial standing of both Rebekah and Isaac. If Eliezer had known that Isaac was not able to maintain them he surely would have objected, or explained that his master was not able to keep them.

"And he said, She is my sister." This is the same sin his father committed, and in the same locality. (Gen. 20: 1, 2.) Whether Rebekah had any knowledge of this we do not know. In the case of Abraham, he asked Sarah to take part with him in the sin, but no mention is here made of Isaac asking Rebekah to tell this falsehood; nor is there any indication that she knew that he had told the men of Gerar that she was his sister.

"My son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee" Rebekah had heard Isaac tell Esau to kill and cook venison that he might eat, and then he would give him his parting blessings. God had said to Rebekah, before the boys were born, that "the elder shall serve the younger." (Gen. 25: 23.) She did not know how the Lord planned to bring this about, and it looked to her, if it was ever to be fulfilled, that something had to be done quickly. So with her characteristic determination, and with that partiality of which both she and Isaac were guilty, she made her own plans to bring it to pass. It was just another case of humanity taking into its own hands that which belongs to God. And, as is always the case, her ways were not God's ways, but they were of this world. Jacob feared detection, not thinking of such perfect deception as his mother planned, so he objected. Then in her determined and imperious manner she commanded him to obey her voice.

"That he may bless thee before his death." "The blessing which Isaac was to confer on his son was a species of divine right, and must be communicated with appropriate ceremonies. As eating and drinking were used among the Asiatics on almost all religious occasions, and especially in making and confirming covenants, it is reasonable to suppose that something of this kind was essentially necessary on this occasion, and that Isaac could not convey the *right* till he had eaten of the meat provided for the purpose by *him* who was to receive the blessing." (Adam Clarke.)

"Upon me be thy curse." Jacob had just said he was afraid he would be detected in this unholy scheme, and that it would bring a curse upon him instead of a blessing which he sought. But Rebekah was determined to go through with it—so determined that she was willing to bear whatever curse might come from it. Whether intended as a punishment for her sin or not, she never had the privilege of seeing Jacob after she sent him away from the wrath of Esau which was caused by her deception. This is another record of the sins of the people whom God used to accomplish his purposes. No attempt is made to hide their sins, or to justify them in these sins.

We are told to imitate them in their good, and to refrain from the sins of which they were guilty. (1 Cor. 10: 6-12; 3 John 11.) But where is the human production that tells the sins of its saints with effort to excuse or justify? This is one proof of the fact that the Bible is not the work of man, but a revelation from God.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Nothing is said about either the birth or death of Rebekah, so we do not know how old she was. The only mention of her death being made by Jacob when he was in Egypt, that along with others Rebekah was buried in the cave which Abraham bought from "the children of Heth." (Gen. 49: 31.) It is very generally thought that she was at least twenty years younger than Isaac, who was forty years old when he married her. (Gen. 25: 20.) She had been married twenty years before Jacob and Esau were born, for Isaac was sixty years of age at the time. (Gen. 25: 26.) It is thought the boys were fifty-seven years of age when Jacob and his mother stole the blessing from Esau. Esau was 40 years old when he married (Gen. 26: 34), and he had been married long enough for his wives to prove themselves a disappointment to his parents.

GEOGRAPHY.—Rebekah lived near Haran, where Abraham stopped in his journey to Canaan for five years, until the death of Terah. (Gen. 11: 31 to 12: 5.) Haran was on the upper sources of the Euphrates River, while Ur was near the mouth of the same river; it was north, but little east, of the land of Canaan. When Abraham left Haran, his brother Nahor stayed behind. He married Milcah, and their son was Bethuel. Rebekah was the daughter of Bethuel. This city of Haran is said to be still in existence, and "seems never to have changed its appellation, and is beyond any reasonable doubt the Haran or Charran of scripture. ... It is now a small village inhabited by a few families of Arabs."

CHARACTER.—"In summing up Rebekah's character we must place her with women intensely loving, but also intensely narrow and pitilessly resolute. Even as a young girl she understood that to go with Eliezer of Damascus was to become the bride of wealth. She may have been sufficiently farsighted to realize that Jacob, better than Esau, would carry on the traditions of Abraham and Isaac. She was shrewd, unscrupulous, and tactful. She is more attractive in her youth than in her later days. It is possible, however, that in her deception she may have thought herself instrumental in carrying on the divine purpose. Two nations, she had been told, were in her womb, and the elder should serve the younger. The fathers . . . advanced this theory as an explanation, which at least is plausible, of Rebekah's determination that Jacob should secure his father's blessing." (Sangster.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

A journey to a faraway land, among strange people, to become the wife of a rich man, the heir of a great and wise patriarch, and to become the mother of two boys who would in time become heads of two great nations of people are items which will catch the interest of these children. If sand tables or pictures of caravans of camels

can be used, it will add to the interest. Have any of them seen weddings? Most of them. They will know something of the unusual interest of the people in weddings, and they will want to know all that can be told them about the customs of the old east and compare them with our customs at such weddings. If the deception of Rebekah is mentioned, they should be impressed with the fact that God was not pleased with it, and that the relation of the facts are no proof that God intended for her to practice this deception. The same is true with any mention of Isaac's deception in Gerar.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Abraham was not willing for his son to marry a woman of the land of Canaan; he must have one of his kind even though it meant going a long way for her. The reason for getting Rebekah was the fact that she was a worshiper of God. These young people need to get the lesson that marriage is not likely to be happy where there is a difference of religious convictions. A home divided religiously will have difficulty rearing the children in either the faith of the father or the mother. To plant these ideals in the minds of boys and girls at this early age will help them in the selection of proper companions later.

How God could foresee that the elder brother would serve the younger is easy to see, but young people are prone to wish to know how God would have worked it out if Rebekah had not practiced deception. It is worthless to speculate on the matter. God could foresee her deception as easily as he could foresee the relationship of the two boys. So he simply told her the facts, but did not explain how it would be brought about. And the fact that he foretold her the facts is no proof that she had to practice the deception. The fact that God foretold the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus is no proof that Judas had to betray him, or that the Jews had to crucify him. There is no justification for her deception.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lesson of marriage of true believers with believers, Christians, is needed in the young people's department. And Paul's teaching on the subject to widows, which probably applies to widowers as well, should be taught frequently. (1 Cor. 7: 39, 40.) Those who marry out of the Lord lay themselves liable to many disappointments, sorrows, and regrets.

Another lesson for parents is the danger, and injustice, or partiality in handling their children. Rebekah's partiality for Jacob is likely what caused her to deceive her husband and set the bad example before her son. How the memory of this sin on the part of his mother must have been a blot on Jacob's memory of his mother. The sins of parents will either cause children to be sinful like their parents, or to be sad and ashamed of their parents. The Lord teaches parents about their relation to their children, and happy the parent and child when parents follow that teaching. It cannot be emphasized too often.

The parents of Rebekah had more to do in determining whom she would marry than parents can today. But surely it is the duty of parents to have something to say about the choice of their children in marriage. The time to have their say is before the child falls in

love; after that it is too late to say anything. So parents must teach their children what to expect and demand in the characters of those whom they marry. Neglect along this line will bring sorrow to parents and trouble to the homes of their children.

Topics for Discussion

1. Does the fact that Isaac made the same mistake in Gerar that his father made before him suggest that Abraham did not tell Isaac of his mistake, and therefore forewarn so as to forearm him against that temptation?
2. In what way was God's statement that the "elder shall serve the younger" fulfilled, in the boys personally or in the nations which sprang from them?
3. What was in the blessing which Jacob stole which referred to the elder serving the younger? and what light does it throw on the way the statement was fulfilled?

Lesson IV—July 27, 1947

MIRIAM, THE SISTER OF MOSES

The Lesson Text

Ex. 2: 4-8; 15: 20, 21

4 And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.
5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river; and her maidens walked along by the riverside; and she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her handmaid to fetch it.

6 And she opened it, and saw the child; and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

7 Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maiden went and called the child's mother.

20 And Mir'i-am the prophetess, the sister of Aar'on, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

21 And Mir'i-am answered them,

Sing ye to Je-ho'vah, for he hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Num. 12: 1, 2, 9-13; 20: 1

1 And Mir'i-am and Aar'on spake against Mo'ses because of the Cush'ite woman whom he had married; for he had married a Cush'ite woman.

2 And they said, Hath Je-ho'vah indeed spoken only with Mo'ses? hath he not spoken also with us? And Je-ho'vah heard it.

9 And the anger of Je-ho'vah was kindled against them; and he departed.

10 And the cloud removed from over the Tent; and, behold, Mir'i-am was leprous, as *white as snow*: and Aar'on looked upon Mir'i-am, and, behold, she was leprous.

11 And Aar'on said unto Mo'ses, Oh, my lord, lay not, I pray thee, sin upon us, for that we have done foolishly, and for that we have sinned.

12 Let her not, I pray, be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.

13 And Mo'ses cried unto Je-ho'vah, saying, Heal her, O God, I beseech thee.

1 And the children of Is'ra-el, even the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Ka'desh; and Mir'i-am died there, and was buried there.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*And I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.*” (Mic. 6: 4b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 24: 8-13.

Daily Bible Readings

July 21. M.....	Miriam, Moses' Sister (Ex. 2: 1-10)
July 22. T.....	The Song of Miriam (Ex. 15: 19-21)
July 23. W.....	Miriam's Parents (Num. 26: 57-62)
July 24. T.....	Miriam and Aaron Speak Against Moses (Num. 12: 1-3)
July 25. F.....	Miriam Afflicted (Num. 12: 4-15)
July 26. S.....	Miriam as a Warning (Deut. 24: 6-9)
July 27. S.....	The Death of Miriam (Num. 20: 1-9)

Lesson Subject Explained

Miriam had two brothers, Moses and Aaron. Their father's name was Amram, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi. (Ex. 6: 16, 18.) Their mother's name was Jochebed, who is also said to be the daughter of Levi, and brother of Kohath. (Num. 26: 59.) This would make Jochebed the aunt of her husband. But the Hebrew word translated "his father's sister" is often translated cousin, so it is thought by some to mean that here. However, at this time there was no law against a man marrying his father's sister, and it is entirely possible that she was his aunt. But the law of Moses made such a marriage unlawful. (Lev. 18: 12.)

Miriam was older than either Moses or Aaron. Aaron was three years older than Moses. (Ex. 7: 7.) Miriam was old enough at the birth of Moses to stand guard over him when he was set adrift in the ark in the river; and she was old enough to suggest to the daughter of Pharaoh that she could get a nurse from among the Hebrews to care for the baby. She must have been at least eight or ten years old at that time.

Miriam is referred to once as "the sister of Aaron." (Ex. 15: 20.) The names of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam occur in several places together as the leaders of the people, our Golden Text being one such instance. Being the sister of Moses, and a prophetess too, no doubt gave her a position of influence among the people not enjoyed by any other woman of her time.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of our lesson we should learn that the children went into Egypt on account of a famine in the land of Canaan. Egypt was prepared for the famine because Joseph, who was sold into Egypt by his brothers, had told Pharaoh of the coming famine, and had advised him to store grain during seven years of plenty for it. The people of Israel settled in the land of Goshen and lived happily until there arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. He made slaves of them; became fearful of them on account of the fact they were multiplying so rapidly; and gave orders for all male children to be destroyed. But in spite of his orders it is said that "the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty." In this connection we are introduced to a certain man and his wife, of the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe, who had a son who appeared to be a "goodly child." The parents hid the son as long as they felt it was safe to do so, and then the mother made an "ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the

flags by the river's brink." At this place Miriam, the subject of our lesson, is introduced to us as the one left to watch the baby, and, in the providence of God, to suggest its mother to be its nurse during infancy.

In the context of the second division of our lesson text we are told that the people of Israel had been led across the Red Sea by Moses. Ten plagues had been brought upon the Egyptians, as a softening-up process, to melt the stubborn resistance of Pharaoh, before he would give his consent for them to leave the country. But after he had given his consent he changed his mind and attempted to keep them from leaving. In this attempt he lost his army, they being drowned in the sea. When the children, of Israel looked back on that scene of destruction and realized fully that they had been delivered from Egypt and the bondage to which they had been subjected, they sang, under the leadership of Moses, a song of deliverance. In response to this Miriam led women singers in a song.

During the months preceding the events of Num. 12: 1, 2, the business of looking after the people, adjusting their differences, and settling their disputes became too much for Moses alone, so he was instructed to select seventy elders of the people to help him in these matters. Miriam was jealous of her brother, and, being stronger than Aaron, she influenced him to join in her criticism of Moses. Beside the matters contained in our text, God plainly told Miriam and Aaron that they did not stand in the same relationship to him that Moses did. To them and all other prophets he would make himself known in dreams and visions; but to Moses he would "speak mouth to mouth," or face to face, and not in dark speeches. Jehovah then raised the question, "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

Nearly forty years had passed and many, many things had happened between the time of Miriam's criticism of Moses and the event mentioned in this last passage of our text. No mention is made of her and her activities during these years, but there is no doubt she continued to be a great influence among the women of Israel.

Golden Text Explained

Our Golden Text is from the writings of Micah, a prophet who lived "in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." (Mic. 1: 1.) And the things about which he prophesied concerned Samaria and Jerusalem. The people had departed from God. It is said that the rulers abhorred justice and perverted all equity; they built up Zion with blood. "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money." (Mic. 3: 9-11.) Moreover they had so far departed from Jehovah that they were worshiping idols, the works of their hands. (Mic. 5: 12, 13.) So for all these things Micah said, "Jehovah hath a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel." Then he set forth some of the things he had done for his people which should have caused them to appreciate him too much to do the things they were doing. Among these things he had brought them up out of Egypt, he had redeemed them from the house of bondage. He said they should remember what Balak and Balaam tried to do to them in the land of Moab, that they might know the righteous acts of Jehovah. And among the good things he had done

for them, not the least was the fact that he had given them Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to go before them.

It is a strong recommendation for a person when God tells people they ought to be thankful to him that he gave them that person to be their leader. And that is just what he said to these people through Micah. They should have been faithful to God for his righteous acts, one of which was that he had given them these three to go before them as their leaders. God is still raising up leaders for his people today. When we follow the teaching and example of these godly leaders, we are showing appreciation to God for giving us such fine leaders. But when we criticize unjustly the leaders, we fail to show appreciation to God for them. When we refuse to follow their teaching and example, and refuse to give them our wholehearted cooperation, that the church may grow in peace and harmony, we are failing to be thankful to God for the leaders he has given us. Miriam made her mistakes, as did Moses and Aaron, but that did not justify the people of Israel in rejecting their teaching. And leaders today, being human, will make mistakes in judgment, and may need correction as did Miriam, but that does not justify people in harsh criticisms and refusing cooperation with the leadership. Good leadership is a great blessing to any church, and for it we ought to be thankful to God.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"His sister stood afar off." This sister was Miriam, who was old enough at the time of the birth of Moses to be planted by his mother as a watch over the child. If the father or mother stood long, it would arouse suspicion. The writer of Hebrews tells us that the parents were not afraid of the king's commandment to destroy all male children; nor does it appear that they were afraid of the child being destroyed or lost in the river. God's providence was guiding, but how much these parents knew at that time there is no way for us to know now.

"The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe." This must have been the customary place for her to bathe, and the parents of Moses must have had knowledge of that custom. Why they wished their child to be brought up in the court of Pharaoh we can never know. Since Pharaoh was bent on destroying every male Hebrew child, it would seem extremely dangerous to send the child into his home. A higher power with greater vision was guiding the events of this lesson.

"She had compassion on him." This is a recommendation for the daughter of Pharaoh. People who cannot be moved to compassion by the tears of a helpless babe are hardhearted indeed. We hear nothing more of the command to kill all male babies, but have reason to believe it did not long continue in force. It has been suggested that Pharaoh's daughter and Moses had something to do with abolishing the edict.

"And the woman took the child, and nursed it." This woman was Jochebed, the mother of the child. And during these nursing years she was able to plant in the mind of that child faith in God, the faith which guided him through one hundred and twenty years of as great temptations and as fearful responsibilities as any man ever endured. What wonderful opportunities mothers have during the first few

years of the lives of their babies to point them in the direction they should go!

"And Miriam the prophetess." Miriam is the first woman mentioned in the Bible as being a prophetess. If any other woman of her day possessed that power, we have no record of it. She was undoubtedly a woman of unusual character as well as unusual opportunities on account of her relationship to Moses and Aaron.

"And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Cushite woman." This woman is usually supposed to be Zipporah, the first wife of Moses. The following note is worthy of consideration: "This can hardly refer to Zipporah, who was not an Ethiopian. Moreover, it is not reasonable to suppose that Miriam would now raise such an objection to Zipporah, after she had been married probably long enough to have been entitled to a golden wedding! It is to us more likely that Zipporah had been sometime dead; and that Miriam had largely taken her place as the confidant and counselor of Moses—a position which gave her peculiar eminence among the women of Israel; and now when Moses took a second wife, and Miriam saw that she must retire from her proud position, she became envious; and, when she could find nothing else on which to base a complaint and with which to feed her jealousy, she must vent her spleen on this swarthy Ethiopian woman, and raise a storm of indignation because her brother had not married to please her!" (Errett, *Evenings with the Bible.*)

"Miriam was leprous, as white as snow." For her sin she was smitten with leprosy. And, though healed immediately, she was excluded from the camp seven days. It is difficult to understand why Aaron was not punished, but the following reasons may be helpful. (1) Miriam took the lead in this criticism. This we know because her name stands first, and because the "word *spake* is in the feminine" indicating that *she said*. Aaron rarely ever took the lead in anything. (2) Aaron may have been spared on account of his office, for the priesthood certainly must have suffered if he, the first high priest, had been excluded. "How many priests and preachers who deserve to be exposed to reproach and infamy have been spared for the sake of the holy character they bore, that the ministry might not be blamed! But the just God will visit their transgressions in some other way, if they do not deeply deplore them and find mercy through Christ." (Adam Clarke.)

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Moses was born in 1571 B.C. If Miriam was ten years old, as is supposed, the date of her birth would be 1581 B.C. She died the same year Moses died, 1451 B.C., which would have made her 130 years old at her death. Moses was 120 years old.

At the time she led the women in their response to the song of deliverance, at the crossing of the Red Sea, she was ninety years old—1491 B.C. The date of her seditious criticism of Moses was about two years after the crossing of the Red Sea.

GEOGRAPHY.—Two places are worthy of mention in our lesson. The first is Hazeroth, the place where Miriam led Aaron in criticizing Moses. Little is known about the place. "It lies about eighteen hours' distance from Sinai on the road to the Akabah. The

word appears to mean the sort of unenclosed villages in which the Bedouins are found to congregate."

The next place is Kadesh, sometimes Kadesh-barnea. It is the point closest to Canaan reached by the children of Israel before they turned back to wander for thirty-eight years longer. From there the spies were sent into the land of Canaan to see its fruits and the people of the land. (Num. 13.) It was here that Moses struck the rock after the people had murmured. (Num. 20.) And it was here that Miriam died and was buried. Scholars are not at all agreed as to the location of Kadesh. Joshua and Ezekiel give Kadesh as the "uttermost part of the south" border of the tribe of Judah (Josh. 15: 1), and "this is the south side southward" (Ezek. 47: 19). It was north of the wilderness of Zin. So on the north border of that wilderness and the extreme southern border of the tribe of Judah Miriam died and was buried.

CHARACTER.—The name Miriam is the Old Testament form for the New Testament Mary. The Old Testament form is said to mean different things, as *their rebellion*, and *bitterness*.

Miriam was a woman of unusual ability, and no doubt rendered a great service among the women of Israel as teacher and counselor. She made one great mistake in life in that she allowed jealousy to lead her into sedition and rebellion for a time. This was during the second year they were in the wilderness, and if she was ever guilty of such sin afterwards, no mention is made of it. It is to be hoped she learned her lesson, and that she kept her place from that time forward. The fact that Moses was her "baby brother" would make it difficult for her to think of him as having any more authority than she or Aaron, but when God told her plainly that Moses was her superior, and enforced the statement with proper punishment, she seems never to have forgotten her place. This is to her credit. "The blemish of Miriam should instruct every one—her own sex especially—to speak advisedly—to repress the earliest risings of vanity or impure ambition—to look well—each one—to her own ways; and, in a quiet and contented spirit, fulfill, with dignity and pleasure, the appropriate duties of her own sphere of action." (*Adams.*)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

God's care of Moses in his infancy and God's use of Miriam in the care of her baby brother are good thoughts with which to begin this lesson in these departments. Miriam rendered a real service both to her brother and to God and to all Israel when she watched over her brother, and when she suggested that she could get a nurse for him. Children need encouragement to be helpful at home, and Miriam furnishes fine material for this lesson.

This lesson can be used to advantage on the sand table. The camp of Israel can be enclosed with paper tents; place as many cutouts of people as can well be used inside the enclosure enjoying the presence and fellowship of God and of each other; then place one lonely figure outside the camp to represent Miriam made unholy by her sin and unfit to be allowed within the camp. From this teach the lesson of the defiling and degrading effects of sin in one's life, and show that finally, unless we repent, we shall be excluded from

heaven eternally. Repentance after the judgment will do no good; it will be too late.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

These departments need the lesson suggested above on the defiling and debasing effects of sin. Though this may have been the only sin of such magnitude in Miriam's life, yet she is remembered for this one sin more than for all the good she did during all her life. We have a good name but once in life. After we have brought reproach on our name it is all but impossible for us to live down our mistakes and regain our good name. A good name is worth more to one than all the pleasures that may be derived from indulging in sin.

Young People and Adult Departments

Miriam's sin was that of jealousy and envy, which we are inclined to look upon as not being very sinful. James teaches that people who allow jealousy in their hearts may stoop to any vile deed. (James 3: 16.) Jesus taught that the elder brother, who was guilty of anger, jealousy, self-righteousness, and unforgiving spirit, was as great a sinner as the prodigal, who had wasted his money indulging in the lusts of his flesh. (Luke 15.) We need a greater abhorrence of these sins of disposition.

Because Miriam was the sister of the two outstanding leaders in Israel she felt too important, took too much authority, and meddled in affairs which were none of her business. Wives of preachers, elders, and deacons can get a good lesson from this. Women who decide all questions for their husbands are out of place. That is what is commonly called *petticoat* rule in the church, and churches cannot long survive such practice. Their punishment may not be as swift as was that of Miriam, but it is nonetheless sure. If God would not allow the welfare of temporal Israel to be endangered by an ambitious woman, certainly he will not allow his spiritual Israel to suffer at the hands of a jealous or ambitious woman without her suffering the penalty.

But Miriam was a capable woman, and God had a place for her and qualified her to fill that place. Her opportunity to honor God was great as long as she stayed within her proper place; but the moment she stepped outside her sphere her opportunity to honor God was lost, and her endowments were being used against God instead of for him. So women today can be a great honor to God as long as they stay in their place. Ruling the church is not their place. But their reward for humble service in their place will be as great as the reward of men who stay in their place and perform their duties to God.

Topics for Discussion

1. God asked Miriam why she was not afraid to speak against his servant. (Num. 12: 8.) Elders are set over the church by divine authority; they are made such by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 20: 28.) Are we not guilty of Miriam's sin when we speak against it without just cause?
2. If this sin kept Miriam out of Canaan, would not such a sin keep us from heaven?

Lesson V—August 3, 1947

DEBORAH, A MOTHER IN ISRAEL

The Lesson Text

Judges 4: 4-10, 14; 5: 6, 7, 12, 15

4 Now Deb'o-rah, a prophetess, the wife of Lap'pi-doth, she judged Is'ra-el at that time.

5 And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deb'o-rah between Ra'mah and B6th'-61 in the hill-country of Ephra-im: and the children of Is'ra-el came up to her for judgment.

6 And she sent and called Ba'ra'k the son of A-bm'o-am out of Ke'desh-naph'ta-li, and said unto him. Hath not Je-ho'vah, the God of Is'ra-el, commanded, saying, Go and draw unto mount Ta'bor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naph'ta-li and of the children of Zeb'u-lun?

7 And I will draw unto thee, to the river Ki'shon, Sis'e-ra, the captain of Ja'bin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand.

8 And Ba'ra'k said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go.

9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Je-ho'vah will sell Sis'e-ra into the hand of a woman. And Deb'o-rah arose, and went with Ba'ra'k to Ke'desh.

10 And Ba'ra'k called Zeb'u-lun and Naph'ta-li together to Ke'desh; and there went up ten thousand men at his feet: and Deb'o-rah went up with him.

14 And Deb'o-rah said unto Ba'ra'k. Up; for this is the day in which Je-ho'vah hath delivered Sis'e-ra into thy hand; is not Je-ho'vah gone out before thee? So Ba'ra'k went down from mount Ta'bor, and ten thousand men after him.

6 In the days of Sham'gar the son of A'nath,
In the days of Ja'el, the highways were unoccupied,
And the travellers walked through byways.

7 The rulers ceased in Is'ra-el, they ceased,
Until that I Deb'o-rah arose,
That I arose a mother in Is'ra-el.

12 Awake, awake, Deb'o-rah;
Awake, awake, utter a song;
Arise, Ba'ra'k, and lead away thy captives, thou son of A-bin'o-am.

15 And the princes of Is'sa-char were with Deb'o-rah;
As was Is'sa-char, so was Ba'ra'k;
Into the valley they rushed forth at his feet.
By the watercourses of Reu'ben
There were great resolves of heart.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The rulers ceased in Israel, they ceased, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel."* (Judges 5: 7.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Judges 5: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

July 28. M.....	A Prophetess (Judges 4: 1-5)
July 29. T.....	Deborah Calls Barak (Judges 4: 6-10)
July 30. W.....	Deborah Encourages Barak (Judges 4: 12-16)
July 31. T.....	The Prophecy of Deborah Fulfilled (Judges 4: 17-22)
August 1. F.....	The Song of Deborah (Judges 5: 1-5)
August 2. S.....	Deborah's Vision (Judges 5: 12-18)
August 3. S.....	Deborah Blesses Jael (Judges 5: 24-31)

Lesson Subject Explained

Deborah was a judge, and, as such, she had certain duties to perform which demanded some of her time. But she was primarily a mother in Israel. Every woman in Israel wished to be a mother. They felt extremely unfortunate if nature deprived them of the privilege and pleasure of rearing children. It is thought by some that Jewish women had such great desire to bear children because each one entertained the thought that she might have the great honor of being the mother of the Messiah for whom all of them longed and so fervently prayed. But whatever was their reason for it, they had a desire so deeply embedded in their nature that it was next thing to a disgrace for one to be unable to give birth to children. So Deborah had rather speak of herself as a mother in Israel than as judge of the nation and deliverer of the people. The home is still the place for the average Christian woman, and bearing and rearing children is still her first duty and greatest privilege. It is also her best means of being a blessing to the world. It is all too common today for women to desire a public career, and if they have a home and children, these are mere side lines and are left to a servant who has not sufficient ability to hold a position of public trust. If something is said about it, they usually use Deborah as an example of women in public life. Deborah was first a mother, and then because of the extreme need of her community she served as judge. But these modern *would-be* Deborahs are public women first, enjoying the freedom and thrills of public life, and then they are mothers—and some not by choice—rearing their children by proxy.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of our lesson we learn that after the death of Joshua the people had no continuous central organized form of government. Judges or deliverers arose among the people as there was a need. As long as the people served God their enemies gave them no trouble; if they had always been faithful to God, they never would have needed one to deliver them from an oppressor. But the people would not be faithful to God; they would go after strange gods, and then their enemies would be allowed to oppress them. The people would cry unto God for relief, and God would raise up a deliverer through whom he would throw off the oppressor and give them peace again.

It was at a time like this that Deborah felt compelled to take a hand in the affairs of her nation. The rulers had ceased in Israel, that is there were none to rule, no one had sufficient interest or courage to take upon himself the responsibility of raising an army for deliverance. And on account of the superior strength of the enemy the men of Israel felt that they did not have a chance to win if they should raise an army. Their faith in God was as lacking as was their interest and courage. Jabin, a king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor, and who had Sisera as the captain of his army, was the oppressor at this time. He had a great army, and one that was well-equipped in his day; and he had nine hundred chariots of iron. Pharaoh's army which followed the Israelites into the sea had only six hundred chariots. When Solomon was at the zenith of his glory he had only fourteen hundred chariots. (1 Kings 10: 26.) So from this

we conclude that Jabin was a rather powerful ruler, and that he had an army too strong and too well-equipped for the children of Israel to meet, if they depended on material equipment alone. Deborah seems to have been the only person in Israel who had a knowledge of anything else on which to depend. And certainly she was the only one who had sufficient faith in God to use what little they had in the belief that God would give them the victory over Jabin.

In the context of our second paragraph the battle is fought, in which "Jehovah discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots"; the soldiers were all killed; and Sisera, the captain, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, since he was on peaceful terms with the Kenites. Jael hypocritically invited him into her tent on the pretense that she would shelter him, give him rest and food, and then send him on when it was safe for him to be out. Being worn out from the exertions of battle and flight, Sisera was soon asleep. And when she knew he was asleep she got her hammer and a large tent pin and drove the pin through Sisera's head, pinning him to the ground. When Barak came along in search of Sisera, she proudly showed him the fruits of her hypocrisy and bloodthirstiness. When the battle was over Deborah composed a song, by inspiration. "It was a song of wonderful beauty and lyric power, somewhat difficult, as all Hebrew poetry is." It is in this song that she speaks of herself as a mother in Israel.

Golden Text Explained

From the Golden Text, and the verse preceding, we learn some of the conditions in Israel at the time Deborah arose to do her duty. First, the highways were unoccupied, the travelers used the byways. So oppressive and abusive were the men of Jabin that the people of Israel could not safely travel the highways. And always there is a mean element among the people who will take advantage of such conditions to live off the community by loot and pillage. So honest and peace-loving people lived in constant danger of losing their property and lives.

Next, the rulers ceased in Israel. Whether this means that there were no rulers in Israel or that what rulers they had had given up all hope and ceased to try to do anything to better conditions it is difficult to determine. The latter thought seems more probable, for Deborah says they ceased *until* she arose to encourage them, to stir them up to faith in God and a patriotic sense of their duty to their people. Barak must have held some position of honor and influence among a portion of Israel, for he was able to call together ten thousand men from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali.

As has been said, Deborah was primarily a mother. She recognized her duty and her sphere of influence to be in her home. But conditions were bad, they were unbearable, and it seems that no one in Israel intended to do anything about it. Being a prophetess, she knew the will of the Lord with reference to conditions. Her statement to Barak implies that there had been talk of what should be done; but the men were not as willing to do as they were to talk about conditions. She said to Barak, "Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, saying, Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?" *Hath not Jehovah commanded?* The

form of this statement implies that Jehovah had commanded some time in the past, but the rulers were doing nothing about it. And now Deborah wants to know why they are not doing what the Lord commanded. In this way she stirred them to action. It was not her place to command, but she could exhort and encourage the men to do what God commanded. This she could do without getting out of her place as a woman and a mother.

Many men today get credit for planning great things for the church, when, if the truth were known, their wives are due the credit. There are small churches where women, like Deborah, have been compelled to take a hand in the affairs of the church or sit by and see the church cease to meet for worship. As a general rule, the women of a community are more inclined to be religious than the men. More women attend church services than men. And many times their interest in the church is greater, and their anxiety for the welfare of the church is greater than that of the men. Such was the case with Deborah, so she arose, in spite of her duties as a mother, and led the way to victory over the enemy.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"She judged Israel at that time." It is not to be supposed that Deborah was judge over all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, in the sense that she was a ruler over all the people, or that she was judge over all the people like a judge presides over the courts of a county or district today. But for this occasion and for the people affected, which was in the northern portion of Israel, she did give prophetic assistance to Barak, and to all who came to seek her judgment on matters of interest.

"She dwelt under the palm-tree." We are told that palm trees were so scarce in that section of Palestine that one of considerable size served well as a landmark.

"In the hill-country of Ephraim." From this it is supposed that Deborah was of the tribe of Ephraim, and therefore a descendant of Joseph, which might account for some of her executive ability in managing the business affairs of a nation.

"Go and draw unto mount Tabor" In the rugged country around Mount Tabor the iron chariots of Sisera would be useless. God then would draw Sisera and his hosts unto the river Kishon, which is to the southwest of Mount Tabor. Between this river and Mount Tabor was part of the great plain of Esdraelon. But with the Israelites at Mount Tabor Sisera would have to send his men in on foot to engage Israel in battle. With them in full flight, closely followed by the men of Israel, it would be difficult to use chariots when they reached the plain. The river played a part too in the victory, for Deborah said, "The river Kishon swept them away." (Judges 5: 21.)

"If thou wilt go with me, then I will go." This seems to be a cowardly statement, for on account of making this statement Barak was deprived of all honor for the victory. Perhaps Barak's motive in taking Deborah along was that he might have one through whom God could speak to direct him in his movements. But this was a lack of faith on his part, for Deborah had given him her word that God would give him the victory.

"*Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.*" For a soldier to be killed by a woman was a great disgrace. One Abimelech commanded his armor-bearer to finish him off with a sword when he had been fatally wounded by a woman, "that men say not of me, A woman slew him." (Judges 9: 52-54.)

"*Deborah . . . went with Barak to Kadesh.*" This was Kadesh-Naphtali, the home of Barak, in the extreme northern part of Palestine, and not the Kadesh of our last lesson, where Miriam died and was buried.

"*And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together*" Barak called ten thousand men out of these two tribes. This shows that oppression of Jabin was local, that it did not affect the whole of the twelve tribes of Israel. This may also add weight to the suggestion that Deborah's judgeship was of a local nature, and that it did not extend to all parts of Palestine. However, in her song Deborah indicates that there was help from Issachar and Ephraim, but other tribes are spoken of as not coming to the battle.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The chronology of the book of Judges is very difficult. For a lengthy discussion of this subject the reader is referred to the preface to the book of Judges in Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, where three separate chronological tables are compared.

According to the table we are following, the date is 1285 B.C. That was 166 years after the children of Israel had crossed the Jordan into the promised land.

GEOGRAPHY.—Hazor, the home of Jabin and Sisera, was in the territory allotted to the tribe of Naphtali, near Lake Merom. It was the principal town of that section of the country in the days of Joshua, and so strong was it that Joshua thought best to burn it rather than leave it in his rear while he went on to other conquests. (Josh. 11.) The city was either rebuilt by the men of Naphtali or by some of the heathen left in the land to prove Israel. (Judges 3:

1.) It was still a strong city in the days of Solomon, and one of the places he fortified by the heavy tax he placed on his people. (1 Kings 9.)

The home of Deborah is said to be under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim. There is some difficulty here as both Ramah and Bethel were in territory allotted to Benjamin. Smith's *Bible Dictionary* gives a lengthy discussion of this in Vol. III, under RAMAH. He says that the "hill-country of Ephraim," or as it is sometimes called Mount Ephraim, is a mountainous section of country in the southern portion of Ephraim and northern part of Benjamin, the boundaries of which "are nowhere distinctly set forth." And further that the tribe of Benjamin was so small and depended so long on Ephraim "that nothing is more probable than that the name of Ephraim may have been extended over the mountainous region which was allotted to the younger son of Rachel." Since Deborah lived between Ramah and Bethel, she could not have lived very far from Jerusalem, for Bethel is not more than twenty miles north of that city.

The place where the battle was fought was near Mount Tabor. This mountain is almost due east of Nazareth, about eight miles. "Its height from the base is estimated at 1,000 feet, but may be

somewhat more rather than less." "It rises abruptly from the northeastern arm of the plain of Esdraelon, and stands entirely insulated, except on the west, where a narrow ridge connects it with the hills of Nazareth." On the plain of Esdraelon at the base of the mountain, between it and the river Kishon, many of the battles of Israel were fought. Sometimes it was called the Valley of Jezreel. A portion of this great plain is known as the Valley of Megiddo, from the town of that name on its southern border. It was in this vicinity that Barak fought his battle. The word Harnagedon (Rev. 16: 16), where John pictures the forces of good and the forces of evil being gathered for a last great battle, simply means "city of Megiddo."

CHARACTER.—The word Deborah means a bee or a wasp. She was the wife of a man named Lapidoth. Had it not been for the activity of his wife, his name would never have been preserved. She was a woman of faith and courage. She deplored the condition of Israel, and believed it could be made better. Not only did she have faith, but she was a woman of action. Her faith was not a dead faith; she translated her faith in terms that could be understood by both friend and foe. She does not appear to be domineering in her attitude. When she spoke to Barak, she reminded him of what the Lord had said, not what she demanded.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Children need to know not only the goodness of God to care for those who are his own, but they need to learn to appreciate the power of God. Sisera had a much greater army than Barak had, and it was much better equipped. The army of Barak was untrained and unarmed as compared to that of Sisera. But with God on Barak's side he won the battle. And God was on the side of Israel because they had turned to him in their time of need. In spite of the fact that they had forgotten him in days past and had worshiped idols, he now listened to their cry, gave them the victory, and gave them rest from their enemy for forty years. So his goodness, his mercy, and his power are manifested in this story. Let the children name ways in which God is manifesting these qualities to us today. God has as much power to destroy the disobedient and unfaithful as he has to save those who love him and do his will, hence, we must seek to know his will and cultivate the disposition to obey him.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The lessons suggested above are good for these ages too. We never get too old to remember, and benefit by meditation upon the goodness, mercy, and power of God.

These young people are being told that the stories of the Old Testament are mere tales told to teach certain lessons, and that the miraculous element of them never really happened because they are unreasonable, cannot be done today, and therefore impossible. We need to give their faith all the support possible during this period of high school and college. Good books which deal with these questions should be purchased by the church and circulated among these young people. Teachers should prepare themselves to defend the truth

against evolutionists and materialists that they may answer the questions raised in the minds of high school and college students.

Young People and Adult Departments

Young people planning homes and the adults who already have homes will be interested in discussing the place of women in the home and in public life. When is it proper for a woman to seek and hold public office? Deborah certainly met the approval of the Lord in the things she did in her work of deliverance. What did she do? How much authority did she exercise over Barak, and over the army he gathered? Did this experience make it more difficult for her to be in subjection to her husband when she returned to normal activity? Many more questions can be raised than can be answered, but there are principles in the gospel which, if properly applied, will give us a safe rule by which to live. It should be your aim as the teachers to guide the classes into a knowledge and application of these principles so they may build and maintain their homes in harmony therewith. These are days when most everybody is walking according to what seems right in his own eyes. We need to be pointed back to the Bible as our rule of faith and practice, not simply in what to do to be saved, and how to conduct public worship; but we need to be guided back to the Bible as our rule to guide us in our homes, our business, our social activities, and our recreational activities.

Topics for Discussion

1. Did Jael do right, according to our standards, when she killed Sisera? and from Judges 5: 24-27 do you think Deborah commended her for killing him?
2. When Deborah told Barak that the Lord would sell Sisera into the hands of a woman, because he had said he would not go to battle unless she accompanied him, did she mean that she would get the glory for the victory? or did she in that statement predict that Sisera would be killed by a woman, as actually happened when he went into the tent of Jael?

Lesson VI—August 10, 1947

RUTH, THE IDEAL DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

The Lesson Text

Ruth 1: 4-6, 14-18, 22; 2: 8-10, 17-19; 4: 13-17

4 And they took them wives of the women of Mo'ab; the name of the one was Or'pah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelt there about ten years.

5 And Mah'lon and Chil'i-on died both of them; and the woman was left of her two children and of her husband.

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Mo'ab: for she had heard in the country of Mo'ab how that Je-ho'vah had visited his people in giving them bread.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Or'pah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law.

16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God;

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Je-ho'vah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

18 And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.

22 So Na-o'mi returned, and Ruth the Mo'ab-i-tess, her daughter-in-law, with her, who returned out of the country of Mo'ab: and they came to Beth-le-hem in the beginning of barley harvest.

8 Then said Bo'az unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither pass from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens.

9 Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.

10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found favor in thy sight, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a foreigner?

17 So she gleaned in the field until even; and she beat out that which she had gleaned, and it was about an e'phah of barley.

18 And she took it up, and went into the city; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth and gave to her that which she had left after she was sufficed.

19 And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where hast thou wrought? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Bo'az.

13 So Bo'az took Ruth, and she became his wife; and he went in unto her, and Je-ho'vah gave her conception, and she bare a son.

14 And the women said unto Na-o'mi, Blessed be Je-ho'vah, who hath not left thee this day without a near kinsman; and let his name be famous in Is'ra-el.

15 And he shall be unto thee a restorer of life, and a nourisher of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.

16 And Na-o'mi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

17 And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Na-o'mi; and they called his name O'bed: he is the father of Jes'se, the father of David.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“For whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God”* (Ruth 1: 16b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ruth 3: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

August 4. M.....	The Family of Elimelech (Ruth 1: 1-5)
August 5. T.....	Three Widows (Ruth 1: 6-14)
August 6. W.....	Ruth's Choice (Ruth 1: 15-22)
August 7. T.....	Ruth Gleans in the Field of Boaz (Ruth 2: 1-23)
August 8. F.....	Ruth's Proposal (Ruth 3: 1-18)
August 9. S.....	Ruth Marries Boaz (Ruth 4: 1-13)
August 10. S.....	Ruth the Grandmother of David (Ruth 4: 14-22)

Lesson Subject Explained

There are many fine qualities about Ruth, the girl from Moab, but none are more unusual than her love for her mother-in-law. Even though Naomi, her mother-in-law, was a fine character, it is still unusual for a young woman to become so devotedly attached to another woman who was old enough to be her mother. "Ruth's tender, self-sacrificing affection for Naomi is the very charm of the story. It is in the strength of love that she abandons Moab and

her father's house; it is in the strength of love that she also conquers the prejudices and jealousies of Bethlehem, and compels even Hebrews to admire her virtue and record her fame. And in that it was by her love for Naomi that Ruth was brought to know and serve the only wise and true God, we may see an illustration of the fact that men and women are often led to religion by natural affection, and rise to the love of God through their love for one another."

From wider experience Naomi knew the perils which belong to young womanhood in a strange land and "threw the mantle of her gracious influence around her" until she had become established. She guarded young Ruth in the associations she formed; she shielded her good name from reproach in the social habits she formed; she introduced her into the society where it was desirable for her to make friends. To all of this Ruth responded affectionately, and proved to be the ideal daughter-in-law by loving Naomi with an unwavering devotion, being kind to her and giving her a home as long as she lived.

Context of the Lesson

The book of Ruth begins by telling us of a famine in the land of Israel which drove Elimelech, a man of Bethlehem-judah, his wife, and two sons into Moab where they might find food. His wife was named Naomi, and his sons were Mahlon and Chilion. These people were of the tribe of Judah. They are called Ephrathites because they were from Bethlehem. Ephrath used to be the name of Bethlehem. (Gen. 35: 16, 19; 48: 7.) In later times the town was called Bethlehem, but the people from there still were called Ephrathites. These people had not been in Moab long when Elimelech died. The two boys married girls of the land of Moab. And before either of them had any children the boys died, leaving Naomi alone in the land, except for her daughters-in-law. Then Naomi heard there was plenty in her home town, so she decided to return. Both girls decided to go with her. She advised them to stay, but they said, "Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people." (1: 10.) And both of them did go as far as the border of the land, but there Orpah weighed the advantages of what she knew she had in Moab against that which she had heard only of Canaan and decided to take the advice of Naomi and return. But Ruth was steadfastly minded to go on.

When they reached Bethlehem, it was the time of barley harvest, and Ruth went out to glean in the field of Boaz, because he had been recommended to her as one who would deal graciously with her. Naomi knew he was a near kinsman to her husband, and suggested that Ruth ask him to perform the duty of the nearest kin, which was to marry her and raise up seed to her departed husband. Under peculiar and unusual circumstances this was done, and Boaz agreed to do so provided another man nearer of kin did not wish to have her. Boaz took up the matter with him, and when he had refused to perform the duty of the near kinsman, Boaz took his shoe in pledge of his right to have Ruth. This was done before ten men of the city who were witnesses to the transaction; it was done at the gate of the city where many people gathered. They all wished Boaz well and pronounced a blessing upon him and the woman whom he was to take as his wife.

Golden Text Explained

Our Golden Text is one of the gems of all literature, and should be committed to memory by every person in the classes. In this statement Ruth vows to share four things with Naomi: (1) her lot; (2) her nationality; (3) her religion; (4) her grave. She would share Naomi's lot regardless of where it might be, and the home of Naomi would be her home regardless of how humble it might be. She would be satisfied to eat at Naomi's table though it might not be groaning under the weight of good things to eat. Rich or poor, sick or well, in happiness or sorrow, among friends of foes, Ruth would share her lot without complaint.

"Thy people shall be my people." She was willing to share Naomi's nationality. Her love for this good woman made it possible for her to become a Jew, instead of a Moabitess, that she might be with her. Love will cross national barriers without looking back for one moment. Love for lost souls will cause people to live and die in a strange land, some even preferring to die among the people whom they have loved and served in spite of the fact it is only their adopted nation.

"Thy God shall be my God." Ruth was willing to share Naomi's religion. She had known nothing but the worship of Chemosh, the god of the Moabites. We know little about the form of the worship rendered this particular idol, but it was all that Ruth had ever known, and with it she had been satisfied. But she was willing to give up even her religion to be with Naomi.

It is thought she reached the climax of her devotion when she said, "Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried." For one of that time to be buried in a strange land was about the worst thing that could happen to him. When Jacob died in Egypt, his sons carried him to Canaan and buried him in the cave of Machpelah. And Jacob took an oath of the children of Israel that they would carry his bones out of Egypt, which they did when they left Egypt under Moses. (Gen. 50: 5, 25; Ex. 13: 19; Josh. 24: 32.) But Ruth was willing to be buried in a strange land, if only she be allowed to stay with Naomi. Such devotion is indeed rare, and especially between in-laws.

"For simple pathos and unstudied eloquence, this language is unsurpassed. . . . Here is the fervent outpouring of a true heart. Love and resolution are at their height. Thousands of human souls have expressed their mutual attachment in these words. They are not words of extravagance or of passion, but of feeling, of principle, of a fixed and changeless mind." "There is no utterance in the Old Testament more pathetic and melodious than these words. . . . Courage and sacrifice, love and devotion, breathe all through them. They condense too all that is prophetic of coming experience—the lodging and the loneliness, the weary pilgrimage and the grave in a foreign land. The mind cannot frame sentences like these with the glow of a sincere and sacrificial heart." (*Pulpit Commentary.*)

Helps on the Lesson Text

"*And they took them wives of the women of Moab.*" This was a violation of the law of Moses. (Deut. 7: 1-5.) But these were not the only Jews who disregarded the law in this respect. Solomon married foreign wives. (1 Kings 3: 1-3; 11: 1-8.) In the case of

Solomon much evil came from his unlawful marriages. But in the case in our lesson no harm seems to have come, but rather good seems to have come from the marriage of Mahlon. But the fact that good sometimes comes from the violation of God's law is no proof that the law is not good and that all should not follow it.

"Jehovah had visited his people in giving them bread." The thought here is that God had visited his people to give them bread. God is pictured as visiting his people in Egypt to determine their condition. (Ex. 3: 16; 4: 31.) The famine had been severe in Bethlehem, and God had visited his people to give them bread to eat. This he did by causing a return of fruitful seasons, which are gifts from him. (Acts 14: 17.) Indeed Paul tells us that he "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." (Acts 17: 25.)

"Return thou after thy sister-in-law." Orpah had planned at first to leave Moab and go with Naomi, but now she has given up that good intention. The things material which she could see and handle are nearer and dearer to her than the things of promise which she has to lay hold of by faith in what Naomi had taught her. And now that she has turned back, Naomi uses that as an added reason why Ruth should go. Will she follow a bad example? It is easier to do so than to follow a good example; it is easier to drift downstream than it is to force one's way upstream against the current.

"Entreat me not to leave thee." Ruth was putting up a fight in her own heart. Moab was pulling at her affections; she was not immune to the temptations which took Orpah back to Moab. "Entreat me not" is the language of a heart that knows there is a limit to the power of resistance. As Ruth resisted the entreaty to go back to Moab, so we ought to resist all entreaties and temptations to go back to sin which we left to follow Christ.

"In the beginning of barley harvest." The barley harvest followed immediately after the Feast of the Passover, usually in March and April, and the hilly districts as late as May. It was always before the wheat harvest as much as a week, and sometimes as much as three weeks.

"Go not to glean in another field." This is the language of Boaz to Ruth. He had been attracted to her by her industry, and her kindness to her mother-in-law. For said he, "It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband." And the fact that she had left her homeland and was a stranger caused Boaz to feel more kindly towards her than maidens who were among their own people.

"She fell on her face." This was her way of showing courtesy and humility to Boaz. It was customary for inferiors to bow to the ground in the presence of superiors. Ruth knew how Jews felt towards Moabites. Had she stood erect with a haughty look in her eyes, she would never have gained the favor of Boaz. But her humility was not simply to gain favor; it was genuine, so all the more convincing.

"An ephah of barley." Adam Clarke says an ephah was equal to a little more than seven and one-half gallons. Josephus says it was equal to 8.67 gallons. While the Jewish rabbis' table gives it equal to 4.43 gallons. It is impossible to know which is right.

"Gave to her that which she had left." Ruth was careful to see that her mother-in-law had what she needed. It is commendable

when young people are thoughtful for the needs of older people. Young people are too much inclined to think only of their own needs and pleasures. In this matter Ruth was an exceptionally fine character.

"The man's name ... is Boaz." This is Ruth's answer to the question of Naomi as to where she had gleaned. Naomi immediately gave thanks to God for not forgetting the living and the dead. Naomi and Ruth were the living referred to, and Elimelech and his boys were the dead. Then Naomi told Ruth that Boaz was their near kinsman. The Jerusalem Talmud says that Boaz is the same as Ibzan, one of the judges of Israel (Judges 12: 8-10), and some scholars are inclined to agree, while others say, "There is not a shadow of probability in the notion ... as to the identity of Ibzan with Boaz." From what little we know of Ibzan, we would hate to think of him being identical with Boaz for the sake of Ruth, if for no other reason.

"Better to thee than seven sons." This is what the neighbors of Naomi said to her about Ruth. Surely Ruth was unusually good to her mother-in-law, if her neighbors could truthfully say she was better than seven sons. We can allow for a little exaggeration and still it is a fine recommendation.

"They called his name Obed." This was the name of Ruth's first son. The word Obed means *he who serves*. He was to be a restorer of life and a nourisher of old age to Naomi, and in this way he would serve her, so they called him Obed.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—This book gives us a picture of home life during the time of the judges, and that is about as near as we can determine the time of these events. (Ruth 1: 1.) Adam Clarke gives the date as 1186 B.C.

GEOGRAPHY.—Bethlehem is one of the oldest towns in Palestine, being a town of some prominence when Jacob returned with his wives and family to the land of Canaan. (Gen. 35: 19.) It was situated only a few miles due south of Jerusalem. David was born here, and so was our Lord, but these facts seem not to have affected the fortunes of the city so far as making it any larger is concerned. It has remained a small, unimportant town.

Moab was a small tract of land which lay just east of the Dead Sea, and at one time it extended as far north as the Jordan Valley opposite Jericho. (Deut. 1: 5.) The people who were known as Moabites were the descendants of Lot by one of his daughters. (Gen. 19.) They refused to allow the children of Israel to go through their land without a fight. And they had a part with the Midianites in seducing the Israelites at the suggestion of Balaam. They were never considered as the friends of Israel until after the time of Ruth. When David wished a place of safety for his parents while he was fleeing from the wrath of Saul, he took them into the land of Moab. That was probably because he was related to them through Ruth.

CHARACTER.—Ruth's character is as well balanced as that of any woman of whom we read in the Bible. She manifests so many fine traits of character in her attitude towards Naomi—love, kindness, devotion, care for the aged. And she got along with other people as she gleaned with them. It would have been easy for her to misunder-

stand the Jews, and it would have been easy for them to misunderstand her, and these misunderstandings could have issued in no end of trouble. But she was wise and discreet enough to avoid all this. She was a virtuous woman. It would have been easy for her to make social connections with the wrong class of young men, but she seeks advice from Naomi and follows it. Even in her approach to Boaz—and there are some customs connected therewith which we do not understand—she was so reserved as to indicate that she was extremely virtuous.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Respect for the aged is a good lesson for these departments to learn from Ruth. Ruth gleaned grain from the fields and took it home for her aged mother-in-law. She could have been out having a good time with young people, but she preferred to work for her living and to support Naomi. Furthermore, she got a joy out of this service; she did not do it just because she had it to do. One of our Lord's last acts before his death was to provide for the care of his mother. So we are following Christ when we are thoughtful for our parents and for the aged.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Ruth was steadfast in her determination to do what she thought was best. Naomi told her to stay in Moab among her own people, but Ruth loved Naomi too much to leave her, and she must have learned enough from Naomi about her people and her God that she wished to be one of her people that she might worship her God. When once she set her mind to go to be among the people of God and to worship Jehovah, she never looked back. She refused to allow the pleasures of Moab to lure her away from her purpose. In this she becomes a fine example to young people to be steadfast in their determination to serve the Lord, and not allow the pleasures of this world to induce them to turn back from following him. The fact that Orpah turned back did not cause Ruth to weaken. Young people are inclined to follow others even into sin. If the crowd is doing something, it is hard for them to keep from doing it. Learn to stand for what is right, even if you have to stand alone.

Young People and Adult Departments

Ruth did not allow the fact that she had to work for a living to keep her from being devoutly religious. People in these departments often allow their jobs to get an ever-increasing amount of their time, until they have none for the Lord and his church.

Ruth did not allow the fact that she was in a strange land, unknown to any but one, to entice her to "let down the bars" and do things she would not do back where she was known. She would be virtuous in a strange land the same as at home. What a person is in a big, strange city determines character. What a person does, says, and thinks where he is unknown is what the person is in the sight of God.

Ruth needed the advice and counsel of an older person. Naomi could and did give her what she needed. We need more Naomis, who are sufficiently interested in young people to take some time out from

their work and give them the leadership and comradeship they need.

Ruth was not too independent and self-sufficient to listen to Naomi. We need more Ruths in this respect. Young people are inclined to steer their own boat, even in disregard of the counsel of older people.

Topics for Discussion

1. Ruth was a foreigner in the line of Christ. How many others can you name in that line who were not Jews?

2. Contrast the characters of Ruth and Orpah. If Ruth is like the good seed in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13; Luke 8), how would you characterize Orpah and why?

3. From a study of Ruth 3: 1-14, do you think Ruth proposed marriage to Boaz? If so, was that considered a forward act in her day? Did she lay herself liable to just criticism by her actions that night?

Lesson VII—August 17, 1947

HANNAH, THE MOTHER OF SAMUEL

The Lesson Text

1 Sam. 1: 9-18; 2: 18-21

9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shi'loh, and after they had drunk. Now E'li the priest was sitting upon his seat by the door-post of the temple of Je-ho'vah.

10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto Je-ho'vah, and wept sore.

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O Je-ho'vah of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Je-ho'vah all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before Je-ho'vah, that E'li marked her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore E'li thought she had been drunken.

14 And E'li said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before J6-h6'vSh.

16 Count not thy handmaid for a wicked woman; for out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation have I spoken hitherto.

17 Then E'li answered and said, Go in peace; and the God of Is-ra-el grant thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

18 And she said, Let thy handmaid find favor in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat; and her countenance was no more sad.

18 But Sam'u-el ministered before Je-ho'vah, being a child, girded with a linen eph'od.

19 Moreover his mother made him a little robe, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

20 And E'li blessed El'ka-nah and his wife, and said, Je-ho'vah give thee seed of this woman for the petition which was asked of Je-ho'vah. And they went unto their own home.

21 And Je-ho'vah visited Hannah, and she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Sam'u-el grew before Je-ho'vah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“And she called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of Jehovah.”* (1 Sam. 1: 20b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Sam. 2: 1-10.

Daily Bible Readings

August 11. M.....	Hannah the Wife of Elkanah (1 Sam. 1: 1-8)
August 12. T.....	Hannah's Vow (1 Sam. 1: 9-11)
August 13. W.....	Eli Rebuked Hannah (1 Sam. 1: 12-18)
August 14. T.....	Hannah's Son Born (1 Sam. 1: 19-23)
August 15. F.....	Hannah Dedicates Samuel (1 Sam. 1: 24-28)
August 16. S.....	Hannah's Prayer (1 Sam. 2: 1-11)
August 17. S.....	Hannah Blessed (1 Sam. 2: 18-21)

Lesson Subject Explained

Several great men have said that all they were, or ever hoped to be, they owed it to the influence of a good mother. It seems that Samuel might have made such a statement regarding his mother. Though she gave him to the Lord in early life, and was privileged to see him only occasionally, yet she used what time she did have in his early life and her visits with him to turn his feet into right paths and incline his heart to seek after God.

Hannah was not *the wife*, but only one of the wives of her husband, Elkanah. The other wife, Peninnah, was the mother of children, but Hannah was barren. Conditions in this home remind us of another home long before the time of Hannah. Jacob married two sisters and one of them, Rachel, was barren, while Leah bore children. Jacob loved Rachel more tenderly than he did Leah, yet that love did not make up for the lack of children to love and the haughty superior look and attitude of her sister. So Hannah enjoyed the special love of her husband, but it was not equal to the joy of children, nor was it enough to outweigh the insolent provocations of the despised Peninnah. "Her proud and arrogant behavior, in her prosperity, toward the amiable Hannah, in her humiliation, has stamped her name, so far as it is thought of at all, with undying infamy. She was as graceless as she was immodest—and as mean as she was ignorant and senseless—and as proud as she was hypocritical—and as wicked as she was audacious and disgusting. . . . It seemed sufficiently afflictive to endure the reproaches of her adversary when at home; and she had a right to expect, at least when abroad with strangers—and, most of all, when at the annual worship and sacrifice, and within sight of the ark of God—that she might be at peace. But when she perceived, from year to year, that these public and solemn occasions were specially selected as opportunities for pouring contempt upon her, she wept in the bitterness of her soul, and refused to be comforted by human sympathy." (Adams.) Under such conditions Hannah asked the Lord for a son, whom she promised to lend to Jehovah all the days of his life.

Context of the Lesson

The book of Ruth gives us a story of family life south of Jerusalem during the time of the judges. In this lesson we have another story of family life, north of Jerusalem, in the time of the judges at just about the same time. Sorrow invaded both of these homes, but the nature of their sorrows was different. In the story of Ruth it was famine and death; but in this story it is the yearning of a mother heart for a child to love and caress. Naomi and Ruth lost their husbands in death, but Hannah had to share her husband with an arrogant and insolent woman incapable of sympathetic understanding. Death strikes swiftly and, though the wound is deep and

painful, it will heal in time; but the wounds in Hannah's heart were opened daily, not only at home, but even when they went to Jerusalem for solemn worship. Though polygamy was tolerated by the Lord, it was never his will, and we have no record of a polygamous home where there were peace and happiness. God made one woman for one man, and the two, said he, should become one. "And did he not make one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? And wherefore one? He sought a godly seed." (Mai. 2: 15.) The prophet argues that God made but one woman for man, though he could have made more; but he did not make more than one because he sought a godly seed. Polygamy does not tend toward godliness in the home nor in the community.

The first book of Samuel starts with this story of a family that lived in Ramathaim-zophim, or simply Ramah. In a very few words we are told that Peninnah had several children, but that Hannah was by nature denied that joy; and that this was a source of friction between the two women, both at home and in public. We are told of Elkanah's fruitless efforts to make up for her loss through being especially kind and attentive to her. Then follows the record of the events in Jerusalem related in our text.

After Hannah had received assurance that her prayer was to be answered, she was happy. Within the year her son was born, and, when Elkanah and the rest of the family went to Jerusalem for the yearly sacrifice, Hannah and her son stayed at home. She went back to the sacrifices no more until the child was old enough for her to leave as she had promised the Lord she would do. When finally she was able to take the child and leave him, she took appropriate sacrifices along. She found Eli, the priest who had thought her drunk when last she was there to worship, and told him how her prayer had been answered, how she had promised the child to the Lord, and now she was ready to fulfill that promise. Then follows Hannah's prophetic prayer, of which Dr. Hales says, "This admirable hymn excels in simplicity of composition, closeness of connection, and uniformity of sentiment; breathing the pious effusions of a devout mind, deeply impressed with a conviction of God's mercies to herself in particular, and of his providential government of the world in general; exalting the poor in spirit or the humble-minded, and abasing the rich and the arrogant; rewarding the righteous, and punishing the wicked." (From Adam Clarke.)

In this same context we learn of the shameful conditions which prevailed in connection with the tabernacle service and worship. Eli's sons were base fellows, taking from the people greater portions of the meat sacrificed than was due them, even if they had to resort to force to do it. And they were so base that they even descended to immorality with the women servants about the tabernacle. Surely there was need for some one to rise in Israel who had the background of Samuel who grew up with the idea that he belonged to the Lord even from birth, and that he was to be the Lord's servant all his life.

Golden Text Explained

The word Samuel means "asked of God." Hannah simply used a contraction of the ordinary words which would be used to say that her son was asked of God. She gave him a name which would

remind her continually of the fact that God heard her request and graciously granted her petition. Not only would it mean something to her every time she spoke the words, but it would mean something to the boy. Undoubtedly Samuel, like every child who has a peculiar name, asked his mother why she gave him that name. And that would afford her a joy that could not be measured to tell the lad the story of her sorrow, and how the Lord had been good to her in giving her a son. And that story would fill the boy's heart with gladness, and a sense of importance. Every time he heard the story, or thought of the reason why he was given such a name, he knew he was wanted and appreciated in his home.

And along with the meaning of his name, as a part of the story, there always went the promise of the mother to lend the boy to the Lord as long as he lived. Surely Hannah never lost an opportunity to impress him with the idea that he was hers only for a short time, that soon she must take him to Jerusalem and give him back to the Lord. She had asked him of God, and God had granted her request; but she promised to give him back to the Lord. This must have made a deep impression on the boy's mind; God's need of him was so urgent that his mother could keep him but a little while. No wonder Samuel had an unusually keen sense of his responsibility to God!

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Eli . . . was sitting . . . by the door-post of the temple." Eli was both priest and judge of the people in Shiloh. It seems that he had a favorite place to sit, where he could watch the people in their devotions, and where it was easy for them to see him if they wished his counsel in any matters. The use of the word *temple* in this statement leads some to think the book of First Samuel was written after the first temple was built, otherwise the word *tabernacle* would have been used here.

"And she vowed a vow." According to the law of Moses, if a woman vowed a vow and her husband heard it, he might allow or disallow it to stand. If he made no objection to the vow "in the day that he heareth it," then the woman is bound to keep her vow. But if the husband be displeased with the vow, and "disallow her in the day that he heareth it, then he shall make void her vow which is upon her, . . . and Jehovah will forgive her." (Num. 30.) It seems that Hannah did not talk this matter over with Elkanah, but made her vow without his knowledge. But he was a good man, and devoutly religious, and he allowed the vow to stand when he heard it. So they both were bound to keep the promise Hannah made.

"I will give him unto Jehovah." As we learn from the record this promise included taking Samuel to the tabernacle at Shiloh and leaving him there under the training of Eli the judge and priest, to be his helper. The mother saw him only once a year when she went to the feast, unless indeed she made special trips for short visits with her son.

"There- shall no razor come upon his head." This is an indication that he was brought up under the Nazirite vow, and that for life. One might take the Nazirite vow for a limited time, or for life. Among the requirements were that he must not drink wine or strong drink of any kind, not even vinegar, nor was he to eat grapes

fresh or dried. He was not to cut his hair. He must not touch a dead body, and if one died near him and accidentally touched him, he was to make appropriate offerings. (Num. 6: 1-21.)

"Hannah . . . spake in her heart" Hannah was praying, but not audibly; her lips were moving, but no sound coming therefrom. Others were about, and why should the curious know her sorrow? But when Eli noticed her, he thought she was drunk, and reproved her as was his duty.

"Out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation." Hannah was not to be classed with the "wicked women," or "daughter of Belial," as reads the King James Version. She was not going through the forms of worship to cover her sins of drunkenness and immorality. But she was talking to God about the abundance of her complaints and provocations. Her complaint was that nature had been unfair to her in that she was barren. Her provocations were from Peninnah whose arrogance and reproachments were beyond enduring. Human hands were too weak to help; she had gone to God, the Helper of the helpless.

"The God of Israel grant thy petition" Since Eli had misjudged her, he was rather obligated to be sympathetic towards her. Eli seems to have been a good man, and one who loved the Lord and was sympathetic with the people who came to him for help and comfort. So he gave a hearty amen to the prayer of Hannah. Whether he, as priest, had the power to grant her petition, or he simply joined with her in prayer to God that her petition might be granted, is difficult to determine. The latter seems most probable. But being a priest and a good man, his prayer would have influence at the throne of grace. Hannah seems to have felt sure her prayer would be granted, for it is said that her countenance was no more sad.

"Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife." The blessing which he pronounced upon them was, "Jehovah give thee seed of this woman for the petition which was asked of Jehovah." Here again we have the prayer of the priest, and God having respect for it. For Hannah bore three sons and two daughters. It is said that this blessing was to come to them because of her prayer. God did for them things which would not have been done for them if she had not prayed. We have not because we ask not. (James 4: 2.) And some ask and receive not because they ask for things that they may consume them in their own pleasures. Hannah asked for a son, not simply for her own pleasure, but that she might lend him to God all the days of his life. Her prayer was not a selfish prayer.

"The child Samuel grew before Jehovah." This expression may include three ideas. First, he grew up in the presence of God and things spiritual. He was in the tabernacle, surrounded by worshippers and assisting in the worship of God every day. This necessarily had a profound influence on his mental and moral development. Next, he grew up under the guidance of God. Samuel was given to Hannah for a special purpose. God needed a man to come to Israel at this time for a special purpose. The low state of morals, even of the priests, was indicative of the general conditions existing at the time. God was guiding him in his growth that he might have a man equal to the tasks imposed by the times in which he lived. Third, he grew up under the inspection of God. In this sense we are

all before Jehovah. He sees all, records all. How careful we ought to be before the Great Inspector.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The date of Hannah's prayer is given as 1171 B.C. The birth of Samuel is one year later. The date of Samuel's coming to the tabernacle is given as 1165 B.C.

GEOGRAPHY.—It is not difficult to locate Shiloh, the place where the tabernacle was located in the time of Hannah. For it is said of Shiloh, "which is on the north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." (Judges 21: 19.) Bethel and Shechem are well-known places north of Jerusalem. Shechem was in what afterwards became Samaria, but both Bethel and Shiloh were south of the border between Judea and Samaria. Shiloh was the center of worship from a short time after the crossing of the Jordan until the time of Eli. His sons carried the ark of God into battle with the Philistines who captured it. From that time Shiloh lost its place among the cities of Israel and became an insignificant place. The prophet explains this in these words, "But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel." (Jer. 7: 12.)

Ramathaim-zophim is another place mentioned in our lesson as the home of Hannah, and the birthplace of Samuel. It usually goes by the shorter name of Ramah, though some Bible scholars think there were two different places. For a more extended discussion of this place see Lesson XI, First Quarter.

CHARACTER.—Hannah was a patient woman, bearing the cruelties of Peninnah without demanding that Elkanah send her away as Sarah did with Hagar. She was a devoutly religious woman, taking her problems to God and leaving them with him to settle. She was an unselfish woman, being willing to give her son to God, if only her reproach be taken away. Hannah was trustworthy in that she kept her vow to God. With many women it would have been too great a sacrifice, and they could easily have justified themselves by saying that they did not realize what they were saying at the time; their provocation was great, and their desire was so great that they were not responsible for making such a rash promise under such mental strain. But Hannah lived up to her vow without a whimper.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This is a story of unusual interest for these departments. The boy that came in answer to his mother's prayer; the boy who was given to God to serve in the tabernacle when he was between four and six years of age; the boy whose mother visited him once a year and brought him a new coat each time she came—these are all points of interest around which good lessons can be built. A sand table layout with the tabernacle as the center and Hannah praying for the first scene, and then a second scene of Hannah bringing her boy to give him to God will be easy to construct, and it will occupy the hands as well as the hearts of these children.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Patience under provoking circumstances is a good lesson for these boys and girls. Young people of these ages are prone to have their own way; to do a thing at once or not do it at all. It is not to be supposed that this is the first time Hannah ever prayed to God for relief from the provocations of her rival. But she continued to pray until it was God's will. And in this connection it might be well to use Peninnah to teach them a lesson on being kind to those who are less fortunate than we are. Peninnah is remembered only because of her ugly character and disposition, which is worse than not being remembered at all.

Hannah gave her boy to God that he might grow up before Jehovah. Boys and girls ought to respond to and cooperate with their parents' efforts to bring them up in the way of the Lord. During these ages more boys and girls are lost from church attendance than at any other time. So they should be impressed with the value and importance of growing up before the Lord.

Young People and Adult Departments

The importance of establishing and maintaining a Christian home cannot be stressed too much. Hannah was filled with sorrow because her home was not what God would have it. So many homes today are rocked with internal strife because they were not built according to God's plan.

Hannah desired to bear and rear children. The greatest sorrow of her life, and the subject of her prayers, was her childlessness. Childless homes can never be as happy as they could be if there were children; nor can they be as pleasing to God. Prayer solved Hannah's problem; it may take adoption to solve others' problems.

You may not take your child to the church house and leave it there, but you can as surely give your child to the Lord by planting in its heart the ideal of wholehearted and unselfish service to God all the days of its life. If you can rear a child to give as great service to God as Samuel gave, and certainly that is not impossible, you will have performed the greatest service you can possibly perform.

Topics for Discussion

1. "Is any among you suffering? let him pray." (James 5: 13.) That is what Hannah did. May we find relief today from our sufferings through prayer? Suffering is caused by homes about to break up. Will prayer solve the problem?
2. What effect did Hannah's prayerful life have in determining the character of Samuel? Can parents wield that same influence on children today by being as prayerful as she?

Lesson VIII—August 24, 1947

THE SHUNAMMITE, A HOSPITABLE WOMAN

The Lesson Text

2 Kings 4: 8-16, 25-27, 30, 31, 36, 37

8 And it fell on a day, that E-li'sha passed to Shu'nem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

9 And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, that passeth by us continually.

10 Let us make, I pray thee, a little chamber on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a seat, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

11 And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber and lay there.

12 And he said to Ge-ha'zi his servant, Call this Shu'nam-mite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.

13 And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.

14 And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Ge-ha'zi answered, Verily she hath no son, and her husband is old.

15 And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.

16 And he said, At this season, when the time cometh round, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thy handmaid.

25 So she went, and came unto the man of God to mount Car'mel.

And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Ge-ha'zi his servant, Behold, yonder is the Shu'nam-mite:

26 Run, I pray thee, now to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.

27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Ge-ha'zi came near to thrust her away; but the man of God said, Let her alone: for her soul is vexed within her; and Je-ho'vah hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.

30 And the mother of the child said, As Je-ho'vah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

31 And Ge-ha'zi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he returned to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

36 And he called Ge-ha'zi, and said, Call this Shu'nam-mite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground; and she took up her son, and went out.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”* (Heb. 13: 2.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Kings 4: 17-24.

Daily Bible Readings

August 18. M.	Elisha Visits Shunem (2 Kings 4: 1-3)
August 19. T.	The Widow's Oil Increased (2 Kings 4: 4-7)
August 20. W.	The Woman Entertains Elisha (2 Kings 4: 8-16)
August 21. T.	The Woman Bears a Son (2 Kings 4: 17-19)
August 22. F.	The Woman's Son Dies (2 Kings 4: 20-24)
August 23. S.	Her Visit to Elisha (2 Kings 4: 25-31)
August 24. S.	Elisha Restores the Child (2 Kings 4: 32-37)

Lesson Subject Explained

The word Shunammite in our lesson subject simply means a person who lived in Shunem. Shunem was a small town in the territory allotted to the tribe of Issachar. (Josh. 19: 18.) It was situated in the hills in the vicinity where the plains of Esdraelon and the river Kishon start their westward course towards the Mediterranean, and where the valley of Jezreel starts its eastward course toward the Jordan.

This woman is said to have been a “great woman,” that is, a wealthy woman. And she was not a selfish woman, hoarding her

riches to consume her wealth upon her own pleasures. Nor was she wholly family-minded concerning her wealth. There are people who are not selfish and stingy with their family, but they never divide what they have with people outside of the family. But this woman's interests were wider than her home and family. She had noticed that a prophet passed her door often and one day she gave him a pressing invitation to stop and eat. This became a habit with the prophet, and they became better acquainted. Finally, by observing his life carefully, the woman perceived that this was not only a man of God, but a *holy* man of God, and one worthy of anything and everything she might be able to do for him. So she suggested to her husband that they build a room especially for him to be used by him any time he might come their way. In this way was her hospitality shown to the prophet.

She is not the only person who ever showed hospitality to God's men. Lydia pressed her invitation upon Paul and his company to come into her house and there abide. (Acts 16: 15.) And Priscilla probably entertained Apollos, the eloquent preacher, in her home as she taught him the way of the Lord more accurately. (Acts 18: 26.) Mary and Martha opened their house to the weary prophet of Nazareth and gave him rest from both his work and his enemies. And preachers of the gospel all down through the ages are indebted to hospitable women, like the Shunammite, for their refreshing care and attention.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of our lesson we learn that Elijah was taken up into heaven, and that his understudy and associate, Elisha, caught his mantle and asked for a double portion of his spirit to rest upon him. From that time Elisha takes the place of Elijah in the school of the prophets and in the affairs of Israel. He gave counsel to kings, but did not refuse to help the widow whose possessions were about to be taken away by extortioners. To pay her debts Elisha told her to borrow all the vessels she could from her neighbors and begin pouring oil from the only pot of oil she had. Through the miraculous help of the prophet she was able to fill all the vessels she could borrow by pouring from that one small vessel. She then sold the oil and paid her debts and still had enough for her and her sons to live comfortably.

In return for her hospitality Elisha promised this Shunammite a son. The Lord honored Elisha's word, and the woman gave birth to a son. When the child was five or six years old he, being in the field with his father, complained of his head hurting. He was sent to the house for his mother to care for him, but he soon died. The mother asked her husband for a servant and an ass, but did not state her reasons. Her husband supposed she wished to go to worship, but as it was neither new moon nor Sabbath, he was puzzled. But she assured him, "It shall be well." His confidence in her is a recommendation to her.

When she got to Carmel, where the prophet lived, she refused to deal with his servant, but stated her mission directly to Elisha. The servant was sent on to place the staff on the child, but the Shunammite refused to leave the prophet. She would be satisfied with none less than his personal attention. The servant, Gehazi, failed to do any good. The prophet stretched his body upon that of the child,

placing his face exactly to the face of the child. Some commentators say this was done to give the child's body warmth, but this hardly seems reasonable. There is no way of knowing why Elisha did this; we only know the fact that he did it, "and the flesh of the child waxed warm." And when he had walked across the floor twice, he stretched himself upon the body of the child again, and the child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

Golden Text Explained

The first exhortation of our Golden Text is "*forget not.*" It is easy to get so busy with the things in which we are particularly interested that we forget about the welfare of strangers. Even when we go to church we have in mind to see our friends and have a visit with them after the service. And we become so interested in that visit that we forget to get acquainted with the strangers present. Many are allowed to visit several times and no one ever meets them and welcomes them back. At some place there is an official welcoming committee to meet strangers. That is good. But even then it should not be left entirely up to the committee. The text does not say to appoint a committee to show love to strangers for you; and the committee, while doing a good work and filling a need for the church, cannot obey this commandment for you. And showing love to strangers may include more than simply meeting them and asking them to return to church services. It may mean helping in times of illness, sharing your food and clothing and shelter with strangers.

The reason for showing love to strangers is that some have thereby entertained angels without knowing it. Abraham is a good example of that. He prepared food for three strangers who came his way. After the meal and their promise to Sarah that she would have a son, the men turned towards Sodom, and Abraham, through courtesy, went some distance with them. Two of the men went on, but one stayed for a visit with Abraham, who, from the context, we learn was the Lord himself, the second person of the godhead in human form. (Gen. 18: 2, 22.)

The two men who went on to Sodom were entertained by Lot with genuine hospitality, and before the morning came Lot found they were angels sent to deliver him from the wicked city before its destruction. (Gen. 19: 1-22.) Both Abraham and Lot had entertained angels unawares. Had they been less hospitable, they might not have received the blessings they enjoyed. Abraham thought at first he was talking to a man, but before the visit was over he found that he was talking to the Lord himself. So what we do for others today we may be doing for the Lord. Jesus teaches us that when we feed the hungry and visit the sick we are doing these things to him. (Matt. 25: 34-40.)

The Shunammite woman built a room and furnished it for the man of God and his servant. This was genuine hospitality. Though Elisha was not an angel, when we do good to those serving the Lord, it is a service we render to the Lord, and he does not allow it to go unnoticed and unblest. Social conditions today make the taking of strangers into our homes rather difficult. Many people have bedding space only for their family, and may be crowded at that. But there are others who have the room who do not care to be bothered and inconvenienced by providing for the comforts of strangers. These

are the people who need this lesson. In refusing to practice hospitality we become selfish, our souls shrivel, and we cheat ourselves of many blessings the Lord would otherwise give us.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Where was a great woman" The word great was not used in the sense in which we use it. It referred to wealth. Nabal was brutish; even his servant and his wife both spoke of him as a "worthless fellow." Yet he is spoken of as a great man. (1 Sam. 25: 2.) Barzilai is also called "a very great man," though so far as we know he did not distinguish himself as having any of the outstanding qualities which make a man great in our day, except that he was rich. (2 Sam. 19: 31.) So this Shunammite is called a great woman because of her wealth. She was also entitled to be called great because of her hospitality.

"Let us make, I pray thee, a little chamber." This is the language of the woman to her husband, which reveals other great qualities. First, she was more interested in spiritual things than her husband. That is usual. The woman in the home usually is more spiritual than the husband; she usually thinks of doing good to others before the husband does. And next, she was obedient to her husband. She did not *tell* the husband; she *asked* him. Though she got the same results, a room for the prophet, yet we would do her an injustice to suppose that she would not have given up the idea if her husband had not thought well of the idea. On account of superior qualities both mentally and spiritually, it may be necessary for some women to take the lead in their homes in such matters in order to get anything done, but there is a modest, humble God-fearing way to do it; and this Shunammite woman sets a very fine example for Christian women of today.

"Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king?" In the first place this shows the influence of this prophet in government circles of his day. It is no sin for preachers to have and exercise influence in high places today; but not many can do it for long and still remain true to God, to friends, and to conscience.

"I dwell among mine own people" Believe it or not! Here is a woman who has no longing for the society of the court and the palace. A word from Elisha, and she and her husband can quit the farm, move to the capital, live in pleasure, and enjoy the distinction of being a man and a woman of the court. She said I am satisfied among people of my kind. "How few are there who will not sacrifice everything—peace, domestic comfort, their friends, their conscience, and their God—for *money, honours, grandeur, and parade?*"

"Thou shalt embrace a son" The woman's hospitality was so unselfish that she seems to have refused to name anything she wanted done for her, so Gehazi suggested that her husband was old and they had no children. That was enough. Elisha called for her and gave her the promise that she was to have a son to embrace. And, like Sarah of old, it was too good to be true, and difficult to believe.

"And she answered, It is well" The child she had embraced for so few years was dead, yet with courage she answers, "It is well." Her faith in God and her submission to his authority, even if the child could not be revived, was such that all was well. But if God would listen to the prophet's petition on her behalf to give her a son,

her faith was such that she believed God would listen to that same prophet if he asked God to restore her son. And if so, she could say, "It is well."

"Did I not say, *Do not deceive me?*" This is the language of the woman to Elisha in which she reminded him of her statement several years before when he promised her a son. It was even worse for him to give her a son for several years and then take him away from her than for him to promise her a son and not fulfil that promise. To give her a son without her asking for him and then take him away seemed like trifling with her affections.

She "*fell at his feet.*" Her gratitude was as great as her hospitality. In fact, in all this story there is not any indication of a mean quality in this woman.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Our lesson opens in 895 B.C. The death of the child is dated 891 B.C. But that is admitted to be a guess, as the child may have been a few years older; at least, he was old enough to be with his father in the field.

GEOGRAPHY.—About as much has been said of the town of Shunem as is known. "It is reasonably identified with the modern *Solam*, at the southeastern foot of the Gebel Duhy, or 'Little Hermon,' a flourishing village encompassed by gardens, and in the midst of the finest cornfields in the world." (*Pulpit Commentary.*)

Mount Carmel, the home of Elisha, is perhaps the most interesting mountain of all Palestine. The word Carmel means *the park*. It is said that there is not a shrub, tree, or flower growing anywhere in Palestine that does not grow in abundance on Carmel. Mount Carmel is a long, somewhat irregular formation, from 600 to 1,728 feet above sea level, beginning at the Mediterranean Sea and running parallel with the river Kishon in a southeasterly direction for about twelve miles. Its southern slopes are rough, but somewhat gradual; but on the northern side "its gradients are more sudden, in many places descending almost by precipices to the Kishon." Shunem was southeast of the eastern extremity of Carmel several miles, so this woman had quite a distance to go at best; and if Elisha lived near the west end of Carmel, she had a long distance for her day to travel as she did.

CHARACTER.—In this woman's character we find several things that are outstanding. First, she was a hospitable woman. She was willing to go to both trouble and expense to serve others. Next, she knew her place in the home, and though she seems to have been superior to her husband in some ways, she maintained her proper relation to him in all matters. She was a woman of great faith. She could believe that all was well even in the face of death. And she gave evidence of great self-control in that she went to her husband and made arrangements to go to Carmel without so much as showing any sign of grief. She did not become hysterical, but went about doing the things her faith and good judgment dictated. The journey was rather long and hard considering her means of travel, but her patience and courage sustained her until the round trip was made. In calm, yet earnest, tones she talked with the prophet; no shouting; no wailing; no rending of garments, or tearing of hair. She was truly a great woman from every point of view.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Kindness to others; the rewards of kindness; and the enrichment of soul are lessons of interest in these departments. And, too, telling the story of the coming, death, and revival of this boy will catch and hold the interest of these boys and girls. They will not tire of telling the story, or of hearing others tell it. Let one tell the story, and the rest watch to see what is left out. Then let another tell it as he thinks it ought to be told, while others watch for things he leaves out. Repetition will impress the story, give several the joy of telling it, and gain the attention of all by asking them to watch for something that may be left out by the one telling the story.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Young people are likely to be guilty of forgetting to show love and kindness to other young people who attend church services. In too many places the welcoming committee does not include young people, so strangers may come and go without ever meeting boys and girls their age. When a family moves into the community, young people are sometimes slow to receive the new boy or girl into "their set." In some places this is carried to shameful extremes. Money, social standing, and other like things often determine whether a new boy or girl will be taken into the young set of the church or not. Teachers ought to do all they can to correct such situations if they exist.

This woman of Shunem was not interested in the money, social life, or luxuries of the king's palace. How many of the boys and girls in your class think she made a wise decision? How many of them would make the same decision? They need no lesson today more than they need to know there are a lot of things worth more than the opportunities offered this woman in this proposition made by the prophet. This woman was unusually sensible. The glitter of temporal things about us influences us too much in what we think, say, and do; it is too easy to mind earthly things, to walk according to the course of this world. We must learn to divorce ourselves from these things and set our affections on heavenly things.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lessons suggested above cannot be overlooked in these departments. They are the central ideas in the passage we are studying, and they are needed in these departments as much as in the others.

In addition to these it will be well to remember that one never loses by showing kindness to good men. The woman was kind to Elisha, but was repaid many times over for her kindness. We are not to be kind only for what we can get in return, for that is not true kindness; that is simply an effort to buy the good deeds of others, and people of that type are always wanting much for little. But to be kind to others without thought of getting anything in return is true kindness. If done to evil men, we will have to wait until we get to heaven for our reward; but if done to good men, we will get part of our reward here, as this woman was blessed by Elisha in return for her kindness to him.

That little boy very probably owed his continued life to the calm, courageous faith of his mother. What if she had become hysterical, rent her clothes, and called in her neighbors to help her bury her dead instead of going calmly to the prophet for help? The boy would likely have been buried before the prophet even knew he was ill. Children today are fortunate who have wise, faithful, God-fearing parents. Every one of us owes it to our children to see that they have just that kind of parents. Do your children?

Topics for Discussion

1. During revival meetings we have the practice of inviting the preacher, usually accompanied by the local preacher, into a different home each day for lunch and a visit. In some churches it is difficult to find enough families to invite the preachers into a different home each day for ten days. Is this a lack of hospitality? Are social conditions such as to justify people in not continuing that practice? What would the woman of Shunem do if she were among us today?

2. Elisha, contrary to his predecessor Elijah, was the friend and counselor of kings, and had much influence with them. To what extent can preachers of the gospel take part in political activities of this day? Does that run contrary to Paul's advice to keep themselves free from entanglements of this world, or the affairs of this life?

Lesson IX—August 31, 1947

ESTHER, THE QUEEN

The Lesson Text

Esth. 2: 5-11, 16-18; 4: 13-17

5 There was a certain Jew in Shu'shan the palace, whose name was Mor'de-cai, the son of Ja'ir, the son of Shim'e-i, the son of Kish, a Ben'ja-mite.

6 Who had been carried away from Je-ru'sa-lem with the captives that had been carried away with Jec-o-ni'ah king of Judah, whom Neb-u-chad-nez'zar the king of Bab'y-lon had carried away.

7 And he brought up Ha-das'sah, that is, Es'ther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maiden was fair and beautiful; and when her father and mother were dead, Mor'de-cai took her for his own daughter.

8 So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shu'shan the palace, to the custody of He'gai, that Es'ther was taken into the king's house, to the custody of He'gai, keeper of the women.

9 And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with her portions, and the seven maidens who were meet to be given her out of the king's house: and he removed her and her maidens to the best place of the house of the women.

10 Es'ther had not made known her people nor her kindred; for Mor'de-cai had charged her that she should not make it known.

11 And Mor'de-cai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Es'ther did, and what would become of her.

16 So Es'ther was taken unto king A-has-u-e-rus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Te'beth, in the seventh year of his reign.

17 And the king loved Es'ther above all the women, and she obtained favor and kindness in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vash'ti.

18 Then the king made a great feast unto all of his princes and his servants, even Es'ther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the bounty of the king.

13 Then Mor'de-cai bade them return answer unto Es'ther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish: and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

15 Then Es'ther bade them return answer unto Mor'de-cai,

16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shu'shan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

17 So Mor'de-cai went his way, and did according to all that Es'ther had commanded him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“And who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”* (Esth. 4: 14b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Esth. 9: 29-32.

Daily Bible Readings

August 25. M.....	Esther Chosen (Esth. 2: 1-7)
August 26. T.....	Esther Made Queen (Esth. 2: 12-18)
August 27. W.....	Mordecai Informs Esther (Esth. 4: 9-12)
August 28. T.....	Purpose of Esther's Position (Esth. 4: 13-17)
August 29. F.....	Esther's Banquet (Esth. 5: 1-14)
August 30. S.....	Esther Has Haman Hanged (Esth. 7: 1-10)
August 31. S.....	Esther Saves the Jews (Esth. 8: 1-17)

Lesson Subject Explained

Esther was a Jewish maiden, a descendant of one Kish who had been carried away from the kingdom of Judah to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Persia. When his queen displeased him, the king Ahasuerus, who was Xerxes the son of Darius Hystaspis, expelled her and chose another to take her place. On account of her beauty, and the providence of God, Esther was chosen and crowned with much pomp and rejoicing. Thus God raised up one to a special place of honor, at a special time and place, for a special purpose. Honors and great privileges usually carry with them great responsibilities, and it was so in this case, for Esther was called upon as queen to use her office for the good of her people. And the manner in which she did her duty has caused her name to live in the hearts of all men, and especially her race. They look upon her as a saviour of the race.

But Esther may be looked upon as queen in another sense. Young women of exceptionally fine character and gracious manners, with unusually good judgment in matters of taste, and whose disposition, attitudes, and ideals measure up to the highest standards, are often referred to as queens. Esther was a queen long before she received the crown from Xerxes. And every young woman should have it in her heart to be a queen in this sense. And, too, we often refer to the wife who presides with unusual dignity and graciousness over her home as the queen in that home. To this distinction each young woman should aspire. There is no higher station, no greater honor, and no place for which nature has better qualified her than to reign as queen in her own home.

Context of the Lesson

The context of our lesson is the simple story as told in the book of Esther. The king of Persia had one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in his kingdom, and over each of these ruled a prince. On

one special occasion for one hundred and eighty days these men were called to the palace in Shushan, or Susa, to transact business of the kingdom, and to have a great feast. The feast lasted for seven days. Money and liquor flowed freely. Towards the end of the feast all, including the king, were drunk. The women had their feast too, which seemed to be separate from that of the men. But it occurred to the king that it would be a good thing to have his queen, Vashti, to make a display of her beauty, "for she was fair to look upon." So he gave commandment that she come into the hall where the men were gathered, and that she come dressed in such fashion as to make a display of herself. This she refused to do, though she was conscious of the fact that she might even be condemned to death for disobeying the king. Her standard of modesty was commendable. The seven highest officers in the kingdom suggested that if she be allowed to get by with this disobedience all the women of the kingdom might show the same contempt for their husbands, and for that reason she ought to be removed, her property confiscated, another chosen to take her place, and a decree be published throughout the kingdom that all women were to give their husbands honor. Their suggestion was adopted and Vashti was deposed. Then a search was made in every province of the kingdom, and a collection made of all the beautiful young women in the kingdom. They were brought to the king's palace, turned over to the chamberlain, and given a course of preparation which lasted a year. This course of preparation consisted of treatment of the whole body for six months with oil of myrrh and six months with sweet odors. Then each young woman was brought before the king and, much like women are selected for various parts for roles in a movie, the king selected the one who most appealed to him. Modest women of today would resent such a manner of selection, but such were the customs of that day, and no blame attaches to Esther for submitting to such a custom.

Some time after her selection, Esther's cousin and foster father, Mordecai, learned of a plot made by Haman, and agreed to by the king, to kill all the Jews in the land. The plot was made because Mordecai refused to bow to Haman. Mordecai sent word to Esther that she must go to the king in behalf of her people. But she said she could not go into his presence unless he sent for her, except at the risk of her life. If she went on her own accord, and he received her, all was well. But, if she went uninvited and he refused to hold out the golden scepter as a sign that he was willing to receive her, she would be put to death. She had not been called by the king for thirty days, and she feared to go to him. Then follows the last paragraph of our lesson text.

It should be said that when Esther went into the king's inner court she was received by the king. Her plans were well laid. She asked only that the king and Haman come to a banquet she would prepare for them, and her request was granted. At the banquet Esther made known the plot of Haman to destroy her and her people, and the king had Haman hanged on the gallows he had prepared for another. The decree of the king could not be changed, but the Jews were warned and told to prepare to defend themselves on the day appointed for their destruction, and it was a great victory for

them. In celebration thereof they instituted the feast of Purim, which the Jews celebrate to this day.

Golden Text Explained

The language of our Golden Text is that of Mordecai to Esther when he was creating in her that sense of responsibility she needed to feel in the present situation. Much honor for Esther's actions must be given to her teacher and counselor. Mordecai took her as his own daughter to rear, and he must have done a good job of it, for even after she was made queen it is said that "Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him."

Mordecai reasoned with Esther that if she held her peace both she and her people would be destroyed. The king did not know that she was a Jewess, and she probably never would have been selected as queen if he had known that fact. But such a wholesale destruction of a race of people could hardly be carried out without someone telling the king, or Haman, that Esther was a Jewess. So she could hardly hope to escape destruction with her people. But if she went in to see the king and he refused to see her and she had to die as a result, that would be no more than all her people were doomed to suffer. She might as well die in an attempt to save herself and all the people as to wait and die with her people without doing what she could to help them. And then, reasons Mordecai, who knows but that God has raised you up to the position you enjoy that you may have favor with the king to save both yourself and your people? Mordecai was a religious man. Though the name of God is not mentioned in this book, his overruling providence is implied in no uncertain terms. Esther could hardly think that she was raised from a nobody in the kingdom to that of queen solely for her own sake; her exaltation must be for better reasons and must include more people than herself. And surely every one of us ought to realize that we receive far too many blessings to be worthy in ourselves of all of them; they are not given to us because of our individual merit. But these blessings are given us that we may use them for the good of others and for the glory of God. Who knows but that God has raised each one of us up to the station and position we now enjoy for a very definite purpose? If our courage fails, we may be lost. Esther might have reasoned that she was having too much fun to spoil it all by revealing her race, endangering her life and position, and for the sake of pleasure refused to accept the responsibility. Many do that today, and they shall as surely perish as Esther would have perished if she had not courageously accepted the responsibility.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Who had been carried away from Jerusalem." For the record of the captivity of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar, who carried them into Babylon read the last chapters of Second Kings and Second Chronicles. They were carried into captivity 133 years after the kingdom of Israel, the northern kingdom, was carried into captivity by Assyria.

"And he brought up Hadassah." This was Esther's Babylonish name, and means a *myrtle*. She was given the name Esther when she was brought to the king's court as one of the contestants for the

queen's place. The word Esther means a *star*. Esther was an orphan, and was reared by Mordecai, her cousin. Josephus says she was Mordecai's niece.

"And the maiden pleased him" All the maidens were placed in the keeping of Hegai, the king's chamberlain. He was so pleased with Esther that he showed her special favors. Who can fail to see the providence of God in this? However, to those involved at the time it was more difficult to see. Mordecai seemed to realize it when the decree was made to kill all the Jews in the nation. So we today may be guided by providence without perceiving it.

"The tenth month, which is the month Tebeth" This was not the tenth month of their *civil* year, but of their *sacred* or *ecclesiastical* year. Their civil year began with Tisri, which corresponds with our September. Their sacred year began with Ahib, or Nisan, which corresponds with our March. This month Tebeth corresponds with our December. "The identification of the Jewish months with our own cannot be effected with precision on account of the variations that must inevitably exist between the lunar and solar month, each of the former ranging over portions of two of the latter."

"And he made a release to the provinces." When feasts were made in honor of some high state official, certain grants were made for the relief of people in various ways. Some tax would be remitted so those who were benefited would feel kindly toward the official being honored. And gifts were made according to the bounty of the king. By this is meant that grants of money were made to certain cities or provinces, for erection of temples or other such public works as were desired.

"Wili relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place." Mordecai had faith in God to deliver his people from the impending destruction. He believed Esther was raised to her place as queen for this very work. But if she did not have the courage to do her duty, God was not so dependent upon her that he could not raise up another deliverer. None should feel so important today as to think the Lord and the church cannot get along without him. God can raise up a nobody any day in the week to take our places.

"Gather together all the Jews . . . and fast ye for me." Why Esther does not mention prayer in this place is not known, and speculation would be worthless. The name of God is not mentioned in the whole book. And this fast is about the only mention of anything like worship. But surely both she and Mordecai attached some religious significance to this fact.

"If I perish, I perish." These are words of courage and determination to take a dangerous step. She was taking her life in her hands, hinging it on the caprice of a dangerous and brutal eastern monarch in whose sight human life was worth but very little. But for the sake of her people she was willing to run the risk, and if necessary pay the price.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Ahasuerus began to reign in Persia about 464 B.C. Our lesson begins in the third year of his reign, or 462 B.C. The selection of a queen to take the place of Vashti consumed more time than is usually supposed. The gathering of maidens began in 461 B.C. A whole year was taken in purifications after they had been

gathered. Esther was chosen as queen in 458 B.C. The destruction of the Jews was plotted by Haman in 453 B.C.

GEOGRAPHY.—The Persian empire in the time of Ahasuerus is said to have extended from India to Ethiopia, and to be composed of one hundred twenty-seven provinces.

Shushan, the capital of the empire and sometimes called Susa, was originally capital of a country called in the scriptures Elam, and spoken of as being in the province of Elam in the time of Daniel. (Dan. 8: 2.) Chedorlaomer is mentioned as king of Elam in the days of Abraham. (Gen. 14: 1.) He had power to make war against other kings two thousand miles from his capital, and at one time ruled a large portion of lower Mesopotamia. The ruins of old Shushan "cover a space about 6,000 feet long from east to west, by 4,500 feet broad from north to south. The circumference of the whole, exclusive of outlying and comparatively insignificant mounds, is about three miles, . . . and all the ruins are contained within a circumference of about seven miles."

CHARACTER.—"She appears there as a woman of deep piety, faith, courage, patriotism, and caution, combined with resolutions; a dutiful daughter to her adoptive father, docile and obedient to his counsels, and anxious to share the king's favor with him for the good of the Jewish people. That she was a virtuous woman, and, as far as her situation made it possible, a good wife to the king, her continued influence over him for so long a time warrants us to infer. And there must have been a singular grace and charm in her aspect and manners, since she 'obtained favor in the sight of all that looked upon her.' That she was raised up as an instrument in the hands of God to avert the destruction of the Jewish people, and to afford them protection, and forward their wealth and peace in their captivity, is also manifest from the scripture account." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Orphans never fail to attract the attention and arouse the sympathy of children in these departments. For them this lesson could be headed, "How an Orphan Girl Saved Her People." And for children who are orphans this can be used to give them encouragement, that God can use us for good in spite of the fact that we have had a harder time in life than the average. In fact, these hardships, which we class as misfortunes, may only be steppingstones to real success by those with the proper courage and determination.

It will be well for teachers to be able to tell other parts of this story, how Haman had to advertise Mordecai as the man whom the king delighted to honor because Mordecai had rendered a service to the king; how Haman was hanged on a gallows he made for others. The children will delight in hearing and telling these stories themselves.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The Shunammite woman refused an opportunity to go to the king's palace, and it was commendable in her to do so. But Esther accepts the opportunity to go, and she is commended. Though there are extreme dangers in such society, it is not impossible for one to live as a Christian should live. If duty calls one into such society,

and one has the moral courage to remain faithful and true to God, it is right to go. One may be raised up for such an hour, for such a work. But let no one think that Esther did not place herself in the way of more and greater temptations than did the Shunammite who remained among her people in the common walks of life.

Esther's courage and self-sacrifice are a challenge to these young people which they admire and in which they are interested. Young people love difficult and dangerous things, the things that cannot be done are the things that hold their interest. Get them to see that Esther did not know, as we now know, that God was on her side and using her. So far as she knew, she was alone in that venture, and she was the only one on earth who could do the job. Such opportunities do not come to every one. But there are opportunities for service which require the same courage and self-denial, and we let them go by unrecognized. Some are waiting for a big job to come along before we start, but the big jobs are done by those who have started by doing the little things faithfully as they come along.

Young People and Adult Departments

Mordecai rendered the Jewish nation a wonderful service without knowing about it for several years afterwards. He gave Esther the very training that fitted her to perform the work she did. Had he refused to take in the little orphan girl and give her the best training he could, and she had been allowed to grow up in the streets and alleys and keep the bad company that invariably goes with such conditions, who can believe that she would have been capable of rendering the service to her nation she did? So parents today should give their children the very best training possible. And childless homes may be sinning against the church, the community, and the nation by neglecting to give a home and training to an orphan child.

Esther was raised from a nobody to the queen of the greatest nation of the time within a little more than one year. It was enough to turn all but the calmest head, and ruin with pride all but the humblest heart. But Esther, thanks to Mordecai's training, was equal to the task. She was as humble in the king's palace as the chief wife and head of the harem as she had been when she was a girl in her teens playing in the streets or working in the fields. Men who are elevated to the office of deacon or elder or preacher should be careful to accept the responsibility with humble gratitude and resolve to be the servant of all.

Topics for Discussion

1. The stories of Joseph and Esther furnish us the best lessons of the Bible on the providence of God. Does God still work in the affairs of nations as he did in the days of Esther? Are the affairs of individual Christians determined to any degree by providence?

2. Esther was willing to die for her people. There is only one other thing greater than dying for others, and that is living for others. It opens a wider field, filled with greater difficulties, fraught with more terrible responsibilities, but offers a correspondingly greater reward to those with the courage and self-denial to live aright.

3. When people have risen to heights of fame and honor by strict self-discipline and courageous effort, they are prone to forget how they attained such heights. Esther continued to be what made her great, and that is true greatness.

Lesson X—September 7, 1947

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

The Lesson Text

Luke 1: 26-30; 2: 48-51

26 Now In the sixth month the angel Ga'bri-el was sent from God unto a city of Gal'i-lee, named Naz'a-reth,

27 To a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee.

29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God.

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

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

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

51 And he went down with them, and came to Naz'a-reth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all *these* sayings in her heart.

Mark 3: 31-35

31 And there come his mother and his brethren; and, standing without, they sent unto him, calling him.

32 And a multitude was sitting about him; and they say unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33 And he answereth them, and saith, Who is my mother and my brethren?

34 And looking round on them that sat round about him, he saith, Behold, my mother and my brethren!

35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Acts 1: 14

14 These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Je'sus, and with his brethren.

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

Devotional Reading.—John 2: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

September 1. M..... Mary Betrothed to Joseph (Matt. 1: 18-23)
 September 2. T..... The Angel's Visit to Mary (Luke 1: 26-38)
 September 3. W..... Mary Visits Elizabeth (Luke 1: 39-56)
 September 4. T..... Mary's Trip to Bethlehem (Luke 2: 1-7)
 September 5. F..... The Mother of Jesus (Luke 2: 8-21)
 September 6. S..... Mary at the Marriage Feast (John 2: 1-11)
 September 7. S..... Mary at the Cross (John 19: 23-27)

Lesson Subject Explained

Many women had hoped they might be the mother of the Messiah. And those who were barren, as Sarah and Hannah, regarded themselves as very unfortunate that they could not hope to be in the line of the Messiah. When the angel told Mary she was to have a son, that he was to be the Son of the Most High, and that he was to have the throne of his father David and reign over the house of Jacob forever, her joy knew no bounds. She had a relative in the hill country of Judea whom she wished to visit. As she saluted Elisabeth,

she heard these words, "Blessed art thou among women." (Luke 1: 42.) Surely if ever a mortal was blessed in the service she was allowed to render, Mary was that one. It would have been impossible for a greater honor to have been given her.

But along with honors and privileges there usually come sorrows and sufferings. So it was also said to Mary, "Yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul." (Luke 2: 35.) She was to see her child grow beyond her in more ways than one. She could not always keep him as her very own; he belonged to the world. He had relationships higher than that of being her son, and these relationships would take him away from her. They would bring upon him duties that would cause the world to hate him, and this would bring sorrow to her. And finally, her soul would be pierced through with sorrow beyond measure as she followed him to Calvary and stood by his cross. But this was a part of being the mother of the Lord Jesus, just as much as the joy of bearing and rearing him from infancy to manhood. And Mary was as brave and steadfast in her sorrows as she was pleased and thrilled in her joys of motherhood. Life is not all sunshine; "Into each life some rain must fall." And they who enjoy the sunshine should not whimper when the rain begins to fall.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson we find the world in expectation. (Luke 3: 15.) A priest named Zacharias had had a peculiar experience while ministering in the temple. An angel had told him that his wife, though "well stricken in years," was to bear a son. He was to have the Holy Spirit from birth, he was to come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and he was to prepare a people for the Lord. These were great things, so great that Zacharias found them too difficult for him to believe without some tangible evidence. And when he asked how he was to know they were true, the angel told him he would not be able to speak until they were fulfilled. When Elisabeth had conceived, she secluded herself five months. It was during this time that Mary went into the hill country to visit her.

Elisabeth's son was born, and they named him John as the angel instructed. Six months later, when Caesar Augustus had all to enroll for taxation, Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem, their home city. While there, because there was no room for them in the inn, Mary gave birth to her son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger. A host of angels had appeared to shepherds watching their flocks by night to sing them a song of peace on earth and good will to men. On the eighth day the baby was circumcised according to the law of Moses under which he was born. Simeon and Anna had prophesied great things concerning Mary's baby, things they could not understand, but which they held in their hearts, words fraught with too much meaning to be forgotten. The child grew and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. When he was twelve, he came to Jerusalem, as all other boys his age did, with his parents to worship. After the days of worship the family started home and went a day's journey before they missed him. For three days they searched, and finally found him in the temple discussing matters of great importance with the learned of his day.

Golden Text Explained

In one short sentence the angel quieted the fears of Mary and delivered the sweetest message that ever filled the ears of woman-kind. Not only was God favoring her to be a mother, but she was to be the mother of the Saviour. Elisabeth called Mary "the mother of my Lord." (Luke 1: 43.) Yes, she was favored to be the mother of the Lord of us all. "The virgin is no longer upon a level with others of her sex. 'Blessed art thou among women' is announced to her from an authority more than human, and henceforth 'all generations' must contemplate her as standing alone. There is none like her—there can be none. She is the first of her sex, from the ancient 'mother of all living,' down to the last maid that shall bloom in beauty at the opposite far-off extremity of Adam's race. Standing as in the center of human generations, there she rises, with sublimity unearthly, to the gaze of a wondering world—her form beautiful with a radiance soft, yet novel and awful, and with a beauty above human, and peerless. Whoever speaks of her now, let him pause as he pronounces a name not more pleasant, but holy, and attaching to itself associations as interesting and as sublime as man's immortal weal. Is it a goddess as we approach her—a being once human and terrestrial, and now suddenly deified, and registered with celestial intelligences? Nothing of this. Spare your adorations and your prayers. Worship God! Here rises no divinity. Humanity is still here; but who shall tell its exaltation?" (Adams.)

When Satan tempted Eve through the serpent, a part of the curse pronounced upon him was, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3: 15.) This has been understood generally to be a promise of a redeemer who was to come through womankind. Paul speaks of Jesus being born of woman. (Gal. 4: 4.) When the angel told Mary she had found favor with God, we may understand that a part of this favor was that she has been selected to bring into this world the seed of woman who was to bruise Satan. By woman had come the downfall of humanity, and now through the favor, grace, of God Mary is selected to bring about the salvation of humanity. If Eve is to be blamed for humanity's condition, Mary may be praised for our hopes of better conditions after this life.

What Mary had to do or be that she might be favored thus highly of God we do not know. But surely it is not idle speculation to say that she must be clean in both body and mind. Her habits of life and conduct among her companions were of a high standard. That she must be sinless is not at all necessary, nor is it possible of proof. Of her Son and our Lord alone is it said that he lived without sin. But it is also a fact that no enemy ever pointed to his mother's disreputable past to shame him into silence. He was once set at nought because his father (Joseph) was a carpenter, and from such a source they would not accept new and strange doctrines. (Matt. 13: 54-57.) But no lack of piety or unrighteousness on the part of his mother was ever thrown up to him as a reason for rejecting him or his teaching.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Now in the sixth month." In verse twenty-four it is said that after Elisabeth conceived she hid herself five months. Then follows this statement that in the sixth month Gabriel went to Mary. We conclude that it was the sixth month after Elisabeth conceived. So John was about six months older than Jesus.

"Gabriel was sent . . . unto . . . Nazareth, to a virgin." When Gabriel is the bearer of a message, it is always good news; his seems to have been the "ministration of comfort and sympathy to man." Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament; neither does Josephus mention the town. Jesus did not depend upon the city from which he hailed to recommend him or make it possible for him to gain a hearing of the people. Gabriel's visit was to a virgin betrothed to a man who is thought to have been much older than she. Emphasis is to be placed on two points here, Mary was a virgin. The word virgin is never used of a married woman. Mary was betrothed, a custom which bound her in faithfulness to Joseph as much as marriage did, but which did not allow marriage privileges. We also have the word of Mary, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Next, if Mary was not a virgin, the birth of Jesus cannot be the fulfillment of prophecy, for Isaiah said, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7: 14.)

"Joseph, of the house of David." Both Joseph and Mary were of the house of David, of the tribe of Judah, from which tribe the Messiah was to come. Matthew and Luke give the genealogy of Jesus to show that he was the descendant of both David and Judah.

"When they saw him, they were astonished." The astonishment seems to have been on account of his being with the great teachers of the day. Why would they have time for a mere child? And how could he carry on conversation with them such as he did? Though Mary and Joseph knew of his miraculous beginning, yet it was impossible for them to know him fully. As he developed, each forward step took them by surprise. From this we conclude that he did not reveal to them his nature and destiny, if indeed he knew all about it himself.

"Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" The Greek here may as well be translated *my Father's business, or the things of my Father*. But present reading of our text is usually preferred because when Mary told him they had been searching for him for three days he mildly rebuked her for not knowing where to find him; she should have known to go to the temple the first thing.

"And he was subject unto them." How much Jesus knew of his mission in the world at this time we can never know. But being a child, according to the flesh, of Mary he owed submission to her and Joseph. In this he sets an example for children to follow. And like all other Jewish children, he learned a trade, that of a carpenter. (Mark 6: 3.)

"And there come his mother and his brethren." Catholics and a few Protestants contend for the perpetual virginity of Mary, and they claim that the brothers and sisters of Jesus here mentioned were near relatives, cousins. The word for brethren is frequently translated that way, but this passage and Matt. 13: 55, 56, where his brothers are named and his sisters mentioned, leave little room

for thinking people to doubt they were the children of Mary, and his half brothers and sisters.

"Who is my mother and my brethren?" Did Jesus mean to deny that he was the son of Mary? Surely no one can think he intended to do such when he was so thoughtful for her even while he was dying on the cross. (John 19: 26, 27.) But he did intend to teach that there is a higher relationship, and one more important, than human kinship.

"Whosoever shall do the will of God." Those who are obedient to God's will are in that higher and more important relationship. It is one that does not end in death. Death terminates all human ties. In heaven we will not be parents and children, husband and wife; we will simply be brethren of the Lord and each other, neither male nor female. If we wish to enjoy that relationship with him here and in eternity, we must become obedient to his will.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The events of Luke 1: 26-30 transpired in 5 B.C.; those of Luke 2: 48-51 happened in A.D. 8; those of Mark 3: 31-35 took place in A.D. 27; and those of Acts 1: 14 were in A.D. 29, though most people say A.D. 30.

GEOGRAPHY.—Nazareth is situated among the hills of lower Galilee just before they sink down into the plains of Esdraelon; these hills are the southern ridges of Lebanon. To the west and across the plain of Esdraelon and the Kishon River is the twelve-mile-long ridge known as Mount Carmel where both Elijah and Elisha lived. Nestled in these low, oval-shaped hills is a valley about one mile long and one-quarter of a mile wide, which is really a basin. In this basin on the edge of the hillside is the city of Nazareth. Being in a basin, it is protected from severe weather, the hills rising to a height of 400 to 500 feet. So the weather is temperate most of the time so that trees, shrubs, and grain grow in abundance. It is said that our familiar hollyhock grows wild in that valley, and fruits of all kinds are to be found in abundance.

"Of the identification of the ancient site there can be no doubt. The name of the present village is *en-Nazirah*, the same, therefore, as of old. . . . The modern Nazareth belongs to the better class of eastern villages. It has a population variously estimated from 3,000 to 5,000. It consists of Mohammedans, Latin and Greek Christians, and a few Protestants. There are two mosks (one of them very small), a Franciscan convent of huge dimensions but displaying no great architectural beauty, a small Maronite church, a Greek church, and perhaps a church or chapel of some of the other confessions. Protestant missions have been attempted, but with no very marked success. . . . The streets and lanes are narrow and crooked, and after rain are so full of mud and mire as to be almost impassable."

CHARACTER.—The Holy Spirit did not see fit to say much about the character of Mary, but we get glimpses occasionally which reveal some traits of her character. Her faith and humility are manifested when, though unable to understand fully what was to come to her and how, she said, "Be it unto me according to thy word." (Luke 1: 38.) And again her humility is seen in her retiring manner at the wedding in Cana. She was free from ambition, for she made no effort to seize the lead of his disciples when he died; she did not

even set herself up as an adviser of the disciples on account of her relationship to Jesus. Many women of this day would not have let such an opportunity pass without using it to the fullest. "In a word, so far as Mary is portrayed to us in scripture, she is, as we should have expected, the most tender, the most faithful, humble, patient, and loving of women, but a woman still."

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Perhaps this story of Jesus is told to children more often than any other story, and yet there is no story which captures and holds their interest quite like this one. If the teacher will put both accounts given by Matthew and Luke together and get all the details in chronological order, it will be a good service to the children. Make a list of the visits of the angel to Mary and to Joseph, what was said on each visit, the birth, the visit of the shepherds and the wise men, and then discuss them in their order.

The story of Jesus among the learned teachers in Jerusalem will be interesting to these departments. Where did he get his knowledge? Was he embarrassed when he first talked with them? What was his attitude? Was he a smarty? or was he humble and serious? Jesus was not idle during his boyhood. He attended the synagogue school and worked with Joseph as a carpenter. Though Mary knew he was to be a great man, for the angel told her, she saw to it that her boy worked as other boys of his day. Children should not look upon work as something to be evaded if at all possible.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The idea suggested above about boys and girls working around the home will be good for these departments.

But there is a tendency among the learned to deny the virgin birth of Jesus because it is biologically impossible. It was no more impossible for him to be born of a virgin, without being begotten by a human father, than for him to be raised from the dead. If we deny one miracle in connection with Jesus, we may as well deny them all. And such infidelity is growing today. The average Protestant pulpit is filled by men who deny the virgin birth. Is this report of his birth an inspired report? If so, it is God's word. If we may discard it because it sounds unreasonable and impossible, then we may discard every other statement and command that sound unreasonable. Teachers in these departments have the duty of grounding in the faith these boys and girls that they may stand against the wild speculations of high school and college teachers.

Young People and Adult Departments

These departments need to become acquainted with the arguments pro and con on the subject of the virgin birth. They need to see both sides, and know how to meet error on the subject. Space forbids a discussion here, but material can be obtained from good religious encyclopedias.

Mary found it difficult to understand her son, but she did not give up: she took him home from the temple, and firmly taught him a trade. She is not the only parent who ever had difficulty in under-

standing her teen-age child. That is an age when they do not understand themselves nor their parents: it is a period of unsettled turmoil and excitement. But above all it is a period when parents cannot afford, to turn them loose to make their own decisions and live their own lives. Proper training through the past decade is the best thing that can be done for teen-age children.

Of doctrinal importance is the idea that people must not only do the will of the Lord in primary obedience to the gospel to be the brothers and sisters of the Lord, but they must continue to do his will that they may be children of God, for Jesus said we must love our enemies and pray for them that we may be sons of our Father in heaven. (Matt. 5: 44, 45.)

Topics for Discussion

1. If Jesus was not born of a virgin, the Messiah of prophecy has not come, and one is yet to be born of a virgin of the tribe of Judah. But no Jew on earth today knows of what tribe he is; no tribal records have been preserved. Therefore it will never be possible for one to give as good evidence of his Messiahship as Jesus of Nazareth gave. Those who reject him have no hope of ever proving another to be the son of David.

2. Is it ever correct to speak of Mary as the mother of God? Jesus was both human and divine. Mary was mother of the humanity of Jesus, but not of the divinity; his divine nature is eternal and could have no mother. (Comp. John 1: 1-3; Col. 1: 15-17; Rom. 1: 3; 9: 5.)

Lesson XI—September 14, 1947

MARY AND MARTHA, FRIENDS OF JESUS

The Lesson Text

Luke 10: 38-42

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.

John 11: 1-5, 19, 20; 12: 1-3

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

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

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

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

5 Now Je'sus loved Martha, and her sister, and Laz'a-rus.

19 And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother.

20 Martha therefore, when she heard that Je'sus was coming, went and met him: but Mary still sat in the house.

1 Je'sus therefore six days before the passover came to Beth'a-ny, where Laz'a-rus was, whom Je'sus raised from the dead.

2 So they made him a supper there: and Martha served; but Laz'a-rus was one of them that sat at meat with him.

3 Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Je'sus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 11: 17-29.

Daily Bible Readings

September 8. M..... Mary and Martha Entertain Jesus (Luke 10: 38-42)
 September 9. T. Mary and Martha Lazarus's Sisters (John 11: 1-5)
 September 10. W. Mary and Martha's Faith (John 11: 17-22)
 September 11. T. Jesus Comforts the Sisters (John 11: 23-30)
 September 12. F. Jesus Weeps with Them (John 11: 31-35)
 September 13. S. They Visit the Tomb with Jesus (John 11: 36-44)
 September 14. S. They Minister Unto Jesus (John 12: 1-8)

Lesson Subject Explained

Since we must be either for or against Jesus, for there is no middle ground, we must either be friends or foes. Mary and Martha are remembered for the fact that they were friends of the Lord to the very end. Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends." (John 15: 14, 15.) This is the same test Jesus gave for us to determine whether we love him or not. "If a man love me, he will keep my word. . . . He that loveth me not keepeth not my words." (John 14: 23, 24.) Those who live in continual disobedience to the teaching of Jesus Christ have no right to say they love him, and that they are his friends. But those who are not his friends are his foes. Therefore those who do not keep the commandments of Jesus Christ are his enemies. They may resent the classification, and deny the accusation; but it is the teaching of the Lord and there is no way of denying that without rejecting everything he ever said. Fair-weather friends are not appreciated, yet the Lord has people who will keep his commandments as long as it does not cost them time, effort, and money, and as long as there are not persecutions to suffer. They are fair-weather friends. And then there are lip friends, people who talk as if they are your friends, but by their actions you know they are not. Jesus has some of that kind of friends. They may sing his praises loud and long, and take a big part in public worship. But in everyday life they forget him and often put him to shame by unchristian words and deeds. Mary and Martha stand well toward the top of the list of the true and faithful friends of the Lord, who were willing to pay whatever price was attached to being his friend.

Context of the Lesson

In the immediate context of our text in Luke we find Jesus sending out seventy disciples to preach the gospel of the coming kingdom. They returned rejoicing that even the demons were sub-

ject unto them when they spoke in his name. He told them not to rejoice in the fact that they could cast out demons, but rather their names were written in heaven. Many people today rejoice in temporal successes, financially, socially, and politically, who have little concern whether their names are written in heaven or not. Then he gave them the lesson of the good Samaritan who freely gave time, effort, and money to care for an unfortunate man whom the priest and the Levite had neglected, to teach them who is their neighbor.

In the context of John 11 we learn that Jesus had gone away to a place beyond, east of, the Jordan, where John did his first baptizing. John the Baptist performed no miracles, but when Jesus went there teaching and working among them they remembered what John taught them about Jesus, and they could see that he had told them the truth about Jesus, so they became believers in him. While Jesus was in that section of the country, Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, whom Jesus loved very dearly, took sick. When he heard that his friend was sick, he purposely stayed a few days. He told his disciples he was glad he was not with Lazarus at the time of his illness, meaning that since Lazarus had died and had been in the grave four days, it would give him an opportunity to display his power in a way and to a degree they had not yet seen, and would therefore increase their faith in him. The sisters believed Jesus could have prevented the death of Lazarus if he had been there, but it did not occur to them that he had the power to raise him from the dead. In his conversation with Martha he leads her step by step into the faith that he, being the Son of God, had power of life and death, and therefore could bring him back to life. This he did before a host of the friends of Mary and Martha, and many believed on him.

The raising of Lazarus was several weeks before the death of Jesus. During that time John says he walked no more openly among the Jews, but went to a city near the wilderness called Ephraim. There was considerable talk about him in Jerusalem, and much speculation as to whether he would attend the Feast of the Passover that year or not. The chief priests and Pharisees even commanded that if any knew where he was they would tell them of his whereabouts. But six days before the Passover he made his appearance at the home of his best friends of that section.

Golden Text Explained

Jesus loves all men, even his enemies. So the statement of our Golden Text that Jesus loved these three people must be taken to mean something different from the love he has for all men. John was that disciple whom Jesus loved. Does that imply that Jesus did not love any of them except John? It simply means that John had learned to understand him and sympathize with him and to appreciate him and his work to a greater degree than the others, and in return for that reason Jesus had a warmth of affection for him that the others did not enjoy. So Mary, Martha, and Lazarus had a greater share in his affections than other people because they were capable of deeper understanding, greater sympathy, and more whole-hearted appreciation than the average disciple. They were his bosom friends. They were the people to whom he could turn in

times of sorrow when he needed sympathy and encouragement. This was the human side of Jesus. Being human he had the same human longings we have that are right and holy. He longed for understanding companionship, and found it in these three.

And Jesus still loves his friends today with an equal warmth of affection. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." (John 14: 21.) Yes, Jesus loves the disobedient and ungodly as much today as he did in the day he suffered on the cross for them. But that is not the warm, tender affection of friends here under consideration. If we so heartily agree with Jesus in his purposes and his work that we obey his commandments, both he and his Father will love us. God loves all who love Jesus, and they both love all who keep the commandments of the Lord. If there were no other reward for keeping the commandments of Jesus, this one thing would be enough to pay us for keeping them. Mary and Martha believed him to be the Christ and the Son of God, and as such was worthy of their love and obedience. In return for this attitude he loved them. What greater reward could they ask? Surely no one deserves anything greater than to be loved by Jesus Christ and his Father. It is the nature of love to bless. There is no limit to the love of God, nor is there a limit to his power to bless. So if we can but be sure he loves us, we need have no fears that he will bless us beyond that we deserve. Mary and Martha enjoyed his love; he blessed them in giving them back their departed brother.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Martha received him into her house." She seems to have been the head of this house instead of the brother, Lazarus. This may be accounted for in either of two ways. It may have been because she was older than either Mary or Lazarus. And then, as several well-known scholars think, she may have been a widow, and Lazarus and Mary had come to live with her upon the death of their parents.

"Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet." Mary was of the studious, contemplative type. She made use of her opportunity to learn from the Great Teacher. A reasonable amount of preparation for the meal, preparing that which was essential, was enough according to her standard; and when that was done, she sat at the feet of Jesus. Notice the word *also*. She *also* sat at his feet. This word indicates that she did something beside sitting at the feet of Jesus. Undoubtedly it implies that she gave some attention to preparation of the meal, but she did not agree with Martha that so much should be prepared that they would have no time left to learn from Jesus.

"Martha was cumbered about much serving." Martha loved the Lord as much as Mary did, but she had a different way of showing it. Mary would show her love by hanging on his words with sincere interest; Martha would show her love for the Lord by feeding him a big meal well prepared and thoughtfully served. Food is necessary as long as we live in the flesh, but it should not be held dearer than the words of Jesus. The rich man provided for the flesh only when he filled his barns with enough for many years; he forgot he had a soul that could not eat and grow on oats, wheat, and corn. Martha gave too much attention to temporal things, and not enough to

spiritual matters. Cooking and serving are not wrong, but to do these things to the neglect of spiritual duties is wrong.

"Lord, dost thou not care?" This is the language of impatience; it is the language of one who is peeved, of one who feels neglected and injured and imposed upon. Mary, who sat at the feet of Jesus, did not develop such a disposition. And those who live close to Jesus and develop the spiritual side of life will not be little and peevish; this comes from being mindful of material things.

"Thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful." These are the words of Jesus to Martha. She was troubled about many dishes, or courses, for the meal. She would have a feast of food for the stomach. Jesus said one dish, or course, is enough for us when the time is so short for me to be with you, and I have so much to say to you.

"Mary hath chosen the good part." Mary is more interested in spiritual food than she is in perishing food for a perishing body"; she prefers the spiritual above the temporal and physical things of life. And Martha has many more followers today than Mary.

"It was that Mary who anointed the Lord." There is much disagreement as to what anointing is here under consideration. Some claim it is that of Luke 7: 37. Others think John referred to the anointing of John 12: 1-5, and that he mentioned it only by way of anticipation here. Judas is mentioned as the one who betrayed the Lord in connection with the mention of events before the betrayal. (John 6: 71.) The writer, writing years later, using the name of Mary in relating one event, just mentions the fact that this is the same Mary who did another thing months later. Though the mention of wiping his feet with her hair does strongly suggest that the anointing of Luke 7: 37 is the one John had in mind.

"This sickness is not unto death." Yet Lazarus actually died. We must therefore take it that Jesus did not mean that Lazarus would get well and not die at all. But rather that this sickness would not end in death beyond his power to reclaim. This was brought on Lazarus for a demonstration of the power and glory of God, and that Jesus might be glorified as the Son of God.

"Martha . . . went and met him." Martha is the woman of action. Mary sat still in the house. She was glad the Lord had come, but she would wait until Jesus sent for her. (Verses 28, 29.)

"Martha served; . . . Mary . . . anointed." Here again we find them in their respective roles. Martha is taking care of the physical needs, and Mary is offering an act of devout worship. Some of the disciples thought Mary overdid the worship as much as Jesus said Martha overdid the serving. The ointment cost about fifty-one dollars in our money, which was a great sum in that day. But Jesus commended her for it. Things spent for the spirit are saved, laid up in heaven; but things spent on the flesh are lost, we cannot take them with us. (Gal. 6: 7, 8.)

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The date of Luke 10: 38-42 is A.D. 28; that of John 11 and 12 is A.D. 29.

GEOGRAPHY.—The little village of Bethany "lies on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, fully a mile beyond the summit, and

not very far from the point at which the road to Jericho begins its more sudden descent towards the Jordan Valley. The spot is a woody hollow more or less planted with fruit trees—olives, almonds, pomegranates, as well as oaks and carobs." It is about two miles a little south of east of Jerusalem. The word Bethany means *house of dates*, though some think it means *house of sorrow*. Bethany is not mentioned in the early travels of Jesus. It was his connection with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus which brought him to the village. It was there that he spent most, if not all, of the nights of that last busy week of his life. Teaching all day in Jerusalem, he retired to the quiet of the village and to the comfort and consolation of sympathetic and understanding hearts.

CHARACTER.—Mary and Martha were women of more than ordinary intelligence. They were women of faith, believing Jesus to be the Christ and the Son of God. They had risen above the common Jewish conception of the Messiah as an ordinary human being whom God would anoint to be their leader, and not a divine being in human form. (John 11: 27.) This was equal to the faith of any of the apostles. (Matt. 16: 16.) They were women of deep piety and unquestioned righteousness. Their fear of God and proper treatment of other people marked them as being women of superior quality. And they were women of large hospitality. Like the Shunammite, they provided a room for the prophet of God, and deserved his love and blessings.

"Mary was contemplative; Martha was active. Mary was docile; Martha was inquisitive also. One of the apostles, when at their house, would have no suspicion of coldness in Mary; he would have been fully convinced of the cordiality of Martha. If he would have praised the quietness of Mary, he would have rejoiced equally in the vivacity of Martha. We love Mary as, at Simon's festival, she anointed the Messiah's sacred person. We equally love Martha as, at the same feast, she joyfully serves the table where the Messiah is feasting. We approve the quietness of Mary, as she waited at her house till Christ called her to witness her brother's resurrection. We, at the same time, honor Martha, who, in her eagerness, flies at once to the Great Comforter, and, in her sprightliness, draws forth from his lips some of the most precious divine declarations touching the general resurrection. Mary's silence is impressive and beautiful; Martha's sociality is instructive and refreshing. We glance at Mary, and think of the eternal portion; we turn to Martha, and are reminded that activity to serve Christ is the sure means of gaining that prize. We need Mary—we cannot dispense with Martha. Remove the one, and we shall wander in pensive sorrow to find her; take away the other, and life's woes are at once redoubled." (Adams.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

There is nothing that stirs the heart of a child like the thought of being the friend and helper of Jesus. They need to get the lesson that the only way they can be a friend of Jesus is to learn his will and obey his commandments. True, they are not old enough now to be baptized into Christ, but they can form habits of honesty, being kind to each other and to older people, obeying their parents, helping orphan children, being unselfish, and many other things you can list

as being in the rounds of their daily lives. These are common things, but they are intensely practical and worth while.

Children do not understand death, nor why people have to die, nor is it necessary for them to understand these things. But when you have impressed upon them the fact of death as a result of sin, you may present Jesus as the Friend to man who has the power to raise people from the dead. He loved Lazarus, because Lazarus did his will, and he raised him to life. If we do his will, he will love us and raise us up never to die again.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Again you have the opportunity of impressing these young people with the divine power and nature of Jesus. This account of the raising of Lazarus was written during the lifetime of some who witnessed the event. If the story is all fiction, someone would have denied it, saying there was no such man as Lazarus who had two sisters named Mary and Martha, or producing the proof that he never died as this story relates. The fact the story went unquestioned in the generation in which it was written is proof that it is in harmony with the facts. Therefore Jesus raised from the dead a man who had been dead four days, and this is proof of his divinity.

Young People and Adult Departments

No one can miss the central lesson of Martha's anxiety about material things and Mary's better part in desiring to drink deeply of the spiritual blessings while she had the opportunity. Jesus did not forbid such service as Martha was rendering; he reproved her for going to the extreme, and to the neglect of the better thing. We are constantly in danger of making Martha's mistake. Not only did Martha give too much time to material things, but in doing so she deprived herself of spiritual blessings which she could have been enjoying. And that is why we today should not give all our time and effort to things physical. It is not that physical things are sinful, but the enjoyment of them robs us of the enjoyment of spiritual things. Since we partake of the nature of that to whom we give our love and devotion, we must put spiritual things first in our hearts and lives if we wish and expect to partake of their nature.

Mary's sacrifice in anointing Jesus is a lesson to us all in liberality in the support of church work. The disciples thought Mary wasted money. If it had been used to feed the poor, it would have been well spent. They could understand why money would be spent for physical needs, but to spend it simply as an expression of love and devotion to the Lord was beyond them. It is beyond many today.

Topics for Discussion

1. Was Martha impolite in accusing the Lord of keeping Mary from the work of serving with her? Was the fact that she gave too much importance to serving the cause of her peevish attitude? Are those interested in spiritual things, like Mary, as apt to become peevish as those who, like Martha, give too much time to temporal things?
2. If each woman in the church would take off one afternoon each week from her home duties to work for the church visiting the

sick, newcomers, and backsliders, the church would grow more, the women would be happy in their work, and souls would be saved. Would Jesus say they have chosen the "good part" in so doing?

Lesson XII—September 21, 1947

DORCAS, A FRIEND OF THE POOR

The 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 AE'ne-as, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied.

34 And Peter said unto him, AE'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.

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

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

DEVOTIONAL READING.—PROV. 31: 10-31.

Daily Bible Readings

September 15. M.....	Laws to Help the Poor (Lev. 25: 25-47)
September 16. T.....	Poor Not to Cease (Deut. 15: 4-11)
September 17. W.....	Gifts to the Poor (Esth. 9: 20-25)
September 18. T.....	Encouraged to Give to the Poor (Prov. 22: 1-9)
September 19. F.....	Oppressors of the Poor (Prov. 22: 10-16)
September 20. S.....	Help the Poor (Prov. 31: 10-20)
September 21. S.....	Gospel Preached to the Poor (Luke 4: 16-19)

Lesson Subject Explained

Dorcas is the type of character that is always needed in the church. Jesus said, "For ye have the poor always with you, and whosoever ye will ye can do them good." (Mark 14: 7.) The early church set us a fine example in caring for the poor among the church membership when they raised a fund and appointed men to see that it was distributed to each one as he had need. (Acts 6.)

Jehovah is the friend of the poor and is their refuge (Psalm 14: 6), and he will plead their cause, and despoil those who despoil the poor (Prov. 22: 23). We make ourselves like God when we befriend

the poor. "The poor is hated even of his own neighbor; but the rich hath many friends. He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth; but he that hath pity on the poor, happy is he." (Prov. 14: 20, 21.) Dorcas did not run after the rich to make friends with them, but out of compassion for the poor she filled their needs, and in that found happiness. Dorcas was a righteous woman, for Solomon says, "The righteous taketh knowledge of the cause of the poor; the wicked hath not understanding to know it." (Prov. 29: 7.) When people get too busy to take knowledge of the condition of the poor, and too busy to take out time to relieve the poor, and too selfish and stingy to spend their time and money for the relief of the poor, they lose every right to claim the mercy of God as well as the right to be classed with the righteous of the community. God is anxious that rulers of the nations keep the poor in mind, for, "the king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever." (Prov. 29: 14.)

And by the standard set by Solomon for a "worthy woman," Dorcas may be judged as one of that class. "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." (Prov. 31: 20.) Every woman should read often Solomon's description of the worthy woman, and seek to conform her life to the standards set by him. Though she "looketh well to the ways of her household," and provides for their needs, she does not forget the poor outside her household and leave them to the care of the unrighteous.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of our lesson we find the church scattered by the persecution under the leadership of Saul of Tarsus. Stephen had been stoned because in a religious debate with the Jews he had so completely answered their arguments that they had no more to say, and he had made such powerful arguments in favor of Jesus of Nazareth being the Christ and the Son of God that the Jews could not answer them. So to silence him and to satisfy their lust for blood they stoned him. Saul took the leadership that day with the full intention of continuing it until he had completely extinguished the church. When on his way to Damascus with letters of authority from the chief priests to bind all whom he found "that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem." While on this mission, Saul was stopped by the appearance of the Lord to him on the highway between Jerusalem and Damascus. He was told to go into Damascus, and he would be told what to do to be saved. After three days, praying in blindness, Saul was told by Ananias to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins, and when he had done so, "he took food and was strengthened." He began immediately to preach Christ, but the disciples were afraid to trust him. Even in Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, he found it impossible to get sufficient hearing, so he returned to his home town of Tarsus. After his conversion the persecution subsided, and it is said that the church throughout all Judea, Samaria, and Galilee had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied. It was during this time of the peace and prosperity of the church that Peter came to preach the gospel in Lydda, which was near Joppa, the home of Dorcas.

Golden Text Explained

By the language of our Golden Text we might conclude that Solomon thought such women as he described were not very plentiful. Who can find a worthy woman? Was it difficult to find one in his day? Are they to be found in large numbers in our day? How many among the women of the church where you worship may be certainly classed as worthy women, when measured by the standard set by Solomon? It is asserted that her price is far above rubies, which in that time was a most valuable stone.

It will be worth while for us to notice some of the things which make one a worthy woman; the things that make a woman worth more than precious stones, as diamonds or rubies. First, her husband can trust in her (verse 11), she is no embarrassment to him when he sits at the gate among the elders of the land (verse 23), and takes delight in praising her rather than in finding fault and criticizing her (verse 28). Next, she is industrious (verses 13, 22, 24); she is wise in making provisions for the future (verses 21, 25); and she uses wisdom in the management of her affairs (verses 14, 16). She is a woman whom her children respect and appreciate (verse 28); her words are well chosen and impress people with the fact that she is kind and thoughtful of the happiness of others (verse 26); and she is not forgetful of the poor, for she is reaching out her hands filled with good things for their relief (verse 20). And she is a woman who does not depend upon externals for her beauty; she does not expect to be attractive because of the way she does her hair, fixes her face, or paints her nails. Her beauty comes from within. Her fear of Jehovah which produces such a godly life as witnessed by the "fruit of her hands" is all she needs to bring that measure of praise "in the gates" to which she aspires. Paul says women who make a profession of godliness should adorn themselves with good works; they are to learn in quietness and not exercise dominion over men. (1 Tim. 2: 10-12.) Peter tells us that women should be careful to adorn the inner man, and that the adornment should consist of "the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." Then he gives as his reason the fact that holy women of the past "who hoped in God" adorned themselves after this fashion. Notice that it was women who hoped in God; not those who had their hopes set on this world, or the things of the world. They were women whose hopes and aspirations were satisfied in the enjoyment of spiritual things, and not those who were ambitious for worldly careers in society and politics.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Jesus Christ healeth thee." This is the language of Peter to Aeneas. It was the report of cures here at Lydda that caused the brethren at Joppa to send for Peter. It was Jesus that did the healing; Peter was simply an instrument through which Jesus healed. It is said that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John. Yes, Jesus baptized people, though there is no record of his doing so with his own hands. And John adds, "Although Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples." (John 4: 1, 2.) In that sense we may say today that we have been baptized by Jesus Christ. So these people were healed by the Lord. As a result of this healing of

Aeneas many who saw him turned to the Lord. That was the purpose of miracles. No miracle was ever performed by the apostles primarily for the relief of human suffering. Paul left Trophimus at Miletus sick, not because his suffering was not great enough to pay to use divine power—not because Paul did not have the power to heal him, but because miracles were not for the relief of human suffering. They were to be used to convince people of the truth of the gospel and cause them to turn to the Lord. (Mark 16: 20; Heb. 2: 2-4.)

"Full of good works and almsdeeds which she did" She was full of these heavenly charities. They were not occasional with her. She did not do such things after she caught up with her own work and had nothing else to do. "They were not spasmodic ebullitions of kindness" which she did to atone for the misdeeds which usually took her time. They were not accidental; they were the things she planned to do. They were not things which were forced upon her by importunate people who refused to take no for an answer; they were things she loved to do and for which she sought the opportunity of doing.

"Widows stood by him weeping." This shows the affection they had in their hearts for one who had been good to them. What will be the feeling and disposition of the community when we die? When some people die, there is complete indifference in the community. Everybody, including the undertakers and gravediggers, go on with "business as usual." Some people manage to live after such a fashion that there is an attitude of quiet, straight-faced rejoicing; their passing is a relief to the community. But such was not so when Dorcas passed.

"Showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made." These things were more eloquent praise than long funeral orations. Whether these same people were careful to give her such praise while she lived we know not. But it is human to neglect to tell others how much we love and appreciate them until they are gone. And then, no matter how loud we shout it, they cannot hear it; and if their service has pleased their Master, they do not need the praise. It is while we are here in this world, fighting temptations and praying for the strength to continue in well-doing, that we need the songs of praise and the manifestations of love and appreciation.

"Peter put them all forth . . . and prayed." Why Peter excluded all from the room is not known. It has been suggested that Peter did not know whether it was the will of God to raise her from the dead, and that he did not wish for them to hear him praying to God to raise her if it were not his will. But he must have had some intimation either before or during his prayer, for with all faith he commanded her to arise.

"And many believed on the Lord." Here again we see the purpose of miracles. To those who believe the truth heaven is a better place than this world. So this miracle was not done to help Dorcas. It, like all others, was performed to cause people to believe the gospel. Very few people have ever been raised from the dead, but in no instance have wicked people been raised from the dead. Elisha raised a child from the dead. Jesus raised a young man, the only son of a widow, and from the context we gather that he was a faithful Israelite. Lazarus was a good man, and Dorcas was a real

Christian. The only word that has ever come from the place of torment has been *sent*. And a peculiar thing about the righteous who have been called back from the other world is that if they ever said anything about what they saw and enjoyed over there we have no record of it. Paul said when he went to Paradise he saw and heard things not lawful for him to utter—that he was not allowed to tell. (2 Cor. 12: 4.) It is not, therefore, unreasonable to suppose that Lazarus and Dorcas were not allowed to tell what they saw and heard. Our faith is to rest in the word of God, and not the experiences, though they be heavenly experiences, of men.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The time of the events of this lesson is given as A.D. 37.

GEOGRAPHY.—Lydda is the first place of interest in our lesson. There were a number of saints in this town, so, as we would say today, there was an active church in that city. And Peter, going “throughout all parts” of the country encouraging the saints and converting the lost, stopped there for work among them for some time. Lydda was situated on that part of the maritime plain of the Mediterranean which was known as the Plain of Sharon. This was a very fertile part of the country, and grain and fruits abounded. It was nine miles from Joppa, a seacoast town, and was on one of the highways leading from Joppa to Jerusalem.

Sharon is the next place mentioned in our text where Peter labored and turned people to the Lord. Little is known of the place, indeed difficult to be certain whether it was a city or a plain, or whether both a city and the surrounding plain wore the name. In naming the officers of David certain men are named as watching over the herds of cattle in Sharon. (1 Chron. 27: 29.) The word Sharon means *the plain*. In our text it seems to be the name of a town near Lydda. It was considered as a very beautiful district, even on a par with Carmel. (Isa. 35: 2.) The desolation and destruction of Sharon would be viewed as a distinct calamity. (Isa. 33: 9.) The rebuilding of Sharon would be a mark of the highest prosperity. (Isa. 65: 10.) The “rose of Sharon” seemed to be to lovers of that day what the beautiful orchids of today are, the expression of the greatest love. (Sol. 2: 1.)

Joppa is the next place of interest. This was the home town of Dorcas. It is likely the word means *beauty*. It is situated on the Mediterranean coast southwest of Jerusalem, and was the seaport of that inland city. On account of its harbor being rough and difficult it was not always used, Caesarea and Seleucia and sometimes Tyre getting part of the sea travel. It is now known as Jaffa. This was the port from which Jonah set sail when he would run away from the Lord. And this was the port to which Hiram, king of Tyre, shipped cedars of Lebanon for the temple of Solomon.

CHARACTER.—The real name of this woman was Tabitha, which means *a gazelle*. The word Tabitha is an Aramaic word. Dorcas is the same thing in Greek. To the Arabs the gazelle, called tabitha, was the standard of beauty, so her name really signified *beauty*, or the *beautiful one*.

Whether she had a beautiful face we have no way of knowing, but hers was a most beautiful life. She neither reigned as queen like

Esther, nor led a song of triumph over the armies of the enemy like Miriam. But her reward in heaven will be none the less because she was not continually in the eyes of the public. She was capable of doing things for others, and she did what she could. She was so busy doing good that she had no time for backbiting, talebearing, or mischief-making, but every influence going out from her was comforting, pure, and beneficent. When contrasted with Jezebel or Herodias, it is difficult to see how beings so utterly diverse can be of the same race, or that they sprang from a common source. Only by a knowledge of sin and of its polluting and defiling, degrading and debasing effects on humanity, and a knowledge of the cleansing and ennobling effects of Christianity, can we understand why Dorcas and Jezebel could come from the same source.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The sympathy of children is easily stirred, especially for other children who have no parents to feed and clothe them. Dorcas was a friend to such children. She was a friend to children who had lost only their fathers, and whose mothers were trying to care for them. Since God is a friend of the poor and a place of refuge for them in time of trouble, Dorcas was a partner of God. This idea will thrill the children. They may be partners of God in doing things for unfortunate children.

God selected good people to help him teach the lessons of his power to raise the dead. Both Lazarus and Dorcas were good. We have no record of an evil person being raised from the dead. Dorcas was a partner of God in teaching his great power. Not every good person can be so used, but God has a work for all; and if we do our work as faithfully as Dorcas did her work, we will receive just as great blessings as she received.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Here is another lesson on the power of God to do things which, from the human point of view, are impossible. Some modernists deny that this woman was dead; she was in a coma, and would have revived without the aid of Peter. Others deny the incident, saying it has been added by later writers. This last charge can be refuted by evidence of the first order. Luke wrote the Acts less than thirty years after this event, and had he not told the truth, there would have been plenty of enemies to bring him to account for it. The enemies of the church in that day did not contend that Dorcas merely swooned, for there were too many people living who would testify to the fact that she was actually dead.

According to the standard by which God measures people, Dorcas was a great woman. When we meet God in the judgment, the fact that we were a judge, a congressman, a governor, or a president, whether we were rich or poor, whether we were a social leader or a nobody, will mean absolutely nothing. Why be anxious about those things which will mean nothing to us in the last great day? We ought to build into our lives here those things which will be of most help to us in the judgment. Bernice (Acts 25: 23) would not have condescended to associate with Dorcas, but who would choose Bernice's place now instead of that of Dorcas?

Young People and Adult Departments

These departments need the lessons suggested above. There is a tendency in some churches to form social cliques in which the membership is determined by the kind of clothes worn, the kind of cars driven, and the size of the house and the kind of furniture one can afford. It is possible that Dorcas could not have belonged to some of these cliques; she would not have been invited to their teas, or to become a member of their clubs; or she might be spoken of as "that poor old soul" whom we cannot afford to invite to our social events. But who would trade her chances for heaven with these moderns who spend their time at teas, social clubs, and theatre parties? Dorcas placed the emphasis where it pleased God, and where it belongs in the life of every woman today.

Topics for Discussion

1. If miracles were performed in that day for the confirmation of the word preached, why are they not performed for that purpose today? If others beside the apostles could perform miracles, why cannot we perform them today, though we are not apostles?

2. Will Dorcas be saved in heaven primarily because she was a friend to the poor? If she had not been a member of the church, which is God's family, would her help to the poor be worth anything to her in the judgment? Can people be saved because of good works? If good works do not save us, or atone for our sins, can we go to heaven without them?

Lesson XIII—September 28, 1947

LYDIA, A WOMAN WHO PUT GOD FIRST

The 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.—*"Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised."* (Prov. 31: 30.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—PROV. 14: 1-7.

Daily Bible Readings

September 22. M.....	Noah Put God First (Gen. 8: 20-22)
September 23. T.....	Abraham Put God First (Gen. 18: 16-21)
September 24. W.....	Moses Put God First (Heb. 11: 23-28)
September 25. T.....	Joshua Put God First (Josh. 24: 14-18)
September 26. F.....	Samuel Put God First (1 Sam. 24: 14-18)
September 27. S.....	Daniel Put God First (Dan. 6: 10-15)
September 28. S.....	Paul Puts God First (Phil. 3: 7-16)

Lesson Subject Explained

Jehovah is presented to us as a jealous God who will not allow a rival to share our affections with him. "For thou shalt worship no other god: for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." (Ex. 34: 14. See Ex. 20: 5 and Josh. 24: 19.) As a husband with ordinary self-respect would not allow his wife to love another man and live with him part of the time, so God will not allow us to love and worship other gods and still retain our fellowship and communion with him.

The idea of putting God first does not mean that we may worship other gods provided we worship him first; nor does it mean we may have other gods in our hearts provided we give more of our time and effort to him than we give other gods. Putting God first simply means that we choose him in preference to other gods, and that we allow them no place in our hearts. "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.) Again, Jesus says, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." (Matt. 12: 30.) We must either make full and complete surrender to God to be wholly for him, or be classed as his enemy working with Satan for the overthrow of God and all that is good.

God's jealousy and his demand that we put him first is not from a selfish motive on his part. It is for our good. He does not say, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," in the sense that he will not allow it; he is simply stating an impossibility. Man is incapable of loving good and evil at the same time. Good and evil are opposites in nature, and man can no more love and appreciate them both than he can ride in two automobiles going in opposite directions at the same time. So this is a warning to man, for man's good. Loving evil will ruin one eternally. Loving good will bring life and happiness forever. Since you cannot love both, a choice must be made; your life is an expression of your choice, whether you intend for it to be or not. Lydia chose God; she put God first in her life.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson we find Paul starting on another missionary journey. Instead of having Barnabas for a companion, he has Silas. They went through that section of country visited on his first journey and added Timothy to their company. From there

they went to Troas, where they added Luke, the physician, to their company. This was one of the best additions Paul ever made to his missionary group, for Luke was as faithful to him, and as helpful, as any helper he had. On one occasion he wrote with a note of sadness of the leaving of some of his helpers, and added, "Only Luke is with me." (2 Tim. 4: 11.)

It was in Troas where Paul saw in a vision in the night a man of Macedonia calling to him to come over into Macedonia with the gospel. And Luke said they concluded that God had called them to preach the gospel in that country. Macedonia was in Europe, divided from Asia by a narrow body of water. But Paul had never done any work in Europe, nor had any other preachers gone there with the gospel. Then follows the first paragraph of our lesson text.

After the conversion of Lydia, Paul and his company stayed in Philippi for many days. They were hindered and embarrassed in their work by a young girl who had a spirit of divination. This evil spirit enabled the girl, or rather used the girl's tongue, to foretell future events. She would be called a fortuneteller today, the only difference being that this demon actually foretold things within limitations, and modern fortunetellers guess. Only God and Satan have the power to see into the future. God is not using his power through people today, and never did use his power to satisfy idle curiosity, concerning the future. So if one is actually able to foretell the future, he does it by the power of the devil, and Christians have no business patronizing such persons. Paul cast out the demon, and the girl lost her power to foretell events, and her masters were deprived of their means of gain. So they accused Paul before the court and had them put in the inner prison. An earthquake released them at midnight, and the jailer, being impressed with the fact that they were the servants of God, asked them what to do to be saved. Paul assured him there was salvation for him if he would believe in Christ. Then he preached the word of the Lord to him and his family; they believed and were baptized the same hour of the night, so were in position to claim the Lord's promise of salvation. (Mark 16: 16.)

Golden Text Explained

The words of our Golden Text are a part of the description of Solomon's worthy woman. In this statement Solomon seems to be contrasting physical grace and beauty with the more enduring beauty of soul which characterizes the worthy woman. The word grace in this text refers to manner of carriage; the physical carriage and mannerisms which make for attractiveness. And this Solomon says is deceitful. A lady may be very attractive in her carriage and yet be very unlovely within. Carriage and physical mannerisms are no indication of a clean heart or a lovely disposition. The word beauty in this text suggests "elegance of shape, symmetry of features, dignity of mien and beauty of countenance." But this Solomon says is vain; it is vanity compared to loveliness of character. Character is more enduring than the body. A lovely form may change, by accident, overnight. A beautiful face, besides hiding an ugly disposition, may become unbearable. Even if accidents which injure the physical form do not happen, sickness may rob the body of all its beauty. Suffering, mental and physical, mars the beauty of face and ruins its beauty. And finally death will destroy both the grace

and beauty of the body. They are deceitful and vain. But the beauty of the soul survives anything and everything which befalls the body; it lives on when the body is cold in death.

How many things women do to gain grace and beauty! This is not mentioned because it is sinful to care for one's person and make a nice, neat appearance. It is the duty of all women to give proper attention to their persons. But the lengths to which women sometimes go to gain poise, grace, attractiveness is sinful. The same women do not give five minutes per day to the beautifying of the soul. They will exercise; they will half starve themselves to reduce; they will paint themselves to the extent that they look unnatural, all to gain grace, charm, attractive appearance. And when they have spent a lifetime gaining this, failing health, disease, and death write complete failure across the ledger. What a pity they do not realize that a clean body modestly appareled, indwelt by a meek and quiet spirit, is worthy of far more effort and attention, and in the reach of every woman. If God has given you a beautiful face and a lovely figure, just remember that they will likely not last until you get to the grave, and will not do you any good if they do. You will still need a soul cultured by gospel forces if you expect to pass inspection in the day when God looks past the face and into the heart to judge us. If God has not given you a pretty face or a lovely figure, just remember you have not been cheated of anything eternal, and that a Christian disposition can shine through a homely face and make it attractive.

Not every time is the woman who fears Jehovah praised in this life; she may suffer persecution instead. But she shall truly be praised of God, whose praises she should seek more diligently than the praises of men. "The friendship of Jehovah is with them that fear him." (Psalm 25: 14.) And, "Behold, the eye of Jehovah is upon them that fear him." (Psalm 33: 18.) "Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and prolong his days, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God." (Eccles. 8: 12.) These are a few of the things we are told about the fear of Jehovah, which should cause us to cultivate that fear in our hearts. Since godly fear in the heart gets the praise of God, but grace and beauty are deceitful and vain and cannot be taken beyond the grave, every person should strive to cultivate the fear of Jehovah. "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Prov. 9: 10.)

Helps on the Lesson Text

"A Roman colony." Paul and his company left ship at Neapolis, which was the port of Philippi, which was the Roman colony. This colony was planted by Julius Caesar and later enlarged by Augustus Caesar. Being a Roman colony gave the citizens the rights of Roman citizens, and they even called themselves Romans. And many of them were from Italy, having been deprived of their homes there to give room for victorious soldiers, and were transported to Macedonia.

"And on the sabbath day" There was no synagogue in Philippi; hence, very few Jews. It is said that where as many as ten families of Jews resided they built a synagogue. The apostle and his helpers went there not to worship on the Sabbath, for they attended to their

Christian worship on the first day of the week. (Acts 20: 7.) But if they could find a synagogue, or in the absence of one a place of prayer, there they would find devout worshippers of God who were looking for the Messiah. To them Paul would carry the good news of the fulfillments of God's promises to bless all nations in the seed of Abraham.

"A seller of purple." The word purple may mean the rich-colored cloth or the coloring matter itself. This coloring matter was obtained from a secretion of a certain species of shellfish found in various parts of the Mediterranean Sea. It is found elsewhere, but none quite so rich in color as those found in that sea. "The coloring matter was contained in a small vessel in the throat of the fish; and as the quantity amounted to only a single drop in each animal, the value of the dye was proportionately high." This accounts for the rich being clothed in purple, and for the fact that kings used it. It was also the color worn by the high priest.

"Whose heart the Lord opened." Some have supposed that the Lord opened her heart by a direct divine operation of the Holy Spirit. But the passage does not say that, nor is it necessarily implied by what is said, and such an idea is contrary to the teaching of the gospel elsewhere. The gospel is God's power to move people to act. This woman heard the gospel as preached by Paul, and it was what she heard that moved her to give heed to the things spoken. The Lord uses means instead of direct physical force. The means he uses is his gospel, and with that he pricks our hearts, opens our hearts, converts our souls.

"She was baptized, and her household." She attended unto the things spoken by Paul, and she was baptized; so we conclude that Paul commanded her to be baptized. Since Paul teaches us that we are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6: 3), we conclude that she was not in Christ when Paul found her; but when Paul left her, she was in Christ and entitled to all the blessings and privileges which are said to be in Christ Jesus. Gospel obedience, culminating in baptism, brings one from without to within Christ where these blessings are had. The fact that her household was baptized has been thought by some to mean that infants should be baptized today. Since Lydia was a business woman, it is most doubtful if there were any infants in her household. In fact, there is no evidence that she was a married woman. Her household undoubtedly consisted of salesladies in her employ.

"If ye have judged me to be faithful." Her faithful, sincere obedience to the gospel she used as proof of the sincerity of her invitation to Paul and his company to lodge with her. This suggests that her invitation was at first not accepted. Her proposition seems to have been this: if you think I have been baptized to form an acquaintance for financial or physical reasons, do not come into my house; but if you think I was baptized because I fear God and wish to please him, then come into my house and let me save you the expense of a hotel. This Paul calls fellowship in the gospel from the first day. (Phil. 1: 5.)

"The magistrates have sent to let you go." This was after the earthquake, and the rulers are not only willing, they are anxious, for Paul to get out of town; but they realized they had treated him shamefully and did not wish to face him. So they simply gent word

for him to get out of town. Paul was not willing to let the matter end like that. His rights as a Roman citizen had been violated, and he refused to leave town like the villain they had judged him to be. So he forced the magistrates to clear him of all charges and send him away in a lawful manner.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The events of this lesson are dated A.D. 53.

GEOGRAPHY.—Thyatira was the home of Lydia. This was a "city on the Lycus, founded by Seleucus Nicator. It was one of the many Macedonian colonies established in Asia Minor, in the sequel of the destruction of the Persian empire by Alexander. It lay to the left of the road from Pergamus to Sardis, on the southern incline of the watershed which separates the valley of Caius from that of the Hermus, on the very confines of Mysia and Ionia, so as to be sometimes reckoned within the one, and sometimes within the other. . . . There is evidence of many corporate guilds in the city. Bakers, potters, tanners, weavers, robe-makers, and dyers are especially mentioned. Of these last there is a notice in no less than three inscriptions, so that dyeing apparently formed an important part of the industrial activity of Thyatira, as it did of that of Colossae and Laodicea. With this guild there can be no doubt that Lydia, the seller of purple stuffs, from whom St. Paul met with so favorable a reception at Philippi, was connected. . . . The principal deity of the city was Apollo, worshipped as the sun-god under the surname of Tyrimnas. He was no doubt introduced by the Macedonian colonists, for the name is Macedonian. . . . A special priesthood was attached to his service. A priestess of Artemis is also mentioned, probably the administratrix of a cult derived from the earlier times of the city, and similar in its nature to that of the Ephesian Artemis." (Smith's Bible *Dictionary*.)

CHARACTER.—Of the character of Lydia we know but very little. She was a business woman, but not so taken up with her business in a strange city that she forgot to worship God to the best of her knowledge on her day of worship. This testifies eloquently of her piety. And the fact that she obeyed the gospel the first time she ever heard it suggests that she was not prejudiced against truth, but that she loved truth and was anxious to learn and willing to obey truth as fast as she learned it. Sincere worshipers seem to have been the best prospects for obeying the gospel in the time of the apostles. Most of the cases of conversion in Acts of Apostles are conversions of devout worshipers of God.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Faithful church attendance is a lesson that these children can get from Lydia. She did not know about Jesus, but she was worshiping God after the manner of the Jews. She was faithful to give one day a week to religious activities. The finest habit children can possibly form is that of going to Bible class and church service every Sunday, with a lesson well prepared by daily reading and study through the week. Lydia took others with her, too. So these children can get the habit of asking others, and taking others with them to their classes. They can actually work at the job, inviting their playmates

and schoolmates to go with them to the Bible classes. Start a campaign of gathering names with their help; ask them to invite them; send them cards signed by the teacher; and the teacher can visit in these homes as they have opportunity to get them to attend. Such work engaged in continually will bear fruit in increased attendance, and finally in leading them to the Lord.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Lydia was not ashamed of her religion among her business associates. Sometimes boys and girls in these ages are inclined to be ashamed of their church connection among their business and social associates. This is a test of our loyalty to God and Christ. If we are ashamed of Jesus here, he will be ashamed to confess us before his Father, and that will mean that we cannot be saved. Lydia accepted new truth before her business associates. She was not afraid she would be ridiculed or criticized for making a change in her religious views and connections. Our love and regard for truth should be such that we will accept it regardless of what others think, say, or do, and we ought not to let the attitude of others delay us even one day in accepting truth, lest we put it off too long.

Young People and Adult Departments

These adults can profit by Lydia's sacrifice to observe her day of worship. She was in a Roman colony where the Sabbath was not observed; it was a day of business. When she took off that day from business, she lost money. She was willing to stand that loss in order that she might be pleasing to the Lord. This example of faithful service puts to shame many whose opportunities are much superior to the advantages she enjoyed.

When Lydia became a Christian, she wished to share in the burden of carrying the gospel to the world; she wanted to have fellowship in the gospel. She had a home which was big enough to accommodate them, but since she and her helpers were all women, and Paul and his helpers were all men, it might look none too good for two groups of Jews to stay in the same house. She was thoughtful for that, as well as Paul was. But her reputation among the people was such that she felt safe in keeping them. In this way she could save them more money than she would be able to contribute, and it would be as great help to them as an outright contribution. In our hospitality we may have fellowship in the gospel.

Topics for Discussion

1. Does the Lord open hearts today like he opened Lydia's heart? Was the opening of her heart the same thing as pricking the hearts of others in Acts 2: 37?
2. What was Paul's object in demanding that the magistrates come and send him out of the city? Was it for his safety, or to get even with them for what they did to him?

FOURTH QUARTER

THE MAJOR PROPHETS

AIM.—To study some things in the major prophets and to lead the students in discovering and appreciating how God, through prophets, gave help and guidance to Israel, and to draw some practical lessons for today.

Lesson I—October 5, 1947

ISAIAH, THE MESSIANIC PROPHET

The Lesson Text

Isa. 1: 1-9, 18-20

1 The vision of I-sa'iah the son of A'moz, which he saw concerning Ju'dah and Je-ru'sa-lem, in the days of Uz-zi'ah, Jo'tham, A'haz, and Hez-ki'ah, kings of Ju'dah.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Je-ho'vah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Is-ra-el doth not know, my people doth not consider.

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly! they have forsaken Je-ho'vah, they have despised the Holy One of Is-ra-el, they are estranged and gone backward.

5 Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and fresh stripes: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil.

7 Your country is desolate; your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 And the daughter of Zi'on is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except Je-ho'vah of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sod'om, we should have been like unto Go-mor'rah.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith Je-ho'vah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Je-ho'vah hath spoken it.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."* (Isa. 1: 18.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 6: 1-5.

Daily Bible Readings

September 29.	M.....	Isaiah's Prophecy of Judah (Isa. 2: 1-11)
September 30.	T.....	Judah's Rulers Denounced (Isa. 3: 1-12)
October 1.	W.....	Corruption Denounced (Isa. 3: 13-26)
October 2.	T.....	A Remnant to Be Saved (Isa. 4: 1-6)
October 3.	F.....	Parable of the Vineyard (Isa. 5: 1-7)
October 4.	S.....	Woes Pronounced (Isa. 5: 8-23)
October 5.	S.....	Jehovah's Vengeance (Isa. 5: 24-30)

Lesson Subject Explained

The word Messiah means *the Anointed One*. Messiah is the Hebrew word, and Christ is the Greek word. The word Messianic

means: "Of or pertaining to the Messiah: said specif, of those parts of the Old Testament foretelling or relating to the Messiah." (Webster.) So when we refer to Isaiah as being the Messianic prophet we mean that his prophecies dealt largely with the coming Messiah and his kingdom. And this we find to be literally true when we begin to mark all the statements in the book of Isaiah which deal with the person, work, and kingdom of the Messiah.

Isaiah foretold the conception and birth of the Messiah. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." (Isa. 7: 14.) "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." (Isa. 9: 6.) The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is devoted wholly to the Messiah, telling how he would be despised and rejected by men; how he would bear his sorrows in silence; that he would be scourged and bruised for our sins; that his suffering was to be in our behalf, and with his stripes we would be healed; that he would be cut off out of the land of the living; that he would die with the wicked and be buried among the rich.

Isaiah also foretold the establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah. "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." (Isa. 2: 2.) Some of the glorious conditions of spiritual peace and prosperity are described in Isa. 35: 1-10. The preparatory work of John the Baptist was also foretold by this prophet. (Isa. 40: 3-5.) In chapters sixty-one and sixty-two the work of the Messiah in his personal ministry and the carrying of the gospel to Gentiles with the promise of a new name for his people are foretold by this prophet. Since no other prophet has dealt so largely with these things, Isaiah may well be called the Messianic prophet.

Context of the Lesson

Since Isaiah did his prophetic work during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, it will be necessary for the student to review the historical accounts of these kings, and those preceding them, in order to get a true historical context of this lesson. At the close of the reign of Solomon the kingdom was divided, ten tribes going to the north and known as the kingdom of Israel; while the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, accompanied largely by the Levites, stayed with Jerusalem and the temple, and were known as the kingdom of Judah. For a long time, at least sixty years, there was strife between the two nations, Judah trying to regain authority over the ten tribes. Then, on account of pressure from foes without, there was a period of friendship and alliance between the two divisions. This alliance lasted for about eighty years, until the time of Amaziah. This Amaziah was the father of Uzziah, in whose reign Isaiah began his work, though he did not begin until in the very last years of his reign. Uzziah reigned in Judah for fifty-two years. He came to the throne at the tender age of sixteen, and for the greater part of his long reign he lived in the fear of God, and showed himself a wise, active, and pious ruler. During Uzziah's reign in Judah there were five rulers in Israel, and eleven years of that time there was no one at all on the throne. It was a time of continual fighting for the throne within, and trying to ward off the enemies without who were taking more and more territory. During this time Israel lost the

territory east of the Jordan to the Assyrians. Isaiah lived to see the kingdom of Israel taken into captivity in punishment for her wickedness, though, according to some, his prophetic utterances ceased several years before that time. During the time of Isaiah the kingdom of Judah made considerable progress, though they suffered one defeat at the hands of Israel which was most disastrous, in which they lost one hundred twenty thousand men. "Under Uzziah and Jotham, Judah long enjoyed political and religious prosperity, till the wanton Ahaz, surrounded by united enemies, with whom he was unable to cope became in an evil hour the tributary and vassal of Tiglath-pileser." The reader will find the record of the events during the life of Isaiah in 2 Kings 15 to 18 and 2 Chron. 26 to 32.

Golden Text Explained

Our Golden Text follows a catalogue of the sins of the people, some of which are to be found in the first paragraph of our lesson text. In the paragraph between the first part of our lesson text and the Golden Text we learn God's attitude towards the people for their sins. He refused to accept their sacrifices, regardless of the multitude of them. He could not bear their solemn assemblies, and when they spread forth their hands to him begging for blessings, he would hide his eyes from them, for their hands were full of blood. The cure for it all was for them to wash themselves, cease to do evil, seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the orphan, and plead for the widow. In the first line of our text he summons them to a discussion of their condition. On the meaning of the word reason, Barnes says, "Here it denotes the kind of contention, or argumentation, which occurs in a court of justice, where the parties reciprocally state the grounds of their cause." God was willing to debate the matter with them, if they were inclined to deny their guilt. But along with his accusation of their sinfulness, God assured them that pardon was possible.

"*Though your sins be as scarlet.*" The word scarlet denotes a bright red color which was highly prized by the people of that time. The coloring matter was obtained from the eggs of a very small insect "somewhat resembling the cochineal," which lays its eggs on limbs and leaves of trees. When goods were dipped in the dye the color became fast, or fixed, so there was no removing it. This suggests that one's sins so stain the soul that no human effort is capable of removing the stain; only God can cleanse the soul stained with sin. But God held out the promise to his people that they could become clean, even as white as snow, in spite of the fact that they had been dyed in sin. The practice of dipping the cloth twice in the solution was so universal that the word translated scarlet means *twice-dipped*, or *double-dyed*. This, too, suggests the extent to which they had gone in sin. They had been double dyed in sin, and still in spite of that, God promised them forgiveness, and a cleansing that would render them as white as snow.

"*Though they be red like crimson.*" This statement varies very little from the other; it is simply a poetic form of expressing the same thing in different words, for the sake of emphasis. "The difference between *scarlet* and *crimson* is that the former denotes a deep red: and the latter a deep red slightly tinged with blue." This crimson dye was slightly different from the scarlet, and was better

adapted to dyeing wool. The promise connected with this statement is that they shall be as wool—that is, they shall be as white as wool before it has been dyed. Though they were polluted and stained with sin, colored as deeply by sin as wool is by double dipping in dye, God will cleanse them so thoroughly that they shall be as white as clean wool never dipped in the solution.

Three things are suggested in these wonderful promises. First, sin, stains one so deeply that human means are incapable of cleansing one from the effects of sin. Second, God is able to cleanse the soul regardless of how deeply dyed he is in sin. The soul may be double dipped in sin, dyed beyond the possibility of recovery by human agency; but God is able to render the soul as white as snow, and as wool which had never been dyed. And third, God is willing, even anxious, for us to allow him to cleanse us from our sins. It may be suggested, however, that in spite of this fair proposition to the people to reason together on their condition, and in spite of God's ability and desire to cleanse them from their sins "if they be willing and obedient," they refused his offered mercy and reaped the due reward of their sinful deeds in captivity in a foreign land.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"The vision of Isaiah." "The word vision denotes properly that which is seen" and is the translation of a word which means to see, to behold. For this reason prophets were often referred to as seers. "In these visions the objects were probably made to pass before the mind of the prophet as in a picture in which the various events were delineated with more or less distinctness, and the prophecies were spoken, or recorded, as the visions appeared to the observer." (Barnes.)

"Concerning Judah and Jerusalem." It is supposed that Isaiah lived in, or near, Jerusalem. Though the kingdom of Israel did not finally fall until the last days of Isaiah, his work was with the kingdom of Judah. There were more prophets in Israel than in Judah on account of the greater wickedness of that kingdom; but there was sufficient wickedness in Judah to require all of his time and attention.

"I have nourished and brought up children." Isaiah used the relationship of parents and children to show Judah her sins. Children are expected to be obedient to parents, and give them such honor as is due them. But though God had cared for Judah as parents care for children, Judah had not given God the honor they owed him; they had been rebellious.

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib." This is a very cutting statement, designed to make Judah take notice of her actions. The ox and the ass were the two most dumb and senseless animals known to man. Yet these dumbest of all the dumb animals act with more reason than Judah was acting. Israel did not know, did not consider. The word Israel here is not used in the kingdom sense, for these words were addressed to Judah and not to Israel as kingdoms, but as the descendants of Israel, or Jacob.

"Laden with iniquity." Several statements in this verse describe the sinful condition of Judah. They are pictured as being overloaded and borne down with the great load of sin. This is the word Cain used when he said, "My punishment is greater than I can bear."

It is the word Moses used when he said, "I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me."

"*Why will ye be still stricken?*" Isaiah represents Judah as a body that has been beaten and bruised until there is no sound flesh to be stricken. The wounds and bruises of the past have not been bound up nor treated with oil. And why will you continue in disobedience and make the infliction of further punishment necessary? This suggests that the infliction of punishment was necessary, not for the pleasure of God, but for the honor of God and for the good of the people.

"*Your country is desolate.*" This was the fulfillment of prophecy. (Lev. 26: 33.) Isaiah turns from the figurative to the literal, and describes the actual conditions brought upon them for their sins. Though the country was prosperous during the reign of Uzziah, it had not recovered from all the desolation it suffered under Joash and Amaziah. (2 Chron. 24 and 25.) If Jehovah had not been merciful to leave a very small remnant, Judah would have been as Sodom and Gomorrah, extinct and forgotten except as proof of the justice of a God that will not allow sin to go unpunished.

"*If ye be willing and obedient.*" This was a merciful provision of Jehovah. It was within the reach of all. If he had said, "If ye will pay a great sum of money," they might have been excused for not complying. All can be willing; all can obey to the extent of their ability. Willing obedience would be rewarded by enjoying the fat of the land.

"*If ye refuse and rebel.*" This is the opposite of willing obedience. They were at the forks of the road; they must choose whom they will serve. To refuse and rebel would bring the sword of destruction upon them, but obedience would bring the fat of the land. Did they believe God? If so, did they care which road they took? Had they as soon endure the sword of destruction as to enjoy the fat of the land? Why do people today choose that which they know will bring destruction? Some are married to evil and have not the strength or courage to break the union; in some it seems the desire to break with sin is gone.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The date of this lesson is given as 760 B.C. The whole subject of the dates of the life of Isaiah will be discussed more fully in the next lesson.

CHARACTER.—Of the birth and family of Isaiah we know very little. His father named Amoz, but of him we know nothing for certain. However, tradition is consistent in claiming that this Amoz was the brother of Amaziah, son of Joash, king of Judah. (2 Kings 14: 1.) If this is true, Isaiah was of the tribe of Judah. It is thought by some that the internal evidence of his writings bears out the idea that he was of the royal blood and training. He had two sons, Shear-jashub (7: 3) and "Maher-shala-hash-baz (8: 1, 3). The former name means *A remnant shall return*. The latter name means, *The spoil speedeth*, or, according to Horne, *Make speed to the spoil*. These names had special reference to conditions in Judah at the time of the birth of the sons. His wife is called a prophetess. (8: 3.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The lessons of this last quarter will not furnish material ideally suited to children of these ages. It will be necessary, therefore, for the teachers to use suggestions in the lesson texts to teach these children things which will be interesting and helpful.

These children can appreciate the lesson Isaiah draws of the stupidity of the people of Judah when he contrasted them with an ox and an ass. (Verse 3.) These animals recognized their owners, and knew that their welfare depended upon their staying with their owners. But Judah refused to recognize God as their master, and failed to understand that their welfare physically and spiritually depended on being faithful to God. This lesson can easily be illustrated with a sand table, or cutouts, or flannel board.

And the two roads of verses nineteen and twenty can be appreciated by these children. If a sand table is used, the dividing of the highway with arrows pointing to life and destruction can be used. Children will come to that point in life where they must choose which road they will travel. Allow them to put their choice in their own words; it will do them good, and give them courage and self-confidence to express themselves.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

These departments need the lesson about the ox and ass being less stupid than some people. This is a time when intellectual pride may cause some to be inclined to act as if the smart thing to do is disregard the church and its claims upon them. But God said those who do so are more stupid than the ox or the ass. Officers of the law say, "Crime does not pay." The history of four thousand years of human experience, written by the finger of God, declares that sin does not pay, but that godliness is profitable here and hereafter. (1 Tim. 4: 8.) These lessons cannot be impressed too often or too deeply in these ages.

Young: People and Adult Departments

Special assignments should be made, either for this lesson or in the next for a study of conditions in Israel and Judah in the time of Isaiah. Space does not allow a discussion of those things which may be learned from the reading of the inspired history, so it will be well to assign special reports for different members of the class to give on (1) conditions in Judah and (2) conditions in Israel in the days of Isaiah as revealed by the sacred historians. Another interesting study would be for special reports to be made on the lives and labors of the four kings mentioned as reigning during the life of Isaiah in chapter one. Any good religious encyclopedia will be helpful in obtaining the information; or reading and collecting what the books of Kings and Chronicles have to say about them will furnish all the material necessary for such reports.

Topics for Discussion

1. Make a list of the sins of which Isaiah accused Judah of being guilty, and then compare it with the sins which are prevalent today in our nation. If Judah could not long continue on account of her

sinfulness, how long may we expect this nation to continue in spite of these very sins? Is God more long-suffering today than he was then? Is God more indulgent with people in their sins today than he was in the days of Isaiah?

2. Will God bless and prosper a nation today that is upright as to morals? and will God bring destruction upon a nation today that is unrighteous in its morals? Was the fall of Germany and Japan due to their unrighteousness? Of what sins were those people guilty that the people of America are not guilty? Is God a respecter of nations?

3. Did the people heed the warning of Isaiah and become willing and obedient or did they disregard it and continue to refuse and rebel? When was this threat of the sword of destruction carried out on the people of Judah?

4. What lesson is there for the church in this threat of destruction?

5. Why did Jehovah save a small remnant of Judah? Why did he not allow them to become as Sodom and Gomorrah? Was his promise to Abraham and David involved in this? What about the royal seed through which Christ was to come?

Lesson II—October 12, 1947

ISAIAH ANNOUNCES THE BIRTH OF THE MESSIAH

The Lesson Text

Isa. 7: 14-16; 9: 1-7; 11: 1-5

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.

15 Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken.

1 But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zeb'u-lun and the land of Naph-ta-li; but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Gal'i-lee of the nations.

2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as in the day of Mid'i-an.

5 For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall be for burning, for fuel of fire.

6 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.

7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Je-ho'vah of hosts will perform this.

1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jes'se, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit.

2 And the Spirit of Je-ho'vah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Je-ho'vah.

3 And his delight shall be in the fear of Je-ho'vah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears;

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.”* (Isa. 11: 9b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 11: 6-10.

Daily Bible Readings

October 6. M.....	War Against Jerusalem (Isa. 7: 1-13)
October 7. T.....	The Child Immanuel (Isa. 7: 18-25)
October 8. W.....	Devastation of Judah (Isa. 8: 1-8)
October 9. T.....	Sins Condemned (Isa. 8: 9-18)
October 10. F.....	God's Anger (Isa. 9: 8-17)
October 11. S.....	Woe Upon Assyria (Isa. 10: 1-11)
October 12. S.....	Return of a Remnant (Isa. 10: 20-23)

Lesson Subject Explained

The first paragraph of our lesson text has been considered by most commentators as a very difficult passage. There are three different views with reference to the passage. (1) It is thought by many that the passage has reference to a child to be born in the days of Ahaz, and that it has no reference at all to the Messiah. Orthodox Jews hold to this interpretation. (2) By others it is thought that the passage has no reference at all to a child to be born in that time, but refers solely to the Messiah. Adam Clarke seems to be of this opinion, though he mentions the third possible explanation. (3) By another group of scholars it is said to include both ideas—that is, a child was to be born in the time of Ahaz as a sign to him, but that it should have a more remote and glorious fulfillment in the Messiah to be born of a virgin. Albert Barnes and others hold to this explanation of the passage. The Jews explain the passage by saying that the virgin mentioned was the wife of Ahaz, and the child to be born was Hezekiah, their son. But by a comparison of 2 Kings 16: 2 and 18: 2 it will be found that Hezekiah was already nine years old when this prophecy was made. It is well known, however, that the ancient Jews regarded this passage to refer to the birth of the Messiah. The greatest objection that has been urged against this interpretation is that the birth of a child seven hundred years after the time of Ahaz could not be a sign for either his comfort or instruction. This must be regarded as an objection of great force. Adam Clarke feels the force of it and argues that Isaiah told Ahaz that the royal house of David could not fall until a virgin should conceive and bear a son; and since this was the promise of God he need not fear his enemies until such an event came to pass. But the word of Isaiah was one thing and a sign from heaven was another. Ahaz already had the word of Isaiah, and in addition to that he was to have a sign from Jehovah. The birth of the Messiah was too remote to serve as a sign to Ahaz. Hence, it seems that the third explanation given above meets this requirement, as well as giving the prophecy its evident Messianic meaning.

Context of the Lesson

“At the time referred to, the kingdom of Judah, under the government of Ahaz, was reduced very low. Pekah, king of Israel, had

slain in Judea one hundred and twenty thousand persons in one day; and carried away captives two hundred thousand, including women and children, together with much spoil. To add to their distress, Rezin, king of Syria, being confederate with Pekah, had taken Elath, a fortified city of Judah, and carried the inhabitants away captive to Damascus. In this critical conjuncture, need we wonder that Ahaz was afraid that the enemies who were now united against him must prevail, destroy Jerusalem, end the kingdom of Judah, and annihilate the family of David? To meet and remove this fear, apparently well grounded, Isaiah was sent from the Lord to Ahaz, swallowed up now both by sorrow and unbelief, in order to assure him that the counsels of his enemies should not stand; and that they should be utterly discomfited. To encourage Ahaz, he commands him to ask for a sign or miracle, which should be a pledge in hand, that God should, in due time, fulfil the predictions of his servant, as related in the context." (Adam Clarke.)

But Ahaz refused to ask for the sign on the ground that it would be tempting God if he did so. This refusal to ask for a miraculous sign in such a time of distress and anxiety is most difficult to understand unless we take into consideration the character of Ahaz. As usual on such matters, there is difference of opinion as to why Ahaz did not ask for the sign. Adam Clarke suggests that "Ahaz humbly" refused to ask for the sign. But since he was an unbeliever in God and a worshiper of idols, it is difficult to believe that he was very humble in his refusal to ask for the sign. Without giving the entire quotation, the explanation of Albert Barnes is given as follows: Ahaz did not ask for a sign that Jerusalem and the family of David would be spared at this time because he was at that time secretly making an alliance with the king of Assyria to help him, and he was stripping Jerusalem and the temple of their wealth to pay for the assistance. Next, if Isaiah was able to work a miracle, Ahaz did not care to witness it because of his unbelief and idolatry. Next, if Isaiah was unable to work a miracle, which Ahaz felt to be true, the confidence of the people in the safety of Jerusalem would be all the more unsettled, and Ahaz did not wish that to happen. And last, even if Isaiah could work a miracle by the power of his God, that would be no proof to Ahaz that the god of his enemy nations could not work a greater miracle. The victory of one nation over another was taken as proof, by idolaters, that one god was stronger than the other god. Isaiah might be able to work a miracle, but that would not prove that his God was stronger in battle than the gods of the nations gathered together for battle against Ahaz. Since Ahaz was an idolater, it is very probable that he held such views of the matter. We can hardly believe that an idolater would humbly refuse to ask for a miraculous sign on the ground that such would be a tempting, or trial, of God, when such good men as Gideon and Zacharias (father of John the Baptist) asked for signs. For the inspired record of these things read 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chron. 28.

Golden Text Explained

Our Golden Text is a statement of the prophet explaining, or giving a reason for, a condition which he said would exist in the days of the Messiah. He had said that the wolf would dwell with the lamb, and the leopard would lie down with the kid; the cow and

the bear would feed together, and the lion would cease to eat meat and feed upon straw; and the infant would not be hurt though it places its hand in the den of the poisonous reptile. He then sums up the conditions by saying in the first part of this verse, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain," and then gives the Golden Text as the reason why they shall not hurt. This is a difficult passage and capable of different interpretations, some of which are false and hurtful.

Some take this, and several similar passages, as proof that the Lord will reign personally on this earth, and that during his reign these passages will be literally fulfilled. Aside from the fact that there is no foundation in scripture for such a reign after the second coming of our Lord, it is puerile to think that the physical nature of animals will be so changed that the body of the lion can live and grow on straw like the cow lives. These are figures of speech used to describe a time of peace among people. The Bible is not the only book, nor the first one either, to use such figures of speech to give a picture of the golden age of humanity. It simply means that people who have the ferocious traits of the wolf will, through the knowledge of the Lord, lose those traits of character. Those people who have the vicious tempers and dispositions characteristic of a lion shall be so changed by the knowledge of Jehovah that they will dwell with other people who have no disposition to protect themselves, and will do them no harm. And those who have the sneaking deceitful ways of the serpent, asp, will not hurt people who are as innocent as the infant.

The difficult part of this passage is whether we are now in that time to which the prophet referred, or is it yet to come before the end of time. Many among us affirm that such a time is yet to come when the reforming knowledge of Jehovah will cover the earth so fully that the vast majority of people then living will be righteous. Alexander Campbell believed a time would come when such conditions would prevail all over the earth, and he labored unceasingly to bring it about. According to our Golden Text, this condition is to be brought about by a knowledge of Jehovah, which we gain from a study of the Bible. It is not to be brought about by the second coming of the Lord who is supposed to kill off all who differ from him, and rule the balance with a rod of iron so they can hardly afford to act otherwise. And any theory which overlooks the fact that the knowledge of Jehovah, gained from a study of the Bible as we now have it, is the power through which the change is to be affected, is a false theory and capable of doing untold injury.

The writer of these lessons does not believe the Golden Text teaches that there will be a "golden age" in which the vast majority of people will be so changed by the knowledge of Jehovah. He believes Isaiah told the truth when he said that the knowledge of Jehovah will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. But he does not believe that people will universally accept, and live in harmony with, that knowledge. People never have so universally accepted the will of the Lord; why think that human nature will so change in the future? The trend has always been in the opposite direction. There is less faith in God's word today than there was a quarter of a century ago; and people generally have less respect for God's will today than they had a quarter of a century ago. Why think

they will reverse themselves? This verse teaches that the knowledge of Jehovah will spread over all the earth—it did in Paul's day (Col. 1: 23) and there was no golden age—and to the extent that people accept it and live in harmony with it, their characters will be changed from evil to good, from animal-likeness to Christlikeness.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." This was to be a sign from heaven for Ahaz that Jerusalem should not at that time be destroyed, and that the family of David would be preserved, in spite of the great armies that were then on the march against him. The immediate explanation and application of it is likely this, "Things look gloomy to you now, Ahaz, but within so short a time as a virgin can conceive and bear a son (nine months), conditions will have cleared so definitely in such unnatural way that you will be forced to acknowledge that the change was wrought by Jehovah." The remote interpretation, of course, is that a virgin of the house of David will conceive and bear a son, who will be God with us, and it is he that shall bring about everlasting peace, and not a short-lived peace such as will come to Judah within nine months.

"Butter and honey shall he eat." These are the food of peaceful nations; they denote plenty, also. When the child is old enough to eat butter and honey, there will be such peace and prosperity in the land that he will have butter and honey to eat. It is thought that this statement in its remote application to Jesus is intended as a proof of his humanity.

"The land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken" The two kings Ahaz feared were Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel. In effect, Isaiah said to Ahaz, "Before this child is old enough to know good from evil, both these kings shall be destroyed and their land will be desolate." Rezin was killed in the third year of the reign of Ahaz, and Pekah was slain in the fourth year of the reign of Ahaz (2 Kings 15: 30; 16: 9), which was only two or three years after Isaiah delivered this prophecy to Ahaz.

"He brought into contempt the land of Zebulun" The possessions of Zebulun and Naphtali lay in the extreme north portion of Palestine. They were farthest from Jerusalem and the religious environment, and nearest to the heathen lands and more subjected to heathen influence. In this way that land was brought into contempt.

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." The section that aforetime had been made contemptible was in our Lord's time called Galilee. It was here that Jesus grew up to manhood, and to him was reference made when Isaiah said the people saw a great light. (Matt. 4: 12-16.)

"Mighty God, Everlasting Father." The child to be born in this part of the prophecy can be none other than the Messiah, for he was to be Mighty God. That Jesus was divine, that he was God in the flesh is affirmed many times in the New Testament. (John 1: 1; Rom. 9: 5; Heb. 1: 8; 1 John 5: 20.) He was also to be Everlasting Father, or Father of eternity, suggesting that "eternal duration owed itself to his paternity." (See John 8: 58; Col. 1: 17.)

"A shoot out of the stock of Jesse." This suggests the picture of an old tree which has fallen, and a tender stem or branch growing out of the old stump, and finally bearing fruit. The family of Jesse,

and so of David his son, was in a bad condition; it was ready to fall when this prophecy was uttered. But in spite of its fallen condition, it had not died, nor would it die until a branch had put out to preserve life. This branch was Jesus Christ.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Isaiah began his work in the reign of Uzziah, perhaps the last year of his reign. The next king was Jotham, who reigned sixteen years. Then came Ahaz and he reigned sixteen years. Then came Hezekiah, who reigned twenty-nine years. We know that Isaiah lived and prophesied from the last year of Uzziah to the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, which makes forty-seven years of prophetic work.

But there is good evidence that he lived beyond the death of Hezekiah, though no word of inspiration to that effect. In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign he became ill, and through Isaiah God told him he should live fifteen years more. (Isa. 38: 1-8.) We also have a record of that in 2 Chron. 32: 24-26. Then in 2 Chron. 32: 32 we are told, "Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah . . . are written in the vision of Isaiah." That must mean that the acts after his illness were written by Isaiah. If that be true, Isaiah outlived Hezekiah and wrote his memoirs. There is a persistent tradition among the Jews and early Christian fathers to the effect that Isaiah was sawn asunder by Manasseh. It is objected by some that this would make Isaiah too old. If he lived until the death of Hezekiah, he had sixty-two years of prophetic work. If he was twenty-five years old when he began, he would have been eighty-seven at the death of Hezekiah. But Jehoida, a priest of that time, was one hundred and thirty years old at death. (2 Chron. 24: 15.) Why would it be impossible for Isaiah to live to be eighty-seven to ninety years of age? From comments available it seems very probable that Isaiah lived till some time in the reign of the cruel Manasseh, and that he likely was sawn asunder, and may be the one referred to in Heb. 11: 37.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The lesson in these departments should center around the birth of Jesus and the work he was to do in the world. The fact that his birth was foretold seven hundred years before it happened will be of interest to these children. From this you will be able to give them a lesson on the goodness of God to make provisions for the happiness of his people, and that God works according to a plan perfected in his wisdom and power. This will also serve to show how great Jesus was, that his birth should be planned hundreds of years before it happened. We should count it an honor to learn about the so great as he, and especially should we be glad to be his followers in life, and his helpers in doing good to others and trying to save them.

Seven hundred years before Jesus was born it was said that he would be the Prince of Peace. He is called the Prince of Peace because he came to bring peace on earth and good will to men. Earthly kings promote their kingdoms through conquest and bloodshed, but Jesus extends the borders of his kingdom by peaceful methods.

And to the extent that we follow his example and teaching we will be peaceable. Children may be impressed with the idea of getting along with their associates in a peaceable manner; never provoking trouble, and doing all that is possible to bring peace where there is trouble between others.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The boys and girls need to be impressed with the fact that Isaiah was writing these prophecies over seven hundred years before their fulfillment. How could he know that a virgin would bear a son, and that she would be a virgin until after his birth? Only divine inspiration could make such a prediction possible. Therefore, we have in this lesson a demonstration of the fact of inspiration. Not only did Isaiah predict the virgin birth of Jesus, but he foretold his person and character. How did Isaiah know he would be a wonderful person? The word wonderful here denotes that which is extraordinary and unusual, even to the miraculous. He was wonderful in his birth, in his life of sinlessness, in the doctrines he taught, in the death he died, in his resurrection, and in his ascension; and no less wonderful in the influence he is still exerting over the world. Use these and other things as time allows to impress these young people with the divine inspiration of the Bible, the greatness of Jesus Christ, and the religion he taught.

Young People and Adult Departments

In these departments there should be two divisions of the lesson. First, they should be able to get a connected vision of the entire prophecy beginning with chapter six and running through chapter twelve. There are four discourses, the first contained in chapter six. The second from 7: 1 to 9: 6. The third is from 9: 7 to 10: 4. The fourth is from 10: 5 to 12: 6.

In the second division of the lesson the doctrine of inspiration should be discussed. The person and work of Jesus Christ should be studied as suggested by the titles given in chapter 9: 6, 7. His reign upon the throne of David might well be connected with our Golden Text, that the characteristics of the people are to be changed by the knowledge of Jehovah, which is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. This knowledge is to cover the earth while he is reigning upon the throne of David, so whatever change is to be brought about by that knowledge is to be seen during his reign on David's throne. Since he is now on David's throne (Acts 2: 30-36), these changes in the characters of people are being affected by the knowledge of Jehovah at this time.

The providence of God may be exhibited in the shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots to bear fruit. This was a prediction that the family of Jesse and David would not die utterly until that shoot should come forth and bear fruit. God protected the family of David and kept it from extinction until he had used it for the purpose of bringing into the world its Messiah.

Topics for Discussion

1. If Jesus is not that shoot out of the stock of Jesse, there never will be one who can prove himself to be, for the family of David is extinct. Not a Jew on earth can now prove that he is a descendant of David.

Lesson III—October 19, 1947

ISAIAH FORETELLS THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

The Lesson Text

Isa. 2: 1-4; 32: 1-8

1 The word that I-sa'iah the son of A'moz saw concerning Ju'dah and Je-ru'sa-lem.

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.

1 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in justice.

2 And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

3 And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken.

4 And the heart of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.

5 The fool shall be no more called noble, nor the churl said to be bountiful.

6 For the fool will speak folly, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise profaneness, and to utter error against Je-ho'vah, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.

7 And the instruments of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the meek with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.

8 But the noble deviseth noble things; and in noble things shall he continue.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Then justice shall dwell in the wilderness; and righteousness shall abide in the fruitful field."* (Isa. 32: 16.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 35: 3-10.

Daily Bible Readings

October 13. M.....	Branch of Jesse (Isa. 11: 1-10)
October 14. T.....	The Outcasts of Israel (Isa. 11: 11-16)
October 15. W.....	A Son of Thanksgiving (Isa. 12: 1-6)
October 16. T.....	The Fall of Babylon (Isa. 13: 1-16)
October 17. F.....	Triumph Over Babylon (Isa. 14: 3-20)
October 18. S.....	Jerusalem Besieged (Isa. 22: 1-14)
October 19. S.....	Jehovah's Vineyard (Isa. 27: 2-13)

Lesson Subject Explained

Though the Jews generally never did get the idea of anything better than a kingdom of this world with a king of the house of David seated on the old throne of David in Jerusalem and extending his dominion over all the world, the prophets saw a kingdom of a different nature. While no one prophet saw the entire vision at one time; no one prophet put all the elements of the kingdom together in one prophecy, or discourse, yet when we take all that was said by all the prophets at different times, we will be able to get a fair view of what the kingdom of the Messiah was to be like.

In this lesson Isaiah tells us several things about the kingdom to be established by the Messiah. First, he tells us when the kingdom was to be established, the latter days. The expression means, "In the *after* days; in the *futurity* of days; i.e., in the time to come." (Barnes.) Though there is nothing in the expression itself to indicate a certain period of time, yet the prophets used it so consistently with reference to the times of the Messiah that it has come to have that meaning. (Joel 2: 28; Dan 2: 28; Acts 2: 17; Heb. 1: 2; Deut. 4: 30; Mic. 4: 1.) So, according to Isaiah, the kingdom of the Messiah was to be established in the days of the Messiah. The history of God's dealings with man is divided into three divisions: the times of the patriarchs, the times of Moses, and the times of the Messiah. The kingdom was to be established in the last times, the last dispensation.

Next, we learn from Isaiah that the kingdom of the Messiah was to be established in, and start from, Jerusalem. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." The law here mentioned is the law of the Messianic kingdom to be established in the latter days. Hence, the kingdom was to begin there.

Last, Isaiah says all nations shall flow into that kingdom established by the Messiah. This was never the Jewish conception of the kingdom. Though they expected to rule all nations, they did not expect other nations to be allowed membership in the kingdom on equality with them. These items of this prophecy correspond so much in detail with a statement of our Lord that we feel sure he had this prophecy in mind when he said, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24: 46, 47.) He then told his apostles to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit, which was to guide them into all truth in the operation of the kingdom to be established. They received this promise on the day of Pentecost, just a few days later (Acts 2), and from that time forward we see the kingdom in operation, and people are being translated into it (Col. 1: 13).

Context of the Lesson

Since it is not known just when the prophecy in Isa. 2 was delivered, it is difficult to give a lesson concerning its context. However, those scholars considered most conservative think it was delivered in the last year of the reign of Uzziah, or the first few years of that of Jotham. We may be sure the prophecy was uttered at a time when the "nation was proud, haughty, and hypocritical; when they had been successfully engaged in commerce, and when the means of luxury abounded; when the national pride and vanity were manifested in dress, in luxury, and in the oppressive acts of rulers; when general disorder and anarchy prevailed; and when a part of the nation at least was idolatrous."

In the context of Isa. 32: 1-8 we learn of the danger in which Jerusalem was placed by the Assyrian army under Sennacherib. In 2 Kings 18 and 19 we have the history back of this prophecy. Sennacherib came and encamped before Jerusalem and made demands of Hezekiah for certain things. Hezekiah robbed the temple and the

city of all their valuables to pay off, but that was not enough to satisfy. The spokesman for Sennacherib boastfully told the Jews that their ally, Egypt, could do them no good, and further told them it was worse than foolish for them to trust in their God for deliverance. In these trying times Hezekiah rent his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth, and sent men to Isaiah to know what the Lord would do for him. Isaiah comforted him by saying that the Lord would cause the king of Assyria to "hear tidings, and shall return to his own land" where he would fall by the sword. Isaiah then sent another message saying that Hezekiah would eat "this year that which groweth of itself, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof." Isaiah also told Hezekiah that Sennacherib would not come to Jerusalem, nor shoot an arrow into the city, and that God would take over the defense of the city for the sake of David. And that night the angel of Jehovah smote the army of Sennacherib, and in the morning it was found that there were 185,000 dead Assyrians. Sennacherib departed from Judah, dwelt in Nineveh, and soon afterwards was slain by his own men while at worship. (2 Kings 18, 19.)

In chapter thirty-one Isaiah rebukes Hezekiah for making an alliance with Egypt instead of trusting to God to help him, and then predicts the destruction of the army of Sennacherib, according to the historical record above. In chapter thirty-two he tells of the peace and progress of Judah under Hezekiah following the destruction of their enemies. The primary application of this passage is to Hezekiah's reign over Judah, but its remote fulfillment is found in Christ and his reign over the kingdom of God.

Golden Text Explained

Beginning with Isa. 32: 9 there seems to be a change in the line of thought. The first eight verses describe a time of peace and progress along all lines under a king that reigns in righteousness. But verse nine begins the painting of another picture of desolation, "until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high." Following this we have the words of our Golden Text. So between the peace and prosperity under Hezekiah and the pouring out of the Spirit and the time described in our Golden Text, there was to be a period of trouble. Some scholars say that was the invasion of the Chaldeans. "From this verse (9) to the end of the fourteenth, the desolation of Judea by the Chaldeans appears to be foretold. ... It must at least extend to the ruin of the country and city by the Chaldeans. And the promise of blessings which follows was not fulfilled under the Mosaic dispensation; they belong to the kingdom of the Messiah." (Adam Clarke.) If this be true, as is reasonable to believe, the pouring out of the Spirit mentioned in verse fifteen must refer to Pentecost. (Acts 2.)

When the Spirit is poured out "then," at that time, justice shall dwell in the wilderness. By that is meant that, in places where law and order had not reached before, people would be brought under the influence of the teaching of the Spirit, and justice would prevail. It is not to be supposed that the prophet looked for everyone to embrace the teaching of the Spirit, but this was to be the effect in every person influenced by the Spirit. And righteousness shall abide in the fruitful field. This suggests the same idea with a slight variation

of the words. The word righteousness here is to be taken in its first and primary meaning, that of just and equitable treatment one of another. So, whether in the wilderness or the fruitful field, people, under the influence of the Spirit, will do justice and deal righteously.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Come to pass in the latter days." The expression "latter days," or last dispensation, is used to refer to the times of the Messiah. Those who look for another age, millennium, to follow this dispensation cannot accept these prophecies in which this expression is used as being fulfilled. If they are fulfilled, this is the last dispensation; if there is another age to follow this one on earth, these scriptures have not been fulfilled.

"Mountain of Jehovah's house." The word mountain means government. It is the mountain that is to be established; a government to be built and fixed so as not to be moved. And it is to be on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills. By this is meant that this government of the Lord is to be greater and more exalted than the governments of man and of the world.

"All nations shall flow unto it." This indicates the rapid growth of the Messiah's kingdom. They shall *flow* unto it; they shall not wander into it a few at a time; but there is to be a great, continual stream of all nations pouring into it.

"He will teach us of his ways." The ways of the Lord are taught ways. Men do not get them by birth, accident, nor through human philosophy; they are to be taught of the Lord. None come to Jesus except those who have been taught of God. (John 6: 44, 45.) And when they have been taught by the Messiah, they will walk in his paths.

"Out of Zion shall go forth the law." The word Zion is used many times in scripture for Jerusalem. One of the mountains, and the highest, on which Jerusalem is built; the one held by the Jebusites until David took it from them, and for that reason was called the "City of David"; and the type of heaven. (Heb. 12: 22; Rev. 14: 1.) Zion and Jerusalem are used as synonyms in this verse, for the law was to go out from Zion, and the word of the Lord, which is the law, is to go forth from Jerusalem.

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares" Those who go up to Zion to be taught of the ways of the Lord and walk in his paths will turn to the ways of peace, for the Messiah is the Prince of Peace. Some contend that this passage foretells a time when the whole world will live in peace; it is the ancient idea of the Golden Age again; in recent years the discussion has raged around the word millennium. We are accustomed to making allowance for *poetic license* when we read poetry; it is just as necessary to make allowance for *prophetic license* when reading prophecy. Not that we must allow for things that are false. But there is a use made of literal things to describe spiritual conditions, and if we make literal applications, we will have John the Baptist as the greatest civil engineer the world has ever known, filling all the valleys, leveling off all the hills and mountains, and making crooked roads of Palestine straight for the Lord to travel at ease. (Isa. 40: 3; Matt. 3: 4-6.) So here swords and spears, implements of war, are to be turned into implements of peace, and by this is meant that people who are taught of the Lord and

walk in his ways shall become peaceable in their attitudes and dispositions.

"Behold, a king" It is probable that the primary application of this is to Hezekiah, but the remote application is the Messiah, as the context demands.

"A man shall be as a hiding-place." This man, Hezekiah, would be a protection to them from the troubles that had hitherto desolated the nation. He would be a cover from trouble, and as refreshing as water found in a desert place.

"The fool shall be no more called noble." Under the reign of unrighteous kings the fool may be raised to power and influence, so that it may at times seem profitable to be wicked. But under the reign of this righteous king the fool will be known for what he is, and he will be kept out of positions of power and influence.

"The noble deviseth noble things." Under the reign of this righteous king the noble will be raised to power. And since they are a noble disposition, their devising will be of a noble character. Like begets like; a good tree brings forth good fruit. So the noble of soul will devise good things for the people under them, and their reign will be helpful and beneficent.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The date for the prophecy of Isa. 2 is 760 B.C.; while that of chapter thirty-two is 713 B.C.

GEOGRAPHY.—"Mount Zion is the southern terminus and western tongue of the high tableland, or double promontory, on which Jerusalem was built, and is the highest of its hills. Elevated, and surrounded by deep, trenchlike ravines on the west, south, and east, with a deep depression, or valley, in the ridge on the north, it was a position of great natural strength. It first appears in sacred history as a stronghold of the Jebusites who had fortified it, and who held possession of it long after the Israelites had gained the rest of the territory. It was assaulted at length, and captured by King David (1 Chron. 10: 4-7), who built both a palace and a citadel upon it, and subsequently brought to it the ark of the Lord. As the seat not only of regal dominion, but of sacred worship until the temple was built, this eminence came to be designated as the 'Holy hill of Zion' (Psalm 2: 6) and as the 'chosen habitation' of Jehovah (Psalm 132: 13), and this naturally led to its employment by the New Testament writers as a type of heaven. It being the royal residence, it was called the city of David; and its prominence in the city led to the frequent use of its name as a synonym of Jerusalem. . . . Zion was a natural rocky terrace, and hence the force of the scriptural comparisons which associate with its strong foundations the safety of believers and the stability of Christ's kingdom." (Isa. 28: 16.) "They that trust in Jehovah are as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth for ever." (Psalm 125: 1.) "Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." (Psalm 48: 2.) "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined forth." (Psalm 50: 2.)

Helps for Teachers Elementary and Junior Departments

The fact that the kingdom of the Messiah was promised as many as seven hundred and sixty years before the birth of Christ is

an indication that God made long-range plans to bless his people. And the fact that the kingdom of the Messiah, over which he is King, is the church, over which he is head (Eph. 1: 22), will give these children a more exalted view of the church. As long ago as the time of Isaiah God said he would build a church, and now we have the privilege of learning of God and of Christ through that church, and in a few years these children will have the exalted privilege of becoming members of that church, citizens in the kingdom of the Messiah, which Isaiah foretold. We should use every opportunity to build into their minds the fact that the church is the greatest institution on earth, that it is "exalted above the hills"; and that membership in the church of the Lord is the grandest privilege we enjoy on this earth. And in harmony with the last paragraph of our lesson, they should be impressed with the idea that to be members of the kingdom of the Messiah they must live in harmony with the principles of the kingdom. It will be a kingdom in which the noble will be exalted, and those who are of contrary character will find no place in it. Though these children are too young to be members of the church at this time, yet they can be careful to build such characters as will be suitable for membership in the church when they do become of age.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

In this lesson you have another opportunity to impress these young people with the divine inspiration of the Bible. Isaiah foretold the kingdom of the Messiah. He told where it was to be established—in Jerusalem. How did he know 760 years before its establishment that it would begin there? Again, he foretold when the kingdom would be established—in the latter times, in the last dispensation. How could Isaiah know that this will be the last dispensation of all time? There are many now who deny that this will be the last division of time, but Isaiah says it will be. And last, Isaiah foretold the fact that all nations would make up the membership of that kingdom, or church, which was to be established in Jerusalem. This is a most remarkable part of the prophecy. Isaiah was as loyal a Jew as any in the land of his day, and Jews recoiled at the idea of Gentiles being on equality with them religiously. He would never have made such a statement of his own will and wisdom. Nothing short of inspiration could have caused him to make that statement. Peter made a similar statement (Acts 2: 39), but God had to perform a miracle to get him to go into a Gentile home to preach the gospel to them (Acts 10).

Young: People and Adult Departments

In these departments a thorough study of the establishment of the kingdom should be made. In the *Gospel Plan of Salvation*, by T. W. Brents, is a chapter devoted to this subject, which should be studied by each one.

These people should also learn how to prove that the church which Jesus built is the kingdom which he established. Jesus used the words as synonyms in Matt. 16: 18, 19. And, too, Jesus said he would eat and drink with us in the kingdom (Matt. 26: 29; Luke 22: 16), and that he was giving his disciples a kingdom "that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom" (Luke 22: 29, 30). But Paul taught the brethren at Corinth that they were to eat the Lord's

Supper in the church. (1 Cor. 11: 18-30.) So if the church and kingdom are not the same institution, we have two different institutions in which to eat the Lord's Supper.

We may also learn something of the duration of the kingdom from this. We are to eat the Lord's Supper in the kingdom of Christ. (Luke 22: 30.) We are to take the Lord's Supper only "till he come." (1 Cor. 11: 26.) From this we conclude that the kingdom has been in existence ever since people have been taking the Lord's Supper, otherwise they took the supper out of the kingdom, the place where the Lord ordained they should take it. But if, as some claim, the kingdom is not yet established and not to be until the second coming of the Lord, and if the supper is to be taken only until he comes again, people could never take the supper in the kingdom.

Topics for Discussion

1. From a study of all the occurrences of the expression "the latter days," or "the last days" in scripture, to what period of time do you find these expressions referring?

2. Give a number of illustrations from scripture which prove that we cannot take prophetic expressions in their literal meaning without doing violence to the passages.

3. Compare Isa. 2: 4 with Joel 3: 9, 10 with reference to the meaning of these prophetic expressions.

Lesson IV—October 26, 1947

ISAIAH DESCRIBES THE MESSIAH'S GLORY

The Lesson Text

Isa. 62: 1-3; 66: 1, 2, 10-17

1 For Zi'on's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Je-ru'sa-lem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth.

2 And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Je-ho'vah shall name.

3 Thou shalt also be a crown of beauty in the hand of Je-ho'vah, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

1 Thus saith Je-ho'vah, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: what manner of house will ye build unto me? and what place shall be my rest?

2 For all these things hath my hand made, and so all these things came to be, saith Je-ho'vah: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.

10 Rejoice ye with Je-ru'sa-lem, and be glad for her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn over her;

11 That ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

12 For thus saith Je-ho'vah, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream: and ye shall suck thereof; ye shall be borne upon the side, and shall be dandled upon the knees.

13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Je-ru'sa-lem.

14 And ye shall see it, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like the tender grass: and the hand of Je-ho'vah shall be known toward his servants; and he will have indignation against his enemies.

15 For, behold, Je-ho'vah will come with fire, and his chariots shall be like

the whirlwind; to render his anger with fierceness, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

16 For by fire will Je-ho'vah execute judgment, and by his sword, upon all flesh; and the slain of Je-ho'vah shall be many.

17 They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves to go unto the gardens, behind one in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, they shall come to an end together, saith Je-ho'vah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name"* (Isa. 62: 2b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 66: 22-25.

Daily Bible Readings

October 20. M.....	Reign of the Righteous King (Isa. 32: 1-20)
October 21. T.....	Jehovah's Gracious Reign (Isa. 33: 13-24)
October 22. W.....	Zion's Happy Future (Isa. 25: 1-10)
October 23. T.....	Jehovah's Promise (Isa. 42: 1-13)
October 24. F.....	Predicts Christ's Sufferings (Isa. 53: 1-12)
October 25. S.....	Jehovah's Love for Zion (Isa. 54: 9-17)
October 26. S.....	The New Heaven and the New Earth (Isa. 65: 17-25)

Lesson Subject Explained

As has been said, the prophet Isaiah writes more fully of the Messiah than any other prophet. He was given greater visions of the Messiah, his person, his work, his kingdom, and his glory than any other prophet enjoyed. In this lesson we deal only with Isaiah's visions of the glory of the Messiah. There is one passage not included in our lesson text, which deals exclusively with a vision of the glory of Jehovah as manifested in the Messiah, which should be studied. In Isa. 6: 1-8 the prophet tells us he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. And an attending seraphim said, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." And then Isaiah feared for his life, being a man of unclean lips, and living in the midst of an unclean people, and yet, he said, "Mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts." From the reading of this vision we might get the idea this refers to God the Father, but from a reference in the New Testament we learn that Isaiah saw the Messiah in this vision. After quoting from the prophet Isaiah, from this sixth chapter, and making application of the words of the prophets to the people of his day, John adds this explanation: "These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory; and he spake of him." (John 12: 37-41.) This is positive proof of the fact that the name Jehovah is used by the Holy Spirit when speaking of the Messiah, and that, therefore, he is divine and eternal. This is one of the very best and strongest proof texts we have of the divinity and of the glory and majesty of the Messiah.

In our lesson text the glory of the Messiah is seen chiefly, not in the person, but in the kingdom and reign of the Messiah in bringing peace and security to the people who put their trust in him. His glory is also seen in the fact that his reign is world-wide, and not over one nation. The Gentiles are permitted to see his glory, and to partake of the blessings of his kingdom. Even kings of the earth, who live in splendor and are served by their millions, have no glory when compared with the Messiah, and they are pictured as rejoicing in the glory and splendor of the Messiah's reign.

Context of the Lesson

According to Thomas Hartwell Horne, author of a standard work on *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, our lesson text is in Part VI of the book of Isaiah, including chapters forty to sixty-six, and "comprises a series of prophecies, delivered, in all probability, towards the close of Hezekiah's reign." And he further says, "This portion of Isaiah's predictions constitutes the most elegant part of the sacred writings of the Old Testament. The chief subject is the restoration of the church. This is pursued with the greatest regularity; containing the deliverance of the Jews from captivity—the vanity and destruction of idols—the vindication of the divine power and truth—consolations and invitations to the Jews—denunciations against them for their infidelity and impiety—their rejection, and calling of the Gentiles—the happiness of the righteous, and the final destruction of the wicked. But, as the subject of this very beautiful series of prophecies is chiefly of the consolatory kind, they are introduced with a promise of the restoration of the kingdom, and a return from the Babylonian captivity, through the merciful interposition of God. At the same time, this redemption from Babylon is employed as an image to shadow out a redemption of an infinitely higher and more important nature. The prophet connects these two events together, scarcely ever treating of the former without throwing in some intimations of the latter; and sometimes he is so fully possessed with the glories of the future more remote kingdom of the Messiah that he seems to leave the immediate subject of his commission almost out of the question. This part consists of twelve prophetic poems or discourses. . . . Discourse twelve chiefly predicts the general conversion of the Jews to the gospel, the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles, and the destruction of the Antichrist. . . . In chapter 61: 1-9 the Messiah is introduced describing the character and office, and confirming the ample promises made in the preceding chapter. The deliverance of the church from all her enemies by the GREAT REDEEMER, and the destruction of the Antichrist and his followers, are delineated in chapter 63: 1-6, with unequalled pathos, energy, and sublimity. And the two last chapters in the prophecy set forth, in the clearest terms, the calling of the Gentiles, the establishment of the Christian dispensation, and the reprobation of the apostate Jews." (Vol. IV, pp. 182, 183.)

Golden Text Explained

The language of our Golden Text is by many taken to point primarily to the giving of the name Christian to the followers of Christ. This is undoubtedly the remote and secondary application of the prophecy, as we shall see later; but that it is the primary and immediate application of the words of Isaiah is a position which cannot be maintained. Isaiah was contemplating better times for the people of God. There was to be no rest until Zion was restored and rebuilt. And in that time of restoration she was to have a new name expressive of the peace and prosperity she would be enjoying, and not her old name which was expressive of the times of her sorrow and suffering. That this is the meaning of the passage is proved by the statement in verse four. "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt

be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." These last two phrases are an explanation of the names he shall give the people and their land. The word *Hephzi-bah* means *my delight is in her*; and the word *Beulah* means *married*. This was said as a means of encouraging the people of God in their captivity. Though they were forsaken and desolate, and their land in waste, it should not always be thus, for God had not forgotten them. There would come a time when the word *forsaken* would not be appropriate; only the name Hephzibah would be appropriate when the Lord restored them and made them the object of his delight. Though their land should be desolate during captivity, and that word correctly described it, yet there would come a time when that word would not be appropriate, for the land would no longer be a widow—desolate—but would be married, cultivated and given proper care.

But as usual with Isaiah, when he thinks of the people being restored to their land and peace and prosperity reigning, his mind goes to the times of the Messiah, when the true people of God will be really the object of his delight. And so there is undoubtedly a remote application of this prophetic language to the times of the Messiah, and the new name given by the mouth of Jehovah to his people. It is said that this new name shall be given when the Gentiles see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory. This is an expression which was not true with reference to the name Hephzibah, for when that name was given his people upon their return from captivity Gentiles had not seen his righteousness, nor had kings seen his glory. But in the times of the Messiah, when the gospel had been preached among the Gentiles at Antioch, and at a time when kings were being told the story of the cross, it is said "that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11: 26.) The Greek word translated *were called* is often used in the sense of calling by divine authority. That most certainly is the sense here. There are those who think the name Christian was given in derision, and that it was finally accepted by the disciples themselves. But the meaning of this word will not allow that explanation. Through the mouth of one of those prophets, perhaps Barnabas or Saul, the Lord gave that name, and in it we are to glorify God, and for it we are to suffer if the need or occasion arise. (1 Pet. 4: 14-16.)

Helps on the Lesson Text

"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace." Just who the speaker is in this verse is the subject of controversy; whether it was Isaiah or Jehovah cannot be certainly known. "If it is the language of God, it is a solemn declaration that he was intent on the deliverance of his people, and that he would never cease his endeavours until the work should be accomplished. If it is the language of the prophet, it implies that he would persevere, notwithstanding all opposition, in rebuking the nation for its sins, and in the general work of the prophetic office, until Zion should rise in its glory. If the former, it is the solemn assurance of Jehovah that the church would be the object of his unceasing watchfulness and care, until its glory should fill the earth. If the latter, it expresses the feelings of earnest and devoted piety; the purpose to persevere in prayer and in active efforts to extend the cause of God until it shall triumph." (Albert Barnes.)

"Her righteousness go forth as brightness." The word *righteousness* here is equal to *salvation* in the next phrase. And the idea is that righteousness or salvation is to spread over the earth like the light, or brightness, the morning sun spreads in its rising, bathing and illuminating every hill and vale, mountain and river until the whole world has been covered and made happy in its light.

"The nations shall see thy righteousness." Isaiah very often predicted that the reign of the Messiah would include all the nations. In chapter eleven, where the root of Jesse is said to stand for an ensign, to which the nations, or Gentiles, shall seek, we have another illustration of this fact. This was one of the glories of the Messianic kingdom.

"A crown of beauty . . . and a royal diadem." Some commentators are confused by the fact that this *crown* is said to be in the *hand* of Jehovah. Perhaps the thought is that God's people would be precious, that Jerusalem would be beautiful and splendid in his sight, such as would be worthy to honor and glorify her great King.

"What manner of house will ye build unto me?" That this has reference to a time when the Jews were to build a temple perhaps is true. Commentators are divided as to whether it refers to the temple built by the returned exiles, or to the time of the Maccabees, or to the temple built by Herod. That Isaiah was looking too far into the future for that built by the exiles is certain; and that he would write with reference to the building of literal temples in the time of Herod is doubtful. It is likely a general statement to the effect that temples made with hands or wood and stone cannot accommodate him whose throne is heaven, and whose footstool is the earth. (1 Kings 8: 27; Acts 17: 24.) The only temple suitable for him is one made from living stones, purified and consecrated to him in the name of Christ. (Eph. 2: 20, 21; 1 Pet. 2: 5.)

"To him that is poor and of a contrite spirit." The word *poor* does not mean one who has little, or none, of this world's riches; but one who is humble and subdued in spirit. And a *contrite spirit* is one that is "broken, crushed, deeply affected by sin." One who is not proud, haughty, self-confident, boastful and self-righteous. God proposes to dwell in such persons as this rather than in temples made of wood and stone. He prefers to dwell in a spiritual temple built of lively stones of this character. And this is what the church, or kingdom, of the Messiah is—a spiritual temple composed of this kind of stones.

"Rejoice ye with Jerusalem." This rejoicing is suggested by what has gone before. In verses seven to nine Zion is pictured as bringing forth a child before travail; a nation being born in a day, and no wonder, for God who begat, or planned, would surely insure the birth, or consummation of his plans. This perhaps refers to the kingdom of Messiah being born, or established, and gaining thousands of citizens the first few days of its existence. It was cause of rejoicing, not only on earth among men, but in heaven among the angels.

"That ye may suck and be satisfied." This is given as another reason for rejoicing, for as the infant sucks from its mother's breast unto complete satisfaction, so those who love Zion may take from her comfort and consolation and delight to their heart's content. They shall be completely satisfied with the abundance of her glory. Zion, spiritual, shall not be desolate; she shall be a heavenly institu-

tion, abounding in glory, from which all her children may suck and be satisfied.

"Borne upon the side, and shall be dandled upon the knees" As a mother carries her child in one arm, with the weight of the child largely resting upon one hip; and as the mother dandles—toss or bounce caressingly—the child on her knees, so Jehovah will care for his children in Zion. This is a homely picture of a mother caressing and caring for her child, and Isaiah used it to show how Jehovah proposes to love and care for his people.

"Jehovah will come with fire." What a pity that the beautiful and glorious cannot go without being marred by the opposite! But, as always, there will be enemies of God in the times of the Messiah, and upon them Jehovah will exercise his fierce wrath, even to the eternal destruction of many.

"They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves." This is a description of the worship of the enemies of Jehovah; emphasis is to be put on the words *themselves*. Eating of swine's flesh and the mouse are of interest. Swine's flesh was forbidden the Jews as unclean, so this would suggest any unclean practices in the times of the Messiah. The mouse is said to have been held in abomination by the Jews, though it was raised for food by the Romans. It was sometimes used by idolaters in their rites and ceremonies. So Isaiah simply uses it here to further describe the idolatrous practices of the enemies of Messiah.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The date given for these prophecies is 712 B.C. It has already been mentioned that the last division of the book of Isaiah consists of twelve different discourses. It is not necessary to conclude that all these discourses were delivered at the same time, or in the same years. We do not know enough about the manner in which these prophecies were delivered to be able to say when they were composed. Some of them were called forth by local and national conditions; others seem to have been delivered solely for the benefit of future generations. (1 Pet. 1: 12.) Of these we have no way of determining the dates.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Every child in the class is either a Jew or a Gentile. Probably there are no Jews at all in the class; all are Gentiles. There was a time when the Jews were the favorite people of God, and the religious opportunities were far better than those of the Gentiles. (Rom. 3.) But God did not favor the Jews because they were more worthy of his favors than the Gentiles, nor because he was a respecter of persons; but that he might bring into the world the Messiah of whose glory we are now studying. (Rom. 9: 4, 5.) And all Gentiles are brought under lasting obligation to God to be grateful to him for his mercy in extending the blessings of the Messianic kingdom to them. From this you can draw a lesson for these departments and cause them to appreciate Jesus and his world-wide sympathies. And from that you can easily pass to the lesson of a world-wide vision in our religious sympathies and activities.

And, too, children of these departments can appreciate the lesson of our Golden Text, that God has given us a name to wear. If parents were to neglect to name a child, it would be evidence they did not love the child. God loves his people enough to give them a name, and it is a glorious name, the name of his Son, the Christ. Could he have given us a better name? a more glorious name? For it we should be thankful; of it we should be proud.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The lesson suggested above is a good one for these departments. These young people occasionally get into places and among company where they are tempted to be ashamed of the name God gave us to wear. To be ashamed to wear that name is to be ashamed of the name of Christ. And to be ashamed of Christ and his teaching is to be lost. (Luke 9: 26; 12: 8, 9.)

Our text also suggests that Jehovah is a great and wonderful character, worthy of our love and adoration. Heaven is his throne. The earth is his footstool. We are his creatures. What chance has one frail human being of rebelling against God to his profit? How futile is our disobedience and rebellion. Since God is wise enough, and powerful enough, to make this universe out of nothing (Heb. 11: 3), is it not foolish and stupid beyond measure for us, who know not how to begin to make one little planet, to question his revealed word on the sublime subjects of sin and salvation?

Young People and Adult Departments

The Messiah has built a kingdom, the most wonderful ever to be among men, and he did it without the use of arms, or material force of any kind. From this we should learn that there are forces in this world that are greater than bullets and bombs—yes, including the atom bomb.

Though this kingdom is the most powerful force on earth, it is composed of the poor in spirit, and those that are of a contrite heart. What group of men on this earth would try to build a forceful and glorious institution of such characters? The Messiah was crucified, the most shameful death to which one could be subjected, and this very thing became the glory of his preachers, the thing of which they boasted. (Gal. 6: 14.) That which was shameful was made to be glorious by reason of him who suffered the shame. In this is illustrated the glory of the Messiah.

Topics for Discussion

1. In what ways is the love and care of God for his people expressed and manifested in this lesson?

2. In what ways are the anger and fierceness of God to be manifested towards his enemies. Does this correspond with New Testament teaching? (Rom. 11: 22; 2 Thess. 1: 7-10.)

Lesson V—November 2, 1947

JEREMIAH, THE WEeping PROPHEt

The Lesson Text

Jer. 1: 1-10; 9: 1; 13: 15-17

1 The words of Jer-e-mi'ah the son of Hil-ki'ah, of the priests that were in An'a-thoth in the land of Ben'ja-min:

2 To whom the word of Je-ho'vah came in the days of Jo-si'ah the son of A'mon, king of Ju'dah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

3 It came also in the days of Je-hoi'a-kim the son of Jo-si'ah, king of Ju'dah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zed-e-ki'ah, the son of Jo-si'ah, king of Ju'dah, unto the carrying away of Je-ru'sa-lem captive in the fifth month.

4 Now the word of Je-ho'vah came unto me, saying,

5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations.

6 Then said I, Ah, Lord Je-ho'vah! behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child.

7 But Je-ho'vah said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak.

8 Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Je-ho'vah.

9 Then Je-ho'vah put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and Je-ho'vah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth:

10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.

1 Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

15 Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud; for Je-ho'vah hath spoken.

16 Give glory to Je-ho'vah your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

17 But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret for *your* pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because Je-ho'vah's flock is taken captive.

Golden Text.—*"It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."*
(Jer. 10: 23b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Jer. 9: 17-22.

Daily Bible Readings

October 27. M.....	Apostasy of Israel (Jer. 2: 1-19)
October 28. T.....	Their Backsliding Unexampled (Jer. 2: 20-23)
October 29. W.....	Jehovah's Forbearance (Jer. 3: 1-10)
October 30. T.....	Laments Over Judah (Jer. 4: 19-31)
October 31. F.....	A Picture of Judah's Guilt (Jer. 5: 19-29)
November 1. S.....	Corrupt Worship (Jer. 7: 1-11)
November 2. S.....	Idolatry Punished (Jer. 7: 21-34)

Lesson Subject Explained

The prophet Jeremiah lived at a time, and under circumstances, which made him pre-eminently the suffering prophet. The term "weeping prophet" is justified by the many expressions of his suffering and sorrow which are to be found in his writings. He invites us to a comparison of his sorrows with those of others, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is brought upon me, wherewith Jehovah hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." (Lam. 1: 12.) Of himself he says, "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me and caused me to walk in darkness. . . . Surely against me he turneth his hand again and again all the day." . . . Remember mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall." (Lam. 3: 1, 3, 19.)

Part of the sorrow of Jeremiah was due to the life of solitude he lived. The Lord told him, "Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters, in this place," because of the suffering of persecution and the "grievous deaths" that should come

upon the people of Jerusalem and his generation. (Jer. 16i 2-4.) He had to live aloof from other people, except as his duties of reproof and rebuking them caused him to be in their company. He was not to go into their houses of mourning to lament or bemoan the passing of people in death. (Jer. 16: 5.) Being God's prophet, his actions would be taken as an indication of the attitude of God towards them. So if he lamented their death, it would be an indication that God sympathized with that rebellious people. Neither was he to go into "the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and to drink." (Jer. 16: 8.)

Besides not being allowed to associate with the people and cultivate their friendship, Jeremiah was compelled to do a work which brought him into contempt of all who were opposed to the political policies he was inspired of God to advocate. During the reign of Jehoiakim and that of Zedekiah there was a strong sentiment among the leaders of the nation to make an alliance with Egypt for their protection from the Chaldeans. Jeremiah often spoke of Nebuchadnezzar as the "servant of God" (25: 9; 27: 6), and advocated that the people give themselves up to him instead of joining forces with Egypt and fighting him. This brought hatred and persecution of the sorest sort upon him. He spoke of himself as "a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!" (15: 10.)

Added to all the sorrow which the hatred and persecution of his enemies brought upon him, there were times when it looked as if his positions were wrong, and there was fear in his heart as to whether his work was effective. Those against whom he uttered his prophecies and whose destruction he foretold went right on in their sinful ways prospering and laughing him to scorn in spite of his threats. (12: 1, 2.) At times he cried in the anguish of his soul that the Lord had persuaded (deceived, King James Version) him because the Lord was stronger and had made him a laughingstock for everyone to mock. And for a time he would hold his peace and refuse to say anything more to the people. But soon the word of the Lord would burn within as a fire and he would be rebuking the people again. (20: 7-9.) And like Job, he cursed the day he was born; he cursed the man who told his father of his birth for not killing him. "Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" (20: 14-18.) Not a little of his sorrow was on account of the work of false prophets, who, noticing the effects of his severe prophecies on the people, took occasion to predict peace and plenty to gain position and power.

Context of the Lesson

The first chapter of the book of Jeremiah is simply an introduction to the prophecies that are contained in the book. The first three verses contain the title to the book. Verses four to ten record the call of Jeremiah to the prophetic office and the commission which the Lord gave him. The balance of the chapter is given to two visions. That of the almond tree was intended to indicate the nearness of the divine judgments which were to come upon the people; while that of the boiling caldron was given to indicate the fierceness and severity of those divine judgments.

The historical context is to be found in the books of the Kings and Chronicles. In 2 Chron. 34 we are told that Josiah, under whose

reign Jeremiah began his prophetic work, was eight years of age when he came to the throne. When he had been ruling eight years, he "began to seek after the God of David his father." And in the twelfth year of his reign he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of their idolatries, breaking down their altars and grinding to dust their images, and destroying their high places. It was during this time that the events of our lesson occurred, for the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah on this occasion, for the first time in his life, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah.

As the historical context of Jer. 13: 15-17 we have the record of 2 Kings 24: 8-17, in which we learn that Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah, was king at the age of eighteen years. (2 Chron. 36: 9 says eight years.) He did that which was evil in the sight of God, and reigned only three months. The Chaldean army was encamped against Judah at the time, but took no action until Nebuchadnezzar came with reinforcements. He carried Jehoiachin and many others with him to Babylon into captivity and made Zedekiah king in his stead.

Golden Text Explained

Our Golden Text is part of a discourse delivered in the eleventh year of the reign of Jehoiakim. In the verses preceding the text (17-22) Jehovah is represented as telling the people to gather up their belongings because he would "sling out the inhabitants of the land" and would distress them in such way that they might feel it. He then gives some reasons why that is to be done. His tent, tabernacle, was destroyed; his children were gone, and there was no one to spread his tent—establish his worship; the shepherds had become brutish, and their flocks had scattered. And now a great commotion from the north, the Chaldeans were coming upon them to make Judah desolate and a dwelling place for jackals.

To this Jeremiah responds, "Oh Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." As if to say, Lord, this is a most terrible punishment; but who am I to argue the case with the Almighty? Who am I to say that the chastisements of Jehovah are too severe? Since it is not in man to direct his steps, it certainly is not the province of man, neither is it within his ability, to determine his punishments. Then Jeremiah ventures a prayer, a request with reference to the punishment, as follows: "O Jehovah, correct me, but in measure; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." He requests that the sins of Judah be not punished in full, but in measure, in part. If they are punished to the utmost of what they deserve, they will be utterly destroyed, "totally and irrecoverably ruined."

Practical applications of this Golden Text may be made in several ways. First, it is not in man to direct his steps in matters of religion. Man has never found God through science and philosophy; only through God's revealed will can man seek after God so as to find him and enjoy him. Next, man has never been able of himself to direct his way in the moral realm. The tendency of humanity has always been downward, and in spite of the correcting influence of God. If that correcting and restraining influence were withdrawn and man were left wholly to himself, he would go even faster to moral ruin. And again, man has never been able to take over the affairs of government and direct his way in that realm with success.

Governments flourish for a while and then grow weak and have to be replaced. Man's ignorance and stupidity, his avarice and greed, his lust for position and power have always led to his ruin, and to the fall of his governments. This is not a flattering view of man, but it is a true view, and it should be a sobering view. And since this is the true view, people, and especially young people, should remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and seek after that wisdom that cometh from above, and let the word of God be a light upon their path, and a lamp to their feet.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah." By some it has been said that this Hilkiah, the father of Jeremiah, was the high priest who had such a large part in the reforms of Josiah. (2 Chron. 34: 9.) Since the name is the same, and they lived in about the same time, it looks reasonable to think it might be so. But when we learn that the priests who lived in Anathoth, Jeremiah's birthplace, were of the house of Ithamar (1 Kings 2: 26), while the high priests from Zadok, in the days of David, down to the time of Jeremiah were of the house of Eleazer (1 Chron. 24: 3), we have to conclude that the father of Jeremiah was not that high priest.

"Before thou earnest forth." Jeremiah was set apart, sanctified, from before his birth to the work of a prophet. This reminds us of the apostle Paul, who said he was separated even from his mother's womb to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. (Gal. 1: 15, 16.) Since the prophet here says he was sanctified from before birth, we are forced to conclude that the word sanctify does not mean to purify one from original, or Adamic, sin, as some people are teaching today.

"For I am a child." This was said by Jeremiah to excuse himself from being God's prophet. From this we can gather little as to his age at the time. Solomon spoke of himself in this same way, saying, "I am but a little child" (1 Kings 3: 7), when he was made king, and yet he must have been about twenty years of age. Commentators guess the age of Jeremiah at this time from fourteen to twenty-two years.

"I am with thee to deliver thee." The fact that God was with Jeremiah to deliver him did not mean that God would not allow him to suffer. Jeremiah suffered much ill-treatment, even being put in the dungeon. People today seem to think the Lord is not with people if they are allowed to suffer. But God did preserve him to carry on his work as long as he had use for him; and whatever he suffered was for his refinement, that he might be a partaker of God's holiness. (Heb. 12: 10.)

"I have this day set thee over the nations." This does not mean that Jeremiah was made a ruler of one nation, much less many nations. But he was made God's mouthpiece to correct the nations, to pronounce their judgments, either for building or destroying.

"Oh that my head were waters." These are words of lamentation. Jeremiah had shed tears until there were no more to shed, and he could wish that his head were a fountain of tears so he could weep day and night without ceasing; "that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters." (9: 18.)

"Be not proud; for Jehovah hath spoken." The people did not realize that Jehovah was speaking through Jeremiah, and they proud-

ly set up their judgment against his words, for they thought they could make an alliance with Egypt that would save them from calamity.

"My *soul shall weep in secret for your pride.*" Jeremiah loved the people in spite of their pride, arrogance, and disobedience against the Lord. The ordinary man, with average patience, would have given them up as unworthy of any further effort. But Jeremiah never did cease to love the people and to weep over their sins and consequent sufferings.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The first division of our lesson text suggests two dates. The first was in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, whose reign was from 638 to 608 B.C., or 625 B.C. Adam Clarke gives it 629 B.C. The next date is the eleventh year of the reign of King Zedekiah. His reign was from 597 to 586 B.C. He reigned only eleven years, so that prophecy was in the last year of his reign.

According to the chronology of the books of Kings and Chronicles Jeremiah prophesied over a period of forty years and six months, plus the time he spent in Judah after the capture of Zedekiah, and the time that he was in Egypt. Since Josiah reigned thirty-one years, and Jeremiah's work began in the thirteenth year, he prophesied eighteen years under him. Jehoahaz was next, and he reigned only three months. Jehoiakim was next, and he reigned eleven years. Then followed Jehoiachin (Jeconiah or Coniah) with a three months' reign. And then Zedekiah in eleven years' reign. A total of forty years and six months. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah governor over those left in Judah, but his term lasted only seven months, when he was slain by Ishmael and ten henchmen, and then the few who were in Judah, fearing the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar, fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them, either because they feared him or because they felt the need of prophetic guidance.

GEOGRAPHY.—Jeremiah was born at Anathoth, which word means *echoes*. It is mentioned by Joshua as one of the cities in the territory belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. (Josh. 21: 17, 18.) And it is mentioned as being one of the cities which the priests were to have as their inheritance. (1 Chron. 6: 60.)

As to the location of the city we are told, "The real position has no doubt been discovered by Robinson at *Anata*, on a broad ridge one hour N.N.E. from Jerusalem. The cultivation of priests survives in the tilled fields of grain, with figs and olives. . . . The present *Anata* is a little hamlet of twelve or fifteen houses, where, as of old on roofs of this humble class, the grass still grows on the housetops. . . . It is worth remarking, too, that parts of the Dead Sea and its dismal scenery are distinctly visible from this ancient home of the pensive, heart-burdened Jeremiah." (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The lack of appreciation is a good thought to begin this lesson with in these departments. Jeremiah served his people faithfully for over forty years, during which time he made very few friends. His lack of friends was no fault of his, for he was a very affectionate

man. But his duty was to tell people of their sins and plead with them to turn from sin and do right. The people did not appreciate this service. Parents sometimes have to correct their children. They do not punish because they enjoy punishing them, but for the good of the children. To the children this punishment is never a thing of pleasure, and some become hardened and rebellious against their parents and leave home. They are lacking in understanding and appreciation.

Jeremiah was set apart from his birth to be God's prophet. That does not mean that he could not grow up like other boys, and have his fun with them. But it does mean that he early was impressed with the desire, ambition, and intention to serve the Lord; and he did not allow bad habits to wreck his life so he would not be fit to render that service. So children of these ages ought to form resolutions to keep themselves from vicious habits that would make it impossible for them to be the best servants of God possible. They should recall Samuel whose mother promised to give him to the Lord if she might be blessed with a son, and he lived before the Lord all the days of his life.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

These young people are living in the sunshine period of their lives; very few clouds have ever darkened their sky, and they are prone to look upon such gloomy prophets as Jeremiah as being joy-killers and crapehangers. Jeremiah's own people did not wish to hear his gloomy predictions of their fate. They wanted smooth sayings uttered and good times predicted, and they rewarded handsomely those false prophets who were willing to satisfy their desires. But with Jeremiah it was not how he could gain the reward of men, but what was the truth? and what would do the people the most good? Young people will do well to give serious consideration before criticizing a preacher for a serious presentation of sin and its consequences.

Jeremiah was not allowed to join in the feasting and festivals of his day. This was one of the many sacrifices he made that he might perform the service of the Lord. Though we may not understand why it was necessary for him to refrain from these things, yet we can appreciate the sacrifice he made to serve God. Are we willing to make this and similar sacrifices that we may better serve our God?

Young People and Adult Departments

The lesson of sacrifice will be a good starting point in these departments. Jeremiah was forbidden to marry and have a family like other people. Again, we may not understand just why God required this of him, but he did, and Jeremiah was willing to pay the price. Yet many people today are not willing to deny themselves a little pleasure that they may better serve the Lord. It helps us to compare what we suffer for the Lord with that of others; when we see the difference, it spurs us on to greater sacrifices.

It will be well for these departments to read the whole book of Jeremiah and underscore the verses where the sufferings of Jeremiah are recorded. Also make a note of those verses which record his discouragements. He was a man of like passions with us, yet he was able to do a great work under most discouraging difficulties. We

are inclined to look upon these prophets as miraclemen, but they were human, and labored under similar difficulties, and reacted in somewhat the same way we do. And as you read, note the attitude of the people towards Jeremiah. Could you continue to serve the Lord faithfully in spite of such unfavorable attitudes of your fellow men?

Topics for Discussion

1. Contrast the meaning of the word *sanctify* in Jer. 1: 5 with the use which modern denominational preachers make of the word today.

2. Compare Jeremiah's sorrow for his people with that of Paul for Israel in Rom. 9: 1-5.

Lesson VI—November 9, 1947

JEREMIAH PREDICTS SEVENTY-YEAR CAPTIVITY

The Lesson Text

Jer. 25: 7-14; 29: 10-14

7 Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith Je-ho'vah; that ye may provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own hurt.

8 Therefore thus saith Je-ho'vah of hosts: Because ye have not heard my words,

9 Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith Je-ho'vah, and I will send unto Neb-u-chad-rez'zar the king of Bab'y-lon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a hissing, and perpetual desolations.

10 Moreover I will take from them the voice or mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the lamp.

11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Bab'y-lon seventy years.

12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Bab'y-lon, and that nation, saith Je-ho'vah, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chal-de'ans; and I will make it desolate for ever.

13 And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jer-e-mi'ah hath prophesied against all the nations.

14 For many nations and great kings shall make bondmen of them, even of them; and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the work of their hands.

10 For thus saith Je-ho'vah, After seventy years are accomplished for Bab'y-lon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith Je-ho'vah, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope in your latter end.

12 And ye shall call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

14 And I will be found of you, saith Je-ho'vah, and I will turn again your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith Je-ho'vah; and I will bring you again unto the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

Golden Text.—*"And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."* (Jer. 30: 22.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Jer. 30: 12-17.

Daily Bible Readings

November 3. M.....	False Gods Contrasted with Jehovah (Jer. 10: 1-16)
November 4. T.....	Judah Breaks the Covenant (Jer. 10: 17-25)
November 5. W.....	Punishment Threatened (Jer. 11: 9-17)
November 6. T.....	A Plot Against Jeremiah (Jer. 11: 18-23)
November 7. F.....	Jehovah's Judgment on Judah (Jer. 12: 7-17)
November 8. S.....	Captivity Threatened (Jer. 13: 12-27)
November 9. S.....	Grievous Distresses Foretold (Jer. 16: 1-18)

Lesson Subject Explained

Jeremiah was not the only one who predicted that the people of Israel would be taken into captivity. Nearly nine hundred years earlier than Jeremiah's time, Moses foretold the disobedience of the people and many of the things which they would suffer. In this connection the student should read chapters twenty-eight, twenty-nine, and thirty of the book of Deuteronomy. It is possible that in prophecy Moses even looks beyond the Babylonian captivity to the scattering of the people consequent to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was brought upon them for their rejection and crucifixion of Christ.

The prediction of Moses was of much longer range than that of Jeremiah. This prophecy was delivered in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, and he reigned eleven years, and Nebuchadnezzar took him and many of his people to Babylon as captives. So this prophecy was uttered only seven or eight years before the events foretold occurred. However, the duration of the captivity was foretold and this is greater proof of inspiration than foretelling the captivity. In the first place it was farther in the future by seventy years. And in the next place it was more contrary to reason. It was not unreasonable that a heathen king would carry into captivity his vassals who were continually rebelling. If he carried them into his own land, they would be much easier to police. It is possible that a wise man might foresee, without divine aid, that Nebuchadnezzar would do such a thing. But who ever heard of a king going to the trouble and expense of taking a nation into captivity, and then within the short period of seventy years releasing them and even paying the expense of their return to their native land? And how could Jeremiah know that it would be just seventy years? There is no possible way of explaining this without taking into consideration divine inspiration.

Context of the Lesson

In the context of this lesson we learn that the prophecy was delivered in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim. (25: 1.) It might be well for us to know that it was in this year also that Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon. It was also in this year that the great battle of Carchemish was fought, in which Nebuchadnezzar defeated the forces of Egypt. In the days of Josiah the Egyptians, under Pharaoh-necho, following the battle of Megiddo, had defeated the Babylonians at Carchemish, a city of the Euphrates. Babylon could never hope to rule Syria and Palestine as long as the Egyptians held Carchemish on their flank, so Nebuchadnezzar gathered his forces for a showdown battle, and won it in this fourth year of Jehoiakim. This should have blasted the hopes of the Jews who were looking to Egypt for help, and though Jeremiah used it to prove that their hopes were vain, even Zedekiah, several years later, made

the mistake of making an alliance with Egypt. The student should read Jer. 46 in this connection.

In this immediate context we also learn that Jeremiah had been prophesying for twenty-three years. He says he began in the thirteenth year of Josiah, and this was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Since Josiah reigned thirty-one years, Jeremiah worked eighteen years under him; he was three months under Jehoahaz; and now four years under Jehoiakim would make the twenty-three years. During all this time Jeremiah had been "rising up early and speaking," but the people had not paid any attention to him. "Ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear."

Not the least of Jeremiah's troubles was the fact that false prophets hindered his work; they were continually undermining him and keeping the people in doubt as to whom they should trust. Early in the reign of Zedekiah, after many people had already been taken into captivity in Babylon, consequent to the rebellion of Jehoiakim, false prophets among the people in Babylon raised false hopes in their hearts as to the length of their captivity. These false prophets were telling the people that they would be there but a few short years. One of them even wrote letters to the people who remained in Jerusalem, warning them against Jeremiah and telling them not to believe what he was saying about the length of their captivity. (Jer. 29: 25-28.)

Jeremiah had written the captives a letter telling them to build houses, plant gardens, marry and build homes, and seek the peace of the cities wherein they dwelt, for they would be in that land long enough that it would pay them to go about living in a normal way. He exhorted them not to listen to any prophet who told them otherwise. In the context following our lesson is an interesting story of an incident between Jeremiah and one of these false prophets who remained in Jerusalem. Jeremiah put on his neck a yoke made of wood to illustrate the captivity, and repeated his saying that they would be there seventy years. This false prophet took the yoke and broke it, and denied the seventy years' captivity. Jeremiah then predicted the death of this false prophet, which occurred in the same year. This is in Jer. 28, though it was in the fourth year of Zedekiah, and so follows what is recorded in chapter twenty-nine.

Golden Text Explained

Our Golden Text is a part of one of the last prophecies Jeremiah delivered after the destruction of Jerusalem, and before he went into Egypt following the slaying of Gedaliah. Commentators are divided in their opinions as to the meaning and extent of this prophecy. Adam Clarke says, "This and the following chapter must relate to a still future restoration of the posterity of Jacob from their several dispersions, as no deliverance hitherto afforded them comes up to the terms of it; for, after the return from Babylon, they were again enslaved by the Greeks and Romans, contrary to the prediction of the eighth verse; in every papistical country they had labored under great civil disabilities, and in some of them have been horribly persecuted; upon the ancient people has this mystic Babylon very heavily laid her yoke; and in no place in the world are they at present their own masters; so that this prophecy remains to be fulfilled in the reign of David, i.e., Messiah; the type, according to the general

structure of the prophetic writings, being put for the antitype. . . . The great blessings of Messiah's reign are enumerated, 18-22."

There is a similar statement in Isa. 11: 11 where the Lord says he will recover his people from many nations and the isles of the sea, and this recovery was to be the *second* gathering. Upon this verse and the passage from which our Golden Text comes many have based their arguments that the Jews will be regathered into their land of Palestine a second time, and that it is still in the future. Albert Barnes has a good statement on this matter in his comments on Isa. 11: 11. He says the Hebrew word translated *recover* means to *purchase*, and that word is in the margin of the American Standard Version. "It means here that Jehovah would redeem, rescue, recover his people; but it does not specify the *mode* in which it would be done. Any mode—either by collecting and rescuing them from the regions into which they were scattered into one place, or by a *spiritual* turning unto him, wherever they might be—would meet the force of this word. If in the lands where they were scattered, and where they had wandered away from the true God, they were converted, and should again become his people, the event would correspond with all that is meant by the word here. . . . It is not necessary, therefore, to resort to the interpretation that they should in this 'second' deliverance be restored *literally* to the land of Canaan. . . . All that the word implies is that they should be *possessed* by God as his people; an idea which is fully met by the supposition that the scattered Jews everywhere will be converted to the Messiah, and thus become his true people. . . . In no place does it necessarily imply the idea of *collecting* or *restoring* a scattered people to their own land." And this idea of the Jews again becoming the Lord's people is the idea of our Golden Text. Not that their nation will be restored, and the nation become God's nation as it was once. But Jews shall not always, future to the time of Jeremiah, remain cast away; there will come a time when they shall be people of God, and God will be their Father, their God. On the day of Pentecost Jews from every nation under heaven returned to God. (Acts 2.) They became servants of David, a word used for Messiah in Jer. 30: 9. They became the people of God, and he was again pleased to be their God. The whole chapter should be read in connection with the Golden Text to get the meaning.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Ye have not hearkened unto me." God never punishes people without warning. From the time of Moses down to the time of their captivity God was continually warning them of the dangers of disobedience, telling them their idolatry would lead them into captivity. But they chose their own ways and provoked the Lord to anger.

"I will . . . take all the families of the north." This is a reference to Babylon and all her allies. These nations God used to punish his people. In this chapter we have the name Nebuchadrezzar instead of Nebuchadnezzar. We are told that the former way of spelling is nearer the original form of the name, though it is not so frequently used. The word means "Nebo is the protector against misfortune." He was at this time king of Babylon.

"The sound of the millstones, and the light of the lamp." This is one of the expressions used to describe the completeness of the

destruction that should come upon Judah because of her sins. Where there were no millstones to grind the corn, and where there were no lamps seen burning through the windows of the houses, there was no life. These things were essential to life, and the absence of these things proved there was no life. The desolation was complete.

"I will punish the king of Babylon." In chapters fifty and fifty-one of this same book we have the punishment of Babylon and her king described at length. God did not cause Babylon to take his people into captivity, but he allowed them to do it, and used them for the punishment of his people. But since they were acting of their free will, they were responsible for their sins. Babylon was called the servants of God while they were taking Judah into captivity, in the sense that she was being used of God to punish his people; but the Babylonians did not take Judah captive because they wanted to help God or do his service. They took them captive because of their greed and lust for power. They were punished, not because they served God in punishing his people, but because of their greed in plundering God's heritage.

"Many nations and great kings." The Medes and Persians under Cyrus were used of the Lord to bring the final destruction of the Babylonian empire. By changing the course of a river, the army entered the city while the rulers were having a great feast, and took the city and plundered it. The student may read of the fall of Babylon in the book of Daniel.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you." This is an expression of tenderness among hard judgments, and shows the feeling of God for his people. He is being stern in his punishment, but it is not because he enjoys it. He must punish sin for the protection of his own glory and majesty, that his sense of right and justice be not outraged, and for the good of his people. But all the while he is thinking thoughts of peace and love, and thoughts that will give them hope in the time to come.

"Ye shall . . . pray unto me, and I will hearken." How wonderful and long-suffering is the love and forbearance of God! These people had lived in such way as to provoke him to anger, yet when they turn to him with their whole heart, he will love them and forgive them, and he will bring them back into their land and give them happiness. In this forgiving disposition of God, we too base our hopes of everlasting happiness. If God is not willing to forgive over and over again those who sin without excuse, none of us will be saved.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—It is rather difficult to determine the exact dates of the captivity, and show that the Jews were in Babylon just seventy years. In fact some of them were there longer than seventy years, or some of them were there not quite that long, for they were not all taken to Babylon at once, or in the same years. "Nebuchadnezzar, in the first half of his reign, 606-562 B.C., repeatedly invaded Judah, besieged Jerusalem, carried away the inhabitants to Babylon, and destroyed the city and temple. Two distinct deportations are mentioned in 2 Kings 24: 14 (including 100,000 persons) and 25: 11. One in 2 Chron. 36: 20. Three in Jer. 52: 28, 29, including 4,600 persons, and one in Dan. 1:3. The two principal deportations were:

(1) that which took place in 598 B.C., when Jehoiachin with all the nobles, soldiers, and artificers were carried away; and (2) that which followed the destruction of the temple and the capture of Zedekiah 588 B.C. . . . The seventy years of captivity predicted by Jeremiah (25: 12) are dated by Prideaux from 606 B.C." (Smith's Bible *Dictionary*.)

This last date mentioned seems to be the correct date for the beginning of the seventy years, though it was not the year in which the greater number of captives were taken. Geikie says, "The seventy years of captivity, dating from 606 B.C.—the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Daniel and many others were carried off to Babylon—to the accession of Cyrus as sole king, in 536 B.C., had now expired, and the sure word of prophecy could not fail." (Vol. 6, p. 402.) Since the date of the decree of Cyrus is rather well fixed, and they were to be in captivity just seventy years, and since there were a few who were taken into captivity in that year, the fourth of the reign of Jehoiakim, it seems best to use these dates as the period of captivity.

But as the people were taken into captivity at different times, so they were brought back at different times; they did not all return together.) "The Babylonian captivity was brought to a close by the decree (Ezra 1: 2) of Cyrus, 536 B.C., and the return of a portion of the nation under Sheshbazzar or Zerubbabel 535 B.C., Ezra 458 B.C., and Nehemiah 445 B.C." (Smith's Bible *Dictionary*.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The central theme of this lesson is that people who sin must suffer. There can be no such thing as sin without suffering. This lesson may be illustrated by the use of the physical body. If one eats too much, the body will suffer; and if such abuse of the body is continued indefinitely, death will be the result. The people of Judah continued to sin against God in spite of repeated warnings from the prophets. God brought mild rebukes at first; then the punishments were a little more severe from time to time; finally, when they refused to heed his warnings, he brought upon them such a sore punishment that they were cured of the idolater. After their return from Babylon the Jews were never guilty of idolatry again, though they did commit other sins.

The last paragraph of our lesson text presents another side of God's nature. He is just as willing to forgive and bless the penitent as he is to punish the sinner. So we have his promises to forgive them, to hear them when they pray, and to be found of them who seek him with their whole heart. From this you may show the goodness and mercy of God toward all people in spite of the fact that all are sinners. The first is a warning to those who are doing wrong; the last is a promise and encouragement to all who wish to quit sin and live for God. These lessons may be used in these departments to inspire these children to resolve to live in the fear of God so they may escape his judgments. If you can keep them from forming bad habits of sin, they will never have to break bad and sinful habits to avoid the punishments which God sends upon the sinner.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The consequences of sin should be impressed deeply in these departments. Temptations to sin are many, and young people in these departments are especially in danger because of their environment and associations. They are continually in need of both encouragements and warnings against sin. Paul tells us that these things happened to the people, and were written for our admonition, so we may not make the mistake of walking contrary to the will of God. (Rom. 15: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 6, 11.)

Again we have evidences of divine inspiration of the word of God in these prophecies of Jeremiah. His predictions came true, and they were of such nature that he could not possibly have guessed; he was talking as he was guided by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1: 21.)

Young People and Adult Departments

As in the other departments, so in these, the central thought is that disobedience to God's will always brings destruction if man persists in it. From the Garden of Eden, the flood, the captivity of the Jews, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the description of the place of final and eternal punishment of the wicked—from all these there is but one lesson—they all with one voice shout, "The wages of sin is death." Stupid indeed must be that man or woman who can read these records of the punishment of evildoers and go on living in sin with impunity!

Topics for Discussion

It would be helpful and interesting to have special reports by selected ones on Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon, and Cyrus. It would also be well to have one report on the last five kings of Judah—Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. Their reigns, and the outstanding events of each, in their order will give the class a background which will help them to understand the captivity.

Another thing of interest which will help in studying the book of Jeremiah is to have a report on the order in which Jeremiah's prophecies are recorded in his book. Some of his early prophecies are in the last part of the book, and some of his late works are in the first part of the book. The material can be found in Adam Clarke's *Commentary*, in the Introduction to Jeremiah, or in any good religious encyclopedia. The study will be both interesting and instructive.

Lesson VII—November 16, 1947

JEREMIAH FORETELLS THE NEW COVENANT

The Lesson Text

Jer. 31: 31-34; 32: 36-41; 50: 4, 5

31 Behold, the days come, saith Je-ho'vah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Is'ra-el, and with the house of Ju'dah:

32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Je-ho'vah.

33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Is'ra-el after those days, saith Je-ho'vah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in

their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Je-ho'vah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Je-ho'vah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.

36 And now therefore thus saith Je-ho'vah, the God of Is-ra-el, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It is given into the hand of the king of Bab'y-lon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence:

37 Behold, I will gather them out of all the countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my wrath, and in great indignation; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely.

38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

39 And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:

40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from following them, to do them good; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they may not depart from me.

41 Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.

4 In those days, and in that time, saith Je-ho'vah, the children of Is-ra-el shall come, they and the children of Ju'dah together; they shall go on their way weeping, and shall seek Je-ho'vah their God.

5 They shall inquire concerning Zi'on with their faces thitherward, saying, Come ye, and join yourselves to Je-ho'vah in an everlasting covenant that shall not be forgotten.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them.”* (Jer. 32: 39.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Jer. 33: 1-9.

Daily Bible Readings

November 10. M.....	The Potter's Vessel (Jer. 18: 1-12)
November 11. T.....	Israel to Be Scattered (Jer. 18: 13-23)
November 12. W.....	Jeremiah Bewails Their Fate (Jer. 20: 7-18)
November 13. T.....	The Lying Prophets (Jer. 23: 9-32)
November 14. F.....	Mockers Rebuked (Jer. 23: 33-40)
November 15. S.....	Judah's Captivity Threatened Again (Jer. 25: 1-14)
November 16. S.....	Deliverance Promised (Jer. 30: 12-24)

Lesson Subject Explained

When God delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage under Moses, he made a covenant with them at Mount Sinai. (Deut. 5.) The words of this covenant are the ten commandments, written on two tables of stone. (Ex. 34: 27, 28; Deut. 9: 9-11.) But the Jews broke this covenant times without number. Jehovah said, "For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice. Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the stubbornness of their evil heart: therefore I brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did them not." (Jer. 11: 7, 8.) When one party to a covenant, or agreement, fails to keep the terms of the covenant, the other party to the agreement is released of any further obligation. So when the Jews broke the covenant by their unfaithfulness and infidelity, God was no longer bound to bless and keep them according to the terms of the covenant. But his infinite love would not allow him to abandon them completely; he would make a new covenant with them. This new covenant would be a better one, established upon better promises,

having a better mediator, with blood better than that of animals. (Heb. 8: 6.)

However, at the time of the prophecy the Jews were not ready for the new covenant. They were at that time in captivity in Babylon, and they must be brought back into their own land before the covenant could be made. So Jeremiah is comforting and encouraging them to look for a return to their own land, where they would enjoy a better covenant with God. But the fulfillment of this prophecy was not until the times of the Messiah, who was to be the mediator. This new covenant is the gospel of Jesus Christ. As the old covenant was expressed in the ten commandments, so this new covenant is expressed in the gospel of Christ. In this connection the student should read chapters eight, nine, and ten of Hebrews to get the contrast between the two covenants and see the superiority of the new over the old.

Context of the Lesson

Authorities differ as to the time of the deliverance of this prophecy. Adam Clarke thinks it was delivered after the fall and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. But Geikie thinks it was delivered during the siege of the city, which lasted nearly eighteen months. But whether during the siege, or after the fall of the city, we are assured that the conditions under which Jeremiah delivered this prophecy concerning the restoration of the people and living under a new and better covenant were not conducive to belief of it. It required an unusual faith in the prophet himself to deliver such a prophecy when he was undergoing almost unbearable persecution from his enemies in the city during the siege. Jeremiah advocated surrender to Nebuchadnezzar as their only hope of saving the city from complete destruction, as well as saving the lives of many of the people. A strong party in the city which depended on Egypt to help them break the siege accused Jeremiah of a lack of loyalty, even of treachery and desertion. When the Egyptians made a weak attempt to help the Jews, the besieging army had to withdraw some of its forces for two or three months to repel the Egyptians. During this time Jeremiah decided to go to Anathoth, his home town, to receive some money due him. When he reached the gate of Jerusalem, he was arrested as a deserter and thrown in a dungeon. On another occasion he was thrown into a pit, or old cistern, where the mud and mire, according to Josephus, came up to his neck. In this he would surely have died, as his enemies intended, if he had not been rescued by an Ethiopian friend. And had Zedekiah not feared and respected him as God's prophet, he no doubt would have died. However, Zedekiah did not have the courage to give him the protection he deserved. It was during this time, too, that Jeremiah bought a field from his cousin that he might demonstrate his faith in his predictions as to the future welfare of the land. (Jer. 32.) To get a picture of the conditions of the time, and of Jeremiah's suffering during the time he delivered the prophecy of our lesson, the student should read chapters thirty-two to forty of the book of Jeremiah.

The paragraph from Jer. 50: 4, 5, though near the close of the book, is part of a prophecy delivered in the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah. (Jer. 51: 59.) And the siege of the city, at or near

the time of the delivery of the other parts of our lesson text, was in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah. (Jer. 52: 5.) So this part of our lesson was delivered some six or seven years prior to the other sections. The conditions which prevailed in Judah at the time may be gathered from the following, "And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy." (2 Chron. 36: 15, 16.)

But in spite of the conditions which prevailed at the time of the delivery of the prophecy, Jeremiah was allowed to look into the future and see that the people of Israel would be weeping for their God and for their land, and that they would be allowed to return. He was also allowed to see that the nation which took them into captivity would be visited by a people from the north of them who would destroy Babylon. (50: 2, 3.)

Golden Text Explained

The language of our Golden Text has reference to the condition of the people after the return from captivity. (32: 36, 37.) "**I will give them one heart.**" This new heart was a heart of undivided affection. Before the captivity the people were idolatrous, worshipping the gods of the nations around them. But when they came back from Babylon, they were cured of their idolatrous worship. We have similar language in another of Jeremiah's prophecies, which describes this new heart they were to have. "And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Jehovah: . . . for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." (Jer. 24: 7.) And Ezekiel spoke of the same gathering from captivity, and of similar results to follow. "And I will give them one heart, . . . that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them. . . . But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their way upon their own heads." (Ezek. 11: 19-21.)

The fact that God says he would give them this heart is no proof of a miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit. God led the people through such experiences during their captivity that they changed their mind with reference to idolatry, and came to fear the Lord, and respect him and his authority over them.

This new heart that would fear Jehovah would be for the good of the people and for the good of their children after them. Parents today should realize that if they fear the Lord it will be good for them, and that it will have a wholesome influence upon their children to keep them in the church, clean in their lives, and faithful in their devotion to God. For parents to fail to set this example and wield this influence over their children is to sin grievously against them. In this connection read Deut. 11: 18-25.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"*With the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.*" The "house of Israel" means the ten tribes in the kingdom of Israel,

which were carried into Assyria, from which captivity they never returned; so they are spoken of as lost. How could God make a new covenant with them? This expression, "house of Israel" and "house of Judah," included all the people of God. The new covenant was not to be made with Jews only, but with all of every nation who would turn to God with the whole heart. So the expression must be taken simply as meaning all of the people of God.

"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers."

This covenant made when he led their fathers out of Egypt was the Sinaitic covenant, the ten commandments, with all the rites and ceremonies, and sundry regulations growing out of them, which was given through Moses. It was called the law of Moses. (Ezra 7: 6; Acts 15: 5; see Ezra 6: 18; Neh. 8: 1.)

"My covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them."

God represents himself as married to his people, and when they worshiped idols they were guilty of spiritual fornication, and for that God regarded not his covenant with them. For the proof of their fornication see Jer. 2: 20 and Ezek. 16: 29.

"I will put my law in their inward parts." This is equal to the next expression, "And in their heart will I write it." We have the same statement in 2 Cor. 3: 3 with reference to the law of Christ. Their obedience was not to be so much formality, but it would be from the inward parts, the heart.

"They shall teach no more." The idea is not that the new covenant is not to be taught to any one at all. The gospel is to be preached to every creature under heaven. "They shall all be taught of God." (John 6: 45.) But under the new covenant the members of that covenant will not need to be taught to know Jehovah, for all, from the least to the greatest, shall already know Jehovah. Under the old covenant people came into it by natural birth, and so had to be taught to know Jehovah. But under the new covenant people come into it through a knowledge of God; hence, do not have to be taught to know Jehovah after they get in. This is proof that infants are not included in the new covenant.

"Their sin will I remember no more." Under the first covenant there was a remembrance made of sins year by year in the offerings of animals, since their blood could not atone for sins. But under the new covenant the blood of Christ completely atones for sin, and there is no necessity for that offering to be repeated. (Heb. 9: 24 to 10: 4.)

"Behold, I will gather them out of all the countries." Right along with the description of the terrible desolation that was to come upon the people and their land Jeremiah gives promises of a restoration of the people to the land. But, as usual, right in the midst of those promises of restoration the prophet's mind runs on to the distant future to things which have not been, and cannot be, expected to take place in the land of Palestine. So in this passage he speaks of the restoration of the people to their land, and then the new covenant is to be given. But the restoration to the land took place more than four hundred and fifty years before the new covenant was given. It is possible that the prophet had only the spiritual restoration in mind, and he used the literal terms to express it.

"I will rejoice over them to do them good." Jehovah speaks of doing things with his whole heart and his whole soul. This expresses his sincerity in doing good to his people.

"Join yourselves to Jehovah in an everlasting covenant." This is a picture of God's people returning in their hearts to the God they had forsaken. As an unfaithful wife returns humbly and heart-broken to her faithful, waiting husband to join herself to him again, so his people were through with idolatry and ready to be married again to God.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The table of dates being followed in these lessons gives 587 B.C. for Jer. 31; 589 B.C. for Jer. 32; and 595 B.C. for Jer. 50.

FALL OF JERUSALEM.—A description of the siege and fall of Jerusalem is thought helpful at this time. The following is condensed from Geikie, vol. 6; chap. VI. The siege of Jerusalem had begun on the tenth of the month Kislew, nearly our December, in the year 591 B.C. Jerusalem was a place in all probability of not more than 20,000 inhabitants at the time. And had not the city been on such inaccessible hills, surrounded by such walls, this small force could not have held out for eighteen months. The besiegers had invested it on every side, so no provisions could enter. The thud of battering-rams shook the walls day and night; archers made the defense increasingly hard by constant showers of arrows from high wooden forts erected by the enemy outside the walls; catapults of all sizes hurled stones into the town with a force as deadly as that of modern bullets, and darts tipped with fire kindled the roofs of the houses; mines were dug under the walls, and attempts at escalade by ladders were renewed at every favorable opportunity.

But the besieged were not behind in their resources of defense. Houses were demolished that new walls might be built of the material inside each spot weakened by the battering-rams. The rams were caught when possible with double chains or ropes, to weaken them, or capsize them. Lighted torches and firebrands were thrown on the catapults and rams; the gates were defended against burning. But famine stalked within the walls, followed by its inevitable colleague, pestilence. Mothers became so hungry that they ate their children; the richest citizens wandered the streets looking for food in the rubbish and dunghills. To make matters worse feuds broke out within the city.

But finally a breach was made in the walls. Under cover of night a force entered the city. The shout of the conquerors was the signal for King Zedekiah to flee for his life. He tried to make the crossing of the Jordan near Jericho, but was overtaken and brought back to Nebuchadnezzar. His eyes were punched out; he was chained; a ring was put through his lips, and he was placed in a cage and taken to Babylon to lie in a dungeon, till death put an end to his sufferings. Such were the fearful and terrible consequences of continued disobedience to the word of Jehovah delivered by his prophets.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

A few children came from Europe to America during the war because their lives were in danger. Although they were not captives and were treated well while they were here, no doubt they were happy when the news came to them that their land was safe and they were to return to their homes. And surely there was happiness among the people who were held captives in Babylon when the news was brought to them that the days of their captivity were over, and they might return to their homeland where they might be free men and women, and boys and girls, and live like normal human beings.

With this demonstration of the goodness of God the Jews never again went off into idolatry. And the goodness of God manifested towards us in giving us a free land in which to live, good homes with plenty of food and clothing, and the privilege of living under rulers who allow us to worship as we are taught in the Bible, should cause us to love God and serve him as long as we live. The wise man, Solomon, said, "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." (Eccles. 12: 1.) Children should be impressed with the goodness of God, which leads people to turn to God (Rom. 2: 4), and this lesson affords a good opportunity to illustrate his goodness to his people.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The people of Israel and Judah made their mistakes by refusing to listen to the prophets of God. All the miseries of their capture and captivity resulted from walking in their own ways in preference to the ways of God. Young people in these departments are inclined to think religion has about outlived its day of usefulness. It is difficult for them to feel the need of outside direction. They are inclined to refuse to listen to the warnings and admonitions of the preachers; their sayings are trite and worn out. No doubt the Jews thought the same thing about the words of the prophets in their day. While people are not carried into captivity of another country today for disobeying God, they are led captive by Satan when they refuse to obey God, and service in his kingdom means death. This is an opportunity to instil in their hearts the proper respect for the messages of God as they fall from the lips of consecrated servants of God preaching the gospel.

The superiority of the blessings of the new covenant over those of the old covenant is a good lesson for these departments. The teacher should make a list, many of which can be found in the book of Hebrews, for the consideration of the class.

Young People and Adult Departments

These departments should make as thorough a study of the two covenants as time will permit. Perhaps special reports on each of them by different members of the class will be the best way. And as many points of contrast should be made between the two as can be made in the time allowed.

Another lesson of interest for these departments is that of the blessings of hardships, or the blessings to be gained through discipline. God did not send his people into captivity as an act of retaliation; he did not punish them because he had the power to do it and enjoyed seeing them suffer. He punished them for their own good. And through their suffering they learned lessons which they would not learn from their prophets. The value of discipline in the church today is not realized as it should be. People are afraid to discipline the wicked for fear the good name of the church will suffer. God did not allow the people of Israel to continue in sin because he was afraid his good name would suffer if he allowed his people to be taken into captivity. It is a truth that his name did suffer when his people were captured. Every Babylonian thought the gods of Babylon were stronger than Jehovah or they could not have won the victory in battle. But his name did not suffer as much when he disciplined his people as it would have suffered by their continued wickedness. Nor will the church suffer as much today from discipline as it will by allowing wickedness to continue in its membership. Many of the Jews were saved by the discipline of captivity. So many people today can be saved by church discipline who would otherwise be lost. (1 Cor. 5: 5.)

Topics for Discussion

1. The children of Israel were given the land of Canaan under an everlasting covenant, as stated by David. (Psalm 105: 8-11.) If the land was theirs by an everlasting covenant, why did they lose it? Why are they not in the land today? Will they ever have it?

Lesson VIII—November 23, 1947

LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH

The Lesson Text

Lam. 1: 1-4; 2: 11-15; 5: 1-7

- 1 How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!
She is become as a widow, that was great among the nations!
She that was a princess among the provinces is become tributary!
- 2 She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks;
Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her;
All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they are become her enemies.
- 3 Ju'dah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude;
She dwelleth among the nations, she findeth no rest:
All her persecutors overtook her within the straits.
- 4 The ways of Zi'on do mourn, because none come to the solemn assembly:
All her gates are desolate, her priests do sigh:
Her virgins are afflicted, and she herself is in bitterness.
- 11 Mine eyes do fail with tears, my heart is troubled;
My liver is poured upon the earth, because of the destruction of the daughter of my people,
Because the young children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city.
- 12 They say to their mothers. Where is grain and wine?
When they swoon as the wounded in the streets of the city,
When their soul is poured out into their mothers' bosom.
- 13 What shall I testify unto thee? what shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Je-ru'sa-lem?

- What shall I compare to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zi'on?
 For thy breach is great like the sea: who can heal thee?
 14 Thy prophets have seen for thee false and foolish visions;
 And they have not uncovered thine iniquity, to bring back thy captivity.
 But have seen for thee false oracles and causes of banishment.
 15 All that pass by clap their hands at thee;
 They hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Je-ru'sa-lem, saying,
 Is this the city that men called The perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?
 1 Remember, O Je-ho'vah, what is come upon us:
 Behold, and see our reproach.
 2 Our inheritance is turned unto strangers.
 Our houses unto aliens.
 3 We are orphans and fatherless;
 Our mothers are as widows.
 4 We have drunken our water for money;
 Our wood is sold unto us.
 5 Our pursuers are upon our necks:
 We are weary, and have no rest.
 6 We have given the hand to the E-gyp'tians,
 And to the A-syr'i-ans, to be satisfied with bread.
 7 Our fathers sinned, and are not;
 And we have borne their iniquities.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.*” (Lam. 3: 41.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Lam. 4: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

November 17.	M.	.....Sorrow for Captive Zion (Lam. 1: 5-11)
November 18.	T.	.....Zion's Sorrow (Lam. 1: 14-22)
November 19.	W.	Lamentations of the Afflicted (Lam. 2: 19-22)
November 20.	T.	.....The Sufferings of Judah (Lam. 3: 1-18)
November 21.	F.	.....Mercy from God (Lam. 3: 19-31)
November 22.	S.	.....Hope of Relief (Lam. 3: 40-66)
November 23.	S.	.....Prayer for Mercy (Lam. 5: 10-22)

Lesson Subject Explained

The book from which our lesson text is taken is a record of the lamentations of the prophet Jeremiah over the fall of Jerusalem and the terrible fate of the city which followed. “In the Hebrew text no author of these compositions is named, but a very old tradition ascribes them to Jeremiah. Already, in the Septuagint translation, made in the second and third centuries before Christ, the statement is prefixed in the Book, that ‘It came to pass, after Israel was taken captive, and Jerusalem made desolate, Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented this Lamentation over Jerusalem,’ and to this the Vulgate adds, ‘in bitterness of heart, sighing and crying.’ The Arabic version quotes the words of the Septuagint, and the Targum begins with the statement that ‘Jeremiah the great prophet and priest’ was the author. It is only in recent times that critics have questioned the Jewish and early Christian church, and ascribed the Lamentations to some other author. Nothing that is urged, however, need shake our confidence in these touching laments being the production of the great prophet. Near the Damascus gate, on the north side of Jerusalem, a ‘grotto,’ which, in reality, is an old quarry, is still shown, as the spot where he is fancied to have composed them, but it is clear that the rock, at one time, extended to the city wall.

“The ‘Lamentations’ are still read yearly by the Jews, to commemorate the burning of the temple. Every Friday, Israelites, old

and young, of both sexes, gather at the 'Wailing Place' in Jerusalem, near the southwest corner of the Old Temple grounds, where an ancient wall, fifty-two yards in length, and fifty-six feet in height, is still revered as a memorial of the sanctuary of the race. Nine courses of huge stones, one sixteen feet long, another thirteen, are crowned by fifteen rows of stones of smaller sizes, but what is above ground is little to what is buried, for seventy feet of rubbish lie heaped over the ancient surface, at the spot where the mourners gather. It may be that some stones of the temple destroyed by the Chaldeans still remain in their places, but they must be buried deep, under the wreck of the second and third temple, especially the third, thrown down by the Romans, when the ancient city finally perished. It is a touching sight, nevertheless, to watch the line of Jews of many nations, in their black gaberdines, as a sign of grief, lamenting aloud the ruin of that House whose very memory is still so dear to their race, and reciting the sad verses of 'Lamentations,' and suitable Psalms, amidst tears, as they fervently kiss the stones. On the ninth of the month Ab, nearly our July, this dirge, composed about six hundred years before Christ, is read aloud in every synagogue over the world." (Geikie, Vol. 6, pp. 118-122.)

Context of the Lesson

As suggested above, we must view the writer of this book as sitting among the ruins of his beloved city, thinking of its glorious past, and of its wonderful possibilities, and all the while contrasting these with what has actually come to pass. What Jerusalem could have been, if the people had obeyed God, and what Jerusalem was at the time of this writing, on account of disobedience and rebellion, were so far apart that even Jeremiah "the weeping prophet" found it difficult to express his disappointment and grief. All the calamities he had foretold had come to pass. And though he wept as he foretold these terrible things, his sorrow is multiplied many times as he beholds such utter desolation.

At this point it will be of interest to know how Jeremiah came to be left in Judea after the capture and destruction of Jerusalem. It should be remembered that Nebuchadnezzar did not take all the Jews out of the land at any one time, nor were they all finally removed. The bulk of the country people were never taken. (Jer. 39: 9, 10.) Those men who took part in the defense of the city were taken whether they lived in the city or the country. And there was always a party in Jerusalem, who believed in Jeremiah's prophecies, that favored nonresistance to Nebuchadnezzar. Those who were of this part were left in Judea to carry on and govern under the direction of Nebuchadnezzar. Gedaliah was made governor. (Jer. 40: 5.) Jeremiah was taken captive, and was led with the rest of the prisoners as far as Ramah. When Nebuchadnezzar discovered him among the people, he put him in the keeping of Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard. Some time after this Nebuzaradan gave Jeremiah his choice, saying, "Behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which are upon thy hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come, and I will look well unto thee; but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land is before thee; whither it seemeth good and right unto thee to go, thither go." (Jer. 40: 4, 5.) This was the reward of righteousness

for Jeremiah. He decided to stay in his native land, though we are not told his motive for so doing. He went back to his native Anathoth, where he remained until the murder of his friend, Gedaliah.

Golden Text Explained

The language of our Golden Text must be considered in the light of what goes before and what follows if we get its meaning. Jeremiah had confessed that the people had sinned, and that the punishment had been the due reward of their deeds. He said, "It is of Jehovah's lovingkindnesses that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." And again, he said, "Jehovah is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him." And so he counseled his people to be patient under their trials and sorrows, knowing they were just. He reminded them that God "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." And since this punishment was not sent upon them because God enjoys seeing his people suffer, there is hope that such suffering will end; but if so, it will be on account of the compassion and mercy, and not the justice, of God. Therefore, since the Jews had brought this suffering upon themselves by their sins, and since there was hope that God might be compassionate with them, three things are recommended. First, do not complain. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" They were fortunate to be alive. Many of their fellow countrymen had perished in the destruction of the city; they should be thankful they were left alive, instead of complaining of their lot, though miserable. Second, they should examine themselves and repent. "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to Jehovah." Certainly, if they would but search and try their ways, they would find sufficient sins to cause them to repent. Likewise, we are told to examine ourselves, try ourselves whether we be in the faith, and in possession of Christ. (2 Cor. 13: 5.) And, third, they were to offer their love to God in fervent prayer. This is suggested in the language of our Golden Text. To lift up the heart with our hands is simply a figure of taking our heart in our hands and holding it up in the attitude of offering it to God. The heart here is used of the love, or affections. They ought to cease to love the idols of the nations around them; they ought to cease to love unrighteousness; they ought to set their affections on the God of the heavens, instead of the god of this world. So to sum up Jeremiah's recommendations, they should cease to complain of their lot and be patient under the rod of affliction which they had brought upon themselves; they should give more thought to self-examination, and, seeing their sins, they should repent, turn to God who alone can pardon out of the abundance of his loving-kindness; and they should prayerfully offer their undivided affections to God with full purpose of heart never to cease to love him and respect him as their God. Though we are not languishing as captives in a foreign land, nor has our native land been made desolate by the invading forces of an enemy nation, leaving us to the mercy of famine and pestilence, yet these three things recommended by Jeremiah for his people will do each one of us good.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"How doth the city sit solitary." Sitting on the ground weeping is a picture expressive of great sorrow. In Lam. 2: 10 the elders of

Jerusalem are pictured as sitting on the ground, clothed in sack-cloth, and throwing dust on their heads. The city was once full of happy people, but now she is pictured as one solitary woman sitting in the dust and weeping.

"She is become as a widow." This is another picture of loneliness and helplessness. "The Hindoo widow, as well as the Jewish, is considered the most destitute and wretched of all human beings. She has her hair cut short, throws off all ornaments, eats the coarsest food, fasts often, and is all but an outcast in the family of her late husband." (A. Clarke.)

"Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her." The allies of Jerusalem have turned against her; those to whom she looked for help proved faithless. Egypt offered a token of assistance, but it delayed the fall of Jerusalem no more than three months.

"Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction" On first sight this seems to say that Judah went into captivity on account of, as a result of affliction. But this we know is the opposite of truth; she went into captivity on account of her sins. The people of God needed affliction to bring them to a realization of their sins, and their lost condition. So we must conclude that this statement must be taken in this sense, that Judah is gone into captivity because of her need of affliction, and because of her need of "great servitude" to bring her to her knees before God, against whom she has so grievously sinned.

"The ways of Zion do mourn." The word *ways* means the roads or streets. They are pictured as mourning because people do not use them to go to worship. Even the gates are pictured as desolate because no one passes through them going to worship. The priests sigh, for no one makes use of their ministrations.

"My liver is poured upon the earth." This expression is used to describe unusual bitterness of soul. In the darkest days of his trouble Job spoke of his gall being poured out upon the ground. (Job 16: 13.) When Jeremiah surveyed the destruction of the "daughter of my people," "the young children and the sucklings," he was especially bitter in anguish.

"Thy breach is great like the sea." Jerusalem had not suffered a small breach in her defenses. All her defenses were swept away like a flood sweeps everything on the beach before it; there was no way of repairing the breach.

"They have not uncovered thine iniquity" This is a charge against the false prophets. Jeremiah seems to suggest here that if all the prophets had told the truth as he did the people of Judah would have listened, and the destruction could have been averted. If they had uncovered iniquity, if they had exposed the sins of the people, they could have been saved. This is good admonition to preachers of this age. Exposing sin is the salvation of the sinner; covering his sin, winking at his sin, will bring about his destruction. And it will also be the cause of the condemnation of the faithless preacher.

"They hiss and wag their head" This is an expression which denotes ridicule. All are represented as ridiculing Jerusalem for her desolate condition. She had boasted the most beautiful temple in the world, and with just grounds; but now it lay in ruins and the heathen jested about its beauty.

"Remember, O Jehovah, what is come upon us." This entire chapter is a prayer for the Jews. Jeremiah calls upon Jehovah to remember them, to see their reproach; he asks that the Lord not overlook the fact that their inheritance has been given over to strangers, and they were being oppressed on every hand.

"We have drunken our water for money." This means that they even had to buy the water they drank. And in the next line he says that wood was sold to them. That which was free in days of old is now sold to them at such prices they can never have anything but the bare necessities of life.

"We have given the hand to the Egyptians." To give the hand is to make an agreement. So they had agreed with both the Egyptians and the Chaldeans to be satisfied with bread. They had no rich foods, no variety of food; their diet was bread and water.

"Our fathers sinned, . . . we have borne their iniquities." When a nation's cup of iniquity is full, and destruction comes upon the nation for its sins, the generation living at the time of destruction has to suffer for the sins of several generations past, as well as for its own sins. The fathers will suffer personally for their sin in the hereafter, but the temporal punishment for the sins of a nation may be suffered by the people of one generation.

"Our skin is black like an oven" Jeremiah says their skin had turned black because of the burning heat of the famine. Lack of food had caused them to lose their flesh between the skin and the bone. Improper diet will cause dark spots to come in the skin. Read verse eight of chapter four. They had been without sufficient and proper food so long that they had become black, and their skin was dry and withered like a stick.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—The date given for the writing of the book of Lamentations is 588 B.C. However, it is altogether probable that the last chapter was written several months, and perhaps a few years, after the other chapters were written. In verse eighteen Jeremiah speaks of the utter desolation of the mountain of Zion, and says, "The foxes walk upon it." It is not likely that the foxes would have walked upon the mountain amid the ruins of the city for some time after the plunderers finished searching the ruins for valuables.

GEOGRAPHY.—This is hardly the place for a description of Babylon, where the captives were at the time of the writing of Lamentations, but space could not be found in other lessons on Jeremiah. Condensed from Geikie, we have the following: The city in which Daniel found himself was the greatest in the ancient world. Herodotus visited Babylon in 450 B.C., less than 100 years after the Jews left there, and he reports that the city was a square of fourteen miles, twice the size of London at the turn of the century. The city was situated at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, in a rich agriculture section; it was on the trade route between the Mediterranean and the far east; and its water routes reached India and Africa. There were rocks for mansions, clay for building brick, bitumen for its cement.

The city was enclosed by two walls, the outer of which was almost unbelievably high and broad. Herodotus says it was 300 feet high and eighty feet across the top. This wall was over forty miles in

length. There were 100 gates in the wall and all were made of brass. And there were 250 towers built upon the wall for observation and protection. It is estimated that more than fifteen billion bricks were used in the walls, not including the towers. There were inner walls along the edge of the river on both sides, with draw-bridges and ferries for crossing. The palace ground covered better than twenty-two square miles. One of the royal buildings covered thirty-seven acres, while another was 800 by 600 yards, or nearly one-half miles square.

Nebuchadnezzar built the "hanging gardens" for his Median wife. These were 400 feet square at the base, and they rose in pyramid style, getting smaller as they rose. On the terraces gardens were planted, springs were made to run, thickets of flowering shrubs, interspersed with cool chambers, royally furnished, at successive heights. It is said to be the most extravagant love gift ever offered by any human being to another. But so little of all this magnificence remains today that the site is difficult to locate. The glories of men pass away and are forgotten, but God and his word live on forever.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

Many German and Japanese cities lie in ruins today because of the lust for power these rulers had. It would be a good thing to get several pictures of these cities to illustrate the wreck and ruin of Jerusalem by the Chaldean army. Impress them with the fact that sin is the cause of all such destruction and desolation. The people of Judah were in a starving condition, as we saw in the lesson comments. Famine and pestilence follow wars; they are a part of the consequences of sin. Pictures of starving children can be found which will illustrate the condition of children in Jerusalem, and catch the attention of the boys and girls in your class.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Sorrow for mistakes will not correct conditions. If that were possible, Jeremiah's sorrow would have restored Jerusalem. The weeping of the Jews in Babylon, and along the "wailing wall" in Jerusalem, would have restored the city if sorrow and regret were effective restorers. Regret will not mend a soiled character, nor rebuild a good reputation. For this reason young people should be very careful what they do and say.

Our lesson represents Jerusalem as being, at one time, great among the nations. In the days of David and Solomon Jerusalem was a great power. As long as their conduct was such that God could be with them, they were great. But when they forgot God, they fell. It is better to live in obscurity with God than to be President without God.

Young People and Adult Departments

Jeremiah's generation bore the iniquities of several generations gone before. Though children cannot inherit guilt of sin from parents, it is a fact that they can inherit the consequences of the sins of parents. Jerusalem was destroyed a generation after Christ was crucified, and Jews continue to suffer the consequences of that na-

tional sin. Parents should be careful to live in such manner that their children will have little or no consequences to bear on account of their sins.

Jerusalem was a well fortified city; but trust in human fortification was her ruin. If she had made Jehovah her tower, she would have been safe from her enemies. (Psalm 61: 3.) Those who trust in Jehovah are never put to shame. (Psalm 71: 1-5.)

Lesson IX—November 30, 1947

EZEKIEL, A MAN OF VISIONS

The Lesson Text

Ezek. 1: 1-10

1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river Che'bar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king J6-hoi'S-chln's captivity,

3 The word of Je-ho'vah came expressly unto E-ze'ki-el the priest, the son of Bu'zi, in the land of the Chal-de'ans by the river Che'bar; and the hand of Je-ho'vah was there upon him.

4 And I looked, and, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud, with a fire infolding itself, and a brightness round about it, and out of the midst thereof as it were glowing metal, out of the midst of the fire.

5 And out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.

6 And every one had four faces, and every one of them had four wings.

7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like burnished brass.

8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings thus:

9 Their wings were joined one to another; and they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.

10 As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man; and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house.”* (Ezek. 3: 27b.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ezek. 1: 15-21.

Daily Bible Readings

November 24. M.....	Vision of Four Wheels (Ezek. 1: 15-25)
November 25. T.....	Vision of Divine Glory (Ezek. 1: 26-28)
November 26. W.....	Desolation of Jerusalem Foretold (Ezek. 5: 13-17)
November 27. T.....	Punishment of the Wicked (Ezek. 7: 1-22)
November 28. F.....	Vision of Abominations (Ezek. 8: 1-18)
November 29. S.....	Vision of the Guilty (Ezek. 9: 1-11)
November 30. S.....	Vision of the Cherubim (Ezek. 10: 9-22)

Lesson Subject Explained

During the wilderness wanderings Miriam and Aaron became jealous of Moses, saying that God had spoken by them as well as by Moses, and in this way indicating that they felt as important as Moses. God called them to the tent of meeting to reprimand them, and said, “If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a

dream. My servant Moses is not so; . . . with him will I speak mouth to mouth." (Num. 12: 6-8.) Ezekiel seems to have been favored with more visions than any other prophet. In Jeremiah we read many times that "the word of Jehovah came unto me." How that word came we are not told. This same expression is found in Ezekiel too, but on a number of occasions he was allowed to see a vision which he described and from which he drew his lessons of warning, reproof, and condemnation, and sometimes encouragement.

"The chief design of Ezekiel's prophecies is to comfort his brethren in captivity, who deplored their having too lightly credited the promises of Jeremiah, who had exhorted them speedily to submit to the Chaldees, on account of the approaching ruin of Jerusalem. As these captives saw no appearance of the fulfillment of Jeremiah's predictions, God raised up Ezekiel to confirm them in the faith, and to support by new prophecies those which Jeremiah had long before published, and even then continued to announce in Judea. In pursuance of this design, Ezekiel predicts the dreadful calamities which soon after were inflicted upon Judea and Jerusalem, on account of the idolatry, impiety, and profligacy of their inhabitants; the divine judgments that would be executed on the false prophets and prophetesses who deluded and hardened the Jews in their rebellion against God." (Horne.)

Some of these visions of Ezekiel are especially difficult. The Jews of ancient times were not allowed to study the book of Ezekiel until they were thirty years of age. On this subject Adam Clarke says, "That Ezekiel is a very obscure writer, all have allowed who have attempted to explain his prophecies. The Jews considered him inexplicable. There is a tradition that the rabbins held a consultation whether they would admit Ezekiel into the sacred canon. And it was likely to be carried in the negative, when Rabbi Ananias rose up and said he would undertake to remove every difficulty from the account of *Jehovah's chariot*, chapter 1, which is confessedly the most difficult part in the whole book. His proposal was received; and to assist him in his work, that he might complete it to his credit, they furnished him with *three hundred barrels of oil* to light his lamp during the time he might be employed in the study of this part of the subject! This extravagant grant proved at once the convictions the rabbins had of the difficulty of the work; and it is not even intimated that Rabbi Ananias succeeded in any tolerable degree, if indeed he undertook the task; and they believe that to this hour the chariot mentioned in chapter 1, and the account of the temple described at the conclusion of the book, have not been explained." But Clarke continues in his next paragraph to say, "The major part of the prophecy is very intelligible, and highly edifying; and does not present more difficulties than have been found in the preceding prophets, and may be found in those which follow."

Context of the Lesson

In order for us to get the context of this lesson it will be necessary for us to go to the historical books of this period. Ezekiel was born, probably, some thirty years before the final fall and destruction of Jerusalem, of which we have studied in the lessons on Jeremiah. He was carried into captivity along with Jehoiachin about eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar had laid siege

to the city and would have destroyed it if the king and his mother had not walked out in deep humility and offered themselves as hostages to save the city. But Nebuchadnezzar was not satisfied to take them alone; he took 10,000 men from the city and 3,000 from the surrounding country, among them being the best skilled craftsmen in the land, also many priests and princes and prophets. (2 Kings 24: 10-16.) Ezekiel was among the priests and their families taken at this time. They were settled in Mesopotamia, on the river Chebar, "which flows into the Euphrates about two hundred miles to the north of Babylon."

Golden Text Explained

To get the meaning of our Golden Text it will be necessary for us to review most of the chapter preceding it. Ezekiel says the Lord told him to warn the people, saying, if the wicked will turn from his wickedness and do right, he will save his life; but if the wicked turn not from his wickedness, he shall die in his iniquity. And if the righteous man turns from his righteousness and does that which is wicked, he shall die in his wickedness. But Ezekiel had a responsibility in these matters. It was his duty to warn the wicked of the consequences of his wickedness, and if he did not deliver the warning and the wicked man died in his wickedness, his blood would be required at the hands of Ezekiel. And if a righteous man turned from his righteousness and Ezekiel did not warn him of the terrible consequences of such a course, the blood of that man would be on Ezekiel's hands. If Ezekiel delivered his messages, he had delivered his soul regardless of how they were received by the people. For his encouragement he was again allowed to behold the vision of the glory of the Lord, which he saw as described in chapter one on the banks of Chebar, and again he was overcome by the grandeur of the vision. In verse twenty-six the Lord said he would make Ezekiel's tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth, that he might be dumb, and not a reprover on account of the rebellious disposition of the people. This seems to indicate that the Lord realized the futility of any further teaching of the people. They were refusing to do what they already knew to be their duty to do, so there was no need to give them any more teaching; though he would allow Ezekiel to warn them again and again. And in the language of our Golden Text, "He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear." This is the language of discouragement. God seems to be speaking as a man, saying, I have said all I know to say; I have done all I know to do to get this people to quit sin and do right; there is nothing more I can do except to warn them continually of the consequences of their course. And, now, if they will hear these warnings, let them hear; but if they forbear, that is, refuse to heed these warnings, let them do that to their own destruction. God was helpless to remedy the situation without exerting a power over them which would interfere with their power of choice. God could force every human being on earth to live right, if it were simply a question of power of the infinite God over frail human flesh. But God created man with the power to choose between good and evil, and from the first day until now he has never taken away from man that right.

Jehovah gave as his reason for his decision to allow these Jews in captivity either to receive or reject his messages the fact that

"they are a rebellious house." Though God has never excused ignorance (Lev. 5: 17-20), he has been lenient and long-suffering towards those who were in ignorance. Paul suggested that God winked at certain ignorance in times past. (Acts 17: 30.) Mankind has always been weak, since sin entered into the world, and has been inclined to evil. And when man sins, God is long-suffering, patient, and willing to forgive. While this has been his attitude towards people guilty of sins of ignorance and weakness, he has not manifested this attitude towards people who rebel against him. These Jews were a rebellious house. Their sins were not due to ignorance, for God had sent his prophets to them times without number to teach them of their sins and warn them to cease from sinning. He had even sent against them Nebuchadnezzar who had carried them into captivity in exact fulfillment of the prophecies of Jeremiah and the other prophets. In the face of these demonstrations of the truthfulness of the prophets these people had refused to listen. They had sinned against both light and mercy, both the knowledge and forbearance of God; they were no longer entitled to merciful consideration, and the justice of God must now be exercised instead of the mercy of God. Jehovah is as infinitely just as he is infinitely merciful; and when it is no longer right for God to extend his mercy to his people, on account of their rebellion, his justice is brought into action for their discipline and his glory.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"It came to pass in the thirtieth year." No one seems to know whether this was the thirtieth year of the life of Ezekiel or the thirtieth year from some other event. "It now seems generally agreed that it was the thirtieth year from the new era of Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar, who began to reign 625 B.C." (Smith's Bible *Dictionary*.) But Horne says, "He commenced his prophetic ministry in the thirtieth year of his age, according to general accounts; or rather, as Calmet thinks, in the thirtieth year after the covenant was renewed with God in the reign of Josiah, which answers to the fifth year of Ezekiel's and Jehoiachin's captivity, the era whence he dates his predictions." Though each man says his conclusion is of general acceptance, they differ widely.

"Fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity." Jehoiachin was taken captive in 599 B.C., so this prophecy was delivered in 595 B.C.

"Ezekiel the priest." Josephus says that Ezekiel was just a boy when he was taken into captivity, and many scholars are inclined to agree with him. But since this was only the fifth year of his captivity, and he speaks of himself as being a priest, and since Levites had to be thirty years of age before they were termed priests and allowed to perform the duties of priests, we conclude that he must have been thirty years old at the time of this experience. This may add weight to the idea that the thirty years of verse one refer to his age, and not to something else. This also tells us of his tribal connection, and helps us understand many phrases used in his prophecies which were peculiar to the priesthood.

Since the primary purpose of these lessons is to deal with characters, and since men of ripe scholarship do not propose to understand the import of this vision, and since our lesson does not cover all of

the vision, it is thought best not to attempt any comments on the balance of the verses of the lesson text.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—As we have before noticed, Ezekiel was carried into captivity in 599 B.C. He had been there nearly five years at the time he began his prophetic work. So the time of this lesson is 595 B.C.

GEOGRAPHY.—Ezekiel says, "Then I came to them of the captivity at Tel-abib, that dwelt by the river Chebar, and to where they dwelt." (Ezek. 3: 15.) Of this place we read, "This was probably a city of Chaldea or Babylonia, not of upper Mesopotamia, as generally imagined. The element 'Tel' in Tel-abib is undoubtedly 'hill.' It is applied in modern times by the Arabs especially to the mounds or heaps which mark the site of ruined cities all over the Mesopotamian plain, an application not very remote from the Hebrew use, according to which 'Tel' is 'especially a heap of stones.' It thus forms the first syllable in many modern, as well as many ancient, names throughout Babylonia." (Smith's Bible *Dictionary*.)

Geikie has an interesting note on this city. "Babylonia, however, was not altogether a strange land to the captives. Numbers of their fellow countrymen had already been carried thither after the battle of Carchemish, and on the second invasion of Palestine by Nebuchadnezzar, and has been settled at Tel-abib, which may be translated 'Cornhill,' on the banks of a great canal, the Chebar, connected with the Euphrates somewhere in Lower Mesopotamia."

Some have thought that the Chebar River was located in upper Mesopotamia, but the best scholars seem now to think the Chebar was a canal, called the "Royal Canal of Nebuchadnezzar." It is said to have been the greatest work of its kind in Mesopotamia, and it is supposed that some of the Jews were used in the excavation of the channel. If this canal is the Chebar of Ezekiel, it is a settled fact that the work of Ezekiel was done in Chaldea, and not in upper Mesopotamia.

CHARACTER.—"Trained as a priest, Ezekiel shows his early associations at once in the character of his visions, and in the culture of his style. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah had taken a lively interest in the everyday affairs and passing moods of their fellow countrymen. Their prophecies, or discourses, had been intensely practical; touching each moment, every relation of public, social, and private life. Ezekiel, on the other hand, speaks and writes in a way of his own, which is in striking contrast to that of his predecessors. Retiring, and indisposed to the part of an orator, he was more at home as the venerable spokesman of a private group than in the market place or the towngate. Fond of study, he shrank from noise and excitement. No other prophet shows so full an acquaintance with the older Hebrew literature, especially the Pentateuch; references to which pervade his whole book. The language of Genesis respecting the creation of man is in effect repeated by him; the Garden of Eden is often mentioned; the list of nations described in his account of Tyre is borrowed from the table of nations in the first book of the Bible; the names of precious stones, which occur so often, are taken from the Pentateuch. . . . He shows acquaintance with the prophecies of Hosea and Isaiah, but especially with those of his older contemporary Jeremiah, freely using their terms of thought

and phrases, as he does those of the books of Moses. . . . The influences of his priestly training are, indeed, everywhere apparent, in contrast with the characteristics of Jeremiah, who, though also a priest, has no such professional colouring in his prophecies. . . . How long Ezekiel continued his labor is not clear, nor is it known when he died. Twenty-seven years after leaving Jerusalem, he was busily engaged in his mission as a prophet (Ezek. 29: 17), but though this is the latest date in his book, he may have lived and worked much longer. Tradition speaks of him as being murdered by a Jewish noble whom he had offended, and a tomb said to be his, noted for a lamp kept continually burning, and for a copy of the prophecies said to be in his autograph, was seen by Benjamin of Tudela in the twelfth century." (Geikie.)

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

The material in our lesson text is not well suited to these departments. The teachers will have to gather material on the character of Ezekiel which will be of interest to these children. The fact that he was faithful when practically all others were rebellious; the fact that he was faithful to God in a strange land, and was continually exhorting all others to be faithful, are points of interest. It might also interest them to know that he was in that same section of country from which the faithful Abraham was called, and from whom the great nation of Jews had been built. It was a most tragic truth that sin had brought them back to the place where they started fifteen hundred years before, and in even a worse condition, for they were slaves and Abraham was a free man. Such are the consequences of sin. And these children can be impressed with it, and taught to avoid it.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

Doing right when it was popular to do wrong is a good thought with which to start this lesson in these departments. The prophets among the captives freely prophesied that their captivity would not last long, some of them even setting the time at two years. To this Ezekiel replied that the captivity would last seventy years. He was speaking God's word when it was most unpopular to do so. He could have enjoyed the friendship of his own people if he had not contradicted what his fellow prophets said, and the things which his people wished to hear. But he was willing to speak God's word regardless of the cost to himself in personal suffering. That is putting God first before self and selfish interest. Young people are inclined to enjoy popularity even if they have to disappoint the Lord to do so. Putting God first in our lives, even when it costs dearly in money or personal sufferings, is a lesson which all need to learn and put into practice.

Young People and Adult Departments

The thoughts suggested above are good for these departments too. Then, too, the idea may be varied a little and presented in this form—doing right in a strange city. People are inclined to take liberties when they are in strange cities to do things, and go places,

contrary to their standards at home. Ezekiel was in a strange land, under the rule of a strange people whose moral standards were very low as compared to his conceptions of right. Had he been inclined to take advantage of the situation to enjoy some liberties and indulge in loose living he had a fine opportunity. But his thoughts did not run along such lines. He was intensely interested in the welfare of his people; he was giving all his thought and energy to teaching them the right way, and warning them against continuing in their sin. It is impossible to calculate the value of such characters in a community. There are some who will not take part in sin, but who will not endanger their reputation, nor run the risk of losing the friendship of many, by reproving sin and warning out loud that sin will finally issue in suffering. They are trying to retain the favor of God and man at the same time. Jesus says it cannot be done. To attempt it is to invite disaster.

Topics for Discussion

Lesson X—December 7, 1947

EZEKIEL'S VISION OF JERUSALEM

The Lesson Text

Ezek. 8: 5-13, 16-18

5 Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold, northward of the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.

6 And he said unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Is'ra-el do commit here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? But thou shalt again see yet other great abominations.

7 And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall.

8 Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold, a door.

9 And he said unto me, Go in, and see the wicked abominations that they do here.

10 So I went in and saw; and behold, every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Is'ra-el, portrayed upon the wall round about.

11 And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Is'ra-el; and in the midst of them stood Ja-az-a-ni'ah the son of Shaphan, every man with his censer in his hand; and the odor of the cloud of incense went up.

12 Then said he unto me. Son of man, hast thou seen what the elders of the house of Is'ra-el do in the dark, every man in his chambers of imagery? for they say, Je-ho'vah seeth us not; Je-ho'vah hath forsaken the land.

13 He said also unto me. Thou shalt again see yet other great abominations which they do.

16 And he brought me into the inner court of Je-ho'vah's house; and behold, at the door of the temple of Je-ho'vah, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of Je-ho'vah, and their faces toward the east; and they were worshipping the sun toward the east.

17 Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Ju'dah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have turned again to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose.

18 Therefore will I also deal in wrath; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.

Golden Text.—*“And the glory of Jehovah went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.”* (Ezek. 11: 23.)

DEVOTIONAL HEADING.—Ezek. 9: 3-8.

Daily Bible Readings

December 1.	M.	False Prophets Condemned (Ezek. 13: 1-16)
December 2.	T.	Jerusalem to Be Destroyed (Ezek. 16: 1-14)
December 3.	W.	Parable of Two Eagles and a Vine (Ezek. 17: 1-21)
December 4.	T.	Punishment of Sin (Ezek. 18: 1-24)
December 5.	F.	Penitence Rewarded (Ezek. 18: 25-32)
December 6.	S.	Israel a Ruined Vine (Ezek. 19: 1-14)
December 7.	S.	Sins of Jerusalem Described (Ezek. 22: 1-22)

Lesson Subject Explained

Our lesson today concerns another vision of Ezekiel. It is not to be supposed that Ezekiel was actually in Jerusalem beholding all these sights described in the lesson. He was simply allowed to behold a vision of conditions which existed in Jerusalem. Whether these were mental impressions made by the Spirit of inspiration, or Ezekiel's spirit was carried away in a moment to see these things as they actually existed, we may never know. Paul says he was caught up to Paradise, whether in the body or out of the body he did not know, and there he saw and heard things he was not allowed to talk about. (2 Cor. 12.) This experience of Ezekiel may have been such an experience as Paul had, only Ezekiel was taken to Jerusalem instead of to Paradise. But since Ezekiel was sitting in his house with the elders of the land, we may conclude that his body was not taken. As Paul would express it, Ezekiel was not in the body. But it is possible that nothing more than a mental impression of conditions in Jerusalem was given Ezekiel. This, at least, would meet all the requirements of the passage. If this is what happened, it is more like the vision of the apostle Peter on the housetop in Joppa, in which he saw a great sheet knit at the four corners containing all manner of creatures, and heard a voice telling him to kill and eat. (Acts 10.) We are not to suppose Peter saw a literal sheet with literal physical animals gathered in it; this was simply a picture, or mental impression made on Peter's mind.

Context of the Lesson

It should be remembered that these prophecies were delivered before the final destruction of Jerusalem at the end of the reign of Zedekiah. Several thousand people were carried away with Jehoiachin, as we learned last week, in addition to those taken some time before. It was to these people that Ezekiel delivered his prophecy. They still did not believe that Jerusalem would be destroyed. They remembered the goodness of God in days past, when Israel needed a deliverer, and in his mercy the Lord always raised up one, or caused the armies of the enemies to perish by plague or pestilence. They could not believe that Jehovah had given them up to their enemies. As it was the duty of Jeremiah in Jerusalem to tell the people that Jerusalem would be destroyed, and that they need not depend on God to save them again as he had in days past, so it was the work of Ezekiel to put over that message to the people who were in captivity.

The purpose of this teaching on the part of Jeremiah in Jerusalem was to save as many of the people as possible from destruction. He told them that if they would accept the rule of Nebuchadnezzar without waging a long battle, the city would not be destroyed and many lives could be saved. But if they insisted on making an alliance with Egypt and fighting to the end, the city would be destroyed completely, and many of them would die in battle and others would be put to death in punishment for their resistance.

The purpose of such teaching by Ezekiel in the land of captivity was to quiet the people, to make them satisfied with their condition, and cause them to live peaceably under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar. There were unruly men among them who were stirring them up to rebel against their captors. There were false prophets who were continually adding fuel to the fire of rebellion by telling them their captivity would not last long. Many of the ringleaders of this opposition had been put to death, but the hopes of an early deliverance still lived in the hearts of many of the people. However, their lack of open rebellion had caused the Jews back in Jerusalem to look upon them as satisfied to stay in captivity, and they had come to despise them for their lack of courage and their willingness to suffer that they might be set free. And with the prospects of returning to Judah growing weaker, Ezekiel took advantage of the opportunity to give them a picture of the conditions in Jerusalem that he might further weaken their desire to return. This seems to be the purpose of the prophecy in our lesson at this time. "If anything could shock the exiles, and lead them to better thoughts, it would be to have the moral decay of the mother city brought vividly before them. Their national pride would surely revolt at the thought of Israel casting off the mighty Jehovah, and sinking to the level of the heathen whom they formerly despised." (Geikie.)

In this vision Ezekiel beheld the Lord coming to him in the likeness of fire and bright, glowing metal; and there came forth a form as of a hand which took him by a lock of his hair and lifted him up between earth and heaven, and carried him in vision to the city of Jerusalem, "to the door of the gate of the inner court that looketh toward the north." And here he beheld the same vision of the appearance of Jehovah as he had seen on the banks of the Chebar and as described in chapter one. He then proceeds to describe the idolatrous conditions of Jerusalem. The people, including the priests, in Jerusalem had copied the idolatries of the nations around them. Verses six to twelve describe the Egyptian worship; verses thirteen and fourteen tell of the Phoenician worship; and verses fifteen and sixteen describe the Persian superstitions which had found their way into Jewish worship.

Golden Text Explained

Chapters eight through eleven are all one prophecy. The sins of the people are described and their punishment is foretold. Coals of fire were scattered throughout the city to denote its destruction by fire. Then in several places in these chapters the glory of Jehovah is pictured as taking its departure from the temple and from the city, and with this part of the prophecy our Golden Text has to do.

In 9: 3 the glory of the Lord, symbolized by the light (Shechinah) between the wings of the cherubim and the mercy seat in the most

holy place, is said to have gone up from its usual place "to the threshold of the house," and in 10: 4 it is said to have "stood over the threshold of the house," so that even the court around the house of Jehovah was filled with the brightness of Jehovah. This removal seems to have been a warning that unless the people repented of their sins Jehovah would leave them, and his departure would mean that they would be denied his help and protection.

Then in 10: 19 the glory of Jehovah is pictured as riding on the Wings and wheels of this chariot which appears in Ezekiel's visions, removing from the threshold of the house to the east gate of the Lord's house. Whether this is the gate of the outer court or the gate of the city is difficult to say. Adam Clarke thinks it means the gate of the city. However, the expression, "east gate of Jehovah's house," will hardly allow that meaning. But it does suggest that the glory of Jehovah was withdrawn farther from the temple, and is a bolder suggestion, or threat, of his departure from the people and the temple.

The next mention of a farther departure of Jehovah is in our Golden Text, and the verse preceding. "Then did the cherubim lift up their wings, and the wheels were beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of Jehovah went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city." The fact that the glory of Jehovah went up "from the midst of the city" seems to confirm the position that the "gate of Jehovah's house" in 10: 19 means, not the gate of the city, but of the court surrounding the temple. Here the glory of Jehovah is said to have deserted the city. It lingers for a while on the Mount of Olives, which is the mountain east of the city. And by this gesture it seems to say that if the people will even yet repent it would return. In spite of their rebellion, and regardless of the fact that they have forsaken Jehovah for the gods of the nations around them, Jehovah is pictured as being loath to leave them. First, he merely leaves his place over the mercy seat, but does not leave the house completely, hovering over the threshold. Then he goes a little farther to stand by the gate of the house, at the outer court, where he waits a little longer. And finally he leaves the city, but not the promised land, and for a while hovers over the Mount of Olives before he takes his final departure from the land and the people which at one time were his heritage and lot, and in whom he was well pleased.

May we not conclude that God does not leave us suddenly? and that in mercy he lingers in the hope that we will repent of our sins and invite him to stay? Happy is that one who observes the Lord's displeasure on account of his sins, and who is warned by the fear of the departure of the Lord, and cleans up his life so the Lord can be pleased to stay. If one is inclined to think this too literal an application of the lesson, read Paul's words, "Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be reprobate." (2 Cor. 13: 5.) And again, Jesus pictures himself outside the lukewarm people of the church at Laodicea and saying, "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.) No, the Lord does not take his leave of us suddenly and without hope of return. He stands outside

the heart that is too filthy for him to indwell, and begs us to clean up and invite him to return. Were it not true, how many would be saved?

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Image of jealousy." That this was the image of some heathen god is accepted by all, but there is much difference of opinion as to what god it was. Geikie says it was "a hewn image of an Asherah, known since among the priests as the image of jealousy," and that it was placed there by Manasseh. It could not have remained there since the days of Manasseh, for his grandson, Josiah, destroyed all such images. (2 Chron. 34: 7.) The majority of authors at hand seem to think this image was that of Tammuz (verse 14), which is identified as Adonis of the Phoenicians, who was supposed to have been killed by a wild boar in a hunt on Mount Lebanon. After his death the Phoenician women worshiped him by "prostituting themselves in his honor." The fact that this image was placed close to the altar seems to have been in open defiance of Jehovah.

"Every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts." This whole paragraph is a description of the Egyptian worship which the party of Jews who were looking for help from Egypt had brought into the worship. Pictures had been drawn upon the walls, and the people burned incense before these pictures.

"Seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel." Was this the Sanhedrin? The number seventy may be used to denote the prominence of the heathen worship. Some very prominent men were engaging in the worship. Shaphan, a faithful man in the days of Josiah, had a son, Jaazaniah, who was among the worshippers.

"Chambers of imagery." This expression simply means chambers, rooms in the temple, that were devoted to this worship, and used by these elders in Judah. It seems that each man had a separate room for his images to which he went to perform his worship. These were rooms which originally were used by the priests who had to have places to rest, dress, and perhaps sleep while they were on duty and not allowed to leave the temple.

"They were worshipping the sun toward the east." In this paragraph we have a description of the Persian sun worship. There were about twenty-five men engaged in this form of worship, which may suggest that it was not as popular as the Egyptian forms of worship.

"They have filled the land with violence." The violence which had filled the land was the punishment for these sins of idolatry. But since they had committed the sins, God says they had filled the land with violence.

"They put the branch to their nose." Geikie says that when the Persians worshiped the sun-god they held branches, or twigs, over their nose lest their breath might pollute their god. These twigs were trees that had a strong and pleasant odor which perfumed their breath while they were engaging in their worship.

"Therefore will I also deal in wrath." Those who picture Jehovah as being too effeminate to punish the guilty do him an injustice, and encourage people in further sinfulness. He is a God of mercy and long-suffering, but when it is no longer a virtue to exercise mercy, God can punish the guilty; his eye will spare not, neither

will be have pity. He is described from of old as a God who will not suffer the guilty to go unpunished. (Ex. 34: 7.)

"Though they cry in mine ears, . . . yet will I not hear them."

This suggests that when the crisis comes some of the people who have continued in sin will see their hopeless condition and call upon the Lord for help. But they are so deserving of punishment that they will be left by the Lord to suffer in spite of their calling upon him. Is this suggestive of deathbed repentance today? People go through life despising God and his offers of mercy, but when death is upon them, they cry for help. It is true the thief on the cross was saved in his dying hour, and it may be that deathbed obedience in some cases will be acceptable. But it is certainly extreme folly for a person to enjoy the pleasures of sin during life with the expectation of turning to God on his deathbed to gain forgiveness and a home in heaven. If God refused to hear his people of old in spite of their calls when they had persisted in sin, it is very probable that he will do the same today.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Ezekiel says that it was in the sixth year that he had this vision; and it was the sixth month, and the fifth day of the month. It is believed by most commentators that this means the sixth year of his captivity. (8: 1.) His first prophecy is dated the fifth year of the captivity of King Jehoiachin, in which captivity Ezekiel was taken to Chaldea. (1: 2.) So this date must be the sixth year of the same captivity. This would make it in the year 594 B.C. This was the sixth month of their religious calendar, not their civil calendar. The month was called Elul, and answers to a part of our August and a part of September.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

A people who got what they deserved: this statement may well be made the theme of the lesson in these departments. God brought the people out of Egyptian bondage and gave them a land "flowing with milk and honey," but they soon forgot him. Though they prospered during the reigns of David and Solomon, and had a few other short periods of prosperity, yet in the main they were always disobedient. They lacked appreciation for what God had done for them. In our lesson today we find God leaving them desolate, saying that he would not hear them though they might call loudly for him. Lack of appreciation for what others do for us is an ugly disposition, and will cause us to lose many friends. We should cultivate the habit of being thankful to everyone for everything they do for us. And above all we should cultivate the habit of giving thanks to God for what he is continually doing for us. If we really appreciate the goodness of God toward us, we will love him and serve him. During these years of early life it will be easy to cultivate a love for God and an appreciation for his goodness as manifested in our daily blessings in the hearts of these boys and girls, and if this love is developed sufficiently, it will cause them to be faithful to the Lord all their lives. Teachers have the opportunity of laying the foundation for useful, fruitful lives; or they

may give the children a few dry facts which will not rouse their emotions or lead them to appreciate the goodness of God, and when temptations come in later years, they will not have the foundation which will make them able to stand. Stir their emotions, and get them to express in their own words their love and loyalty to Jesus, for such expressions will tend to strengthen their love and give them courage.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The worship of the Jews was according to law, the law given by Moses nearly one thousand years before. The worship of the heathen nations was not according to law, so it was changeable. Human wisdom dictated the forms of worship, and each one was free to do as he pleased. The Jews thought they saw progress and advancement in the heathen forms of worship; they thought they had outgrown their old forms of worship, and if they wished to do the wise thing they would accept the more modern forms of worship. This philosophy is in the world today. The religion of Christ is over nineteen hundred years old, and its forms are dictated by law, the gospel as revealed by the apostles. These forms do not change according to the dictates of human wisdom. Young people are inclined to think, as do many modern philosophers, that we have outgrown the religion of Christ, and that we need to accept the more modern forms of religion around us. Our lesson text is one of the very best to prove the fallacy and the folly of such a course. Those modern forms of worship had "filled the land with violence." They were the cause of the people sent into captivity and the city of Jerusalem being utterly destroyed. Modern forms of worship today will bring destruction upon all who adopt them. Here is an opportunity for you to build up respect in their hearts for the revealed religion of Jesus Christ in its purity.

Young People and Adult Departments

The above paragraph is as applicable in these departments as in the former. The very leaders in religion in Jerusalem were among the worshippers of heathen gods. There were the seventy elders of the house of Israel who were burning incense before those Egyptian gods in their chambers of imagery. Adults need to exercise caution lest they be carried away with modern philosophies and new inventions in forms of worship.

How could people who had once known the true God be so brazen as to set up an image of jealousy near the altar of Jehovah? We might be able to answer this question if we can learn why people who sin grievously through the week can sing and pray and take the Lord's Supper on Sunday. How could they use various rooms in the temple of Jehovah as their chambers of imagery in which they burned incense to heathen gods? Yet people use their hearts, which are temples of God today, for malice, jealousy, and other sins as bad as idolatry. We must be careful lest we be guilty of that for which we freely condemn them.

Lesson XI—December 14, 1947

EZEKIEL'S WATCHMAN

The Lesson Text

Ezek. 33: 7-16

7 So thou, son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Is'ra-el; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, and thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way; that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand.

9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, and he turn not from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.

10 And thou, son of man, say unto the house of Is'ra-el: Thus ye speak, saying, Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we pine away in them; how then can we live?

11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord Je-ho'vah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Is'ra-el?

12 And thou, son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall he that is righteous be able to live thereby in the day that he sinneth.

13 When I say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his righteousness, and commit iniquity, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered; but in his iniquity that he hath committed, therein shall he die.

14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

15 If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that which he had taken by robbery, walk in the statutes of life, committing no iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be remembered against him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"So thou, son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel."* (Ezek. 33; 7a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ezek. 33: 1-6.

Daily Bible Readings

December 8.	M.....	Jerusalem Smitten (Ezek. 33: 17-29)
December 9.	T.....	Unfaithful Shepherds (Ezek. 34: 1-10)
December 10.	W.....	David as a Shepherd (Ezek. 34: 17-31)
December 11.	T.....	Vision of Dry Bones (Ezek. 37: 1-14)
December 12.	F.....	Jehovah's Wrath (Ezek. 38: 14-23)
December 13.	S.....	The Measuring Rod (Ezek. 40: 1-27)
December 14.	S.....	Israel's Possessions (Ezek. 47: 6-20)

Lesson Subject Explained

Ezekiel uses the figure of a watchman to show the people his relationship to them, and to justify his continual teaching and warning them concerning their sins. The responsibility of the watchman was fearful. The welfare of all the people depended upon him, and negligence was a crime which called for severe punishment; hence, extreme caution was taken by the watchman to prove himself faithful to his task and loyal to his people.

The figure of the watchman is of military origin. When armies went into camp for the night, they always set watchmen at strategic

points lest the enemy should overcome them by a surprise movement. Originally the Jews divided the night into three watches. The first is referred to as the "beginning of the watches." "Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches." (Lam. 2: 19.) The next was called the "middle watch." It is said that Gideon and one hundred men with him came unto the outermost part of the camp of the Midianites "in the beginning of the middle watch." (Judges 7: 19.) The third division of the night was called the "morning watch." "And it came to pass in the morning watch," and from verse twenty of the same chapter we learn that the night had passed. (Ex. 14: 24.) These watches would begin and end respectively from sunset to 10:00 P.M.; from 10:00 P.M. to 2:00 A.M.; and from 2:00 A.M. to sunrise.

But when the Romans began to rule in Palestine, this division of the night was changed in keeping with their customs. The Romans divided the night into four divisions, and spoke of them as first, second, third, and fourth watches. The first began at sunset and ended at 9:00 P.M.; the second began at 9:00 P.M. and ended at midnight; the third began at midnight and ended at 3:00 A.M.; and the fourth began at 3:00 A.M. and ended at sunrise. So a change of watchmen was made every three hours, instead of every four hours as was the case under the old Jewish custom. According to Roman custom, death was the penalty for negligence of a watchman.

Context of the Lesson

The context of this lesson, so far as the material in the book of Ezekiel is concerned, is short, as chapter thirty-three is the beginning of a new division of the book. Chapters twenty-five and thirty-two comprise the third division of the book in which the prophet predicts the punishment and destruction of the nations round about Judah. The Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, and the Philistines are first on the list. Then the destruction of Tyre is foretold. Last the destruction of Egypt and the death of Pharaoh Hophra under Nebuchadnezzar is predicted. Chapter thirty-three begins a new division which "contains a series of exhortations and consolatory promises to the Jews" and their deliverance from captivity under Cyrus; and then, like Jeremiah, he points to the times of the Messiah by the use of physical terms to describe a greater deliverance and restoration to the communion of Jehovah.

In the immediate context of our lesson Ezekiel defines the duties and responsibilities of a watchman. In chapter three, verse seventeen, we are told that Jehovah had made him a watchman for his people, and this explains why he has been so careful to warn the people of their sins, as well as to encourage them in well-doing all through the years. He did not wish their blood to be upon his hands. It was the duty of a watchman to warn of the approach of the enemy. If he gave the warning and the people did not heed it, he was free; but if he saw the enemy approaching and did not warn the people by sounding the trumpet, and the enemy came and took the people away, the blood of the people would be required at the hands of the watchman. Adam Clarke has a very sensible comment on this lesson as follows: "The care and welfare of the people I have laid on thee. Thou must *watch* for their *safety*, *preach* for their *edification*, and *pray* for their *eternal welfare*. God is particularly

jealous lest *any words* but *his own* be taught for *divine doctrines*. He will not have human *creeds*, no more than TRADITIONS, taught instead of his own word. No word can be successful in the salvation of sinners but that which comes from God. Every minister of the gospel should be familiar with his Maker by *faith* and *prayer*; God will then hold communion with his spirit; otherwise, what he preaches will be destitute of spirit and life, and his *hackneyed texts and sermons*, instead of being bread from heaven, will be like the dry, mouldy Gibeonitish crusts." (Commentary an Ezek. 3: 17.) It is a pity that the learned Doctor did not see fit to follow this sensible course when he came to the gospel plan of salvation in the New Testament.

It will be well, too, for the reader to keep in mind that all of our lesson text was delivered by the prophet before he learned of the destruction of Jerusalem. It was while he was delivering this very prophecy that a messenger came to him to inform him of the fall of the city, as we learn in verses twenty-one and twenty-two of chapter thirty-three.

Golden Text Explained

When a soldier is set by his commanding officer as a watchman over the lives of his fellow soldiers, he has a responsible position. The lives of many others are in his hands. Upon his diligence and faithfulness to duty depend the lives of his fellows. Another thing to consider is that the punishment for failure of faithful performance of duty depends on that over which one is made a watchman. If a man is watchman over a warehouse full of merchandise, and he goes to sleep, and goods are stolen, his punishment may not be so severe. But if he is a watchman over the lives of men, and many die as a result of his negligence, his punishment will be great. Ezekiel was made a watchman over, not the lives, but the souls of his people. As the value of the soul exceeds that of the body, so the responsibility of the watchman of souls is greater than that of the watchman for the physical lives of people. And so the punishment for failure to perform faithfully his obligation to his Lord and to the people would be greater than if he was simply watching for their physical welfare.

Elders, or bishops, of the churches are made watchmen over the sheep of the Lord; they are the pastors, whose duty it is to tend the flock of God, and give account to the chief Shepherd in the last day. "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 to you." (Heb. 13: 17.) Paul told the elders at Ephesus that the Holy Spirit had made them bishops to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. (Acts 20: 28.) If they have faithfully performed their duty in watching for the good of the Lord's sheep, when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, at his second coming, they shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. (1 Pet. 5: 4.) It is very probable that the average elder does not feel as keenly as he should this fearful responsibility. They look after the business of the church, they hire (and sometimes fire) the preacher, and they see to it that teachers meet their classes on Sunday morning. But how many elders have a program which includes any personal care for the spiritual welfare

of each individual of the congregation? Many elders have never been formally introduced to some of the members, and they would not recognize them if they met them on the street; and many elders have never visited in the homes of the majority of the church members. How do they expect to be able to give account of the membership in the day of judgment?

Preachers and teachers are also watchmen in the house of Jehovah, watching for the purity of the doctrine they teach, and for the spiritual development of the children of God. Paul told Timothy to "take heed" to himself and the doctrine he taught. (1 Tim. 4: 16.) These have not the personal responsibility that elders have in the matter of watching for souls, but it is their duty to teach, and to be sure that they teach all the truth and nothing but the truth. If through carelessness and lack of proper preparation they teach error such as will lead to the destruction of the souls who believe and obey it, those souls will be lost, but their blood will be on the hands of the teacher. For this reason teachers of classes ought to make the most thorough preparation possible for the teaching of each lesson. The eternal destiny of never-dying souls may depend on the way you teach this lesson. We cannot afford to go into judgment guilty of causing souls to be lost in the lake of fire and brimstone.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"O wicked man, thou shalt surely die" "The wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6: 23.) "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18: 4.) This is not physical death, for all die on account of Adam's sin. (Rom. 5: 12.) If you walk after the flesh, ye must die. (Rom. 8: 12, 13.) To walk after the flesh is to commit sin, to do the works of the flesh. (Gal. 5: 19-21.) But those who do such things are to die the second death in the lake of fire and brimstone. (Rev. 21: 8.) Therefore, the death which is the penalty for sin is eternal punishment and separation from God. (2 Thess. 1: 8-10.)

"His blood twill I require at thy hand" If the wicked man dies in his iniquity, or on account of his sin, without warning from the watchman, the Lord will hold that watchman responsible. How many souls can go from your community to hell whom you have not warned personally without your soul being lost in hell too?

"Thou hast delivered thy soul" If the watchman warns the wicked to turn from his ways, and the warning is given to heed, the wicked shall die in his sin, and no one will be responsible. The watchman delivered his soul from guilt by giving the warning.

"We pine away in them." Here transgressions and sins are pictured as a great burden under which we stagger and fall. Then God denies that he has any pleasure in seeing us under such burden which will inevitably bring death. The people are represented as saying they pine away in their sins, and asking how they can live. God bids the watchman to tell them they can live if they will turn from their evil ways. They were so blinded as to think they were not responsible for their condition, but God's true watchman will constantly keep before sinners the fact that if they are lost it is their own fault. No one need die; God has made provision for all who will turn from evil and do right.

"The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him." Not only is it possible for the wicked to turn from his wickedness and

do right, but it is possible for the righteous man to turn from his righteousness and do wrong. And if the righteous turn from his righteousness to do wickedness, and die in his wickedness, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered to his credit in the day of judgment. Then if the wicked man turn from his wickedness to do right, and die in that righteous state, none of his wickedness will be remembered against him in the day of judgment.

"If he trust to his righteousness." Since the righteous have the promise of life, some might be inclined to trust in his righteousness; trust to that extent that he thinks he can never be lost because he is a righteous man. Those who have this trust and become careless in their overconfidence of security, take liberties to do things wrong, thinking their righteous state will continue, will be disappointed in the day of judgment; they shall die in the iniquity they have committed, and none of their righteousness shall be remembered.

"If the wicked restore the pledge." The word *pledge* here refers to some article put up as collateral for a loan. Moses gave strict regulations as to what might be taken and as to what might not be taken as a pledge of payment of a loan. (Deut. 24: 10-13.) And in this passage that one who has taken a pledge from the poor which was unlawful, or had held the pledge beyond the time limit, was spoken of as a wicked man. The student should read Ezek. 18: 5-9 to get a longer list of things from which the wicked is to turn.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—According to Ezekiel's own statement, this prophecy was delivered in the twelfth year of his captivity, and in the tenth month and the fifth day. (Ezek. 33: 21.) They were taken captive in 599 B.C., so this prophecy was delivered in 588 B.C., and near the end of that year.

In this connection we have an interesting note both as to time and the fulfillment of prophecy. The Lord promised Ezekiel that he would send a messenger to inform him of the fall of Jerusalem: "In that day he that escapeth shall come unto thee, to cause thee to hear it with thine ears." (Ezek. 24: 26.) And in this passage, 33: 21, 22, we have the fulfillment of this prophecy in the coming of a messenger to tell Ezekiel of the fall.

Jerusalem fell in the eleventh year and fifth month (2 Kings 25: 2, 8) of the reign of Zedekiah, and therefore of the captivity of Jehoiachin, for Zedekiah was made king at once after Jehoiachin was captured. But this messenger did not reach Ezekiel with the news until the twelfth year and tenth month. Did it take him one year and seven months to go from Judah to Babylonia? Adam Clarke says several old manuscripts read *eleventh* year in this passage instead of twelfth. But we have no way of knowing.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This lesson is capable of demonstration in the sand table. One army may be encamped in a valley, on the banks of a stream; on the surrounding hills will be placed the watchmen with their bugles. Off in the distance and beyond distant hills another army attempts to make a surprise attack. It is the duty of the watchmen to sound

the alarm the moment they see danger. Gideon effected just such a surprise by being able to get past the watchmen of the Midianites. (Judges 7.) From this you may teach them to have respect for the elders who watch for the welfare of the souls of the church. We need to begin a campaign of teaching people to have proper respect for faithful elders of the church, and for the authority they have to rule over the church. And there is no better place to begin this teaching than in these departments.

In the lessons of this quarter there has been a lot said about the fearful consequences of sin, and of the severity of God in the punishment of sin. There is a possibility that these children may get a one-sided view of God from so many lessons stressing the same thing. In this lesson we have the matter balanced in a fine way. If the wicked turn from his wickedness, he shall be saved; if the righteous turn from his righteousness and does wrong, he shall be lost. Furthermore, we have the statement of God that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. It will be good to give this sentiment prominence. God did not bring destruction upon Jerusalem because he got pleasure from it; he did not send the people into captivity because he derived pleasure from it; and God does not now send men to torment for the pleasure he gets from seeing them suffer. Sin is so bad that a just and holy God cannot allow it to go unpunished.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The boys and girls of these departments are old enough to know something about sin, and what it means to become entangled in sin, and to be embarrassed and to suffer on account of sin. Since there are none who live without sin, it is encouraging to those who have done wrong to know that they may turn from their sins and be saved. It is also very encouraging to know that when we turn from sin to live right our former sins shall not be remembered against us in the judgment. People may remember them and cause us a lot of embarrassment as long as we live, but if we have truly repented of them, we need have no fears of having to answer for them in the judgment.

But the fact that we have this promise to encourage us should not lead us to take advantage of it to enjoy the pleasures of sin while we are young with the idea of turning from sin when we get older. We should not do this because sin brings suffering; you reap what you sow. (Gal. 6: 7, 8.) Another reason why young people should not do that is that they may form bad habits during that time of sinning which they will never be able to break. One may be able to break all bad habits except one, and that one bad habit cause him to be lost forever. Many men have been able to quit all their meanness except drinking liquor; they died a drunkard because they learned to drink when young, in the time when they were sowing their wild oats. The wicked are held by the cords of his sin. (Prov. 5: 22.)

Young People and Adult Departments

Occasionally we find men who think they have sinned until there is no hope for them. But there is hope for all who can and will turn from their sins and do that which is right in the sight of the

Lord. No matter how long one has lived in sin, all his sins will be forgiven, and not one single one of them will be remembered against him in the judgment; and no matter how deeply he has sunk in the mire and filth of sin, none of this will be remembered against him in the judgment, if he will turn from it and do right.

The danger of turning from one's righteousness to a life of sin is especially needed in adult classes. Men are prone to relax their watchfulness against sin and temptations to sin as they mix with the world. Sin becomes common. That which they once hated, they come to tolerate in others; that which they tolerate in others they soon come to allow in themselves. Their standards of right are lowered almost without being conscious of it. When people have reared their families and they have time on their hands; they begin to go places and do things again, they are liable to go wrong—and often it seems they are more liable to go wrong than young people. They need to be reminded that if they turn from righteousness and do iniquity, and die in their iniquity, none of their righteousness will be remembered, they will get no credit for it, in the judgment.

In this connection it will be well for these classes to consider the old doctrine of "once in grace always in grace." Is it true? Why?

Lesson XII—December 21, 1947

DANIEL, A MAN OF PURPOSE

The Lesson Text

Dan. 1: 8-16; 6: 10-12

8 But Dan'iel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9 Now God made Dan'iel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs.

10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Dan'iel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your food and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths that are of your own age? so would ye endanger my head with the king.

11 Then said Dan'iel to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Dan'iel, Han-a-ni'ah. Mish'a-el, and Az-a-ri'ah:

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's dainties; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he hearkened unto them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties.

16 So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.

10 And when Dan'iel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house (now his windows were open in his chamber toward Je-ru'sa-lem); and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

11 Then these men assembled together, and found Dan'iel making petition and supplication before his God.

12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's interdict: Hast thou not signed an interdict, that every man that shall make petition unto any god or man within thirty days, save unto thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Per'si-ans, which altereth not.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord Jehovah.”* (Ezek. 14: 14.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Dan. 6: 25-28.

Daily Bible Readings

December 15. M.....	Daniel and His Three Friends (Dan. 1: 1-7)
December 16. T.....	Daniel Excels (Dan. 1: 17-21)
December 17. W.....	Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image (Dan. 3: 1-12)
December 18. T.....	Purpose of His Three Friends (Dan. 3: 13-23)
December 19. F.....	The King's Change of Mind (Dan. 3: 24-30)
December 20. S.....	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Tree (Dan. 4: 4-27)
December 21. S.....	Belshazzar's Feast (Dan. 5: 1-9)

Lesson Subject Explained

A man without a purpose is -like a ship without a rudder. In this complex society in which we live where the very atmosphere is surcharged with conflicting motives and desires, that man or woman, boy or girl, who does not have a very well defined purpose in life will find himself, or herself, living like the world round about. It is like one entering an enclosure where thousands of people are milling around with no definite aims. If the one entering has a definite place in mind to go, and something definite to do, he is likely to go to that place in spite of the milling throng. But if one enters with no definite purpose as to where he wishes to go and what he wishes to do, he is most likely to follow the milling throng in going around wheresoever the passing thrill dictates. By a natural birth we enter this world where millions of people are milling around with no definite purpose in mind; they are going here and there, doing this and that, whenever and wherever the passing thrill dictates. And among those who have definite purposes there is no unity, or harmony, so that even their activities add to the confusion in the world. In view of these things, the absolute necessity of a definite purpose in life becomes all the more apparent.

Daniel's purpose was of a religious nature; he purposed to be true to Jehovah in every detail of life, even in the things which he ate. Of all convictions which people have, the religious convictions are strongest. There are more incentives back of them than is the case with nonreligious convictions. The fear of punishment, the hope of reward, and the satisfaction and peace of mind which come from pleasing God are strong incentives to be true to religious convictions. And no doubt all of these were back of Daniel's convictions and contributed to the glorious success he attained. It should be the purpose of all the teachers of this lesson to lead the students, especially the young people, to form some definite religious convictions and purposes early in life, and encourage them to drive straight ahead to the accomplishment of their aims and not be lost in the throng of the milling millions who are going nowhere and accomplishing nothing.

Context of the Lesson

Daniel says he was taken to Babylon in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar at that time was a prince under his father, Nabopolassar, and was sent by his father to quell several uprisings in the western part of his kingdom. While Nebuchadnezzar was on this mission, perhaps during his siege

of Jerusalem, his father died, and he had to rush back to Babylon to take over the reigns of the government. But his generals carried out his orders, the king was taken captive and put in chains with the intention of taking him to Babylon, but the order was changed and he was allowed to remain on his throne provided he would agree to remain faithful to Nebuchadnezzar. But a number of captives, many of the vessels of the temple, and treasures in general were taken. It was at this time that Daniel and his three companions were taken. The record of this is found in 2 Kings 24. There was also another siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar mentioned in that chapter, when Jehoiachin and his mother volunteered to give themselves up to him to keep the city from being destroyed. Adam Clarke makes the mistake of saying it was at this time that Daniel and his companions were taken in his comments on verse thirteen. It is rather difficult to keep all these different raids on Judah in mind, and who was taken at what time. But there is no need to make a mistake as to when Daniel was taken, for he tells us in the first six verses of his book that he was among those taken by Nebuchadnezzar in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim. No other captives were taken then for eight years, for Jehoiakim reigned eleven years, and Jehoiachin was taken at the end of a reign of three months.

When Daniel was taken to Babylon a number of young men, of the seed royal and nobles, were selected to be given an education, including a knowledge of the language and science of the Chaldeans. This no doubt was for the purpose of planting Chaldean ideas and ideals in them and making them leaders among the captives and in time indoctrinating all of them to be good Chaldean citizens. They were to be given the best food, clothing, attention, and training the nation could afford. From some viewpoints it was a most wonderful opportunity for these young men, and they would be expected to count it as such. While their friends and fellow captives worked as slaves, they were in the king's palace enjoying the very best the land afforded. But some of the things which they were expected to eat and some things they were expected to do were contrary to the law of Moses under which these young men had been reared, and which Daniel purposed in his heart he would keep. He had to run the risk of losing this wonderful opportunity; he had to lay himself liable to going back to hard slavery if he remained faithful to Jehovah whom he had purposed to serve. Was he willing to pay that price to be true to God? It is not every young person in a strange land, with such a great opportunity at hand, that would be true to a detail of the law of the Lord, if loyalty to the Lord was going to cost that much.

Golden Text Explained

The words of our Golden Text emphasize the exceeding sinfulness of the Jews. They were in sin, and had been rebelling against God so long and so persistently that their punishment was inevitable. No amount of supplication on the part of righteous individuals could cause God to change his mind with reference to the punishment he intended to give. At one time God said he would destroy the Jews and make a great nation of Moses (Ex. 32: 7-14), but Moses interceded for them, and God repented of the evil which he planned to do them. But such was the accumulation of guilt at this time

that the intercession of Noah, Daniel, and Job would not cause God to change his plans to punish the Jews.

Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generation, but the influence of his righteous life was not sufficient to save the world of his day. Job was a good man, one for whom God had respect, and to whom God would listen, but even his patient goodness and faithfulness to the Lord would not be sufficient to save the Jews from punishment. The fact that Daniel is mentioned with these two is an unusually fine recommendation of the strength of his character. Noah and Job were both dead, and the world had had time to arrive at a fair estimate of their lives. But Daniel was still alive. He had been in captivity only fourteen years, and so was no more than in middle age. That a man of his age should be classed with Noah and Job, saints of ages past, shows what a powerful influence he had, not only with God, but in the eyes of the people to whom this statement was addressed.

There were four things entering into the punishment of the Jews—sword, famine, evil beast, and pestilence. Ezekiel mentions each one separately, and says that the combined influence of Noah, Daniel, and Job would not be enough to get God to change his plan to send that particular punishment upon the Jews. Then in verse twenty-one he concludes, "For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the evil beasts, and the pestilence." If their combined influence would not stop any one of these punishments, they certainly would not have sufficient influence to stop all four of them.

However, it is suggested that if Noah, Daniel, or Job lived in Jerusalem, they would be spared on account of their righteousness—"they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness." When the storm of judgment breaks upon the world in the last day, each one will stand or fall according to the way he has lived. The righteousness of another will do me no good in that day. It is not intended that any one shall get the idea that we can live such lives that we will merit eternal salvation, so that we can demand that God save us on account of our perfection. Only the merits of Jesus make it possible for any of us to be saved at all. But our righteousness is necessary as a condition of salvation. The Lord has promised salvation to all who love and serve faithfully the Lord Jesus, and if we meet this condition, we will stand in the judgment; but if we fail to meet this condition, we will be judged as unrighteous and will be turned away from heaven.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Daniel purposed in his heart" This was a matter of faith, of conviction, with him; it was not simply a matter of policy or custom; it was a heart purpose. But it will be noticed that Daniel could tell it even if it was "in his heart." When Paul tells us to purpose in our hearts what we are going to give (2 Cor. 9: 7), some brethren think he means for us to keep it a secret, and if they write the amount purposed so the elders will know how much income they can plan to spend during the year, the purpose will not be in the heart. The fact that a thing is done in the heart does not mean that it is

secret. We believe in the heart, but we are to confess that faith with the mouth.

"That he would not defile himself." The king furnished the food for these select men, giving them the very best so they would develop mentally and physically as much as possible. But to eat and drink what the king furnished was a violation of Daniel's conscience, and so he would have been defiled if he had eaten it. Adam Clarke suggests three reasons why the food would defile. "(1) Because they ate unclean beasts, which were forbidden by the Jewish law. (2) Because they ate, as did the heathens in general, beasts which had been strangled, or not properly bled. (3) Because the animals that were eaten were first offered as victims to their gods."

"So would ye endanger my head with the king." These are the words of the head eunuch who was responsible for the feeding of these men. If they did not eat what was sent, and if they grew weak and pale, he might lose his life for not carrying out orders.

"Let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink." Pulse now means "the grains of leguminous vegetables." But the term here "probably denotes uncooked grains of any kind, whether barley, wheat, millet, vetches, etc." It was a vegetable diet as opposed to a diet of meat, and water in the place of wine. It may be that Daniel intended this as a test between the foods dictated by the science of the Chaldeans and that which was acceptable to Jehovah. If so, we would expect God to honor his servant by intervening in his behalf and making his progress on this diet such as would be evident to all. And this seems to be the explanation of the almost unnatural success of the undertaking.

"When Daniel knew that the writing was signed." The writing referred to is one which the enemies of Daniel wrote and had the king, Darius, to sign, to the effect that no one could offer a prayer for thirty days to any god except the king. They knew Daniel would not pray to the king; they also knew they could get nothing against him "except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." So they had the king to sign this decree that could not be changed, and then they watched to catch Daniel praying to Jehovah.

"Windows were open . . . toward Jerusalem." It was Daniel's custom, and perhaps that of all Jews in a foreign land, to face Jerusalem while praying. (1 Kings 8: 48.) And those in Jerusalem faced the temple when they prayed.

"Kneeled upon his knees three times a day." No wonder he, along with Noah and Job, was spoken of as having great influence at the throne of God! He was a constant, frequent caller at the throne of God; his was a familiar voice at the throne. Some do not pray often enough to be very well, or favorably, known at the throne of God.

"Shall be cast into the den of lions." These lions were kept, on a lean diet, so as to be ready at any time to devour criminals, for such methods of punishment the law allowed, and the high officials encouraged that they might take vengeance on their enemies. Be it said to the credit of Darius that he was tricked into signing this decree, and that he did what he could to save Daniel from death without establishing a precedent that might have caused his downfall.

But Daniel was in the hands of a greater than Darius, and One that could not be tricked into delivering his faithful friends to death.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Daniel dates his captivity in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim. Since this king began to reign in 609 B.C., the third year would be 607 B.C. Then in the next year the city was taken and a number of people were taken into captivity and a lot of the treasures of the city were taken. This was in 606 B.C., and is the beginning of the seventy years of captivity, which ended in 536 B.C. The date of the second paragraph of our lesson text is dated 537 B.C. Daniel had been in captivity nearly seventy years, so must have been a very old man when he was thrown into the den of lions.

GEOGRAPHY.—Since Daniel occupied the position he did in the kingdom, he undoubtedly spent much of his time in Babylon. However, it is thought that Shushan, or Susa, was his home. In Dan-8: 2 he speaks of being in Shushan. This city is said to have been the summer residence of the kings of Persia. It was originally the capital of Elam, a country which flourished in the days of Abraham. (Gen. 14: 1.) As long as the Chaldeans were in power, Babylon was the center of activities, but when the Persians came to power they made Shushan their capital. It is thought that the change was made by Cyrus. In the days of Esther, 464 B.C., Shushan was the capital of the king Ahasuerus. The change was made because Persia needed a capital west of the Zagros Mountains, and only Babylon and Shushan met that condition. But Shushan had three advantages: (1) It was nearer Persia by more than two hundred miles. (2) Being nearer the mountains, it was much cooler than Babylon. (3) It is said that the water was better, no more plentiful, but purer.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

This lesson text gives us a story that has always been a favorite with boys and girls of these departments. The courage of Daniel to refuse to eat what the king sent him and his faith in God to give him good health on the diet he chose are items of interest. His purpose not to defile himself with the things contrary to the law of Moses is a lesson that will be appreciated by these boys and girls. It took courage to do something different from all others who were being trained for the king's service. He did not wish to be different merely to attract attention, but because faithfulness to his convictions of what was right and wrong led him to be different from the others.

His experience with the lions is the most thrilling of all for these ages. This, too, was on account of his religious convictions. It will be well to bring out the thought that his enemies looked for some fault in his life that they might have whereof to accuse him before the king, but could find none. When we live such good lives that our enemies cannot find anything wrong with us, we will surely be pleasing to the Lord. It is interesting, too, to notice that Daniel did not make any frantic last appeals to the king to save him from the lions. He was a brave man, believing that God would take care

of him. If it was God's will for him to die at that time in that way, he was willing; but if it was not the Lord's will for him to die at that time, he would save him from the lions. True peace and happiness on this earth can be had only when we have such faith and dependence on God.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

In these departments it will be well to emphasize the necessity of making a purpose and striving to attain a certain goal in life. A person who does not have a purpose of heart, and a firm determination, to resist temptations to evil is already half defeated. It is dangerous to wait until one is tempted to drink liquor, or get, or commit adultery, to determine what will be our attitude toward that sin. We must have our minds made up definitely beforehand just what we will do, firmly determined to do what we have in calm, prayerful deliberation purposed to do in event such temptations come.

It should be remembered that Daniel's purpose of heart had to do with the little things of life. And since life is made of a bundle of little things, it follows that if we will purpose in our hearts to be right in all the little things, we will be right in our lives. We should never be ashamed to be right in reference to the little things of life. Nor should we be ashamed to pray to God to help us in these little things.

Young People and Adult Departments

The lessons suggested above are well worthy of the attention of these departments. And in addition, the prayer habits of Daniel should be urged on these departments, especially the parents. Their duty and responsibilities in rearing their children make it doubly important that they pray daily for wisdom and moral courage to live right, and to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Could Daniel have stood the test of the lions' den if he had not been a prayerful man?

The purpose of this historical section of the book of Daniel is to show that God cares for the faithful and rewards them. Daniel and his three friends were faithful young men. And though they were carried into captivity on account of the sins of others, God could and did take care of them. And their purity of life and loyalty to the Lord were rewarded by positions of honor. God still observes our lives, and he is still as ready to reward us for well-doing as he was then, though he may choose various ways to reward us.

Though Daniel was a good man, he had enemies who would gladly have taken his life if they could. We need not become discouraged because we have enemies. Jesus, Paul, and all who will live godly lives, had, and will have, enemies. (2 Tim. 3: 12.) Good men are usually complimented by the class of people who are their enemies.

Lesson XIII—December 28, 1947

DANIEL FORESEES THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Lesson Text

Dan. 2: 36-45

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

37 Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory;

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush.

41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

43 And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron doth not mingle with clay.

44 And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Golden Text.—*"And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."* (Dan. 2:44a.)

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Dan. 2: 31-35.

Daily Bible Readings

December 22. M.....	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (Dan. 2: 1-13)
December 23. T.....	Daniel's Interpretation (Dan. 2: 14-35)
December 24. W.....	Belshazzar's Dream (Dan. 7: 1-14)
December 25.....	T. Daniel's Interpretation (Dan. 7: 15-28)
December 26. F.....	Daniel's Vision (Dan. 8: 1-14)
December 27. S.....	Gabriel's Interpretation (Dan. 8: 15-27)
December 28.....	S. The Time of the End (Dan. 12: 1-13)

Lesson Subject Explained

The writings of Daniel are different from those of other prophets in several ways, but they differ in one way to an unusual degree. His ability to foresee not only what was going to be, but the exact time it was to happen, and many of the details were so clearly foreseen and foretold that some critics have charged that the book was written after the events, and not before. Josephus says, "In the complexion of his predictions he differs widely from all other prophets; they foretold scarcely anything but disastrous events; on the contrary, he predicts the most joyous events, and fixes the time and accomplishment with more circumstantial precision than they

did." And Adam Clarke adds, "This is so true that we cannot help thinking God had given this eminent man a greater degree of light to fix the times when his predictions should issue than he had given in general to his predecessors, who simply declared the mind of God in relation to things future, without attempting to indicate the distance of time in which they should be fulfilled. And in this respect the prophecy of the *seventy weeks* of Daniel exceeds all that have gone before, as the incidents and transactions relative to the fulfillment were so various, and yet so fixed and declared *six hundred* years before the time, that when the time came in which they were predicted to take place, they were *expected*, and occurred exactly according to the *prediction*, and the *expectations* founded upon it."

A statement from Thomas Hartwell Horne is to the point. "But the most satisfactory evidence is the exact accomplishment of Daniel's prophecies, as well those which have been already fulfilled, as those which are now being fulfilled in the world. So clear and explicit indeed are his predictions concerning the advent of the Messiah, and other important events, of times far remote from those in which he lived, that Porphyry, a learned adversary of the Christian faith in the third century, finding that Daniel's predictions concerning the several empires were so universally acknowledged to be fulfilled, that he could not disprove the fact of their accomplishment, alleged against them that they must have been written after the events, to which they refer, had actually occurred. To him they appeared to be a narration of events that had already taken place, rather than a prediction of things future; such was the striking coincidence between the facts when accomplished, and the prophecies which foretold them." (*Introduction to Scriptures*, v. 4, p. 218.)

Context of the Lesson

In our last lesson we learned that Daniel and three companions had refused to eat the diet furnished by the king, and had asked for one of their own. Their request was granted and they prospered under the blessings of God. They were educated in all the wisdom of the Chaldeans, and it is said that "God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." At the end of the days of training they were brought before the king, and when he had communed with them, he found none, of those who had been in training, like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, for in all matters of wisdom and understanding they were ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in all his realm.

Daniel's opportunity for advancement came when Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, but could not remember what it was. The dream was such that it impressed him very much, but it had so utterly gone from him that he could not recall it, and he was worried. So he called for his magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, and demanded that they tell him his dream and the interpretation thereof. When they played for time, he decreed that all of them be put to death if they could not tell the dream. He reasoned that it was no more difficult to tell him what his dream was than to tell him the interpretation. But they argued that no king ever made such an unreasonable demand of his wise men, and that there was not a man on earth who could meet his demand. So the king gave

orders that all be put to death. As this included Daniel and his friends, Daniel asked for time to consider the matter. His prayer to God and his thanksgiving to God for the information are very beautiful and impressive, as well as his humility before the king when he told him, "This secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but to the intent that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that thou mayest know the thoughts of thy heart." (Dan. 2: 30.)

Golden Text Explained

"In the days of those kings." This phrase has reference to the kings of the four kingdoms mentioned in the dream, not merely the kings of the last, or Roman kingdom. The establishment of the kingdom of heaven, according to Daniel, would come to pass before the kingdoms of that dream were all gone.

"God of heaven set up a kingdom." The kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream were all established by men; the kingdom which Daniel saw would be set up by Jehovah. The force of arms was necessary to set up those kingdoms of men and keep them in power; but the kingdom Daniel saw needed not the force of arms to set it up or to keep it in power. Its only sword is the word of God (Eph. 6: 17), and it is to be wielded gently and with a love as tender as that of a mother cherishing her baby. (Eph. 4: 15; 1 Thess. 2: 7.)

"Which shall never be destroyed." The kingdoms of the king's dream were to be destroyed one after the other, being replaced by a still stronger kingdom of this world; but the kingdom Daniel saw rested upon solid foundations, upon eternal principles, and no power on earth or in hell can overthrow it. When all the kingdoms set up by men have utterly failed, and their very foundations have crumbled to dust and their glories have become a subject of ridicule, the kingdom of the God of heaven will still remain—it cannot be shaken.

This kingdom of which Daniel spoke is the church which Jesus built, and of which he is the head. (Eph. 1: 22.) Jesus said to his disciples, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 16: 18, 19.) He did not build one thing and give them the keys to something else, so both terms *church* and *kingdom of heaven* mean the same thing here. The Lord's Supper is to be taken in the kingdom. (Luke 22: 16, 29, 30.) It is to be eaten in the church. (1 Cor. 11: 18-30.) Unless the supper is to be eaten in two institutions, we must conclude that the church and kingdom are the same.

Being in this kingdom is equal to salvation. When Jesus told his disciples that it is difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, they asked, "Who then can be saved?" (Matt. 19: 23-26.) They reasoned that if it is so difficult for people to enter the kingdom, few will be saved. Therefore entering the kingdom and being saved are the same.

This kingdom, the church, is entered by the new birth, the birth of the water and the Spirit. (John 3: 5.) Since the kingdom is entered by the new birth, and the kingdom is the church, it follows that the church is entered by the new birth. Since the church is

entered by the new birth, and none can be saved without the new birth, it follows that none can be saved except those who are in the church which Jesus built.

Helps on the Lesson Text

"Wheresoever the children of men dwell." This was said of the extent of the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar; it was world-wide, covering all the then known world. And this one characteristic all four of these kingdoms had in common. And when the stone hit the image and broke it in pieces so as to destroy it beyond repair, this is the thing which was forever destroyed about them all. The first three were gone and there was nothing to destroy except this world-wide rule principle. Their riches, their glory, their power—everything about them—were gone. This characteristic of world power—all the people of the world under one power—Rome had in common with the others. The stone cut out without hands destroyed the whole image when it hit the feet. There will never be another nation with power to rule the whole world; that was destroyed when the image fell.

"Thou art the head of gold." Nebuchadnezzar, or his kingdom, was the head of this image of his dream. His dream began with his kingdom and included all world-wide kingdoms from his time until the time God would set up a kingdom. His kingdom ended with the death of Belshazzar 538 B.C.

"After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior." This next kingdom was represented by the breast and arms, and they were of silver, denoting their inferiority. This was the Medo-Persian empire, starting with Darius, who shared the throne for two years with another, but became sole ruler in 536 B.C. This kingdom continued until the time of Alexander the Great, who came to power in 331 B.C.

"And another third kingdom of brass." The belly and thighs of the image were of brass. This represented the third kingdom, which was that of Macedonia, the Greeks, under the leadership of Alexander the Great. This kingdom continued from 331 B.C. to the time of the Romans. Alexander did not rule but seven years, at which time his kingdom was divided, as the thighs would indicate, into the Lagidae in Egypt, and the Seleucidae in Syria. T. W. Brents quotes "a distinguished historian" as saying, "Their kingdom was no more a different kingdom than the parts differ from the whole. It was the same government still continued. They who governed were still Macedonians." (*Gospel Plan of Salvation*, p. 154.)

"The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron." This refers to the Roman empire, which defeated the Seleucidae in 65 B.C., when Pompey dethroned Antiochus Asiaticus. The Romans under Octavius Caesar defeated the Lagidae under Anthony and Cleopatra in 30 B.C. From that time the Roman empire was world-wide in its sway.

"It shall be a divided kingdom." The feet and toes of the image represented the Roman empire. They were composed of iron and clay, which do not mix, but yet there was to be in this kingdom the strength of iron, as well as the weakness of clay. It has been said this weakness of clay was seen in the matrimonial alliances Rome made to gain more power, but the alliances brought more strife

and confusion than adhesion and unity. And as the feet of the image had ten toes, so there were ten kingdoms which came out of the weakness of the Roman empire. Authorities are divided as to the names of the ten governments, but that interpretation is generally conceded to be right. Those interested further may read Horne's *Introduction to the Scriptures*, p. 214, Vol. IV.

"Shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms." This is what the kingdom which God would set up would do to all the kingdoms mentioned. How could the kingdom of God do this to all those kingdoms, when three of them had gone out of existence? The answer is, by destroying that which was common to all those kingdoms, the power to rule the whole world. People are asking today, and prophecy mongers are predicting, about Russia—will she be the *next* world power? The answer is. There will be no *next* world power! The kingdom of heaven was the fifth in order from the Chaldean, and world sovereignty will not be left to another, it shall stand forever. Unless and until some power can overthrow the kingdom of God of heaven set up in the days of those kings, there will not be another world-wide kingdom.

"What shall come to pass hereafter." Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that God in this dream had made known what was to come to pass after his time. Since he said that God would set up a kingdom, we conclude that the kingdom was set up after the days of Daniel, and not before and in the days of Abraham as many preachers try to prove.

The Historical Background

CHRONOLOGY.—Daniel says this dream was had and interpreted in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. He occupied the throne nearly two years along with his father. But this is likely the second year he ruled after the death of his father, which was 603 B.C.

CHARACTER.—The word Daniel means *Judge of God*, or *God is judge*. His name was changed by the Chaldeans to Belteshazzar, which means the *prince of Bel*. Bel was the Chaldean form of Baal, which was a heathen God mentioned many times in the scriptures.

Daniel purposed in early life to be true and faithful to Jehovah, and his whole life is sweetened and purified by that holy purpose. The Lord himself classed him with Noah and Job with reference to his influence at the throne of grace in heaven. He prayed to God when he knew he would be sorely punished for it. He gave God the glory for his wisdom and knowledge in the interpretations of his dreams and visions. He told kings the truth when it was unfavorable to them the same as when it was good news to them. He was so conscientious in his writing that when he quoted statements made by others, he wrote their statements in the language in which they spoke. Scholars say he wrote "both Hebrew and Chaldee with great purity." His last recorded vision was in the third year of the reign of Cyrus (10: 1), in 534 B.C., at which time he had been in Babylon seventy-two years, and Horne estimates his age at ninety-four. He was the living proof to the Jews in captivity that Jehovah was still in heaven, and that people who were true to him and placed their trust in him could be great in the eyes of men and hold positions of power and influence. While they languished in slavery because of their idolatry, Daniel was enjoying the honors and comforts of

the greatest government on earth while worshipping Jehovah. Surely God used him in this way to cure his people of the sin of idolatry.

Helps for Teachers

Elementary and Junior Departments

If the teacher has a blackboard, it will be well to draw the form of a man. The drawing should be a large one. Different colors of chalk should be used to represent the different parts of this image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Then opposite the head write Chaldean; opposite the breast and arms write Medo-Persian; opposite the thighs write Greek; and opposite the legs and feet write Roman. It will also be well to write the dates for the beginning and end of each government, and how many years it existed. This will give them some idea of world history, especially the Junior, and the relation of Bible history to world history. They will be interested to know that they have the opportunity to become members of that very kingdom which Daniel foretold six hundred years before it was built.

Intermediate and Senior Departments

The teachers in these department should make the same drawing as suggested above, or perhaps have one of the pupils to do it. It would be well to assign four students the duty of making a special report on the history of the four kingdoms represented by the image. The reports should be brief and to the point. Again the fact that Daniel foretold the establishment of this kingdom six hundred years before its fulfillment should be used to prove the inspiration of Daniel as a prophet, and of the Bible as the word of God. How did Daniel know that there would be three kingdoms after the Chaldean? How did he know there would be just three, and no more, from then until the end of time that would rule the whole world? How did he know that the church would be established "in the days of those kings"? And how did he know that this kingdom which the God of heaven would set up would last forever? Inspiration is the only answer for these questions, and the discussion of them will strengthen the faith of these young people.

Young People and Adult Departments

For further study of this subject these departments are advised to read *Gospel Plan of Salvation*, by Brents, pp. 146-188; read also *Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. IV, pp. 569-575.

The history of the kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream should be reviewed. Each one in the classes should be able to prove the establishment of the kingdom on the first Pentecost after the death of Christ. Each one should be able to prove that the church which we read about in the New Testament is the kingdom of God on earth. Each one should be able to give the New Testament teaching as to how citizenship may be had and enjoyed in this kingdom.

This is the kingdom John the Baptist said was at hand, and the one to which Jesus referred when he said the time was fulfilled, and the kingdom was at hand. (Mark 1: 15.) Either John and Jesus were mistaken, or the kingdom has been established. So those who look for it to be established at the second coming of Jesus are teaching a false doctrine and will be disappointed when he comes.