400 Bible Lessons

V. Sullivan



The **Garden Tomb** outside Jerusalem where Jesus Christ was **buried** and **rose** from the dead. "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus..." (John 19:41-42). "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. .....The angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. **He is not here**: for **he is risen**, as he said. Come, **see the place where the Lord lay**." (Matthew 28:1,2,5,6).

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by

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395. The Prayer of God's Children. Luke 11:1-13. 657
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400. An Erring Brother. Matthew 18:15-17. 658

1. THE CREATION

READ Genesis 1: 1-4, 6, 11, 12, 16-21, 27, 31; chapter 2: 1-3, 7, 9, 15-17, 21, 22.

THEME: How God made the world. TELL THE STORY.

For this lesson it has been found useful to have a roll with the order of Creation when telling the story.

LIGHT.—Draw a globe with half of it black and the other half representing light.

AIR.— Print the word.

LAND, GRASS, TREES, FRUIT.—These might be drawn or small pictures pasted on the roll (v. 11, 12).

SUN, MOON, STARS.—Draw these and colour them yellow (v. 16).

BIRDS AND FISH.—Draw these or paste on pictures (v. 20, 21).

ANIMALS (v. 25) and **MAN** (v. 27); (ch. 2: 21, 22). Pictures.

GOD RESTED (Chapter 2: 2, 3).

GOD FIRST.—"In the beginning God" (v. 1). Just as He was first in the beginning so He should be first in our lives.

GOD FIRST WHEN YOU ARE YOUNG — while your heart and mind are still impressionable and before the cares, riches, pleasures of this life and other things fill the heart and choke the Word (Luke 8: 14; Mark 4: 19). It is much harder for people to become Christians as they grow older, and therefore the proportion of adults who come to Christ is much smaller than that of young people. Do not wait till you are old and sick and unable to do any work for the Lord. What would you think of anyone who gave you a worn out present, one which was of no further use to him. Yet many people use their strength, energy and gifts only for themselves, and when they come to Him late in life, have nothing left to give Him. "Remember now thy Creater in the days of thy youth" (Eccles. 12: 1).

GOD FIRST IN ALL YOUR INTERESTS. Make it your ambition to be well pleasing in His sight (Heb. 13: 21) whether it be at work, at school or in your recreation. Have no interest, pleasure or recreation in which He cannot share.

GOD FIRST IN THE DAY. Try and start the day with God before you do anything else, and yield yourself afresh to Him each morning. Form the habit of taking Quiet Time (Bible reading and prayer alone with God) at the beginning of the day, otherwise He will be crowded out and Satan will gain the victory over you.

If we put God first in our lives everything will be "very good" (Gen. 1: 31).

HOW LIGHT CAME.—Two instruments were used, the Spirit of God and the Word of God. "The Spirit of God moved" (v. 2). He moves and works upon our hearts in many ways to prepare us for the coming light. It may be through sickness, sorrow, bereavement or trial that He moves our hearts and causes us to see our need of the light.

THE WORD OF GOD. God spoke and said, "Let there be light and there was light" (v. 3). The instrument the Holy Spirit uses to cause the light to shine into our hearts is the Word of God. As you hear the Word of God ask the Holy Spirit to cause the light to shine. We learn from 2 Cor. 4: 6 that the light is Jesus Christ Himself.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

DARKNESS AND LIGHT DIVIDED (v. 4). When the light of Jesus Christ shines into our hearts we should separate ourselves from all that is dark and sinful so that we may walk as children of light. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph. 5: 8). Anyone can see the difference between darkness and light, and so they should be able to tell whether we are children of darkness or of the day.

"AFTER HIS KIND" (v. 11, 12, 21, 24, 25). God has a law in nature, everything is "after his kind" — grass, herbs, fruit, animals and man. Man was not evolved but was created in the image of God (v. 27) (See point 6.)

GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY (ch. 2: 2). We now keep the *first* day (Sunday) holy and not the seventh, because on the first day of the week our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and from that time onwards the early disciples met for worship on the first day of the week.

GOD MADE MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE (v. 27). God made man with a body which was something like that of animals, but in addition He gave him an immortal soul, made like Himself in knowledge, righteousness and holiness (Col. 3: 10; Eph. 4: 24). The body will perish but man himself is immortal. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8: 36).

EVERYTHING WAS VERY GOOD THAT GOD HAD MADE (v. 31). Think of the beauties of nature, the clouds, flowers, birds, mountains, rivers, the sun, moon and stars. God so loved man that He created all these things for his happiness and enjoyment.

MAN WAS GIVEN WORK TO DO (2: 15). Many people think that if man had not sinned we need never have worked, but this is not true. Knowing work is good, God gave Adam a job in the Garden of Eden. He was to dress it and to keep it. God regards idleness as a sin, do we? When on earth the Lord Jesus worked faithfully as a carpenter, thus setting us an example. Are we faithful in the little duties of life, or do we scamp them or even leave them undone? Remember we must give an account to God as to how we spend our time. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. 9: 10).

MEMORY VERSE.—Genesis 1: 31—"And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."

2. CREATION OF MAN

Genesis 2:1-25

Golden Text: Eccl. 7:29

I. God's Rest; Vs. 1-3.

1. In creation. Cp. Gen. 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; Heb. 4:4.
2. Disturbed by sin. Gen. 3:9, 24; 6:6, 13; John 5:17, etc.
3. God now rests in Christ. Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28; 4:34; 8:29; 16:10; Acts 17:31; Rom. 1:6; Acts 2:36. Everything has been committed to Him. John 3:35.
4. The believer now rests in Christ through faith in His Person and finished work. Heb. 4:1-11. Ps. 37:7; Isa. 28:9-13; Ps. 116:7-8.

II. Man's Creation; Vs. 7-25.

1. His Origin. The direct creative act of God. No thought of a gradual evolution suggested here and nothing in the facts of science to prove evolution of man either. Drive this home. Cp. Gen. 5:1-2; 9:6; Job 31:15; Psalms 8:3-6; Matt. 19:4-6, etc.; Isa. 40:12-15, 26, 28; 45:11, 12. Evolution is defined by Le Conte as "A continuous progressive exchange, according to fixed laws, and by means of **resident forces.**"
2. His Constitution—Tripartite; Gen. 2:7; 1 Thess. 5:23.
   (1) The Body—the seat of world consciousness; Matt. 6:25. Through the five senses we communicate with the world around us.
   (2) The Soul—the seat of self-consciousness; Luke 12:17-19.
   (3) The Spirit—the seat of God-consciousness; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11, 12, 14; Prov. 20:27. This distinguishes man from brute creation.
3. His Jurisdiction; Gen. 1:26-28; Psalm 8:6. Head of God's creation—Dominion over the earth.
4. His Location; Gen. 2:8-14. The Garden of Eden—planted by God—an ideal environment. Everything supplied by God.
5. **His Assignation; Gen. 2:15.** To dress and **keep the garden. Perfect employment.**
6. **His Prohibition; Gen. 2:16, 17.** Man a responsible being possessed of free will. Therefore this law was necessary: (1) It gave God His place as Supreme; (2) It gave man his place as free moral agent under supervision of God. Perfect government rests on perfect obedience to perfect law.
7. His Companion; Gen. 2:18-25. Cp. Eph. 5:22-32.
   (1) The formation. Not from his head to rule him, or from his feet to be despised, but from his side to be loved, nourished and cherished.
   (2) The purpose: (a) A help, meet for him, V. 18; (b) Fellowship, V. 18, "not good alone;" (c) Union, 23-24; (d) A type of Christ and the Church, Eph. 5:22-32; Rom. 7:4; Rev. 19:7-9; John 17:21-26, etc.

3. THE FALL OF MAN

READ Genesis 3.

THEME: How sin came into the world. TELL THE STORY.

SATAN.—

HIS UNFALLEN STATE is described in Ezekiel 28: 13-15. He was beautiful, he had a position of authority in heaven and was perfect in his ways.

HIS FALL.—This came about through pride, his heart was lifted up because of his beauty. He was determined to set up his throne above God and be like the Most High (Ezek. 28: 16, 17; Is. 14: 12-14).

HE IS A LIAR.—He lied to Eve when he said, "Ye shall not surely die." He is still the father of lies (John 8: 44), and lies to men about God, about sin, about the way of salvation and about Hell. He could do nothing against God Himself, so he determined to ruin Adam and Eve, the wonderful creatures God had made, and thus try to injure God through them.

HOW SIN BEGAN.—In the Garden of Eden Adam was the representative of the whole human race and his first sin involved all mankind in sin so that all men are sinners. But as we have sinned by a representative, so we can be saved by a representative (Rom. 5:18,19).

HOW SIN GREW.—

FIRST EVE LOOKED at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (v. 6). God had forbidden them to eat of it and told them of the punishment that would follow if they did so. It is probable that Eve *continued to look* at the tree. It is always dangerous to continue looking at that which God has forbidden. David prayed, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity" (Ps. 119: 37). How many have been led into sin by going too close to temptation. A man wishing to engage a driver asked him how near he could go to the edge without going over the cliff. One after another of the applicants gave different distances. Then one came who replied, "I should keep as far away from the edge as possible." He was engaged.

NEXT SHE COVETED (v. 6).—This is the next step into sin. We see the same steps in Achan's life. He confessed, "I saw, I coveted, I took" the Babylonish garment, the silver, etc.

THEN SHE TOOK THE FRUIT AND ATE IT.—Taking and doing are the next steps to coveting. How many have been led into sin in just this way.

SHE GAVE SOME TO HER HUSBAND (v. 6). We rarely sin without dragging others also into sin. It is a solemn thought that we influence others either for good or evil, for "None of us liveth to himself" (Rom. 14: 7). We may try to deceive ourselves by saying, "What I do is my own business; it affects me only and has nothing to do with anyone else." The fact remains, however, that it does affect others.

AND SO ADAM AND EVE BECAME SINNERS because they disobeyed God. "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3: 4). They knew God's law but they broke it; they knew His command but they disobeyed. Their hearts were now black with sin, "their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1: 21).

APRONS OF FIG LEAVES

THEY WERE MAN-MADE.—Adam and Eve knew that they were naked and tried to cover their sin by sewing fig leaves together and wearing them as aprons. There is nothing we can do to cover our sin, whether it be by trying to live a clean, straight life, being kind to others, turning over a new leaf, making good resolutions, going to church regularly or reading the Bible and praying. All these, though good in themselves can never cover sin.

FIG LEAVES DO NOT LAST, they fade. The prophet said, "we all do fade as a leaf" (Is. 64: 6). Just as shining, green leaves, in a short time wither and die so our good resolutions are soon broken, our good works cease and we soon find that we cannot do these things in our own strength.

THEY WERE QUITE INADEQUATE, as Adam and Eve found when they heard the voice of the Lord walking in the Garden of Eden for they were afraid and hid themselves from Him (v. 8). So it will be with those who try to cover their sin by methods of their own. They will find out that their own covering, the rags of their own righteousness will be as filthy rags (Is. 54: 6) in that day when they stand before God, and they will be afraid.

COATS OF SKINS (v. 21).

THESE ARE A PICTURE OF THE GARMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS given to all who trust Christ as their Saviour. "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Is. 61: 10).

THEY WERE PROVIDED BY GOD. Adam and Eve had nothing to do with the making of them. And we can do nothing towards providing the garments of salvation. Christ did it all on the Cross and then said, "It is finished" (John 19: 30), meaning He had finished the work of our salvation.

INVOLVED THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD.—An animal had to die before the coats of skins could be provided. Christ had to shed His own precious blood to provide us with the garment of salvation — there was no other way, for "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22). Christ said, "My blood . . . which is shed for many for the remissions of sins (Matt. 26: 28).

THEY WERE LASTING, in contrast with the aprons of fig leaves, which perished quickly. The garment of salvation, the robe of righteousness will never wear out but will last till we reach the gate of heaven, when we shall stand fearless in the Presence of God because we are clothed with Christ's righteousness. The coats of skins could only *cover* sin till Christ came but the blood of Christ *takes away* sin (John 1: 29).

THEY HAD TO BE TAKEN AND WORN, otherwise the blood shed in order to provide them would have been useless to them. Some people say, "Christ died for the sin of the whole world, therefore everyone will be saved." Nowhere does Scripture teach this. We must *believe* on Christ to be saved (Acts 16: 31), we must *receive* Him in order to become His children (John 1: 12). Are you trusting in the apron of fig leaves — your own good works — or have you taken from God's hand the gift of eternal life?

MEMORY VERSE.—Romans 5: 12—"By one man sin entered into the world . . . for that all have sinned."

THE FALL OF MAN

Genesis 3

Golden Text: Rom. 5:12

I. The Tempter; V. 1. Satan through the serpent. Cp. Rev. 12:9; 20:2; John 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 John 3:8; 1 Tim. 2:14. Sketch briefly Satan's history. Touch on his creation, Ezek. 28:13; rebellion, Isa. 13:13; fall, Isa. 14:12; Luke 10:18; present sphere, Eph. 6:11, 12; 2 Cor. 4:4; and final doom, Rev. 20.

II. The Temptation; Vs. 1-6. Satan's tactics are the same today.

1. Its Introduction; Vs. 1-4. Three doubts are suggested:
   (1) Doubt of God's words—"Hath God said?" Satan puts a question mark on God's inerrant word.
   (2) Doubt of God's punishment—"Ye shall not surely die." The "no punishment" doctrine had an early start and a bad origin!
   (3) Doubt of God's goodness—Why withhold **one** tree? "Ye shall be as gods."
2. Its Channel; V. 6. Cp. 1 John 2:16.
   (1) Lust of the flesh: "food."
   (2) Lust of the eyes: "eyes."
   (3) Pride of life: "wise."

   Note: In the temptation of Christ (Luke 4) the same order is tried by Satan, but with utter failure.
3. Its Stages; V. 6.
   (1) Saw; (2) Coveted; (3) Took. See Joshua 7:20, 21; 2 Sam. 11:2-4, etc., etc.

III. The Result; Vs. 7-13.

1. Opened eyes; V. 7. They saw themselves. Cp. Isa. 6:5; Dan. 10:8; Rom. 3:10-19, etc.
2. Self-covering; V. 7. Cp. Isa. 64:6; Rom. 10:3.
3. Separation; V. 8. "Hid." Cp. Isa. 59:1, 2; Jer. 5:25; 14:10; Eph.2:1-3; "Death" in Scripture means separation. Cp. physical death. James 2:26; Spiritual death, Eph. 1:2; 1 Tim. 5:6; Eternal death, Rev. 20:14.
4. Fear, "afraid;" V. 10. Cp. Isa. 33:14; Psalm 53:5; Prov. 28:1; Deut. 28:67; Isa. 57:20, 21, etc.
5. Self excuses; Vs. 12-13. Tried to avoid personal responsibility for their guilt. Cp. Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 14:12; Matt. 12:36, 37, etc.

IV. The Trial and the Sentence; Vs. 14-19.

1. Of the serpent; Vs. 14-15. (1) The sentence; V. 14. (2) The Promise of the Redeemer; V. 15.
2. Of the woman; V. 16.
3. Of the man; Vs. 17-19. (1) The curse on the ground; Vs. 17-18. (2) The judgment on Adam: **Labor** to be the keynote of his life. (3) Death passed upon him .Cp. Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22.

V. The Clothing; V. 21. A type of Christ's work for us. Cp. 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Cor. 1:30; 1 John 4:19; Eph. 1:6, 7, etc.

VI. The Expulsion; Vs. 22-24. What a commentary on the awful effect of sin! Cp. Rev. 20:15; John 8:21; Rev. 21:8.

4. CAIN AND ABEL

READ Genesis 4: 1-16.

THEME: Doing will not save us.

TELL THE STORY.

CAIN AND ABEL HAD THE SAME PARENTS AND THE SAME TEACHING, BUT ABEL WAS SAVED AND CAIN WAS LOST.—"Which were born not of blood . . . but of God" (John 1: 13). There may be two brothers, or two sisters, or a brother and a sister; one may be saved and the other not. We may have godly Christian parents, but we cannot inherit salvation from them, otherwise Cain and Abel would both have been saved.

ABEL KNEW THAT GOD WAS RIGHTEOUS AND MUST PUNISH SIN.— He knew that he was a sinner, so he brought a lamb to die instead of himself (v. 4). As he looked at the lamb on the altar he could say to himself, "that lamb is taking my place, it is dying for my sin. If the lamb does not die, then I must die." Have you ever thought that you are a sinner? But the blood of that lamb could only *cover* sin. God's Word says, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10: 4). They could only cover sin till Christ came.

THE LAMB WAS A PICTURE OF JESUS, THE LAMB OF GOD.—He *takes away* sin (John 1: 29). "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1: 7). Forgiveness in the Bible does not mean the remission of penalty (punishment). God could never say, "it does not matter about sin" for He is a righteous and holy God. Forgiveness means to "send away," to separate the sin from the sinner. God can only forgive the sinner because the Lord Jesus took our punishment upon Himself on Calvary. What a blessed thing it is to know that the sins of all those who have trusted the Lord Jesus have been put away for ever. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103: 12). "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9: 28).

CAIN BROUGHT THE FRUIT OF HIS OWN WORK.— Perhaps he was very proud of the beautiful fruit he had grown on his farm, and felt it was the result of his own efforts. He did not realise that he was a sinner, therefore he saw no need to bring a lamb, he saw no need to shed blood. But the fruit of Cain's own work could not cover his sin. God had taught in type in Genesis 3: 21 when He shed blood in order that the coats of skins might be provided that, "without shedding of blood is no remission" of sins (Heb. 9: 22). Are you bringing your own good works to God in order to get salvation? These

are all very good but they are not sufficient (see Lesson 2,). You must trust in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to save you, take Him as Saviour, then His power within you will enable you to be good.

GOD PLEADED WITH CAIN (v. 7, 8). He told Cain how to come to Him and that if he brought an offering he would be accepted by God as Abel had been. God loves us so much that He gave His only Son to die for us. He has done His part. And so He pleads with us today as He did with the Children of Israel when He said, "Turn ye . . . for why will ye die?" (Ezek. 33: 11). "The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter, 3: 9). Perhaps He is pleading with you today.

BUT CAIN WOULD NOT LISTEN, he turned a deaf ear to God. Have you turned a deaf ear to God when He has called you? Have you thought like Cain that you are all right, that you have not done anything wrong? Perhaps God is speaking to you today through this lesson, through some Christian, or through some circumstance.

HOW CAIN'S SIN GREW.—

HE BECAME JEALOUS OF HIS BROTHER.—Jealousy is a terrible sin for it leads to other great sins. Whenever jealousy is allowed to remain in the heart it brings hatred with it. We may envy others their talents, their position, their popularity or their looks. Watch against the sin of jealousy for it produces much poisonous fruit (James 3: 16).

HE BECAME ANGRY AND SULLEN WITH GOD and would not reply. When God asked him "Why?" he refused to answer, probably because he had no good reason for being jealous of his brother.

HE MURDERED HIS BROTHER.—How rapidly his sin grew till at last he committed this terrible sin. God's Word says, "Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John, 3: 15). You may say, "I could never commit such a terrible sin as murder," but are you harbouring hate in your heart?

HE LIED TO GOD (v. 9). After murdering his brother, he denied that he knew where Abel was. But we cannot hide anything from God. He knows all about us, what we think and say and what we do. He knows us through and through. "My sins are not hid from Thee" (Ps. 69: 5).

HE WENT OUT FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD (v. 16). This is true of all those who say "No" to Jesus, who will not accept Him as their Saviour. Notice Cain himself *went out*, it was his own choice. God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3: 9). He loves you and calls to you. He wants you to become His child and to live with Him in heaven for ever. Listen to God's warning, "Go not in the way of Cain" (Jude 11)

MEMORY VERSE.—John 1: 29—"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

CAIN AND ABEL

Genesis 4:1-15

Golden Text: Hebrews 11:4

I. The Two Offerers; Vs. 1-4. Their bringing of an offering implies—

1. A sense of the guilt of sin. Cp. Romans 1: 18, 19; Romans 2:15; 3:10-23, etc.
2. A revelation of God's way of acceptance. Cp. Gen. 3:21. Abel offered in faith and faith presupposes a previous revelation for "faith comes by hearing the word of God" Romans 10:17.
3. A realization of their need of acceptance before God. Cp. Job 16:21; 22:21; 25:4; 33:27, 28, etc.

II. The Two Offerings.

1. Cain's. What his offering meant. (1) The product of the ground which God had cursed; V. 3. Cp. Gen. 3:17. Cp. Gal. 3:10. (2) The result of his own labor. Cp. Eph. 2:8, 9; Gal. 2:16; Romans 10:1-4; 4:5; 3:19-24. (3) Doubtless beautiful outwardly to natural man. Cp. 1 Sam. 16:7; 15:22; 1 Cor. 2:14; Luke 16:15. (4) Offered in self will and unbelief. Contrast Heb. 11:4 with Jude 11. Cain's was not the worship of a false god, but the false worship of the true God.
2. Abel's.
   (1) The firstlings of the flock; V. 4. A lamb. Cp. John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22.
   (2) Not the labor of his hands. Cp. Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8, 9; Romans 5:6-8; Romans 4:4-8, etc.
   (3) To the natural eye, no beauty in it. Cp. Isa. 53:3; 2 Cor. 4:3, 4; Isa. 55:8, 9; 1 Cor. 1:19-29.
   (4) Offered in faith; Heb. 11:4. Cp. Heb. 11:6; Gal. 3:6, 7; Romans 5:1; Luke 7:50, etc.

III. The Two Results.

1. Cain.
   (1) Refused by God; Vs. 5. Cp. Heb. 6:7, 8.
   (2) Reasoned with; Vs. 6, 7. Cp. Isa. 1:18; Ezek. 33:11. "A sin offering lieth at the door;" V. 7. The Hebrew words for "sin" and "sin offering" are the same.
   (3) Rejected God; V. 8. Turned away from His counsel. Prov. 1:24-31; Prov. 29:1; Heb. 12:25.
   (4) Slew his brother; Vs. 8-13. Cp. 1 John 3:12.
2. Abel.
   (1) Accepted; V. 4. Abel accepted in his offering. Cp. Eph. 1:6; 1 John 4:19; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21.
   (2) Commended; V. 7. Cp. Heb. 11:4. (3) Being dead, yet speaks; Heb. 11:4. (a) Of the presence of sin in the world. (b) Of the fact that every human being comes into the world possessed of a sinful nature. (c) Of the enmity of the human heart to God. (d) Of the way of approach to God—through a Divinely appointed and accepted Sacrifice. (e) Of the fact that faith pleases God. (f) Of the shortness of time and brevity of life. (g) Of the certainty of death and judgment.

5. THE FLOOD — THE ARK

READ Parts of Genesis: chapter 6, chapter 7, and chapter 8.
THEME: God's way of salvation.
TELL THE STORY.

This lesson is about great sin, a great punishment and great salvation.

GOD.—

HE IS ALL-SEEING.—God saw that the wickedness of man was great (6:5). We may be able to hide our sin from man but nothing is hidden from God. He knows our thoughts and sees our actions and knows us as we are. The people in Noah's time may have thought lightly of their sin but in God's sight "it was great." They spent their time in feasting and thinking only of this life and gave no thought to the life to come (Matt. 24: 37, 39).

HE IS HOLY, therefore sin grieves Him at His heart (6: 6). God had made man in His own image, pure and sinless, and He was able to have fellowship with him. But man fell through pride and disobedience, and each generation became worse. God was so grieved that it repented Him that He had made man (6: 6). Today He is grieving over those who disobey Him and who despise and reject His Son.

HE IS RIGHTEOUS and therefore must punish sin, else He would no longer be righteous. What would we think of a Judge, who, after finding a man guilty of a grave breach of the law, released him and said it was of no consequence. You would no longer regard him as a *righteous* Judge. God will by no means clear the guilty (Ex. 34: 7).

BUT HE IS LONGSUFFERING (Numb. 14: 18; Nahum 1: 3). He waited 120 years before the judgment fell because He wanted to give men an opportunity to repent (1 Pet. 3: 20). He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9). Noah preached for 120 years while he was building the Ark, and God is just as patient now, giving all an opportunity to repent because He wants to save them.

HE IS LOVING, and so provided a way of salvation in the Ark for all who would avail themselves of it. God Himself provided the way of salvation for us (John 3: 16).

THE ARK IS A TYPE OF JESUS CHRIST.—

ONLY ONE DOOR, NO OTHER WAY IN.—And there is no other way whereby men may be saved. "None other name under heaven . . . whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12). Going to church, reading the Bible and praying, trying to be good — all these things are very good in themselves, but they are not sufficient to save us from punishment. The Ark was God's appointed way for the people of that time to be saved. The Lord Jesus Christ is His appointed way. He himself

said, "I am the Door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10: 9).

IT WAS PERFECTLY SAFE.—It had pitch inside and outside, and was built of durable wood (v. 14). There was no danger of its sinking or of not reaching its destination. God saw to that. All those who trust in Christ are safe now and for ever. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10: 28).

GOD INVITED MEN TO ENTER THE ARK (7: 1). God would not force anyone to go in. They must accept His invitation — they must themselves be willing to enter. For us today there is the invitation of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Come unto Me" (Matt. 11: 28). You may often have heard His voice, through some messenger of His, or when reading the Bible. How have you treated that invitation?

THE WAVES BEAT ON THE ARK, not on Noah; he was safe inside. Judgment fell but it could not touch Noah. The waves of God's judgment beat on the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary and if we have accepted Him as our Saviour, we are in Him and therefore the waves of judgment and punishment can never touch us.

NOAH.—

HE WALKED WITH GOD (v. 9). Walking indicates *motion*, steady advance step by step. We are not always mounting up with wings (Is. 40: 31); the Christian life is mostly a steady walk. Are you advancing in your Christian life? It implies *purpose*, starting for a goal. "My goal is God Himself." The walk of the Christian means the whole course of his daily living. We read much in the epistles about the walk of the Christian. Noah *walked with God*, keeping step with Him, going His way, and this meant obedience to His will (6: 22). "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3: 3). Walking with God was not easy for Noah, for he lived at a time when men's sin was so great that it grieved Him at His heart; but in spite of his surroundings, Noah walked with God and taught his family to put their trust in Him.

HE PREACHED TO OTHERS for 120 years while he was building the Ark. He was not content that he and his family should belong to God. He was concerned about others and longed that they, too, should come to know Him and yield themselves to Him.

HE ENTERED THE ARK BEFORE THE FLOOD CAME.— Though he could see no water, he believed what God had said about the coming judgment. The people to whom Noah preached waited to see the flood, and it was then too late. Only eight persons accepted God's invitation to enter the Ark, every one else rejected it. God is calling now. Let us believe His Word that judgment is surely coming; let us avail ourselves of His way of salvation before it is too late. "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2).

MEMORY VERSE.—John 10: 9—"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

THE FLOOD

Genesis 6:5-13; 7:1-6, 21-24; 8:6-13

Golden Text: Hebrews 11:7

I. Man's State; Gen. 6:5, 11, 12.

1. By nature; V. 5. Cp. Jer. 17:9; Isa. 53:6; Mark 7:20-23; Rom. 8:5-8. This is how God sees man now by nature.
2. By Practice; V. 11 and 12. Cp. Psa. 14:2-4; Job 15:14-16; Isa. 1:5, 6; Eccl. 7:20; Isa. 59:2; Psalms 51:5; 53:2, 3; Rom. 3:10-19. The hopelessness and helplessness of man by nature.

II. God's Warning; Gen. 6:6, 7, 13. Cp. Jer. 44:4; Ezek. 33:4, 5, 9.

God hates sin and must, because of His holy, just and righteous character, punish it.

The Ark was God's voice to the people of that day. Note it was—

1. A long sermon—at least 120 years, Gen. 6:3, Cp. Gen. 5:32; 7:6. Cp. 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:9; Ezek. 33:11.
2. A righteous sermon. Cp. 2 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 11:7; Rom. 1:17.
3. An illustrated sermon: The Ark. They could see it. There was no excuse, Cp. Rom. 1:20-22; John 1:29; 12:32; Prov. 22:3; Rom. 2:1.

III. God's Way of Salvation. The Ark a type of Christ.

1. The need for the Ark. Man's state and God's judgment. Rom. 5:12, 18-21, etc.
2. The plan of the Ark—all from God through grace. Gen. 6:8, 14-16; John 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:1-9, etc.
3. Only one way into this Salvation—the Door. Cp. John 10:9.
4. The ark a finished work. Gen. 6:22. Cp. John 4:34; 17:4; 19:30.
5. The ark endured the storm from below and above; Gen. 7:11. So Christ the rejection of men and the wrath of God. Cp. Matt. 17:22; Psalms 22:1; 69:1, 2; 88:7. Note "pitched." Gen. 6:14 is same word rendered elsewhere "atone." So the atonement covers and shelters.
6. The ark saved all who trusted in it. 1 Peter 3:20; Acts 16:30, 31; John 5:24; 10:28.

IV. God's Invitation; Gen. 7:1.

1. The Inviter—God "Come thou." "The first "come" of the Bible. God was inside. He was the Captain of the unsinkable Vessel.
2. The Invitation, "Come," Cp. other comes of the Bible; Isa. 1:18; Matt. 11:28; Rev. 22:17.
3. The Explanation, "righteous." How? By faith. Heb. 11:7. Cp. Romans 3:20-26.

V. God's Judgment.

1. The two classes: (1) In the Ark. Cp. "In Christ;" Eph. 1:3, 4, 6, 7, 12-14. (2) Outside the Ark. Cp. Eph. 2:11, 12. So today there are only two classes, the saved (Eph. 2:8) and the lost (2 Cor. 4:3).
2. The two results: (1) Saved; Rom. 8:1, etc. (2) Lost. Cp. 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 6:17. Are you in the Ark of God's providing?

6. GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

Genesis 8:4-9:17

Golden Text: Isa. 55:3

I. The Ark; 8:4-19.

1. The resting place; Vs. 4-5.
2. The two messengers; Vs. 6-12. (1) The Raven. Type of the one who feeds on the things of this world which is corrupt. Cp. Romans 8: 5-8; 1 Cor. 2:14. (2) The Dove. Type of true Christian who cannot find rest in corruption. Cp. 1 John 2:15-16. Ill. The Prodigal Son.
3. The exit from the Ark; Vs. 13-19. (1) Note V. 13. New Year's day. Compare others: (a) Creation; Gen. 1:3, 4. (b) Judgment passed; Gen. 8:13. (c) Restoration; Ezra 7:9. (d) Separation; Ezra 10:12, 17. (d) Altar restored; 2 Chron. 29:5, 7, 17, 18. (f) Worship; Exod. 40:2, 17. (g) Commission; Ezek. 29:17. (2) Note V. 16. All who obeyed the "come" of Gen. 7:1 are included in the "go." Cp. Matt. 11: 28; 28:19. (3) All were equally secure that were in the ark. Judgment had passed; John 5:24; Rom. 8:1; Jude 24, etc. It was not Noah's feelings but the ark that made him secure.

II. The Altar; Gen. 8:20-22.

1. The Sacrifice; V. 20. "Burnt offerings." See its significance. The first thing built after flood was an altar; Heb. 9:22; 13:15.
2. The acceptance; V. 21. Cp. Eph. 5:2; 1:6. We are accepted in our sacrifice.
3. The promise; V. 22. Unconditional. Never broken.

III. The Command; Gen. 9:1-7.

1. To replenish the earth; Vs. 1-3.
2. Magisterial functions conferred on man; Vs 4-6. Cp. Num. 35:33. This has never been revoked. The blood a precious thing. Cp. Lev. 17:11. This is the Scriptural authority for capital punishment.

IV. The Covenant; Vs. 8-17.

1. The promise; Vs. 8-11. Never to destroy the earth by water. The next flood is to be one of fire. See 2 Peter 3:4-12.
2. The token or sign; Vs. 12-17.

Three things are required for a rainbow:

(1) Rain; i. e., God's grace (see Matt. 5:45). God's love alike to all; John 3:16; Titus 2:11; Eph. 2:8, etc.

(2) Cloud; i. e., our sins. Cp. Isa. 44:22; 59:2. Sin, the black cloud that separates us from God. The darker the cloud the brighter the bow; Rom. 5:20, etc.

(3) Sunshine; i. e., the Lord Jesus; Mal. 4:2; John 8:12. So God's grace seen through Christ on dark background of our sins. Both God and man were to look at the same thing. God looked at the bow for remembrance, while man looked at it for assurance.

7. THE TOWER OF BABEL—THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES

READ Genesis 11: 1-9.
THEME: Building without God.
TELL THE STORY FROM THE BIBLE.

WHAT MEN DID.—

THEY BUILT TO MAKE THEIR OWN NAME FAMOUS. They said, "Let us make us a *name*" (v. 4). They had no desire for the glory of *God's* name. Their one thought was to exalt themselves, to make a name for themselves. But of what use will fame be to those who have not trusted in the Name which is above every name . . . the name of Jesus (Phil. 2: 9, 10). "For there is none other name . . . whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12).

And how does ambition affect the Christian? Let him by all means seek to excel in study and sport, but let him examine his motives. If his ambition is merely to make a name for himself, at the end there will be only confusion and loss, but if it is to glorify God then all will be well. God has need of those who seek to excel, but let those who belong to Him, whether they are talented or not, "do *all* in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3: 17).

THEY BUILT FOR THEMSELVES, NOT FOR GOD. "Let us build *us* a tower" (v. 4). Their first thought was for themselves. God did not come into their scheme of things. They were like the rich fool who said, *My* barns, *My* fruits, *My* goods (Luke 12: 18). He forgot that it was God Who had given him these things.

THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE INDEPENDENT OF GOD. They said, "Let *us* build" (v. 4). How many there are today who think they can manage their own lives without God's help. They are full of their own plans, and never consult God.

Let the Christian, too, take warning from this verse. Be careful of building and working without God. Christ said, "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15: 5), for only work done in His strength and in the power of the Spirit will abide.

THEY TRIED THEMSELVES TO MAKE A WAY TO REACH HEAVEN. They said, "Whose top may reach unto heaven" (v. 4). But towers made by men can never reach unto heaven; they are too short. If we think we can get to heaven by merely making a profession, by joining the church, by our own good deeds, by trying to do our best, we are like these builders of the Tower of Babel, we shall never reach heaven.

BUT GOD HIMSELF HAS MADE A WAY. He gave His Son, the

Lord Jesus Christ, Who Himself is the Way (John 14: 6). If we receive Him as Saviour then we are on the straight and narrow road which leads to heaven.

WHAT GOD DID.—

THE LORD CAME DOWN TO SEE (v. 5). God will not pronounce judgment till He personally inspects. He comes down to see what and how we are building. He sees all our activities in every department of life, in the home, in school, in office and workshop. He knows what we are thinking. He hears what we are saying, He sees what we are doing and how we are living. He knows what we *are*. Nothing is hidden from Him (Rev. 1: 14; Prov. 15: 3).

HE COMES DOWN TO PUNISH (Deut. 9: 14). He sent the Flood, He destroyed Sodom, He is just and holy, and must punish sin. "Behold therefore the goodness and *severity* of God" (Romans 11: 22). We must never forget the punitive side of God's character. But before executing judgment He always gives men the opportunity to repent, because He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3: 9).

HE COMES DOWN TO SAVE. He came down to deliver the children of Israel (Exodus 3: 8). He came down to deliver Lot from Sodom (Gen. 19). He came down at the incarnation in the Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who died on Calvary to save all who will believe in Him (John 3: 16).

WHAT BECAME OF THEIR WORK.—

IT WAS BROUGHT TO NOUGHT (v. 8). And so it will be for those who build for time and not for eternity, who live for themselves and not for God, who seek to make a name for themselves instead of exalting Christ. As was said of the rich fool, "Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12: 20). There is a warning here, too, for those who belong to Christ. When your work is tested, how much of it will endure? Will you have much gold, silver, precious stones, for which you will receive a reward, or will your work be found to be wood, hay and stubble? (1 Cor. 3. See Lesson 32, Book 1.)

THEY "LEFT OFF TO BUILD" AFTER GOD CAME DOWN TO SEE THEIR WORK (v. 8). After our work is inspected we shall have no further opportunity of building. Their life went for nothing; their life and testimony were wasted. Lot, who was a child of God, spent years in Sodom heaping up riches, building up a great reputation, and making a name for himself, for he was a judge there, but he lost everything. God destroyed Sodom with fire. Lot was saved, "yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3: 15). When the Lord takes account of our service, may we not suffer loss.

MEMORY VERSE.—Proverbs 18: 10—"The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe."

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Genesis 11:1-9

Golden Text: Matt. 23:12

I. The Migration. Vs. 1-2. This was according to the command of God to multiply and replenish the earth. Gen. 9:1. The world, at this time, had but one language.

II. The Rebellion; Vs. 3-4.

1. Its Purpose. To frustrate, if possible, the purposes of God. God desired the whole world to be repopulated; they wanted to settle down in one locality. Note the personal pronouns, "us and we." God was not in all their thoughts. Psalm 10:4. Man-made unions would bow God out of His own creation! Compare Psalms 2:1-3; Matt. 27:22; Acts 2:23; 4:27; 13:50; Isa. 29:15; Isa. 30:1. The heart of man by nature is in rebellion against God. Rom. 8:7, 8; Mark 7:21; Jer. 17:9.

2. Its plan. To build a tower that would make them independent of God. "Let **us**" not let God;" Rom. 1:21-23. Man's present tower is "modern civilization" which exalts man's power, wisdom, wealth, pleasure, culture, invention and philosophy, but leaves God out. See Psalm 9:17; Deut. 6:12. Ill. Luke 12:16-21. Man's future tower will be the "Mark of the beast" Rev. 13:16-18. Thus both in the past, present and future man-made unity is in opposition to God's word, will and way.

III. The Judgment; Vs. 5-8. Here is God-made unity. Note "us" V. 7. Cp. Gen. 1:26. The mystery of the tri-unity of the Godhead. Cp. Matt. 3:16, 17; 28:19; Eph. 2:18; Gen. 1:26.

1. Divine discernment; V. 5. God can see all things. Cp. Psalms 14:2; 102:19; 33:13-19; 80:14; Gen 16:13; Heb. 4:12, 13.

2. Divine counsel; Vs. 6-7. "Let us." Here is Divine unity and who can stand against it? The unity of the Godhead is for man's blessing. See John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4-6; Rom. 3:19-26; 1 Cor. 1:18-29; Col. 2:13-15; Gal. 3:28; Phil. 2:5-11.

3. Divine judgment. V. 8. The confused tongues and the scattered people. Note:

(1) Confusion of tongues—judgment; Gen. 11:7-9.

(2) Unity of tongue—grace; Acts 2:1-12. Cp. translations of the Bible.

(3) Harmony of tongues—glory; Rev. 5:9; 7:9-14. In the celestial city every tribe, nation and tongue shall join, in glorious harmony, to sing the praises of the One whose precious blood has made their salvation possible. They shall be of one language in that day.

8. CALL OF ABRAM

READ Genesis 11: 31; chap. 12: 1-8.
THEME: All the way for God.
INTRODUCTION.—

After the flood there were many descendants of Noah. They drifted far from God, they gave Him up and served other gods (Joshua 24: 2). Among them was a man named Terah, who lived at Ur. He had a son called Abram, whom God chose to be the ancestor of the Children of Israel, and through whom blessing was to come to them. We are to consider Abram living in three places—at Ur, at Haran, and in Canaan.
NOW TELL THE STORY.

ABRAM AT UR.—

GOD'S CALL TO ABRAM. God said, "Get thee out," literally, "Go for thyself." He was not to look to his relatives to see what they would do, or be advised by them, for they were idolaters. *He* was to obey God's call to *him*. Let us listen to what God has to say to us individually. How easy it is to follow the crowd, to do certain things because other young people do them, and how difficult sometimes to follow God and to obey His voice. God's Word says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exodus 23: 2).

ABRAM WAS CALLED TO LEAVE HIS COUNTRY, HIS PEOPLE, AND HIS RELATIONS (Gen. 12: 1). As they were idolaters, he was not to associate with them in their heathen worship. It is not necessary for us to leave our homes when we belong to Christ, and not many are called, like Abram, to leave their country to go to other lands, but we *are* called to separate from sin, to make no compromise with things God has forbidden, and to set up no idols in our hearts.

HE WAS CALLED TO STEP OUT IN FAITH, for he did not even know where he was going (Heb. 11: 8). When God calls us to follow Him along the narrow way, we do not know what difficulties or testings may await us, the path is unknown to us. But it is not unknown to God, and if we do not know *where* we are going, we know *with Whom* we go. "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them" (John 10: 4). The path God chose for Abram was not an easy one, but he had God's promise.

GOD'S PROMISE (Genesis 12: 2).

"I WILL BLESS THEE." When God asks us to do anything for Him, or to make some sacrifice for Him, He always gives something better in exchange. The blessing of God is worth more than anything this world can offer.

God's blessing makes rich and adds no sorrow with it (Prov. 10: 22).

God's blessing brings peace (Psalm 29: 11).

"THOU SHALT BE A BLESSING" (Genesis 12: 2). It follows that if we have blessing then we shall be a blessing to others. The blessing of God always overflows. It means so much to us that we long that others may share it. If we are not trying to help others the blessing will evaporate.

ABRAM AT HARAN.—

ABRAM WENT ONLY HALF WAY TO CANAAN. He set off "to go into the land of Canaan; and . . . came unto Haran *and dwelt there*" (Gen. 11: 31). Haran was not the place of blessing. He was not told to go to Haran, but to Canaan. Terah may have been the cause of Abram's stay there, for it was only after Terah's death that Abram went on.

IT MAY HAVE BEEN BECAUSE THE ROAD BECAME MORE DIFFICULT AT HARAN. There was less water and pasture beyond Haran. Let us beware of weakening our characters by always choosing the easy way of life, and trying to dodge the hard places. Christian in "Pilgrim's Progress" got into difficulties when he chose the easy track, Bypath Meadow, and this brought him to Doubting Castle. The narrow way leads upward, and we must meet with difficulties and steep bits in the road. Many of those who have accepted Christ as their Saviour are not living in Canaan, the place of blessing. They ran well till they came to Haran, and, seeing difficulties ahead, they remained there.

GOD COULD NOT BLESS ABRAM AT HARAN. We do not read of God speaking to him while he was there. If we want to hear God's voice speaking to us, then we must be prepared to go all the way for Him, to hold back nothing from Him, and to obey Him in everything.

ABRAM IN CANAAN.—

WHEN ABRAM WENT ALL THE WAY TO CANAAN GOD APPEARED TO HIM (v. 7). When we go all the way for God, he will reveal Himself to us. He will speak to us as we read His Word, as we hear others giving messages from that Word, and as we pray. We shall learn to know Him better and to love Him more dearly.

GOD REPEATED THE PROMISES TO ABRAM (v. 7). He assured him that the promises already made to him would come true. It is when we are obeying God that we can claim His promises for ourselves.

ABRAM BUILT THERE AN ALTAR UNTO THE LORD (v. 7). He could now truly worship God, for He was obeying Him. We read of no altar while he was at Haran.

"Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

Where are you? At Ur, at Haran, or in Canaan?

MEMORY VERSE.—Genesis 12: 2—"I will bless thee . . . and thou shalt be a blessing."

THE CALL OF ABRAM

Genesis 12:1-8

Golden Text: Gen. 12:3

I. The Source of It—God; V. 1. Cp. 2 Cor. 5:18. Cp. Acts 13:2.

1. The Gospel call; Matt. 11:28; Rom. 1:6; 1 Thess. 2:12, 13.
2. The service call; Acts 13:2; 1 Cor. 12:7; Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15.
3. The glory call; Rev. 4:1; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

II. The Character of It; V. 1. Separation from

1. Country. See its description; Joshua 24:2, 3. A picture of this world; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 1 John 5:19; John 3:36; 2 Peter 3:7, 10; Heb. 11:15, 16.
2. Kindred. Cp. Matt. 12:50; Matt. 10:37; Phil. 3:4-9; Gal. 6:14.
3. The believer's call. (1) Called saints; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2. (2) To eternal life; 1 Tim. 6:12; John 5:24; 10:28. (3) To liberty; Gal. 5:13; Rom. 6:14; Rom. 7:4-6. (4) To fellowship; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 John 1:3, 6-7; 2:8; 4:17. (5) To suffering; 1 Pet. 2:21; 4:12; Rom. 8:17; Heb. 12:6. (6) To blessing; 1 Peter 3:9; Rom. 12:14; Gal. 3:8. (7) Eternal glory; 1 Peter 5:10; 1 Thess. 2:12; Heb. 2:10.

III. The Cost of It; Vs. 1-5.

1. His own country; Vs. 1, 5. Cp. Phil. 3:20.
2. His own kindred; V. 1. Cp. Phil. 3:8.
3. His own house; V. 1; Luke 14:26-33.

The Christian life is worth to you what it costs you. Matt. 10:38; Luke 9:23; Romans 12:1, 2.

IV. The Compensation of It; Vs. 2-8.

1. A new country; V. 1. Cp. Heb. 11:16; John 14:1-3.
2. A great work; V. 2. Cp. Matt. 28:18-20.
3. True greatness; V. 2; James 2:23. Cp. John 16:27; 14:23.
4. God's favor; V. 3; "blessed." Cp. Psalms 32:1; 1:1; 65:4; 94:12; 128:1; 119:2; 84:4; 34:8.
5. A vision of God; V. 7. 1 Cor. 2:7-10; 2 Cor. 4:6; John 14:9.
6. Blessing from God; V. 7. Cp. Eph. 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3; Rom. 8:32.
7. Communion with God; V. 8; John 4:23, 24; 1 John 1:3; Eph. 2:18, etc.

V. His Obedience to It; Gen. 11:31-12:7.

1. Partial at first; Gen. 11:31. He took Terah and came as far as Haran and remained there until Terah's death. There was no further communion between Abraham and God until he obeyed completely.
2. Full, on death of Terah; Gen. 12:5. Abraham has been called "the Columbus of faith." He did not know the way but he knew his Guide. "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

9. ABRAM AND LOT

READ Genesis 13: 1-18.

THEME: A right and a wrong choice.

When Abram left Ur, to go into Canaan, Lot, his nephew, whose father was dead, went with him.

TELL THE STORY.

A CONTRAST.—

ABRAM walked by faith. He took the long view. "He looked for a city . . . whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11: 10).

LOT walked by sight. He took the short view. He looked for riches and power.

ABRAM allowed God to chose his way. *LOT* chose his own.

ABRAM became a blessing to many. *LOT* wasted his life.

Yet both were believers (2 Peter 2: 7).

ABRAM.—

HE REFUSED TO QUARREL (v. 8). He said, "Let there be no strife . . . between me and thee" (v. 8), showing that Lot had taken up the quarrel on his herdmen's behalf. Notice Abram's reasons for not wishing to quarrel:—

"FOR WE BE BRETHREN." How sad it is when brothers and sisters quarrel, and disturb the peace of the home. Let us, like Abram, try to conciliate the one who is seeking to pick a quarrel, remembering that, "Two it takes to make a quarrel, one it takes to end it."

How necessary it is for Christians to remember that, even if there is no blood relationship, they are brothers and sisters in Christ, and that, instead of contention, there should be unity, love and harmony. Love is the badge of discipleship (John 13: 35).

HE PROBABLY THOUGHT OF THEIR WITNESS BEFORE THE HEATHEN. "And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land" (v. 7). Nothing perhaps brings so much shame upon God's name as strife between those who profess to know and love Christ. Those who do not know Him take note of these quarrels and are hindered.

ABRAM'S HUMILITY AND UNSELFISHNESS (v. 9). As the senior, he had the right to decide, but for the sake of peace he allowed Lot to choose the land he wanted, and he was willing to take what was left. It is sometimes necessary, in order to preserve peace, to make some sacrifices and to give up our "rights." We are often afraid that by doing this we shall be thought weak, but there was nothing weak about Abram.

ABRAM WANTED GOD TO CHOOSE FOR HIM, THEREFORE HE COULD AFFORD TO LET LOT CHOOSE FIRST. God did not allow Abram to be the loser, though he had to wait God's time. God promised him the whole of the land (v. 15). It is a safe thing to allow God to choose for us instead of going on in the path of self-will. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6: 33).

LOT'S DOWNWARD STEPS.—

HE QUARRELLED (vv. 6, 7). This showed Lot's attitude of mind. Selfishness was at the root of the trouble. He wanted the best for himself. He was beginning to love riches. This was the first downward step in his backsliding.

HE LOOKED WITH DESIRE AT WICKED SODOM (v. 10). There was plenty of water, much pasture for his flocks, and a good market for his cattle, BUT, God's description of Sodom was, "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (v. 13). Lot must have known this, yet he desired all the material advantages Sodom could give him. We need to pray with David, "Turn away mine eyes from *beholding* vanity" (Psalm 119: 37). (See Illustration Lesson 2, in Series 1, "How sin grew.")

HE CHOSE TO LIVE NEAR SODOM (vv. 11, 12). He had, at the time, probably no thought of entering Sodom, but merely of pitching his tent *toward* Sodom. It is easy to deceive ourselves and think that we can associate with evil companions without becoming contaminated, but, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" (Proverbs 6: 27, 28.) This wrong choice altered the whole course of Lot's life. We, too, are constantly making decisions, some great, some small. Remember a wrong choice now may affect the whole of your life.

HE SEPARATED FROM ABRAM (v. 11). Abram was the man of faith, the "friend of God," and in him Lot had a spiritual friend and guide. But he chose to part from him, and so drifted further and further from God. Do not cut yourself off from those who will help you, or you, too, will drift. Be careful in choosing your companions.

LOT WENT TO LIVE IN SODOM. In the next lesson, chapter 19, we shall see the awful results of his wrong choice.

MEMORY VERSE.—Proverbs 4: 14—"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men."

ABRAM AND LOT

Genesis 13:1-18

Golden Text: 2 Cor. 4:18

I. The Sojourn in Egypt. Cp. Gen. 12:10-20. What Abram lost in Egypt.

1. His communion with God—no altar in Egypt which is type of the world. Cp. 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 John 1:6, 7.
2. His testimony before men; Gen. 12:18; Romans 2:21-24; 2 Sam. 12:14; 2 Cor. 3:2.
3. His influence on others. Lot went with him; Gen. 13:5; 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 5:15; Romans 14:7. God tells us, not only of the successes, but of the failures of His people that we might profit from both. 1 Cor. 10:11.

II. The Return to Bethel; Gen. 13:1-4.

1. Separation from Egypt; V. 1. No restoration without separation. Cp. 2 Cor. 7:1; Isa. 1:16-18; Jer. 2:19; James 4:7-10.
2. Migration to Bethel; V. 2-4. Cp. 1 John 1:8-2:1; Psalm 32:3-6.
3. Restoration of communion; V. 4. The Altar; Heb. 13:10-13; Hosea 14:1-9, etc.

III. The Choice; Vs. 5-13.

1. The Cause—"Strife;" V. 6-7. Cp. James 3:16.
2. Abram's offer; Vs. 8, 9. Fruit of his restoration. Cp. Gal. 5:22, 23. Note the basis of Abram's plea for harmony; "We be brethren." This is the first mention of this word in the Bible. Cp. Matt. 23:8. Brethren should be known by their love, tolerance and desire for harmony.
3. Lot's Choice; Vs. 10-13. The principles that governed it; Eccles. 1:14, 17; 2:11; Jer. 2:13.
   (1) Its basis—The outward view; V. 10. Cp. The world and its glitter; 1 John 2:15, 16.
   (2) Its selfishness; V. 11. Lot chose for himself; God chose for Abram. Cp. Jer. 45:5; Phil. 4:6-8.
   (3) Its prayerlessness. God not consulted. Cp. Deut. 6:12.
   (4) Its shortsightedness. Sodom a doomed city; V. 10. Cp. 2 Peter 3:10-12; Mark 8:36.
   (5) Its stages. (a) "Beheld;" V. 10. (b) "Chose;" V. 11. (c) "Separated;" V. 11. (d) "Dwelled;" V. 12. What a sad history. Cp. 2 Tim. 4:10.

IV. The Revelation; Vs. 14-18.

1. The Promiser—Jehovah; V. 14. Cp. Num. 23:19; Isa. 40:28; 44:8; 45:19.
2. The Promise; Vs. 14-16. God's choice for Abram.
   (1) Of the land. V. 14, 15; Deut. 32:8, 9; Deut. 34:4, etc.
   (2) Of the seed; V. 16. Cp. Deut. 1:10; Isa. 48:9.
3. The Possession: "Arise . . . walk." Cp. Obad. 17; Heb. 4:3, 9-11; Eph. 1:3. Possess your possessions. Who had the most, Lot, who chose for himself, or Abram, who left the choice to God?

10. GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

Genesis 14:8—15:18

Golden Text: Romans 4:5.

I. The Historic Setting; Gen. 14:8-24.
1. The capture of Lot; Vs. 11, 12.
2. The pursuit of Abraham; Vs. 13-16.
3. The blessing of Melchizedek; Vs. 18-20. This turned his mind from earth to heaven and prepared him to refuse the spoil. Melchizedek a type of Christ, our Great High Priest; Heb. 5:5-10; 7:1-17. (1) The bread to strengthen; John 6:35; John 6:51. (2) The wine to cheer. Cp. Luke 22:20; 1 Peter 1:8. (3) The authority to bless. Cp. Heb. 7:7; Romans 5:10; Heb. 7:25.
4. The refusal of the spoil; Vs. 21-24. Cp. Gen. 13:13; 2 Cor. 6:14, etc. This took real courage for it was an insult to this wicked king.

II. The Divine Encouragement; Gen. 15:1.
1. Fear Not—no fear. The first "fear not" of the Bible. Cp. Gen. 21:17; 26:24; 46:3; Num. 21:34; Joshua 8:1; Judges 6:23; Isa. 43:3; Ezek. 3:9, etc.; 1 John 4:18; Heb. 13:5-6.
2. "Shield"—no danger. God, his Protector. Cp. Psalms 84:11; 18:1, 2; 17:8; John 10:28-30, etc.
3. "Reward"—no loser. Cp. Psalms 73:26; 119:57; 142:5; 1 Sam. 2:30, etc.

III. The request; Vs. 2, 3. Abram's desire for a son.

IV. The Divine promise; Vs. 4, 5.
1. The basis of it. The word of the Lord; V. 4.
2. The content of it. Promise of seed; V. 4.
3. The illustration of it. Stars; V. 5.

V. The Divine blessing; Vs. 6, 7.
1. What Abraham did: "believed." First mention of "believe" in the Bible. Cp. Romans 4:3-5, 20-25; Gal. 3:2-9; Mark 9:23; John 3:36; 5:24; 21:31; Eph. 2:8, etc., etc. Note the two other mentions of men who believed God. (1) Jonah, 3:1-10, Repentance; (2) Acts 27:21-25; Rejoicing.
2. What God did—counted it to him for righteousness. This is still God's method of justifying, or declaring righteous, the believing sinner. See 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 1:30; Romans 3:22; 10:2-11.

VI. The Divine Covenant; V. 8-18.
1. The divided sacrifice; V. 9, 10. Nothing hid—all exposed; Heb. 4:12, 13.
2. The horror of darkness; V. 12. Every earthly hope and confidence gone.
3. The repeated promise; V. 13-16. Note the prophecy of Israel's history in Egypt. Prophecy is history foretold. Cp. Isa. 41:22, 23.
4. The furnace=Divine wrath expended on the sacrifice so that blessing might come to Abram. So with Christ. Psalm 88:7, 16, etc.
5. The lamp—the Divine light that searched the sacrifice and rightly estimated its value. Cp. John 16:10; Romans 1:4.
6. The covenant made; V. 18. Cp. Isa. 55:3; Heb. 9:15-17; Luke 22:20.

11. Abram in Egypt. Genesis 12:9-20; 13:1-4.

1. **God tried Abram's faith through famine,** v. 10. He often sends trouble, sickness, and hard times to try our faith. I Pet. 1.7. Perhaps Abram thought that because trouble came to him he had made a mistake in coming to Canaan. But God had **told** him to go to Canaan. Gen. 12.1.
2. **Abram did not trust God to care for him** and so he went down to Egypt. If God sends us to any place we can trust Him to keep us, but God did not send Abram to Egypt; he chose to go there himself. Gen. 28.15.
3. **The results of not trusting God:**
   (a) Abram was afraid, v. 12, but love casts out fear. I John 4.18.
   (b) He became selfish, he thought only of himself and not about his wife, v. 11-13.
   (c) He deceived others and told lies, v. 13.
   (d) He brought trouble upon others, v. 17.
   (e) He was rebuked by a heathen man who told him of his sin, v. 18. This brought shame on God's Name. Rom. 2.24.
   (f) He had no altar and no fellowship with God. All the presents the King of Egypt gave Abram could not make up to him for all he had lost, v. 16.
4. **How Abram came back to blessing.** He had to come back to the altar, picture of the sacrifice of Christ where we get forgiveness and cleansing. I John 1.9. **Verse to learn,** I Peter 5.7.
   There Abram called on the Name of the Lord, Ch. 13.4.

12. Hagar the slave girl. Genesis 16.1-13.

1. **Sarah did not wait God's time** to give Abram a son she told him to take another wife. Abram did not ask God, he obeyed Sarah. Sometimes Satan tempts us through those we love. Deut. 13.6-8; Matt. 10.37.
2. **Much trouble came from this:**
   (a) Trouble and jealousy came into the home and spoiled it because Hagar despised her mistress, v. 4.
   (b) Sarah was cross with Abram and blamed him for all the trouble but it was her own fault. Abram gave a soft answer. Prov. 15.1.
3. **How the angel of the Lord dealt with Hagar:**
   (a) He found her when she wandered away. Luke 15.4.
   (b) He made her think of how she had left her work because it was hard. He said, "Whence camest thou?" v. 8. We should not run away from trouble.
   (c) He made her think of where she was going. He said, "Where will you go?" She told him she had run away.
   (d) He sent her back to her mistress and told her to obey, v. 9. God was going to open the door and make her free but she had to wait God's time. (13 years.)
4. **Hagar brought this trouble on herself** because she had despised her mistress. Servants should obey their masters. Eph. 6.5, 6. If we do wrong and suffer for it let us bear it patiently, not run away. I Pet. 2.20, 21.
5. **Hagar found out she could not hide from God,** and she said, "Thou God seest me," v. 13; II Chron. 16.9. **Verse to learn,** Ephesians 6.5, 6.

13. Abram walking before God.

Genesis 17.1-8.

1. **God said, "I am the Almighty God,"** v. 1. This means the God Who is enough to meet all our need. Abram did not know God by this name. Do you? Only in God's power could Abram obey the next commands.
2. **God said, "Walk before Me,"** v. 1. Our walk means our daily life. He wants us to live in His Presence, to look to Him only. This is the life of faith. Col. 1.10; Gal. 2.20.
3. **God said, "Be thou perfect."** This means be wholehearted, not trying to please God and man, too. Ps. 12.2; Heb. 13.21. We must be wholehearted in our yielding to God and in our obedience to Him. John 2.5.
4. **Abram humbled himself before God,** he fell on his face, v. 3. When we see God by faith in a new way, it makes us very humble as it did Joshua, ch. 5.14; Moses, Num. 20.6; Isaiah, ch. 6.5, and others.
5. **God talked with him.** When we take a low place before God, He will talk with us and teach us. Is. 57.15. The closer we get to God the more humble it makes us.
6. **God changed his name** from Abram (exalted) to Abraham (fruitful), v. 5. God can change us and make us fruitful. II Cor. 3.18.
7. **God's promises to Abraham:** **Verse to learn,** Colossians 1.10.
   (a) I will make thee fruitful, v. 6.
   (b) I will stablish thee (make you strong), v. 7.
   (c) I will give thee the land (of blessing), v. 8.
   God is willing to do these three things for us.

14. Abraham the friend of God.

Genesis 18.1-8, 14.

One of the three who came to Abraham was the Lord, v. 3.

1. **Three times Abraham is called the friend of God.** II Chron. 20.7 James 2.23; Isaiah 41.8. Christ says to us, "I have called you friends." John 15.15.
2. **How Abraham met the Lord:**
   (a) He showed a ready and willing mind. He **ran** to meet Him, v. 2. Do we so love our Lord that we run to meet Him?
   (b) He showed a humble spirit, he knew he was nothing in the Presence of the the Lord and he bowed himself to the ground, v. 2.
   (c) He said, "My Lord," v. 3. This showed he yielded to the Lord as his Master. Is Jesus not only your Saviour but your Lord? Rom. 14.9.
   (d) He wanted to be with the Lord. He said, "pass not away from Thy servant, v. 3; Luke 24.29.
   (e) He was not thinking of **himself** and his own blessing. He wanted **them** to be refreshed. He said, "Rest yourselves, comfort your hearts," v. 4, 5. Let us think how we can bring rest and joy to our Lord. Is. 53.11.
3. **Abraham was ready to serve.** He ran, he fetched, he gave, v. 7. Love makes us willing to serve. God loves a cheerful giver. II Cor. 9.7.
4. **The Lord showed He was Abraham's friend.** He said. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" v. 17. **Verse to learn,** John 15.15.

15. Abraham praying for Sodom.

Genesis 18.22-32.

1. **God sees sin in the world and His heart is grieved.** He said of Sodom, "The sin of Sodom is very great, v. 20; I will go down and see, v. 21; Gen. 11.5. I will know," v. 21.
2. **Abraham's prayer for Sodom:**
   (a) It was a lonely prayer. He had no one to pray with him for Sodom.
   (b) He prayed for a long time. Sometimes we give up before we get the answer.
   (c) It was a humble prayer, v. 27; 1 Kings 18.42.
   (d) He was willing for God's will. Abraham said, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" v. 25. Luke 22.42.
3. **God is full of mercy.** He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. II Pet. 3.9. If there had been only ten righteous in that big city, God was willing to spare it, v. 32.
4. **LOT AND ABRAHAM.**
   (a) God sent angels to Lot but **God Himself stayed with Abraham** His friend, v. 17.
   (b) The angels were not willing to go into Lot's house, but they were glad to go into Abraham's, 19.2; II Cor. 6.14.
   (c) Lot vexed his own soul II Pet. 2.8, but Abraham refreshed the Lord, v. 4, 5. The separated man is able to have fellowship with God. I John 1.3, 7. **Verse to learn,** Genesis 18.25 (last part of verse).

16. Sodom destroyed.

Genesis 19.

Israel's cry brought God down to deliver them. Ex. 3.7, 8. Sodom's sin brought down God to destroy them. Gen. 19.13.

1. **Why God destroyed Sodom:**
   (a) Because He is a holy God and must punish sin. Their own sin brought this judgment on them. Our God is a consuming fire. Heb. 12.29.
   (b) God wanted to make this a warning to others.
2. **But before God destroyed Sodom he warned them first** by letting King Chedorlaomer overcome them. But they took no notice of this warning.
3. Not many were saved from Sodom but God saved all who would listen to His warning.
4. **Work of the angels at Sodom—an example for us:**
   (a) **They went to Lot** to warn him, they did not wait for him to come out of Sodom.
   (b) **They were willing to work to save even a few.** The Lord spent time with one soul—with the woman of Samaria; with Nicodemus; with the demoniac; and Philip worked hard to save the Ethiopian. Acts 8.
   (c) **They spoke plainly to Lot** about God's punishment and warned him not to wait. Jude 7, 23.
   (d) **They helped him to get out of Sodom;** they caught hold of his hand, v. 16.
5. **No mud of sin stuck to the angels** because they went to Sodom on God's business. But sin left a mark on Lot's life because he went to wicked Sodom for money. **Verse to learn,** Jude 23.

17. LOT IN SODOM

READ Genesis 19.

THEME: Results of Backsliding.

TELL THE STORY.

A POWERLESS LIFE.—

ONE DOWNWARD STEP LEADS TO ANOTHER. From pitching his tent toward Sodom (Gen. 13: 12), Lot went to live there. His decline was gradual. There are few, if any, *sudden* falls. The Prodigal had first wandered from his father's home in heart, and not long afterwards his feet followed. Lot's heart was really in Sodom before he went to live there. He coveted all that Sodom could give him.

HE BECAME A JUDGE. "Lot sat in the gate of Sodom" (v. 1). He set his heart on worldly power and prosperity, and obtained them, but what a price he had to pay. So rooted was he in Sodom that even angels had difficulty in getting him out (v. 16). He had to reap what he had sown (Gal. 6: 7).

HE SUFFERED FROM THEIR FILTHY CONVERSATION AND TERRIBLE WICKEDNESS, BUT HE WAS POWERLESS TO CHANGE THEM (2 Pet. 2: 7). It vexed his soul, yet he remained on. He need not have done so, for he was there by his own choice to gain wealth and influence. Sometimes our daily life and work necessitate our having to associate with those whose talk is like that of the people of Sodom, but if we speak out against it and our lives are consistent, they may at least remain silent in our presence, and in their hearts they will respect us.

HE WAS POWERLESS TO HELP HIS RELATIVES AND THE PEOPLE OF SODOM. His wife perished (v. 26). His daughters became contaminated by the morals of Sodom, his sons-in-law mocked at his warning (v. 14), and the people of Sodom despised him (v. 9). Such people as Lot are despised by the world, and when they talk about God are mocked at by their ungodly relatives and companions. If we wish to influence others for God then we must separate ourselves from their sins. You must be outside a tub yourself if you wish to lift it.

HE LOST EVERYTHING AND WASTED HIS LIFE. He lost the very things he had sacrificed his spiritual assets to gain, and could only look back on a wasted life. Lot belonged to God—in 2 Peter 2: 7, he was called "just Lot"—and therefore he could never be lost, but his life and work went for nothing. Do not be like Lot, who missed God's plan for his life. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3: 2). Remember Lot as well as his wife, and do not live in Sodom.

WHY GOD DESTROYED SODOM.—

BECAUSE HE IS HOLY AND JUST, AND MUST PUNISH SIN. He "will by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus 34: 7). We are told that the sin of the people of Sodom was great before the Lord. A greater judgment will fall on those who reject God's offer of salvation.

BECAUSE GOD WISHED TO WARN OTHERS. "Making (Sodom) an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly" (2 Peter 2: 6). God has made provision for our deliverance through Jesus Christ, but "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2: 3). This judgment was one of God's red lights warning us of danger.

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE.—

SHE WAS TOLD PLAINLY ABOUT THE COMING JUDGMENT. The angels did everything possible to save her. They seized her hand, they brought her out of the city, they warned her not to look back; they said, "Escape for thy life" (v. 17). And God has done everything possible in order to save us. He has provided the means of escape in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for our sins.

SHE CAME OUT OF SODOM, BUT SODOM WAS STILL IN HER HEART. She was very near safety, and yet she was lost. It is not sufficient to be "not far from the kingdom," to be "*almost* persuaded." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31).

MEMORY VERSE.—Jeremiah 2: 19—"It is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God."

For Lesson Isaac offered up, see Book 1, Lesson 5, page 11.

18. LOT'S WIFE

Genesis 19:1-26

Golden Text: Job 36:18

I. The Circumstances. Read Gen. 18

1. The angels entertained; Vs. 1-8. Cp. Heb. 13:2. This is one of the many "Theophanies" of the Old Testament. A "Theophany" is a manifestation of God, in this case, in human form. Undoubtedly this is none other than the Son of God. Note some other Theophanies, Gen. 16:7; 22:11; Judges 6:11, 12; 13:18; etc.
2. The reiterated promise; Vs. 9-15.
3. The intercession of Abraham; Vs. 17-33. What it teaches:
   (1) The duty and privilege of intercessory prayer. Cp. Isa. 64:7; Job 33:26; James 5:17, 18; 1 Tim. 2:1; Eph. 1:15-17; 3:14-21, etc. (2) The basis of true prayer—the revealed will of God; V. 17. Cp. Daniel 9:3-19; Ezra 9:5-15. (3) The value of argument in prayer; V. 23, etc. Cp. Exod. 32:10-14. (4) The right of importunity. Six times he plead for Sodom. It was Abraham who stopped asking. God heard and granted his request each time. (5) The efficacy of prayer. Cp. Jer. 33:3, etc.

II. Lot's wife; Luke 17:32. Remember

1. Her privileges.
   (1) She was faithfully warned; Vs. 13, 14. Cp. Acts 20:19-21, 27; Isa. 55:7; Ezek. 33:4-6, 11; Job 36:18; Romans 6:23, etc. (2) She was related to a righteous man—Lot; 2 Peter 2:7. Christian parents will not save; John 1:13. (3) She was warned by angels; V. 17. Cp. Luke 16:28-31. (4) She knew the way of escape. "Flee." A mere knowledge of the way of salvation, though necessary, will not save. The way of salvation must be accepted and God's word obeyed. (5) She was the subject of Abraham's prayers. Gen. 18:17-33. Many are relying on the fact that their relatives pray for them and imagine this will save them, but remember Lot's wife.
2. Her Sin.
   (1) She preferred Sodom and its wickedness. Sodom like the world; 1 John 2:15, 16. Its pomp, passions, pleasures, treasures, power and popularity enthrall many; Matt. 7:13, 14; James 1:15. (2) She presumed on God's mercy; Romans 2:4-5. (3) She turned back in unbelief; V. 26. Mark 10:22, 16:16; Heb. 10:39; Rev. 21:8.
3. Her Fate.
   (1) Deserved. Cp. Heb. 12:25; Prov. 9:12; Ezek. 33:4, 5.
   (2) Sudden. Cp. 1 Thess. 5:3.
   (3) Final. Cp. 2 Thess. 1:8, 9.
   Her plans were for time only. Her god was pleasure, pomp and fashion. Her faith was in the temporal, not eternal. Therefore she had no escape from God's judgment.

19. ISAAC OFFERED UP

READ Genesis 22: 1-14.
THEME: Obedient unto death.
TELL THE STORY.

ABRAHAM-TYPE OF GOD THE FATHER.—

GREAT LOVE.—Abraham loved his only son, but he loved God still more, and so he was willing to do as God asked him, offer up Isaac for a burnt offering (v. 2, 3). "God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4: 10). His love was great because we were utterly unworthy. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5: 8). It is a great love that will lay down his life for his friends, but a greater love that would lay down his life for his enemies.

A GREAT GIFT.—Jesus Christ was God's *only* begotten Son (John 3: 16); His *dear* Son (Col. 1: 13); the One Who was in the bosom of the Father (John 1: 18). In Prov. 8: 30 we get a glimpse of what the Lord Jesus was to the Father, "daily His delight." Think then of what it must have cost the dear Heavenly Father to allow His Son to come to earth, to be born in a manger, to be hated, mocked, scourged, crowned with thorns and finally to go to the cross and die for our sins (1 Cor. 15: 3). Let us say then, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9: 15).

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC WENT TO MOUNT MORIAH TOGETHER (v. 6). Abraham was willing to give His Son; Isaac was willing to die. God the Father and God the Son were one in the work of our redemption. The Lord Jesus said, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me . . . Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will O God" (Heb. 10: 5, 7).

ISAAC A TYPE OF CHRIST.—

ISAAC WAS BOUND (v. 9). The Lord Jesus, too, was bound, and this increased His shame. Think of our Lord's humiliation — the king of glory bound by wicked men. Annas bound Him (John 18: 24), but Jesus had first bound Himself with the cords of love. He was willing to be bound that we might be freed from the cords of sin (Prov. 5: 22). "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8: 36).

ISAAC WAS WILLING TO BE LAID ON THE ALTAR (v. 9). There was no resistance, no refusal. This is a picture of our Lord Jesus Who was willing to be nailed to the Cross, a sacrifice for sin. But He was more than willing, for He said, "I *delight* to do Thy will, O God." *His death was voluntary.* When the soldiers came to the Garden of Gethsemane to take Him and Peter drew his sword, He said,

"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26: 53). He said, "I lay down My life . . . No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John 10: 17, 18).

ISAAC WAS SPARED, HE DID NOT DIE (v. 12), the knife that would have slain Isaac was, at God's command, suspended in mid air (v. 12). And here the type falls short — God spared Isaac, but He did not spare His Son but "delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. 8: 32). He let men do their worst, for He delivered Him into wicked hands to be crucified and slain (Acts 2: 23).

ISAAC WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD (in a figure) (Heb. 11: 19). When Abraham said to the young men "I and the lad will . . . come again to you" (v. 5) he believed that in some way God would give back to him his dear son, even though He had to raise him from the dead (Heb. 11: 19). This is a faint picture of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. "God hath raised up (Jesus) having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it" (Acts 2: 24). If Christ had not risen from the dead our faith would be in vain because we would still be in our sins (1 Cor. 15: 17). If He had not risen it would show that Christ had not borne our sins in His body on the tree, that He had not satisfied God's claims and that we therefore must take the punishment for our sins.

THE RAM.—

IT WAS A PICTURE OF THE LORD JESUS — THE LAMB OF GOD. Isaac said, "Where is the lamb?" (v. 7). "God will provide Himself a lamb" (v. 8) Abraham answered.

THE LAMB WAS PROVIDED BY GOD.—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29). The Hebrews are accustomed to use the expression that a thing is "of God" when they mean that it is the greatest, the noblest, the chief of the kind. So then we may understand that Jesus is the chief of all sacrifices. Other lambs had been brought for sacrifice, but He is THE Lamb, the Lamb of God. In God's purpose He was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13, 8).

IT WAS OFFERED UP INSTEAD OF ISAAC (v. 13). As Isaac looked at the ram on the altar he knew that it had taken his place, it had died instead of him. This is a picture of Christ Who was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5: 21); Who bore our iniquities (Is. 53: 6); Who died in our stead. As we look by faith at Jesus, the Lamb of God, may we see Him taking our place, bearing our punishment, "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3: 18). Let us say with the apostle Paul, "The Son of God Who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*" (Gal. 2: 20).

MEMORY VERSE.—Rom. 8: 32—"He . . . spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all."

ABRAHAM'S TRIAL

Genesis 22:1-19

Golden Text: Romans 8:32

I. The Trial of Faith; Vs. 1, 2.

1. Its purpose; V. 1. To "test," not "tempt." Cp. James 1:12, 13; 1 Cor. 10:13; Job 23:10; 34:36; 1 Peter 1:7; 4:12; Zech. 13:9; Heb. 11:17. God tests the reality of the believers' faith, obedience and love.
2. Its nature.
   (1) The offering of a son; V. 2. Cp. 1 John 4 10.
   (2) An only son; V. 2. In whom all his hopes were centered. Cp. John 3:16.
   (3) A well beloved son; V. 2. Cp. Matt. 3:16, 17; 17:5; John 12:28.
   (4) A son of promise. Cp. Gen. 15:4:6. Cp. Gal. 4:4, 5; Gen. 3:15.

II. The Obedience of Faith; Vs. 3-10.

1. The prompt response; V. 3-6. Cp. Romans 1:5. Based on implicit, unreasoning, and unquestioning belief in God's wisdom, power and love. Cp. Heb. 11:17-19. Romans 4. Note especially the significance of Gen. 22:5: "Come again to you." He believed God would raise Isaac from the dead; Heb. 11:19.
2. The question; V. 7. "Where is the Lamb?"
   (1) The fire. Typical of God's wrath against sin; Heb. 12:29; Lev. 9:24; 10:2; Romans 1:18.
   (2) The wood. Typical of corrupt humanity fit only for the burning: Zech. 3:2; Psalm 14: 1-3; Jer. 5:14.
   (3) The Lamb. Where is the Lamb? This is the great question of the Old Testament. Unanswered until John the Baptist. Cp. John 1: 29; 1 Peter 1:18; Rev. 5:6.
3. The Answer; V. 8. (1) "God." The Author of salvation; 2 Cor. 5:18. (2) "Will provide." He sees the need; He will meet it; Isa. 59:16; Ezek. 22:30. (3) "Himself a Lamb." God is Himself the Provision; 2 Cor. 5:19.
4. Isaac's Unresisting Surrender; Vs 9-10. Isaac could easily have run away from the sacrifice, but he became obedient to his father's will. Cp. Phil. 2:8; Isa. 53:7, ;; 1 Peter 2:21-23.

III. The Reward of Faith; Vs. 11-19.

1. The Call; Vs. 11, 12. Note the repeated name. See the others of Scripture as Exod. 3:4, etc., etc.
2. The Substitute; V. 13. "The ram." But no response at Calvary. He was the alone Substitute; 2 Cor. 5:21.
3. The Place named; V. 14. "Jehovah Jireh." The Lord will provide; Phil. 4:19. What God has provided through the gift of His Son—all things for time and eternity. (1) Past—a Savior. (2) Present—an Advocate. (3) Future —a King.
4. The Commendation; Vs. 15-18. How wonderfully this has been fulfilled!

20. ELIEZER THE MODEL SERVANT

READ Genesis 24 and Chapter 15: 2.

THEME: Faithful and prayerful service.

TELL THE STORY as far as it concerns Eliezer.

ELIEZER HAD SHOWN HIMSELF WORTHY OF TRUST AND RESPONSIBILITY, for he ruled over all that Abraham had (v. 2). You may be sure that Eliezer had not been given this responsibility all at once. Abraham must have found him faithful in the smaller duties and responsibilities, and promoted him to the greater. We find this in the home life, at school and in business life. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16: 10). A pupil will not be chosen as prefect if he has not proved himself faithful in the lesser duties. It is a great thing to earn a reputation for faithfulness in the home, at school and in business. It is not *successful* service that is valued by God, but *faithful* work.

HE LISTENED CAREFULLY TO HIS MASTER'S INSTRUCTIONS, and asked for further details (v. 5). His master's interests were his. How often our parents, teachers and employers are vexed when we have not carried out their instructions, and it was all due to our not paying particular attention to what they were saying. Let us determine to carry out to the best of our ability the tasks committed to us. Carelessness is always inexcusable.

ELIEZER'S PRAYER.—

HE PRAYED ABOUT HIS WORK (vv. 12-14). A good motto for one's life is, "In *everything* by prayer" (Phil. 4: 6). It is not sufficient, though necessary, to kneel by our bedside in the morning and commit the day and its activities to God. Many things will arise at school, in the office or workshop, for which we shall need help. Cultivate the habit of crying to God for help just when it is needed. Study this wonderful prayer and note some things about it:—

IT WAS A SIMPLE PRAYER. We do not need to use grand and unusual words when talking to God. Be simple, be natural, pour out your heart to Him in everyday language. Go to Him as to a friend who is able and willing to help you.

IT WAS DIRECT. It was guidance he needed, and he asked for it. In the Solomon Islands a native who has some request to make will "beat about the bush" and talk about everything under the sun, and at the end of a lengthy visit, perhaps as he is going out the door, he will ask for what he wants. Eliezer said, "Send me good speed this day." Let us not be ashamed to present our requests to God. Be direct with Him.

IT WAS A TRUSTFUL PRAYER. He believed God would definitely guide him, and enable him to execute his commission successfully (vv. 12-14). Can we not trust God to do the same for us? Difficulties and problems arise in connection with your work in the home, at school, with your home work, or in business. Ask God for His help and believe that He will give it. Claim the promises of God in connection with prayer.

BEFORE HE HAD DONE SPEAKING, THE ANSWER CAME (v. 15). This proves the promise of Isaiah 65: 24—"While they are yet speaking I will hear." Sometimes we have this same experience in our own lives, but at other times the answer is delayed. In either case let us be sure that God always hears and answers. Sometimes His answer is "Yes," sometimes "No," but it is an answer.

WHEN THE ANSWER CAME HE RETURNED THANKS (vv. 26, 27). How often we pray and ask God to give us something or to do something for us, and when He does it we forget to thank Him. "In everything by prayer *with thanksgiving*," Paul said in Phil. 4: 6. How we despise ingratitude in others, but are we guilty of it ourselves towards God? Remember the ten lepers who were healed by the Lord Jesus (Luke 17). Only one returned to give thanks, and our Lord said, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" (Luke 17: 17). When you have been helped in difficult places, acknowledge His help, and return thanks, as Eliezer did.

HE SAID, "I BEING IN THE WAY, THE LORD LED ME" (v. 27). There are conditions to answered prayer. First of all, we must be in His way, in His will, walking in the path He has marked out for us. We can only claim His guidance and help if we are walking with Him, and obedient to His commands. There is another condition. Sin must not be allowed in the life. Nothing must be allowed to come between us and Him. David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66: 18).

ELIEZER WOULD NOT ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE HINDERED IN CARRYING OUT HIS MASTER'S ORDERS. When Rebekah's parents tried to delay him, he said, "Hinder me not" (v. 56). There will always be those who will seek to dissuade us from carrying out our Heavenly Master's orders promptly, and even from serving Him at all. Every time we resist those who would try to turn us from the path of duty, it makes resistance easier the next time. Doing the right thing may sometimes make us unpopular at school or with our friends, but if we have our Master's approval then nothing else matters.

ELIEZER SPOKE NOT AT ALL OF HIMSELF, BUT MUCH OF HIS MASTER. His object was to draw out Rebekah's love toward his master. Let us seek, as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, to attract others not to ourselves, but to Him. He said, "I am Abraham's servant" (v. 34), and then went on to speak of the greatness of his master and of his riches. We, too, are only servants. Let us seek, by word, thought and deed, to exalt the One whom we ourselves love and serve.

MEMORY VERSE.—Genesis 24: 27—"Blessed be the Lord God, . . . I being in the way, the Lord led me."

21. A BRIDE FOR ISAAC

READ Genesis 24.

THEME: Friendship and marriage.

Abraham wanted to see his son Isaac married, but there were two restrictions—

Isaac must marry one of his own kindred (vv. 3, 4).

Isaac must not leave Canaan (vv. 5, 6).

Both these conditions were essential for the fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham, because the seed must be of the chosen line, and the promised land, Canaan, must be held.

LOVE AFFAIRS. As a general rule, all normal young people hope, one day, to marry. How important it is for them when making friends, especially of the opposite sex, to choose companions who will be a help to them in their Christian life, for one of them may one day be their future husband or wife, as the case may be. If it is in God's plan for you to marry, then somewhere in the world today is the one whom God has chosen for you, therefore begin to pray now that your life partner may be the one "whom *the Lord* has appointed" (v. 44). This is one of the most important things in life, because it affects the whole of your future, as it can bring companionship or loneliness, sorrow or happiness. God, who made you, understands you, and your natural desire for friendship and marriage. Commit your way to Him each day and ask Him to guide you in this matter. "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37: 5). Be careful not to lead another to think that you care more for him or her than you really do. Obey the golden rule never to take your pleasure at the expense of another. *Boys*—Preserve respect and chivalry towards all girls and women. *Girls*—Show yourself worthy of boys' respect.

ISAAC WAS FORBIDDEN TO MARRY OUT OF THE CHOSEN LINE. This is, in a spiritual sense, true for the Christian today. Do not pray to God for guidance about whether you should marry one for whom you care but who does not belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. God has clearly revealed his will in this matter in 2 Cor. 6: 14, when He said, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" If you do not heed this warning, then there can be no real unity in your marriage, no fellowship in the things which mean most to you, and there can only come unhappiness and perhaps disaster.

REBEKAH.—

SHE WAS GENEROUS AND GRACIOUS. She gave not only what was asked, but offered what was not asked (vv. 14, 19). Let us not forget that the Spirit of the Master is always evident in our readiness to do or to give the little more. There are many who are conscientious enough to do what they consider their duty, but they will never go beyond that. Let us be "second milers," that is, ready to go not only the one mile which the law compelled, but the second mile voluntarily (Matthew 5: 41). Rebekah had great physical beauty (v. 16), but she

THE BRIDE FOR ISAAC

Genesis 24

Golden Text: Eph. 5:27

I. Abraham's Charge; Vs. 1-9.

1. His Consistency; Vs. 1-3. Cp. 2 Cor. 6:14-18; John 17:13-16.
2. His Commission; Vs. 4-6. A bride for his son. Here Abraham is a type of the Father Whose great desire it is to have a bride for His Son. Cp. Eph. 5:25-27 with Heb. 10:7. It was the Father's will.
3. His confidence; V. 7. Based on God's promises. Cp. Num. 23:19; 2 Cor. 1:20.

II. The Servant's Search; Vs. 10-49. The servant here is typical of the Holy Spirit sent by the Lord after His departure to continue His work; John 16:7-15; 14:16-17; 15:26.

1. The Preparation; V. 10. Cp. John 16:14, 15. The servant must be ready to convince the bride-to-be of the attractiveness of Isaac's person; the sincerity of Isaac's passion and the desirability of Isaac's possessions.
2. The Journey; V. 10. About 500 miles. Cp. "Send." John 14:26.
3. The Prayer; Vs. 11-14. Jer. 33:3; Romans 8: 26-27. Note its elements. (1) Reverence; V. 12, 13. (2) Definiteness; V. 14. (3) Brevity.
4. The Answer; Vs. 15, 16. Cp. Isa. 65:24; Psalm 91:14-16. Note last clause of V. 27. Here is a great principle in guidance: "I, being in the way, the Lord led me." Cp. Hos. 6:3.
5. The Message; Vs. 27-49.
   (1) Its urgency; V. 33; 2 Cor. 6:2; Prov. 27:1.
   (2) Its theme; Vs. 34. Note his humility. It was all about another. Cp. John 16:13. (a) The greatness of Abraham. (b) The desire of Abraham. (c) The riches of his son.
   (3) Its earnest or proof; Vs. 22 and 52. The precious treasures were but a sample of the vast riches of Abraham. See 1 Cor. 2:10-11. Cp. 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 5:5.

III. Rebekah's Choice; Vs. 50-60. A picture of salvation.

1. She heard the message; V. 51. Cp. Romans 10:8-17; John 5:24.
2. She believed the message. Cp. 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 11:13; John 20:29.
3. She decided to receive Isaac as her life partner. V. 58. See also John 1:12. Will you receive Christ as such? Cp. other decisions; Matt. 27:22; Joshua 24:15; Acts 16:30-34.

IV. The Meeting with Isaac; Vs. 61-67.

1. The migration; Vs. 61, 62. Cp. Heb. 11:13-16. The journey through the desert.
2. The meeting; Vs. 63-66. Cp. 1 Thess. 4:13-18. Note "in the fields;" Cp. "in the air."
3. The marriage; V. 67. Cp. Revelation 19:5-10. This story has been appropriately called "A courtship by proxy."

had what was far more important, a generous and gracious disposition. Character is of far more importance than looks, but character is revealed in the face, and even where beauty may be lacking, strength, sweetness and kindness can be seen.

SHE WAS COURTEOUS AND RESPECTFUL (v. 18). Respect to those older than themselves and courtesy to all should be seen in all young people who call themselves Christians. We are apt to overlook the command, "Be courteous" (1 Pet. 3: 8), thinking it of no importance. We need to remember that courtesy is necessary most of all in the home and towards those with whom we associate daily. Manners are often dropped as the door of the home is entered.

SHE WAS JUST CONSCIENTIOUSLY DOING HER EVERYDAY JOB WHEN SHE MET ELIEZER, not sitting down day-dreaming and neglecting her work. God's best gifts frequently come to us as we are going along faithfully performing the daily and perhaps humdrum and monotonous duties. The angels appeared to the shepherds while they were keeping watch over their flocks by night (Luke 2), to Gideon while he was threshing wheat, and the Lord Jesus came to the disciples when they were mending their nets (Matt. 4).

SHE WAS HOSPITABLE (v. 25). Hospitality is commanded in 1 Peter 4: 9. "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." You may say, "That does not apply to me, for I have no home of my own yet." But you can begin now by helping to care for your parents' guests and doing cheerfully any extra work their visits entail.

HER PARENTS SAW THAT THE MARRIAGE HAD BEEN PLANNED BY GOD (v. 50). Prayer had been made in the matter of a wife for Isaac, and God brought Rebekah's parents also to see that their daughter was God's choice for Isaac. When a thing has been planned and ordered by God, He can remove every obstacle.

ISAAC.—

HE WAS A MAN OF PRAYER. As his bride was on her way to him he was praying, probably, about Rebekah and their approaching marriage (v. 63). Surely Isaac had committed this matter to God and He had brought it about. Why should so many who belong to Christ pray about everything else which concerns them, and neglect to pray about this all-important matter, either thinking that they are quite capable of managing it themselves or else leaving it to chance?

HE LOVED REBEKAH. He must have been very lonely after his mother's death, and Rebekah came into his life just when he needed her most, for v. 67 tells us that "Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

MEMORY VERSE.—2 Cor. 6: 14—"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

22. ESAU SOLD HIS BIRTHRIGHT

READ Genesis 25: 27-34.

THEME: Living only for the body.

Isaac had two sons—Esau and Jacob. Esau was an expert hunter, Jacob was a shepherd.

TELL THE STORY.

ESAU.—

HE WAS STRONG AND GOOD AT SPORT, BUT PHYSICAL FITNESS IS NOT EVERYTHING. Clean, healthy sport, which helps to keep us fit, is of value, but we need to see to it that it is kept in its proper place, and not over emphasised. Sometimes sport is taken up almost to the exclusion of everything else. Lessons suffer, work is scamped, and Bible reading and prayer are crowded out. Paul gave warning about this very thing when he said, "Bodily exercise profiteth for a little" (for a little time, for this life only) (1 Tim. 4: 8, R.V.). To Timothy himself Paul said, "Exercise thyself . . . unto godliness" (1 Tim. 4: 7). We need to exercise ourselves spiritually as well as physically, and so build up Christian character.

HIS CHIEF DESIRE WAS TO GRATIFY HIS PHYSICAL APPETITE. He would sacrifice anything to satisfy it for the passing moment. Let us ask ourselves, what is our chief desire? Perhaps it is for dress, for pleasure, for sport or for eating. These are all legitimate, but have we an *excessive* love for them, and what do we sacrifice to gratify our appetite for them? On the other hand, we may have a craving for that which is positively harmful and sinful, and if we yield to these desires we shall, like Esau, bitterly regret it. With God's help and by His power, we should, like Paul, "keep under (our) body and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. 9: 27). Let the body be always subservient to the spirit.

HE WAS PROFANE (Heb. 12: 16). This means he was irreverent, thinking lightly of sacred things. There is so much round us today which will tend to cause us to undervalue, if not scorn, those things which we should regard as sacred. Let us be careful of the books we read, the stories we hear, and the pictures we see.

THE BIRTHRIGHT.—

Gave Esau the privilege of being the head of the house.

Made him the family priest (till the priestly line of Aaron was established). To offer sacrifices for the family. What a great privilege this was.

It made it possible for him to be the forerunner of Christ.

As the firstborn he was in the direct line of Abraham, through whom blessing was to come.

WHAT ESAU DID WITH HIS PRIVILEGES.—

HE DESPISED THE PROMISES AND BLESSING OF GOD (v. 34). He said, "What profit shall this birthright do to me?" (v. 32.) He was like the rich fool who said, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12: 19). What profit! He could see no profit in the birthright, but everything in the mess of pottage, which represented only one meal. He placed no value on the things of God, but valued highly the things of the body. The present was everything to him, the future nothing. He valued what he could see—the temporal, and despised what he could not see—the eternal. He said, "What profit shall this birthright do to me?" God says, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul" (Mark 8: 36). He wanted to have this world and the next too. He wanted to have the pottage and the birthright also. He wanted to have a Hittite for a wife and yet have the blessing which belonged to the separated people of God.

Are you living for the body, and neglecting that which is of far more value, the things of the spirit?

HE MARRIED A HEATHEN WIFE, and this was a grief of mind to his parents (chap. 26: 34, 35). See the warning against this in the previous lesson.

HE BITTERLY REGRETTED HIS CHOICE WHEN IT WAS TOO LATE. Afterwards he wanted the blessing. He sought it carefully with tears, but he could not recover it (Hebrews 12: 16, 17). He found out too late that the choice he had made was irrevocable. The choices we make may cast a bitter shadow over the whole of our future. One's birthright, that is, one's privileges and opportunities, may be cheaply lost but dearly regained, if ever.

JACOB'S MISTAKES.—

He rightly wanted the birthright more than anything else. He appreciated spiritual privileges, those which Esau despised, but—

HE TOOK A MEAN ADVANTAGE OF ESAU. He knew the weaknesses of his brother's character, and seized the opportunity to bargain with him for the birthright. Let us seek to help, rather than tempt, those whose character may be weaker than our own. Never try to make gain out of another's weakness of character, or out of his circumstances.

JACOB DID NOT WAIT GOD'S TIME AND WAY TO GET THE BLESSING. He took matters into his own hands and, as we shall see later, practised lying and deceit to gain that which he so much wanted. We sometimes hear it said that "the end justifies the means," but it is never right to use wrong means to gain a right end. People say, "Let us do evil that good may come." That is never right (Romans 3: 8).

MEMORY VERSE.—I Corinthians 9: 25, 27—"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. . . . But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."

23. JACOB'S DECEIT

READ Genesis 27.
THEME: Sowing and reaping.
TELL THE STORY.

THE MISTAKES OF THE FAMILY.—

FAVOURITISM. Isaac specially loved Esau, while Rebekah favoured Jacob. This brought trouble and strife into the home. Where there is favouritism in the family, sometimes the children add to the difficulty by inducing the parents to take sides. Do your part in trying to preserve peace.

ISAAC tried to give Esau the blessing God had promised to Jacob. Isaac was quite aware of the fact that God had said, "The elder (Esau) shall serve the younger" (Jacob) (Gen. 25: 23), but he tried to alter the purposes of God. One of the reasons may have been that Esau was his favourite son; another, that he was afraid the passionate Esau might make trouble if he did not give him the blessing.

REBEKAH was partial and scheming. How little she knew God when she thought she had to resort to trickery and deceit to bring about the fulfilment of God's promise, and His plan for her beloved Jacob. It is a safe thing to leave your affairs in *God's* hands. She deceived her husband, she aroused Esau to fury, she persuaded Jacob to cheat in order to gain the blessing, and sorrow and trouble were the results of her actions. When sin and deception come into a home, peace and mutual trust depart. True happiness can only be found in obedience to God's will. It can never be right to use wrong means to gain a right end.

ESAU despised his birthright, as we learned in the previous lesson.

JACOB tried to get a right thing in a wrong way. It was right for him to want the blessing, and had he waited God's time and way, he would have received it without all the sorrow and trouble which followed his action.

And so we see that every member of this family had a share in bringing about the trouble and sorrow which came into the home.

ONE SIN LEADS TO ANOTHER.—

We rarely stop at one sin, and so it grows.

JACOB LISTENED TO HIS MOTHER'S EVIL ADVICE. This was the first step. It was true that he made a mild protest (vv. 11, 12), but this was not on account of the sin, but because he was afraid that his deception would be discovered. There is a difference between the fear of sin and the fear of the *consequences* of sin. Remember the advice given in Proverbs 1: 10, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." This warning still holds, even though the temptation may come from a relative or friend.

HE PRACTISED DECEIT. From being tempted to deceive, he went on to practise it. The fact that his father was old and blind made his act a most despicable one. It is always contemptible to serve ourselves by the affliction or ignorance of others. Sometimes such action is described as "smart" or "good business," but it is not viewed in this way by God. He has other names for such actions.

HE LIED MANY TIMES (vv. 19, 20, 24). In nearly every case other lies are necessary to cover the first one. The Lord hates a lying tongue: it is an abomination to Him (Prov. 6: 16, 17). We should make David's prayer our own, "Remove from me the way of lying" (Psalm 119: 29), but we must do our part also and say, "I have chosen the way of truth" (Psalm 119: 30). There must be a determination to *choose* the way of truth.

HE BLASPHEMED—HE USED GOD'S NAME IN ORDER TO COVER HIS LIE (v. 20). People sometimes call upon God to bear witness to the fact that they are telling the truth, even when they are lying. This is not only a great sin in God's sight, but when the lie is discovered people will never trust your word again.

"Oh what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive."

SOWING AND REAPING.—

JACOB HAD TO REAP WHAT HE HAD SOWN. Just as this is God's law in nature (Gen. 1: 12, "after his kind"), so it is in our lives. We cannot sin with impunity. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6: 7). When Jacob cried to God in his loneliness and sin, God forgave him (Gen. 35: 3), but he had to reap the fruit of his sin. Though the sin is forgiven if we come to God in true repentance (1 John 1: 9), yet we must often take some of the consequences of our sin.

WHAT JACOB REAPED.—

HIS BROTHER WANTED TO MURDER HIM. Jacob's action produced hatred in Esau's heart.

HE HAD TO FLEE FROM HIS HOME. We gather, from Gen. 25: 27, that he was a quiet, steady and home-loving man with simple tastes. Then it must have cost him a great deal to leave his home, his parents, and all whom he loved. The homesickness that comes when away from home as a result of wrongdoing must have an element of remorse in it.

HE HAD TO GO OUT PENNILESS. What a contrast his arrival at his Uncle Laban's was to what it might have been had he acted differently.

HE NEVER SAW HIS MOTHER AGAIN. She died before he returned home. Through their own action Rebekah and Jacob were parted for ever. What remorse Jacob must have suffered when he heard of his mother's death, and how Rebekah must have longed to see her dearly loved son before she died.

HE HAD MUCH TROUBLE IN A STRANGE LAND, AND WAS DECEIVED AGAIN AND AGAIN BY LABAN. When Jacob suffered from Laban's deception he must have remembered how he had deceived his own father.

MEMORY VERSE.—Galatians 6: 7—"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

JACOB'S DECEPTION

Genesis 27

Golden Text: Galatians 6:7

I. The Foolish Exchange. See Gen. 25:27-34.

1. Esau's possession; V. 31. A birthright. Our possessions by nature: Soul, reason, conscience, will, health, strength, body, etc.
2. Esau's exchange. Cp. 34. Cp. Heb. 12:16. Cp. Mark 8:36.
3. Some other bad exchanges: (1) Judas' 30 pieces of silver; Matt. 27:3, 4. (2) Pilate—popularity; Matt. 27:17-24. (3) Felix—pet sins; Acts 24:25, 26. What are you exchanging your soul for? Illustration: Passion and Patience in "Pilgrim's Progress."

II. The Wicked Deception; Gen. 27. Let us not suppose for a moment that God condones this lie and deception of Jacob. God everywhere in Scripture condemns sin in any shape and form. It is true God desired Jacob to have the blessing, but Jacob took the wrong means to obtain it and a right end does not justify a wrong means.

1. A mother's influence; Vs. 6-13. (1) For evil. See 1 Kings 22:52; 2 Chron. 22:3. (2) For good. See 1 Sam. 1:27, 28; 2:18, 19; 2 Tim. 1:4, 5. Apply the lesson of the great value, to the child, of a mother's good influence. See Exod. 2:9.
2. A wayward boy; Vs. 14-29.
   (1) He listened to evil counsel; Vs. 6-10. Cp. Prov. 4:14-19; Psalm 1:1. Illustration: Bad companions, books and pleasures.
   (2) He disguised his true person; Vs. 15-16. Pretended to be what he was not. Cp. Matt. 23:25-28; Heb. 4:13.
   (3) He lied openly; V. 24; Rev. 21:8. (4) He apparently prospered; V. 28, 29. Cp. 37:35; Prov. 11:21; Gal. 6:7.
3. A missed blessing; Vs. 30-43.
   (1) The lost blessing mourned, not the sold birthright. Men mourn the evil that sin brings but not the sin that brings the evil. Cp. Heb. 12:17. The meaning of this verse is that Esau failed to change his father's mind in spite of his tears and pleas. (2) Revenge contemplated; V. 41.

III. The Wages of Sin; Vs. 43-46.

1. To Rebekah. She never saw her son again. Ere Jacob returned, many years later, she had died.
2. To Jacob. He lost (1) His good name; V. 36. Cp. Prov. 22:1. (2) His brothers' respect; V. 41; Prov. 18:19. (3) His father's home; V. 43. Cp. Isa. 53:6.
3. What sin costs the sinner: (a) His soul; Mark 8:36. (b) Salvation; Heb. 2:3. (c) Heaven; Rev. 21:27.
4. What sin brings him: (a) Mirth for a while; Eccles. 11:9. (b) Misery; Isaiah 57:20-21. (c) Death; Romans 6:23. (d)Doom; Rev. 20:15; Matt. 12:36. (e) Despair; Mark 9:43-48.

24. JACOB'S LADDER

READ Genesis 28: 10-22.

THEME: The way to heaven. TELL THE STORY.

WHEN IN DISTRESS JACOB CRIED TO GOD (Gen. 35: 3).—

HE WAS DISTRESSED BECAUSE OF HIS SIN. He had a guilty conscience. His distress was all the harder to bear because he knew it was brought about by his own sin. "The way of transgressors is hard" (Proverbs 13: 15). Perhaps he now realised for the first time the enormity of his sin.

HE WAS LONELY, and probably homesick, having left behind all who were dear to him. Then he did the very best thing; he cried to God in his trouble and sin. It is when God brings us to the place where we see ourselves as sinners, that we realise our need of Him, and cry to Him, as Jacob did.

GOD ANSWERED HIM (Gen. 35: 3) *BY SHOWING HIM THE WAY TO HEAVEN.* Where there is anyone truly seeking God with all the heart he shall find him. He will show him the way. And when we feel lonely and homesick and there is no one to whom we can turn, let us cry to God as Jacob did, and He will hear and answer.

THE LADDER.—

THE LADDER WAS THE LINK BETWEEN EARTH AND HEAVEN. Sin separated man from God, and he needed some means of approach to God.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE WAY. He said, "I am the way". (John 14:6)

HE IS THE ONLY WAY; there is no other. Men may try to make a way themselves, but it is useless (Acts 4: 12).

"There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin,
He only could unlock the gate of heaven, and let us in."

HE IS THE DIVINELY APPOINTED WAY from sin to the Father. God Himself provided the Way when He sent His Son from heaven to earth to die for our sin.

HE IS THE FREE WAY. This salvation is without money and without price (Isaiah 55: 1). To get on to this way there is no charge, no toll to pay. The Way is free to all who will accept Christ as Saviour.

HE IS THE PERMANENT WAY. There never has been, nor will be, any other way by which we may reach heaven. All the sacrifices in the Old Testament were foreshadows of the true and only Way.

THE FOOT OF THE LADDER RESTED ON EARTH (v. 12). Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth. He came as a babe, lived as a man, worked as a carpenter, and finally died on the cross to save us.

THE TOP OF THE LADDER REACHED TO HEAVEN (v. 12). There was no gap between the top of the ladder and heaven. Once you get your feet by faith on to this ladder, Christ Jesus, you are certain of reaching heaven. Are you on this ladder? Men's ladders are all too short. Do not try to make a way for yourself. See Lesson 1, Point 4.

THERE WAS TRAFFIC ON THIS LADDER (v. 12). "Angels of God ascending and descending on it." Our prayers, our praises, our tears and our cries *ascend* to heaven through Jesus Christ. Blessings from God *descend*. No blessings, no mercies come to us except through Jesus Christ.

GOD'S PROMISE (Verse 15).—

I AM WITH THEE. Just as God promised to be with Jacob, so He promises to be with us. If we take these four words separately we shall see what a wonderful promise it is. *"I"*—it is the mighty God Who speaks. Think what it means to have an all-powerful Friend with us.

"AM"—He is a very *present* help in trouble (Psalm 46: 1). How often when in trouble we long for the presence of our loved ones who are far away. But God is never absent from those who belong to Him. We can count on His Presence and practical help always.

"WITH THEE"—With every child of God. His Presence is not promised only to special ones. Think of Jacob, with all his faults and failings, yet God promised to be with Him.

"AND WILL KEEP THEE." Girls and boys sometimes say, "It is no use my saying I will be a Christian; I could never keep to it." Of course, you could not. You are not asked to keep yourself; the Lord keeps you by His power. "Kept by the power of God" (1 Peter 1: 5). We are no more able to keep ourselves than we are to save ourselves, and if we recognise this fact then we shall trust Christ's power to keep us.

"IN ALL PLACES WHITHER THOU GOEST." If God be with us, no place is too difficult, no circumstances too hard. You may be the only Christian in the home, in your class at school, or in business. That does not matter, for God is able to keep you in *all* places.

JACOB'S VOW (Verses 20-22).—

The "if" of v. 20 might be translated "since." "Since the Lord will be with me"—

"THEN SHALL THE LORD BE MY GOD." He had probably only a head knowledge of God before. Perhaps he had thought of God only as his father's God. Now he makes the great decision for himself. You may come from a Christian home. Remember you cannot live on the faith of your parents. You cannot *inherit* salvation. You must accept Christ as your own personal Saviour.

HE PROMISED TO GIVE THE TENTH TO GOD. God commanded the Children of Israel later to give the tithe or tenth to Him. In fact, the tithe was already His, and only what was given over and above the tithe was considered a gift to God. Shall we as Christians give less?

WE ARE TO GIVE INDIVIDUALLY (1 Cor. 16: 2). "Let every one of you." Do not give according to the amount others may give. Ask God what you yourself personally are to give.

WE ARE TO GIVE SYSTEMATICALLY. "Upon the first day of the week." Give regularly, not spasmodically.

WE ARE TO GIVE PROPORTIONATELY. "As God hath prospered him." As your allowance or salary is increased, add to the amount you give to God.

MEMORY VERSE.—John 14: 6—"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

JACOB'S VISION

Genesis 28:1-22

Golden Text: Isaiah 12:2

I. The Weary Wanderer; Vs. 10, 11.

1. The cause—sin: Isa. 59:1, 2.
2. The effect—weariness. Cp. Isa. 48:18, 22; Matt 11:28; Isa. 1:4. What a picture of a guilty, lost sinner Jacob presents!
   (1) Behind him is the threat of judgment on the part of an angry, offended brother. Gen. 27:42. Cp. Romans 2:3.
   (2) Within him was an accusing conscience; Romans 2:15.
   (3) Beneath his head a stony pillow that gave him no rest. Cp. Isa. 57:20, 21.
   (4) Around him an unknown country filled with perils. A picture of this world. I John 2:15, 16. There he lies, a crooked sinner, undeserving of the least of God's mercies!

II. The Wondrous Vision; Vs. 12, 13.

1. The cause—God's grace. Cp. Titus 2:11; 3:4, Eph. 2:4; Isa. 1:18.
2. The vision; V. 12. The ladder reaching from earth to heaven is a picture of Christ.
   (1) Mediation, "from earth to heaven." Cp. 1 Tim. 2:5; Job. 9:32, 33; John 14:6.
   (2) Communion, "angels descending and ascending." Cp. Eph. 2:18; Heb. 10:19-22. Someone quaintly observed that what Jacob saw was the changing of the guard of the guardian angels!
   (3) Salvation—Christ as the Way to God is (a) Long enough; John 14:6. (b) Big enough for **all;** John 6:37; 1 Tim. 2:4. (c) Strong enough for every sinner; Heb. 7:25.

III. The Gracious Promise; Vs. 13-15. God is called "The God of Jacob." Ps. 20:1. Cp. 1 Peter 5:10.

1. Concerning the land; V. 13, 14. God cannot break His word; Num. 23:19; 2 Tim. 2:13.
2. Concerning himself; V. 15. (1) Companionship, "with thee." Cp. Joshua 1:9; Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:19, 20. (2) Guardianship, "keep." Cp. John 10:28-30; 1 Peter 1:5; Isa. 27:3. (3) Leadership, "bring." Cp. John 10:2-5, 27.

IV. The Humble Worshiper; Vs. 16-21.

1. His Attitude, 16, 17. Reverent awe. This was the first time God revealed Himself and spoke to him. Jacob was to have seven such theophanies.
2. His Vow; Vs. 18-21. This vow shows how little Jacob appreciated the grace of God. He seeks to drive a bargain with the God of all grace! Yet, faulty though his response was, it was a beginning with God.

V. The Stone of Witness; V. 22. It witnessed to

1. His need; V. 19. He needed God.
2. God's supply; Vs. 20. Cp. Phil. 4:19; Matt. 6:33, etc.
3. His faith; Vs. 21, 22.
4. God's superabounding grace. Cp. 2 Cor. 9:8; 1 Peter 5:10.

25. JACOB'S SERVICE

Genesis 29:1-29, 30:25-43, 31:1-49

Golden Text: Hebrews 12:2

This portion, though mainly historical, is very instructive and contains lessons of spiritual significance.

I. His Meeting with Rachel; Gen. 29:1-14.

1. The long journey; V. 1 (about 500 miles).
2. The happy meeting; V. 2-13. Love at first sight.
3. The sojourn; V. 14. Eastern hospitality is proverbial.

II. The Contract; Vs. 15-20.

1. The constraining power of love; V. 20. All his labor and time forgotten in his infatuation. Cp. 1 Cor. 13:7; Heb. 12:2; Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28; 2 Cor. 5:14.
2. The deception; V. 23, 25. Jacob tastes a little of his own medicine; Gal. 6:7; Hos. 8:7.
3. The Sons of Jacob. (1) Their number. (2) Their names and their meaning present a picture of the Christian life from its beginning to its end. (a) Rueben="See." The sinner sees his need. (b) Simeon="Hearing." He hears the good news; Romans 10:17. (c) Levi ="Joined." Cp. 1 Cor. 12:13 to church. (d) Judah="Praise follows;" Psalm 40:2, 3. (e) Dan="Judging," need of self-judgment; 1 Cor. 11:21. (f) Naphali="Wrestling." Cp. in prayer; Eph. 6:18. (g) Gad="A troop." Souls added as result of prayer; Acts 4:23-33. (h) Asher="Happy." Joy as result; Acts 8:5-8. (i) Issachar="Hire." Reward of toil; Col. 3: 24. (j) Zebulon="Dwelling." Cp. Psalm 133: 1. (k) Joseph="Adding." Cp. 2 Peter 1:4-11. (l) Benjamin="Son of right hand." Christ the Center; Heb. 1:2-8; Matt. 18:20; Eph. 1:20-23.

III. The Second Contract; Gen. 30:25-43.

1. The proposal; V. 25-34.
2. The plan; Vs. 31-42. This was due to God's intervention on Jacob's behalf against the wily Laban. See Gen. 31:10-13. Cp. Gen. 12:3. Laban's mean treatment of Jacob is to be recompensed. See Gen. 31:7, 38-42. Laban's dealings with Jacob could typify the Gentiles' treatment of Israel. It is not by chance that the Jews hold the money bags of the world.

IV. The Flight; Gen. 31:1-49.

1. Laban's attitude; Vs. 1-2.
2. God's command and promise; Vs. 3, 13.
3. Rachel's theft; V. 19. Idolatry. Cp. Joshua 24:2; Romans 1:21-23; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 1 John 5:21.
4. Laban's pursuit; V. 23.
5. God's intervention on Jacob's behalf; V. 24 Cp. Job. 33:14-17; Gen. 20:3-7, etc.
6. The stone of witness; Vs. 36-55; "Mizpeh"— The real meaning is: "The Lord watch you when I cannot!"

26. JACOB AT PENIEL

READ Genesis 32: 24-32.

THEME: Full surrender to God.

After Jacob left home he went to Haran, married, and remained with Laban, his father-in-law, for twenty years. He is now on his way home (vv. 1-23), and at Peniel comes to a crisis in his life. If the vision of the ladder at Bethel was the scene of Jacob's conversion, then Peniel was the place of his consecration.

NOW TELL THE STORY.

CONVERSION AND CONSECRATION.—

SOMETIMES THERE IS A GAP OF YEARS BETWEEN CONVERSION AND CONSECRATION. Our conversion took place when we accepted Christ as Saviour, our consecration when we surrendered everything to Him. In many cases consecration does not take place at the time of conversion.

CONSECRATION CAN AND SHOULD BE SIMULTANEOUS WITH CONVERSION. There need be no interval between them. When the Lord met Saul outside Damascus, and saved him, he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9: 6), and this was his attitude throughout the whole of his life. The moment of his conversion was the moment of his consecration. This is what God expects. Alas! that in the lives of so many Christians there should be a long period of defeat before they learn the secret of the victorious life.

JACOB'S MISTAKES.—

HE CRIED TO GOD TO DELIVER HIM (v. 11), *BUT HE SCHEMED IN ORDER TO DELIVER HIMSELF* (vv. 13-23). Very often we, too, commit our way and our affairs into God's hands, but, instead of leaving them there, we begin to plan for ourselves. We do not trust God to work for us.

HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT HE HAD TO BE BROKEN BEFORE GOD COULD BLESS HIM. God will not give His glory to another, and we have to be so yielded to God that our only desire will be for His glory.

STEPS INTO VICTORY AND POWER.—

HE CONFESSED HIS OWN UNWORTHINESS. He said, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies" (v. 10). Just as there was nothing in him to merit salvation, so there was nothing in him that was worthy of God's blessing. It must be all of grace.

JACOB WAS LEFT ALONE WITH HIS CONSCIENCE AND WITH GOD (v. 24). To get alone with God, away from the world, our business and all other interests, is the only way to see ourselves as God sees us. Perhaps Jacob had never really taken time alone with God before, when he could ask God to search him and know his heart (Psalm 139: 23, 24).

A MAN WRESTLED WITH HIM ALL NIGHT (v. 24). The Man could have been none other than the Lord Himself (Hosea 12: 4, 5, and Gen. 32: 28). God's purpose was to break down Jacob, to bring him to the end of his scheming and planning, to cause him to yield his will. The will is usually the last thing to be yielded in the life of the Christian, and until he does that he can never live the life of victory and of power. "Yield yourselves unto God" (Romans 6: 13).

WHEN GOD BROKE JACOB HE COULD ONLY CLING TO GOD IN WEAKNESS (v. 26). He had to learn that the secret of prevailing with God was not in his strength, but in his weakness. It is when we realise our own weakness that we lay hold of God's strength. God says, "My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12: 9). "God must reduce us to a minimum before he can work through us to the maximum."—F. B. Meyer.

JACOB EARNESTLY DESIRED THE BLESSING, AND WAS DETERMINED TO GET IT. He said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (v. 26). Being hungry and thirsty for the blessing is one of the conditions of obtaining it. If you have not the hunger for the blessing which will enable you to live the life of victory, ask God to give you this hunger. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5: 6). Read the promise in Isaiah 41: 17, 18.

GOD BLESSED HIM THERE (at Peniel) (v. 29). God changed his name from Jacob (Supplanter) to Israel (a prince with God). In Scripture a change of name indicates a change of character. He arose a changed man, saying, "I have seen God face to face" (v. 30). Afterwards he always bore the marks of that crisis in his life, for "he halted upon his thigh" (v. 31). God can do for us what He did for Jacob if we are prepared to fulfil the conditions, and trust Him to do it for us. "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matt. 9: 28, 29).

MEMORY VERSE.—Romans 6: 13—"Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead."

27. Jacob came back to Bethel.

GIVING UP IDOLS.

Read Genesis 35.1-4.

1. Jacob bought ground at Shechem and built an altar there. But God told him to build an altar at Bethel. Ch. 35.1.
2. Because Jacob went to Shechem, great trouble came to his daughter and his sons made him ashamed before the heathen. Ch. 34.30.
3. But God was very patient with Jacob when he made a mistake and He brought him back to the right way.
4. Before Jacob and his people could get back their blessing they must put away idols and be clean. When they buried them they received power. v. 4, 5.
5. God showed Himself again to Jacob, blessed him and again called him Israel (man of power). v. 10.

Verse to learn, I John 5.21. "Keep yourselves from idols."

JACOB'S RETURN

Genesis 32-33

Golden Text: Isaiah 55:7

I. The Angels of God; V. 1-2. Sent doubtless to encourage him at this crisis.

II. His Prayer; Vs. 6-12.

1. Its cause—"Fear;" V. 6-8. Cp. Psalm 107:6, 13, 19, 28; Psalm 91:15; 46:1.
2. Its content; V. 9-12. (1) Adoration; V. 9. (2) Humility; V. 10. (3) Praise; V. 10. (4) Petition; V. 11.
3. Its basis—the sure promises of God. V. 12.

III. His Preparation; Vs. 13-33. Cp. Gal. 6:12. "A fair show." Note V. 20: "I will appease him with the gift." A common fallacy today. Cp. Romans 10:3. God cannot be appeased by good works, morality, sorrow, sincerity, religiousness, forms, ceremonies. It is the **blood** alone. Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22; 1 John 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18; Gal. 2:18. By this preparation he shows how little value he really placed upon his prayer. Jacob is still the scheming bargainer.

IV. His Experience; Vs. 24-32.

1. A lonely man; V. 24. Alone with God. No human aid. No arm of flesh. No human wisdom to help. All props removed. Jacob, like every sinner, must be shut up to God alone. Salvation is the personal dealing of a personal God with an individual. Each sinner must realize this. There can be no hypocrisy, smugness, sleekness or sanctimoniousness in the presence of One to Whom things are open and naked. Heb. 4:12.
2. A wrestling angel—not a wrestling Jacob; V. 24, 25. The angel wrestled with Jacob to rob him of his pride, self-sufficiency and hypocrisy.
3. A clinging Jacob brought to an end of himself; V. 26. Note he had to give his name—Jacob="Supplanter." What is your name? Sinner? Lost? Guilty? Ungodly? Then it can be changed. If your name is "good enough"—it will never be changed; Matt. 9:13.
4. A changed name: V. 27, 28. "Israel, A 'prince with God'." Is your name changed to Christian? Believer? Saint? Disciple? Brethren? The sinner needs
   (1) A changed attitude toward God—repentance; Acts 17:31.
   (2) A changed standing before God—justification; Romans 3:25.
   (3) A changed relationship with God—Sonship. John 1:12.
   (4) A changed walk before God—obedience. Eph. 2:10.
5. A blessed testimony; V. 30-32.

V. His Meeting with Esau; 33:1-9.

1. Answered prayer; Vs. 1-4.
2. Happy reunion; Vs. 4-9.
3. Joyful communion; Vs. 18-20.

28. JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT

READ Genesis 37: 1-36.

THEME: The sin of envy.

Jacob had twelve sons, of whom Joseph was the second youngest. Far more is told of Joseph than of any of the patriarchs preceding him.

REASONS FOR STUDYING HIS LIFE.—

His history explains the development of the Hebrew people.

It gives us a splendid example of personal character, for his was one of the very finest recorded in Scripture.

It shows how God can overrule evil for good.

It shows Joseph as a beautiful type of Christ.

JOSEPH.—

HIS BROTHERS WERE UNFIT COMPANIONS FOR HIM. They had been brought up under the influence of the old scheming Jacob, and had been affected by Jacob's life at Haran when he tried to outdo Laban in cunning. Jacob had not then had the experience at Peniel. Joseph had been the companion of the changed man, Israel. Though Joseph was young, he stood out against everything that would dishonour God. Perhaps you are forced by circumstances into close contact with those who have no sympathy with you in spiritual things, and who may even oppose you. Learn from the life and experience of Joseph that it is possible for you to be kept true to Christ, and unspoiled by your surroundings. "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet ye shall be as the wings of a dove covered with silver" (Psalm 68: 13).

HE HAD THE COURAGE TO REPORT THEIR EVIL DOINGS (v. 2). These were evidently well known to the neighbourhood, but not to their father. It is a mistaken sense of honour that keeps people from reporting wrong-doing. Young people have a horror of being called a spy or a "tell-tale." But many serious evils might have been nipped in the bud if they had been courageously reported at once. There is a difference between tale-bearing and rightly reporting wrong-doing. This lies in the motive. Test your motives. The one reports in order to curry favour, to show himself superior to the other, or to get the wrong-doer into trouble: the other, in order to put an end to wrong-doing. Prefects and others in positions of authority, do your duty in spite of the risk of becoming unpopular, and your own character will be strengthened.

HIS OBEDIENCE WAS THOROUGH AND PROMPT (vv. 13, 14). This was characteristic of Joseph throughout his life. There was nothing of the procrastinator about him. How splendid that this habit should have been formed while he was young, for it then became part of his character. Youth is the time to form habits. It could not have been a pleasant task his father asked him to perform, for Joseph knew how his brothers hated him, but he bore no resentment.

GOD OVERRULED THE EVIL OF HIS BROTHERS. God was with Joseph and prospered him (chap. 39: 2). Nothing can really injure us if we are in the will of God. Sin is never necessary, though it can be overruled by God. Joseph said in after years, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Gen. 50: 20).

ENVY.—

ALL THE TROUBLE AND SORROW IN THIS CHAPTER CAME FROM ENVY (v. 11; Acts 7: 9). Whenever envy is harboured, there is an end of all unity and peace. We may envy others their talents, their position, their popularity, or their looks. Watch against the seed of envy, for it produces much poisonous fruit.

GOD'S WORD HAS MUCH TO SAY ABOUT ENVY AND JEALOUSY. "Jealousy is cruel as the grave" (S. of S. 8: 6). The Lord Jesus was delivered up because of envy (Matt. 27: 18). Every evil work is the result of envy (James 3: 16). "Neither be thou envious" (Psalm 37: 1).

RESULTS OF ENVY.—

HATRED. We soon grow to hate the one whom we envy (v. 4). So it was with Cain—he hated Abel. Saul envied David and then hated him.

MURDER (v. 18). Hatred developed into murder. The Lord Jesus said that he who hates his brother is a murderer.

LYING (v. 20). It is easy to lie about those whom we envy. In this case it was to cover their own sin. In our case it may be speaking against the character of those whom we envy.

QUARRELLING (v.4). "They could not speak peaceably unto him."

CALLOUSNESS AND CRUELTY. They ate while Joseph was in anguish of soul in the pit (Gen. 42: 21). His cries were nothing to them. Envy hardens the heart. They sold him as a slave to a strange people.

HYPOCRISY (v. 35). They pretended to comfort their father when they themselves were the cause of his sorrow.

HOW TO OVERCOME ENVY.—

MAKE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THE GARDENER OF YOUR HEART. Ask Him to remove envy while it is still a seed.

"My heart may be like a garden fair,
Loving thoughts and words and deeds ablossoming there.
Or it may be a place of poison weeds,
Growing into ugly thoughts and words and deeds.
Lord Jesus, make my heart a garden fair,
Come Thou Thyself and be the Gardener there."

SPEAK WELL OF THOSE OF WHOM YOU ARE JEALOUS. think kindly of them and pray for them. Look for opportunities of showing them a kindness and you will find that envy will disappear.

SOWING AND REAPING.—

Jacob deceived his father with the *skin* of a kid.
His sons deceived him with the *blood* of a kid.

MEMORY VERSE.—James 3: 16—"Where envying . . . is, there is confusion and every evil work."

JOSEPH—THE HATED

Genesis 37

Golden Text: Psalm 27:1

Briefly describe the intervening period between the last lesson and this one. Joseph is a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus Christ in many ways, and can be presented as such in each lesson.

I. His Birth (Genesis 30:22-24). He took away the reproach, for to be childless was a reproach. So also Christ removed the reproach of sin, of a broken law, of the curse, of condemnation. Isa. 42:21; Gal. 3:13; Col. 2:13; John 1:29; 3:17, etc.

II. His Occupation; Gen. 37:2. A shepherd. Christ is the good Shepherd Who died to save; the chief Shepherd Who lives to keep; the chief Shepherd Who shall present His flock to the Father. Cp. John 10:11-18; Luke 15:4-7; Psalm 23:1; Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 5:4.

III. His Brethren; V. 2. The evil report. Cp. Mark 7:21-23; John 3:19; John 15:22; Romans 3:10-19; Jer. 17:9.

IV. His Father's Love; V. 3. Cp. Matt. 3:17; John 5:20; Matt. 17:5; John 12:28.

V. His Dreams of future exaltation; Vs. 5-10. This was God's word to Joseph. God often spoke in dreams in those days when there was no written Word. See Job 33:14-17. Joseph had two dreams.

1. An earthly scene; V. 7. Cp. Isa. 11:9, 10; Rev. 11:15. Christ will yet be King over the earth.
2. A heavenly scene; V. 9. Cp. Rev. 5:6-14. Surrounded by His redeemed. Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:18.

VI. His Brother's Hatred; Vs. 4, 11. Cp. John 15:24, 25; 7:7; Isa. 53:3; Mark 15:10. See the parable of the husbandmen in which Christ shows the enmity of Israel against Him, the rightful Heir. Matt. 21:33-41.

VII. His Obedience to His Father's Will; Vs. 12-17.

1. The father's request; Vs. 12, 13. Cp. Isa. 6:8; John 3:16; 6:44; 6:39.
2. The Son's obedience; Vs. 13, 14. Cp. Psalm 40:7, 8; John 6:38. Joseph left Hebron="fellowship" for Shechem. So Christ left heaven for earth. Cp. John 17:5; Luke 19:10, etc.

VIII. The Conspiracy; Vs. 18-26. Cp. Matt. 21:37-9; John 11:47-53; Acts 4:26-28.

IX. The Pit; Vs. 22-24. Cp. Psalm 40:2; 22:1-21; 88:6-8, 16.

X. The Bargain; Vs. 27-30. Cp. Matt. 26:14-16; Matt. 27:9. Cp. Exod. 21:32.

XI. The Deception; Vs. 31-36. The chickens have come home to roost! Jacob deceived his father with a goat's skin; his sons deceive him with a goat's blood.

29. JOSEPH THE SLAVE

READ Genesis 39.

THEME: The fire of temptation.

TELL THE STORY.

JOSEPH IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE.—

JOSEPH WAS FAITHFUL IN ALL HIS WORK, IN SPITE OF ADVERSITY: Humanly speaking, everything was against him. From being in the place of a favourite son, he was now a slave. But instead of sinking into despair, and complaining that God was hard on him, and that his position was hopeless, he did his work to the very utmost of his powers and abilities. He put his whole heart into the work he had to do. How easy it is for us to go under in adversity, or to say circumstances are too hard for us. Let us learn from the experiences of Joseph that this is not so.

THE LORD WAS WITH HIM (v. 2). He was cut off from his own people, he was in a heathen land, and without fellowship with others in the things of God. Perhaps for these very reasons God was with him in a special way. He had to lean all the harder upon God. In times like these we need to lay hold of the promise of Isaiah 43: 2.

THE LORD PROSPERED HIM (v. 2). This seems to be a contradiction when one remembers that Joseph was a slave. But prosperity of soul, which is far more important than worldly prosperity, is not due to circumstances, but to character, and character depends upon faithfulness to God. God honoured Joseph's faithfulness.

POTIPHAR SAW THAT THE LORD WAS WITH HIM AND PROSPERED HIM (v. 3). Although Potiphar did not belong to God, he recognised the fact that Joseph was quite different from the rest of his slaves, and he knew that Joseph's power came from a divine source. He could not explain it, but there it was. How splendid if those whom we serve or with whom we come in contact should be enabled to see the reality of our Christian life by our daily work and conduct.

POTIPHAR'S HOUSE WAS BLESSED FOR JOSEPH'S SAKE (v. 5). Does the Lord bless your home because *you* are there? Is it a happier and more peaceful place because your influence as a Christian is felt? Does your presence in the class or in the office make a difference? A Christian well known to the writer entered the employ of a certain firm. At the end of the first year his employer said to him, "Our business had been going down hill fast before you came into it. Since then it has steadily prospered, and we believe it is because you, as a Christian, are here." What a testimony that was!

JOSEPH IN THE FIRE OF TEMPTATION.—

HIS MASTER'S WIFE TEMPTED HIM TO COMMIT A TER-

RIBLE SIN. Temptation is a great test of character. God has never promised that we shall be free from temptation. There is blessing promised to the one who endures temptation. Temptation overcome will strengthen character and help you to resist next time. Joseph was lonely, and this temptation might have flattered him, coming from one in a high position, but there was no dallying with it, no playing with the temptation.

THE TEMPTATION WAS CONTINUED DAY BY DAY. Temptation once only and temptation continued daily are very different experiences.

HE REFUSED (v. 8). There was no toning down of his refusal, no compromise. He knew the terrible results of such sin. Read Proverbs 2: 16-19, and 5: 3-11, and you will see there the consequences, both physical and spiritual, of such sin, and the warnings against yielding to it.

THE REASONS HE GAVE FOR REFUSING TO YIELD.—

BECAUSE OF HIS DUTY TO HIS MASTER. His master had trusted him implicitly. He had committed everything into his hands. How then could he betray such trust by ruining his home?

BECAUSE OF HIS DUTY TOWARDS GOD. It would have been not only sin against his own body, but sin against God. He did not make light of sin. He said, "How can I do this great wickedness" (v. 9). Do not make light of such sin; remember it is "great wickedness and sin against God." (See Romans 6: 12.)

THROUGH GOD'S POWER JOSEPH WAS VICTORIOUS.—

And that same power may be ours if we claim it. We are to resist the devil by standing (Ephes. 6: 11), having put on the whole armour of God, but there are some temptations, such as those of the flesh, which can only be resisted by flight, and this is what Joseph did. Flee also youthful lusts (2 Tim. 2: 22; 1 Cor. 6: 18, 19). God will always "make a way to escape" (1. Cor. 10: 13).

JOSEPH IN PRISON.—

THE SIN OF OTHERS MAY BRING TROUBLE TO US, BUT ONLY OUR OWN SIN CAN SPOIL OUR LIFE. Joseph was slandered and unjustly punished, but God overruled it all to bring blessing to Joseph and to work out His own divine purposes (Gen. 50: 20). Even in prison God was with him and prospered him (vv. 21, 23). He bore slavery, endured temptation, and met slander all in the strength of God.

JOSEPH HAD TO LEARN THE HARD LESSON OF PATIENCE. God was preparing him for a great work through hardship and suffering (Psalm 105: 18), and in His own time and way He set him free (Psalm 105: 19-22).

MEMORY VERSE.—Philippians 4: 8—"Whatsoever things are true . . . whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

JOSEPH—THE HUMBLED

Genesis 39, 40

Golden Text: 1 Peter 3:18

I. His Prosperity; Gen. 39:1, 2. Its cause—God was with him. Cp. Psalm 1; Isa. 53:10; 52:13; Joshua 1:8; Acts 10:38. He put God first in his life.

II. His Faithfulness; Vs. 3-5. Cp. John 3:35; Eph. 1:3; Col. 3:22-25; Eph. 6:5-8.

III. His Character; Vs. 6. Cp. 1 Tim. 4:8; Dan. 1:20; S. of S. 5:16; Luke 2:52.

IV. His Testing; Vs. 7-19. Joseph is in God's school; Heb. 12:5-11.

1. The fact of trial. Cp. 1 Peter 1:6-7; Heb. 4:15; Luke 4:1-13. No believer is exempt from it.
2. The strength for trial. (1) God's honor uppermost; V. 9. All sin is against God. Psalm 51:4; Romans 1:18; 2:6; 3:10, etc. (2) A consistent life. His consistent life became a wall of defense.
3. The victory in trial; V. 12. He fled. Cp. 2 Tim. 2:22; I Peter 5:9; James 4:7. Resist the Devil but flee from lusts. Joseph argued rightly that God could give him a new coat to replace the one he left in her hands; but could not give him a new character!
   Note Christian combativeness. He must
   (1) Stand against wiles of the Devil; Eph. 6:11.
   (2) Fight good fight of faith; 1 Tim. 6:12.
   (3) Flee from lusts; 2 Tim. 2:22.

V. Imprisonment; Vs. 20-22.

1. For righteousness' sake. The age long problem. Why does God permit the godly to suffer? Psalm 73:1-20; Matt. 5:11; Psalm 37:1-13.
2. God's presence and blessing; Vs. 21-23. Cp. 2 Chron. 16:9. The prison walls shut up Joseph more to God. Romans 8:28.

VI. His Interpretation of the Dreams; C. 40. Once again we read of dreams.

1. The Butler: Vs. 1-15.
   (1) The Dream; Vs. 1-11. Cp. Job 33:13-24.
   (2) The Interpretation; Vs. 12, 13. A message of life. God given the glory; V. 8; Prov. 3:6.
   (3) The Appeal; V. 14. (a) "Remember me." Cp. 1 Cor. 11:25; Luke 22:19, 20. (b) "When it shall be well with thee." Romans 5:1; 8:1; Eph. 1:3, etc. Only saved ones can do this. (c) "Shew kindness"—Service. Cp. Matt. 25:45; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 20; Heb. 13:16; Gal. 6:10; Mark 9:41. (d) "Make mention." Cp. Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8. (e) "Bring me out." 2 Peter 3:12; 1 Thess. 5:13-18, etc.
   (4) The fulfillment; V. 21.
   (5) The forgetfulness; V. 23. Psalm 106:12, 13; Lam. 1:12.
2. The Baker; Vs. 16-22.
   (1) His Dream; Vs. 16, 17.
   (2) The Interpretation; Vs. 18, 19. A message of death. Compare the two thieves on the cross. One received a promise of life, the other, rejecting, suffered his just doom.
   3) The fulfillment; V. 22.

30. JOSEPH PRIME MINISTER OF EGYPT

READ Genesis 41.

THEME: Waiting God's time.

TELL THE STORY.

GOD IS ALWAYS ON TIME. He is never too early or too late. Thirteen years, two of which had been spent in prison, had elapsed from the time Joseph was sold as a slave into Egypt, but God, in His own time, set him free. Joseph had asked the chief butler to speak to Pharaoh for him. Two years went by and nothing happened (Gen. 40: 14, 23; 41: 1). We may sometimes think that God has forgotten us, but He is working out His plan for our life. "Ye have need of patience" (Heb. 10: 36). "Tribulation worketh patience" (Romans 5: 3). One of the things which calls for most patience is waiting in uncertainty of the future, when one is apparently wasting time.

GOD HAS A WORK FOR EACH ONE. "To every one his work" (Mark 13: 34). He has a plan for each life. Not all are called to a great service. To some is given hidden, humble work, but it is none the less God's plan for them. In the gifts given to the Church, mentioned in 1 Cor. 12: 28, "helps" are included, and if you have not many talents you may be one of the "helps."

BUT TRAINING IS NECESSARY. We must meet with the discipline of life. Daily faithfulness in ordinary duties, which in many cases are most monotonous, is often the training God uses for future service. Sometimes God places us, as He did Joseph, in a hard school to fit us for our life work. It is generally acknowledged that physical training must be attended with hardship, but it is not always recognised that this is true also of moral and spiritual training. The greater the work the more severe the discipline. While we are undergoing training it may seem hard, but later we shall be able to look back on the experiences with thankfulness to God, because they have fitted us for our life work. There are many classes in God's training school. In prison Joseph was in the Class of Suffering, "Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron" (Psalm 105: 18). He was also in the Class of Hopes Deferred, when he waited day after day for his freedom. Let us not shirk the lessons God is seeking to teach us through discipline. David said, "It is good for me . . . that I have been afflicted, that I might learn" (Psalm 119: 71).

JOSEPH WAS HUMBLE—HE GAVE ALL THE GLORY TO GOD. He said to Pharaoh, "It is not in me: God . . ." (v. 16). When placed in the "Success Class," he would take no credit to himself,

reminding us of the Apostle Paul who said, "Not I, but Christ" (Gal. 2: 20). Those in this class must learn that they in themselves are nothing, and they learn to give all the glory to God. We have nothing that we have not received from God, therefore there is no room for glorying in any wisdom or talents that we may possess. Joseph had one thought only, and that was the glory of God. Let us put God first in our lives.

PHARAOH RECOGNISED THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN JOSEPH (v. 38). "A man in whom the Spirit of God is." Just what this heathen king meant by these words we do not quite know, but he knew that in some way Joseph was possessed of Divine power. Joseph had natural gifts, wisdom, business ability and administrative powers. These were all increased by the Spirit of God, Who had taken full possession of his nature, intellectually, morally and spiritually. God has need of Christian men and women of outstanding gifts and filled with the Holy Spirit, in order that He might use them in blessing to others. What splendid work for God many Christian men and women in public life have done! But natural gifts, apart from God's Holy Spirit, are useless in His service, and to be indwelt by Him we must first receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. As others look at our lives, can they say, as Pharaoh did of Joseph, "A man in whom the Spirit of God is"? (v. 38.) It was said of Peter and John, "They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4: 13). May the following words be our prayer:

"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wondrous compassion and purity:
O Thou Spirit Divine,
All my nature refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."

FAITHFUL IN LEAST, FAITHFUL IN MUCH. Joseph was faithful at home, in Potiphar's house, and in prison, so God entrusted him with greater responsibilities. Do we sometimes fail in the performance of the small duties because we do not think them sufficiently important, not realising that only faithfulness in the smaller things will bring to us greater responsibilities? Many young people dream of a great work for God, and neglect those which lie to their hand.

WE LEARN FROM THIS LESSON TO BE PROVIDENT. In time of plenty Joseph laid up food for the time of famine. Waste is never pleasing to God. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught the same lesson when feeding the five thousand. He said, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" (John 6: 12).

MEMORY VERSE.—Hebrews 10: 36—"For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

JOSEPH—THE EXALTED

Genesis 41:1-53

Golden Text: Phil. 2:9

I. The Trial; V. 1.

1. The Time; V. 1. "Two full years" of lonely isolation and humiliation. To Joseph it seemed that God had forgotten him and that "Careless seemed the great Avenger." God is never in a hurry. He has all eternity to work in! He knows the end from the beginning.
2. The Testing. See Psalm 105:19. Cp. James 1: 12; 1 Peter 1:6, 7.
3. The Purpose. See Gen. 45:5-8; Romans 8:28. God makes no mistakes. See Cowper's hymn, "God moves in a mysterious way."

II. The Dream; Vs. 1-8.

1. The Dreamer; V. 1. God's purpose in dreams; Job 33:14-18, etc. (a) To speak; Job 33:14. (b) To instruct; V. 16. (c) To warn; V. 17. (d) To show; V. 23. (e) To deliver; V. 24. (f) To point to Christ; V. 24. God now speaks through His Word. From a lowly shepherd boy to a great king, God speaks to each as He wills. Prov. 21:1.
2. The Dream; Vs. 2-7. The fat and lean kine and the fat and lean ears of corn.
3. The Result; V. 8. Troubled.
4. The wise men's failure; V. 8. Cp. 1 Cor. 1:27-29; 2:14. Only one in whom the Spirit of God is, can interpret the language of the Spirit of God.

III. The Interpretation; Vs. 9-36.

1. The butler's confession; Vs. 9-13. Cp. Romans 1:16; John 9:25; 1 Peter 3:15.
2. Joseph's testimony; Vs. 15, 16, 25. Cp. John 3:30; Isa. 57:15; Isa. 66:12; 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:20. "Not I."
3. The dream interpreted; Vs. 25-36.

IV. The Exaltation; Vs. 37-53.

1. Pharoah's testimony; Vs. 37-39. Cp. Matt. 3:17; Col. 2:3; Mark 7:37; 1 Peter 1:8.
2. Joseph's position; Vs. 40-44. Cp. Phil. 2:5-11. (1) The Ring—from slavery to sonship. (2) Vesture—from torn garments to fine linen. (3) Gold chain—from fetters to ornaments. (4) Chariot—from captivity to liberty. (5) Acclamation—from degradation to exaltation.
3. Joseph's new name; V. 45. Combine these meanings.
   (1) In Hebrew="Revealer of secrets." Cp. John 4:16-19; Luke 2:34, 35; Isa. 11:2, 3.
   (2) In Egyptian="Bread of life." Cp. John 6:35, etc.
   (3) In Coptic="Savior of the World." John 3:17; 1 John 2:2.
4. Joseph's success; Vs. 46-53. Cp. Isa. 53:11. Note his children's names. Cp. Heb. 12:2; Rev. 5:13; Phil. 3:13-14.

31. JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

READ Genesis 42.

THEME: The power of conscience.

Twenty years after Joseph had been sold as a slave into Egypt, a famine came, and Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to buy corn. Joseph's early dreams were now fulfilled.

TELL THE STORY.

JOSEPH.—

HE HAD NO DESIRE FOR REVENGE. It was true that when he had them in his power he spoke harshly to them (v. 7), and he put them in prison for three days, but he did this in order to awaken their conscience and to bring them to repentance. There could be no reconciliation without this. The sequel to this story showed that he still loved them, in spite of their cruel treatment of him.

EVERYTHING IN HIS LIFE WAS UNDER GOD'S DIRECTION. And if we, too, in all our ways acknowledge Him, He shall direct our paths (Prov. 3: 6).

IN TEMPTATION HE THOUGHT OF GOD. He said, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against *God*" (Gen. 39: 9). If we, in the hour of temptation, remembered God and His holiness, we should be kept from sin and hate it, as God does.

WHEN IN NEED OF WISDOM HE RELIED UPON GOD. He said, "Interpretations belong to *God*" (Gen. 40: 8). "*God* shall give Pharaoh an answer" (41: 16). Nehemiah, in a sudden emergency, when standing before the king, "prayed to the God of heaven" (Neh. 2: 4). Learn to depend upon God for help with your lessons, your work, or in any emergency which may arise.

HE ACKNOWLEDGED GOD'S LAW OF COMPENSATION. He said, "God . . . hath made me forget all my toil . . . to be fruitful in the land of my affliction" (Gen. 41: 51, 52). He knew that it was *God* Who kept him from brooding over the suffering, injustice and cruelty of the past, and that He had compensated him by causing him to be fruitful in the very place where he had been afflicted. He looked to God to cause him to forget the toil and the affliction.

HE FEARED GOD (Gen. 42: 18), therefore he could not be unjust or revengeful. This fear is not the fear of punishment, but reverential trust and hatred of evil. He feared to grieve God, Who had done so much for him.

AWAKENED CONSCIENCE AND SIGNS OF REPENTANCE.

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS SAID, "WE ARE VERILY GUILTY" (v. 21). Time can never blot out sin. Perhaps their conscience had been asleep for those twenty years, and now for the first time they realise the enormity of their sin. This is the first step in repentance.

MEMORY WAS AT WORK. "We saw the anguish of his soul" (42: 21). Time can never blot out the memory of sin. Suddenly memory will recall the sins which we thought we had forgotten.

THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THEY DESERVED PUNISHMENT. "Therefore is this distress come upon us" (v. 21). "His blood is required" (v. 22). They had sold Joseph into Egypt; now they themselves were in a strange land. They had delivered a defenceless lad into the hands of the merchantmen; now they themselves were in the power of the Prime Minister. They had cast Joseph into the pit; now they were in prison.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONSCIENCES.—

Conscience is like an alarm clock. The bell rings to warn us of the approach of sin; if we do not heed it we shall soon cease to hear it, as one who, each morning, ignores the ring of the bell on the alarm clock. Nevertheless conscience cannot cure sin; it can only show sin, just as repentance alone cannot cleanse from sin; there must also be a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A SEARED CONSCIENCE. "A conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4: 2). The nerves of the body are so sensitive that the touch of a feather can be felt, yet a deep burn can cause paralysis—total loss of feeling. As with the body, so with the conscience; it can become dead to all sense of sin. God says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6: 3). It is a terrible thing when God has to say of anyone, (He) "is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hosea 4: 17).

A DEFILED CONSCIENCE (Titus 1: 15) is one which thinks that right is wrong and wrong is right. It is like the bell on the alarm clock which is out of order, and rings at the wrong time. Do not play with your conscience. We all know how easy it is to convince ourselves that a wrong thing is right, because we wish to do it, or on the other hand to persuade ourselves that a right thing is wrong because we do not wish to do it.

A PURGED CONSCIENCE. The blood of Christ can alone purge the conscience (Heb. 9: 14). Forgiveness of sin causes the sin to pass at once from the conscience, and even if memory recalls it we can rest on God's Word, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1: 7), and thus draw near to God.

A GOOD CONSCIENCE (Heb. 13: 18). We can only have a good conscience if it is first purged, and this takes place when we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. A good conscience approves of all we do.

AN EXERCISED CONSCIENCE (Acts 24: 16). Like an alarm clock that is well oiled, keep your conscience well exercised. Guard it as a precious possession, listen to it so that you may have "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men."

MEMORY VERSE.—Hebrews 9: 14—"How much more shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

JOSEPH—THE PROVIDER

Genesis 41:54,—42:38

Golden Text: Romans 5:20

I. The Need; Gen. 41:54-55.

1. The Famine; V. 54. Cp. Luke 15:14; Amos 8:11. This world cannot satisfy the soul. Its pleasures, pomp, fashion, power, riches, etc., are but husks.
2. The Cry—"bread;" V. 55. Cp. Isa. 55:2; Psalm 107:9. What sinners need is salvation. Cp. Acts 16:30; Luke 18:13; Romans 10:13.

II. The Supply; Vs. 54-57.

1. Its all sufficiency; V. 49. Romans 5:17, 20, 21; 2 Cor. 12:9; Eph. 3:20.
2. Its sole supplier—"Joseph;" V. 55. "Go to Joseph." Joseph was the sole mediator. No one could do business with Pharaoh except through Joseph. See 1 Tim. 2:5, 6. Cp. Acts 4:12; John 2:5; John 14:6; John 10:9.
3. Its abundant supply; Vs. 56, 49. Cp. Heb. 7:25, etc. See abundant (1) Grace, 1 Tim. 1:14. (2) Mercy, 1 Peter 1:3. (3) Pardon, Isa. 55:7. (4) Life, John 10:10. (5) Provision, S. of S. 5:1. (6) Satisfaction, Psalm 36:8. (7) Entrance, 2 Peter 1:11.

III. The Visit; Gen. 42.

1. The Cause; Vs. 1, 2. Their need. Cp. Matt. 15:22-28; Matt. 9:12, 13; Luke 19:10; Matt. 11:28.
2. Their reception; Vs. 3-20. (1) He knew them; V. 8. Cp. John 2:24, 25. (2) They knew him not. Cp. John 1:10-12. (3) Spake roughly; V. 7. See Marg. Cp. Job. 36:8-10; John 6:60-62, etc. These brothers are now to be disciplined by Joseph and be taught lessons that can only be learned in this way. They must be brought to see and acknowledge their sin before they can appreciate his forgiving grace. "Grace must reign through righteousness." Rom. 5:21.
3. Their Conviction; Vs. 21, 22. The law of retribution working in their breasts. Three great factors are seen. (1) Memory. Nearly 20 years had passed but time had not effaced memory, "we saw." The effort to forget only deepens the impression. (2) Conscience. "We are verily guilty." Conscience is the possession of all; Romans 2:14, 15. Conscience is a whole court in itself—judges, jury, witnesses, sheriff, etc.
   (3) Reason: "Therefor . . . on us." Reason will ultimately vindicate the just judgment of God.
4. Their Return; Vs. 23-38. (1) Joseph's true feeling; V. 24. Cp. Matt. 23:34-39. (2) The free provision; Vs. 25-28. Cp. Isa. 55:1; Romans 6:23. Here is grace, but its effect on them was fear! 1 Cor. 2:14. (3) The tale retold; Vs. 29-38. Note Jacob's pitiful plaint, "All these things are against me." This was due to his ignorance, V. 36, forgetfulness (Gen. 28:13-15), unreasonableness and unbelief. Compare this with Paul's triumphant song, "All things work together for good" Romans 8:28.

32. JOSEPH FORGIVES HIS BROTHERS

READ Genesis 45.

THEME: Forgive your enemies.

Joseph's brothers return home, and come again to Egypt, bringing Benjamin with them. On this visit Joseph makes himself known to them.

TELL THE STORY.

JOSEPH.—

HE RETURNED GOOD FOR EVIL. His brothers had eaten while he was hungry in the pit; he made a feast for them. They had sold him for thirty pieces of silver; he returned to them the money they had paid him for corn. They sent him into slavery; he promised to provide for them and their families. We are often satisfied with ourselves if we suffer wrong patiently, and bear no malice towards those who have injured us. But that is merely the *negative* side. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Love your enemies . . . do good to them that hate you" (Matt. 5: 44). This is the positive side.

HE LOOKED BEYOND THEIR TREATMENT OF HIM TO GOD. He said, "It was not you . . . but God" (Gen. 45: 8). God had been working out His own plan and purpose for Joseph's life even when He allowed him to be sold into Egypt. If we can see God's hand in every circumstance of life then we shall not miss the lessons He is seeking to teach us through them. Be like Joseph—do not think of second causes, but look beyond them to God. Recognise His ordering hand in all the details of your life, even when they appear to come to you through others.

"In the centre of the circle
Of the will of God I stand;
There can come no second causes,
All must come from His dear hand."

God is the Heavenly Gardener, and He knows the position and soil best suited for the development of each plant.

JOSEPH WAS NOT ASHAMED OF HIS FATHER; his first thought was for him (45: 3). In spite of Joseph's own exalted position—remember, he was next to Pharaoh—he was not ashamed of his own humble origin. When young people attain to high positions in life, let them never be ashamed of their parents, who may have remained in a humble walk of life. "Honour thy father and mother: which is the first commandment with promise" (Ephes. 6: 2).

HE MADE PROVISION FOR HIS AGED PARENT. Joseph now had a family of his own, yet he did not forget his responsibility towards his father and the rest of his family. The Lord Jesus Christ, when hanging on the cross, thought of His mother's future, and handed her

over to the care of the beloved disciple, John. Never forget all that your parents have done for you. Be grateful to them, honour them, and see that they are provided for.

JOSEPH'S FORGIVENESS.—

IT WAS FULL AND FREE. We sometimes talk of "burying the hatchet," that is, patching up some quarrel, but there is such a thing as burying the hatchet with the handle sticking out. Joseph's was no partial forgiveness, as the following points show.

HE SAID, "COME NEAR TO ME" (45: 4). The happenings of the past were to make no difference in his relationship toward them. He treated them now as though they had never injured him. To say "I forgive, but I cannot forget," or "Things can never be the same between us," is really to hold a grudge in the heart.

HE DID NOT REPROACH HIS BROTHERS. On the contrary, he cheered and encouraged them. He said, "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves" (v. 5). He tried to set them at their ease by reminding them that God had overruled their cruel treatment of him, in order that he might be the means of preserving their lives during the famine. If Joseph had brought up the past and reproached them, it is more than likely that the old bitter feeling of hatred towards him would have been revived.

HE SHOWED HIS LOVE. He kissed *all* his brethren, even those who were directly responsible for his being sold into Egypt (v. 15). Nothing had altered his love for his family, and now he gives expression to it. He promised to provide for them and for their children (v. 11), thus showing his love in a practical way. His brothers could no longer doubt his love. "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3: 18).

AFTER THAT HIS BROTHERS TALKED WITH HIM (v. 15). There is nothing like love to break down all barriers, and to draw together those who have been estranged. Joseph was the injured one, yet he took the initiative in the reconciliation. How often we hear it said, "Why should I make the first advance, seeing I was not at fault?" The Lord Jesus said, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Note that it is the one who is not in the wrong who is told to seek a reconciliation, in order that he may gain his brother (Matt. 18: 15).

THE BROTHERS DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND JOSEPH'S COMPLETE FORGIVENESS. They still thought he harboured a grudge against them, for when their father died they were afraid that Joseph would take his revenge. They asked for forgiveness which had already been given to them. Joseph reassured them, comforted them, and spoke kindly to them (Gen. 50: 21). When a person has freely forgiven you for some wrong done to him, believe that he has not only forgiven you, but that he has forgotten the injury.

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 5: 44—"Love your enemies . . . do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."

JOSEPH—THE RECONCILER

Genesis 43:1—45:15.

Golden Text:Ephesians 2:13

I. The Distress; 43:1-15.

1. The famine continues; V. 1. As it always will when away from Joseph. Jer. 2:13, 10. Only in Christ is true satisfaction found. Augustine said "Thou hast made out hearts for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee." III. The prodigal son in the far country; Luke 15:14-17.
2. The conference; Vs. 2-14. Note V. 11. Cp. Romans 10:3; 3:20; 4:5; 11:6. Note Jacob's advice for them to take something in their hands. How like the sinner who imagines he must bring some of his own merits to gain the favor of God. Religion says: "Something in my hands I bring." The true penitent says: "Nothing in my hands I bring." Cp. Eph. 2:8, 9.
3. The journey; V. 15. John 6:37.

II. The Reception; 43:16-34.

1. The feast provided; Vs. 16, 17. Cp. Luke 14: 16, 17; Ezek. 33:11, etc.
2. The fearful guests; Vs. 18-22. Cp. Isa. 33:14.
3. The comforting word; V. 23. Cp. John 14:27; Luke 24:36-40.
4. The feast enjoyed; Vs. 24-34.

III. The Strategy; Gen. 44:1-34. Cp. Job 33:12, 13, 18-24.

1. To test their honesty; Gen. 43:21, 22.
2. To test their jealousy; Gen. 43:34. Would they be envious of their younger brother as they had been of him? Had they learned the evil of envy?
3. To test their loyalty; Gen. 43:1-34. Here is Judah, who had cruelly proposed that Joseph should be sold as a slave, actually pleading to become the substitute for Benjamin! Under Joseph's able discipline they have been brought to repentance and are now ready to appreciate his pardon.

IV. The Revelation; Gen. 45:1-15.

1. The declaration; Vs. 1-3. "I am Joseph." Cp. Acts 9:1-6; Rev. 1:7.
2. The result; V. 3. "Fear." Cp. Zech. 12:10.
3. The invitation; V. 4. Cp. Heb. 10:16-22; Eph. 2:13; Matt. 11:28.
4. The recital; Vs. 5-8. (1) Sent by God. Cp. John 3:17; 6:38, 39. (2) The need foreseen; Vs. 6, 7. Cp. Romans 3:10-19, 25. (3) The result—great deliverance; V. 7. Cp. Heb. 2:3.
5. The Command; Vs. 9, 10. "Go." Cp. Matt. 28: 18-20 Acts 1:8.
6. The Promise; Vs. 11, 12. Cp. John 6:35; John 10:27-29; Phil. 4:19; Psalm 84:11; Matt. 24:35.
7. The Request; Vs. 13, 14. "Tell my father." Cp. 2. Cor. 4:6; 1 Peter 1:7, 8; 2 Peter 1:16, 17; John 1:14.
8. The Communion; V. 15. Cp. Romans 5:1, 2. Eph. 2:18; Luke 24:29-32.

33. JOSEPH—A TYPE OF CHRIST

THEME: A Prince and a Saviour.

In previous lessons we studied Joseph's life as a splendid example of personal character; in this lesson we meditate upon him as a striking type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

JOSEPH WAS DEARLY LOVED BY JACOB (Gen. 37: 3); *THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WAS BELOVED OF THE FATHER.* God said of Him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3: 17). "My servant in whom my soul delighteth" (Isaiah 42: 1). He is called, in Col. 1: 13, "His dear Son." The following words can refer to no other than the Lord Jesus Christ. "I was daily his (God's) delight, rejoicing always before him" (Prov. 8: 30). These verses help us to understand in a small measure something of the greatness of God's love for His beloved Son. How much then it must have cost Him to give "His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). How much He must have loved us also that He was willing to give His beloved Son to come and die for us.

JOSEPH WAS HATED AND ENVIED BY HIS BRETHREN (Gen. 37: 4, 5, 11). *THEY HATED HIM (JESUS) WITHOUT A CAUSE* (John 15: 25). He came to give temporal blessings; He healed the sick, restored sight to the blind, and raised the dead. He came also to give spiritual blessings. He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10: 10). There was therefore no reason for their hating Him; rather should they have loved Him. But we read "that for envy they had delivered him" (Matt. 27: 18).

JOSEPH WAS REJECTED AND SOLD (Gen. 37: 28); *THE LORD JESUS WAS REJECTED, BETRAYED AND SOLD.* Joseph was rejected by his brothers probably because his life was a constant rebuke to them. The Lord Jesus was rejected. They said, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19: 14). "Away with him, crucify him" (John 19: 15). Just as people rejected Christ when He was upon earth, so many are doing today. As soon as children reach the age when they "know to refuse the evil, and choose the good" (Isaiah 7: 16), God expects them to make a decision, and they must either accept Christ or reject Him.

SOME OF THE REASONS FOR REJECTING CHRIST ARE.— *AN UNWILLINGNESS TO GIVE UP SIN.* There must be repentance and faith, a turning from sin. Our Lord said, "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3: 19).

They are not willing to give up their own way. "We have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53: 6). "Let the wicked forsake his way" (Isaiah 55: 7).

PROCRASTINATION. Many people do not deliberately reject Christ, but in effect they are doing it. They say, "There is plenty of time; I shall wait till I am older"; or, "When I have a convenient season," as Felix said to Paul. But there may not be a more convenient time; you may not have another opportunity. "Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2).

WORK, POSSESSIONS, HOME TIES were all given as reasons for refusing the invitation to the great supper in Luke 14: 18-20. In the parable of the marriage of the king's son, those who were bidden to the wedding "made light of it" (Matt. 22: 5), and so they rejected the invitation. Do not make light of the invitation to come to Christ. What will *you* do with Jesus?

THEY WATCHED JOSEPH SUFFERING (Gen. 37: 25); *THE SOLDIERS WATCHED JESUS AT THE CROSS* (Matt. 27: 36, 39). The sufferings of the Lord Jesus as He hung upon the cross meant nothing to the soldiers and passers-by (Matt. 27: 36). How do you regard the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus? Do the words of Lamentations 1: 12 apply to you? "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" Have you heard the story of the cross so often that it has ceased to make any impression, or do you see Him there as your Saviour, taking your place, dying for your sins? May we be able to say with Paul, "The Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*" (Gal. 2: 20).

JOSEPH'S FEET WERE HURT WITH FETTERS (Psalm 105: 18, 19): *THE LORD'S FEET WERE PIERCED AND NAILED TO THE CROSS* (Psalm 22: 16). This was not because of any sin He had committed, for He was sinless, but for our sin. The passers-by said, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross; He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Matt. 27: 40, 42). It was not the nails, but love that held Him there. He could have saved Himself, but not Himself and us.

JOSEPH WAS LOOSED FROM PRISON (Psalm 105: 20); *THE LORD JESUS WAS LOOSED FROM DEATH* (Acts 2: 24). His resurrection was a proof that God was satisfied with the sacrifice, that He had on the cross paid in full the price for our redemption; "Who made there (by His one oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world."

JOSEPH WAS RAISED TO POWER (Gen. 41: 40, 41); *THE LORD JESUS WAS EXALTED.* Joseph was to be the means of blessing

to the people, to provide for them, and to be the saviour of his people. The Lord Jesus was exalted—

That He might give repentance and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5: 31).

That He might provide the Bread of Life for His people, for He Himself is the Bread of Life (John 6: 35). The people had to *buy* bread from Joseph, but we come to Christ and receive life "without money and without price." He is not only the Giver of life, but He is the Sustainer of His people day by day.

THAT HE MIGHT BE A PRINCE AND A SAVIOUR (Acts 5: 31). He is seated at the right hand of God in the place of power, and that power is available to His people.

JOSEPH'S BRETHREN.—

THEY MUST SURRENDER UNCONDITIONALLY TO JOSEPH. This was the condition if they were to be provided for during the famine. Pharaoh said to the people, "Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do" (Gen. 41: 55). If we are to be forgiven, saved, provided for, guided and controlled by God, then our attitude towards Christ must be that of absolute surrender to Him. First we must receive Him as Saviour and Lord, and then hand our lives over to Him. "Whatsoever He saith unto you do it" (John 2: 5). We surrender to Him, he does the rest.

THEY WERE COMMISSIONED TO TELL THREE GREAT FACTS—(a) Joseph was alive. (b) He was exalted. (c) He was willing to receive them.

We are commissioned to tell others:—

THAT THE LORD JESUS IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, a living and ascended Lord, Who has power to save and to keep.

THAT HE IS EXALTED TO BE A PRINCE AND A SAVIOUR. He has power not only to save, but to keep, to provide, to guide and protect.

THAT HE WILL RECEIVE ALL WHO ARE WILLING TO COME TO HIM. We have been His enemies, as Joseph's brothers had been enemies to him, but the moment we turn to the Lord in repentence and faith He is ready and waiting to receive us.

MEMORY VERSE.—Acts 5: 31—"Him hath God exalted . . . to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance . . . and forgiveness of sins."

JOSEPH—THE SAVIOR

Genesis 45:16—49:28

Golden Text: 2 Corinthians 8:9

I. The Invitation; Gen. 45:16-28. The news pleased Pharoah. Does the news of the repentance and conversion of the sinner please God? See Luke 15:7, 10; 2 Peter 3:9; Ezek. 33:11.

1. The Message; Vs. 16-28.
   (1) "Come;" V. 18. Cp. Matt. 11:28; Rev. 22:17, etc. (2) "Stuff;" V. 20. Cp. Phil. 3:4-9, 13; Romans 10:3; Isa. 64:6. Leave your "stuff" behind, particularly such "stuff" as pride, envy, evil speakings, coveteousness, etc. See Col. 3:8, 9; Gal. 5:19-21.
2. The Earnest; Vs. 21-24. A sample of what awaited them. Cp. Eph. 1:13, 14; 2 Cor. 5:5. III. Num. 13:17-27. What the believer now has from Christ is but a foretaste of the eternal glories that are to be his in "the ages to come." Eph. 2:7.
3. The Result; Vs. 25-28.
   (1) Unbelief; V. 26. Cp. Mark 16:11-14.
   (2) Faith when he saw wagons. Cp. (a) the evidences of Christ's resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:1-9. (b) Of His saving power in others. (c) Of His provision for His own. Read John 20:29.

II. The Journey; Gen. 46:1-7, 28.

1. The Sacrifice; V. 1. God first. Well might the believer offer the sacrifice of praise to God for all He has revealed Himself to be in Christ! See Heb. 13:15.
2. The Promise; Vs. 2-4. Cp. Heb. 13:5; Isa. 43:1; 41:13, 14, etc.
3. The Reception; Vs. 28-30. This is one of the most touching incidents of Scripture. Picture the thoughts of both as they wept in each others arms. Did either Jacob or Joseph regret the way God had led them?

III. The Interview; Gen. 47:1-10. Jacob's confession; V. 9. Truly "the less was blessed of the greater" that day! (Heb. 7:7). Jacob's last days are like a glorious sunset after a troubled day.

IV. The Famine; 47:13-25.

1. The people's need; Vs. 13, 15, 18. Cp. Luke 15:14; Isa. 55:2; 52:3; Romans 7:14; Luke 7:40-43.
2. The Savior's provision; V. 15-25.
   (1) They were bought; V. 23. Cp. 1 Cor. 6:20; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:9 (Marg.).
   (2)They were provided for; V. 24. Cp. Matt. 6:33; Phil. 4:19; Psalm 84:11.
   (3) They were grateful; V. 25. Cp. 2 Cor. 9:15; 2 Cor. 8:9.
   (4) They served him; V. 25. Cp. Romans 6:13; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

V. The blessing; 49:22-26.
Compare Christ as the fulfillment of this.

34. ISRAEL IN EGYPT

READ Exodus 1; Exodus 2: 23-25.

THEME: Deliverance from bondage.

When Israel's (Jacob's) family went to live in Egypt, God promised that He would make of them a great people. This promise was fulfilled—the land was filled with the Children of Israel. The Pharaoh who had been so kind to Joseph had died, and another king, who did not know Joseph, reigned in his stead.

TELL THE STORY of Exodus 1, and a few bare facts of Exodus 2, leaving the telling in detail of the birth of Moses till the next lesson.

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

THEY WERE IN PHARAOH'S POWER. Pharaoh is a type of Satan who is the prince of this world (John 12: 31).

THEY WERE ALIENS AND SLAVES. All who have not received the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour are "without Christ, being aliens . . . having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephes. 2: 12). They are slaves, though they may not know it. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (Gr. slave) of sin" (John 8: 34). There is no neutral position; we either belong to Christ or we are alienated from Him.

THEY WERE AFFLICTED WITH BURDENS; THEIR LIVES WERE MADE BITTER (Exodus 1: 11, 14). At first they submitted willingly and scarcely felt the yoke; then when their bonds were tightened, they found they could not free themselves. Bind a person with cotton and he snaps the bonds easily; tie him up with string, he still may be able to break them; but bind him with rope, and he cannot get free. This is Satan's method when binding his slaves with the ropes of sin. At first they are so light they cannot be felt, then the bonds are so strong the person who is bound cannot free himself. Sin always grows worse. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1: 15).

GOD CAUSED THEM TO FEEL THEIR BONDS SO THAT THEY LONGED TO BE FREE. He would not drag them out from Egypt. He would not deliver them against their will. They must willingly yield themselves to Him. They had to feel their misery to such an extent that they would cry to Him. He must bring about their deliverance in such a way that they themselves would want to be delivered. Before God can deliver us from the bondage of sin, we ourselves must desire to be free.

ISRAEL'S CRY AND GOD'S ANSWER.—

Their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage (2: 23); God heard, God remembered His covenant, God looked, God had respect (God knew, R.V.) (2: 24, 25).

GOD HEARD. He always hears the sincere cry that goes up from the heart of any man or woman, boy or girl, when the bonds become a burden and the need of a Saviour is felt. The cry of penitence always reaches His ear.

GOD REMEMBERED HIS COVENANT. He did not remember their sins and their backslidings, but He remembered Abraham His friend, Isaac and Jacob whom He had loved, and for their sakes He would deliver them. When God remembers His Son, how He lived and died and made an atonement for our sins, when He remembers His covenant with His Son, then for His sake He is ready to deliver us from the bondage of sin.

GOD LOOKED—GOD KNEW. He saw them, He loved and pitied them. He knew all there was to know about them, and He sent a deliverer—Moses. Today God looks down in pity on all those who are out of the way, all who are tied and bound with the chains of their sins, and He is ready to set free all who will accept Christ as Saviour.

MOSES THE DELIVERER—A TYPE OF CHRIST.—

MOSES delivered Israel from the bondage of slavery.

CHRIST delivers from the bondage of sin (Romans 11: 26).

MOSES WAS ONE OF THEMSELVES. JESUS, THE SAVIOUR OF MEN, WAS A MAN LIKE OURSELVES. He was "made of a woman" (Gal. 4: 4). He was "made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2: 7). He is our Mediator, "The man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2: 5).

MOSES, THOUGH ONE OF THEM, WAS ABOVE THEM. He was a prince, and had power. Jesus Christ became one of us. He became man, yet He was the Son of God—God and man. He can break the power of every sin and set the captive free. But there is a contrast between Moses and Christ. Moses was born in lowliness and the degradation of slavery, and had to learn greatness. Christ stooped, and emptied Himself—He learned obscurity, poverty and suffering. To bring many sons unto glory, the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering (Hebrews 2: 10).

If Moses could feel for his brethren, how much more does Christ feel for us (Heb. 4: 15). Here then is the deliverance we need; One Who is willing, able, prepared and ready to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8: 36).

MEMORY VERSE.—John 8: 36—"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

35. THE BIRTH OF MOSES

Exodus 1:7-14, 22; 2:1-10

Golden Text: Romans 8:28

I. The Historic Setting; Ex. 1:7-14. This new king was the first of a different dynasty of kings. Egypt had over 30 of these dynasties, due to revolutions in the land. Describe the death of Jacob, Gen. 49, and the death of Joseph and his prophecy; Gen. 50:24-26. Cp. Heb. 11:22.

1. Their prosperity; V. 7.
2. Their persecution; Vs. 8-11, 13-14. Slavery. Cp. John 8:34; Romans 6:16-19. The power that once had been friendly towards them now became their masters. How like Satan who first beguiles and then blinds, binds and grinds his victims! See Luke 11:21, 22. Jud. 16:21.
3. Their preservation; V. 12. How true of Israel even in this present day. Though subjected to cruel persecution and attempts to annihilate them as a nation, they still persist as a witness to the truth of God's word.

II. His Birth; Ex. 2:1, 2.

1. The child—"goodly."
2. The mother—her courage of faith. Cp. Heb 11:23; Isa. 51:7.

III. His Preservation; Vs. 3-6.

1. The mother's care; V. 3. Cp. Isa. 49:15.
2. The sister's watch; V. 4.
3. The providential visit; Vs. 5, 6. God working all things for good. Cp. Heb. 11:6; Isa. 43:1, 2; Romans 8:28; Isa. 55:9; Isa. 40:28.

IV. His Care; Vs. 7-9.

1. The command: "Take this child." This can apply to the S. S. teachers' work. Cp. Matt. 18:5, 6; Mark 16:15. Children are God's gifts.
2. The work—"nurse it for me." Cp. Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:15; John 21:15; 1 Peter 5:2-4. The food—God's word. 1 Peter 2:1, 2; 1 Cor. 3:2.
3. The promise—"wages." Cp. 2 Tim. 4:8; John 4:36

V. His Education; V. 10. Cp. Acts 7:22. The Egyptians did their best to make an Egyptian out of him, but the education he had received on his mother's knees could never be forgotten. See Prov. 22:6.

1. His knowledge. See Acts 7:22. The Egyptians at this period had a high degree of civilization. Witness the monuments that remain.
2. His eloquence—mighty "words."
3. His character—mighty "deeds."

VI. His Position; V. 10.

Heir to the treasure and power of Egypt. Its throne, with all the pomp and circumstance of kingly glory was before him. It was all his for the taking.

36. MOSES—THE MAN OF FAITH

READ Exodus 2: 1-15; The Acts 7: 20-29; Hebrews 11: 23-27.

THEME: A great decision. TELL THE STORY.

MOSES THE BOY AND PRINCE.—

HIS PARENTS, AMRAM AND JOCHOBED (Exodus 6: 20) *HAD FAITH IN GOD* (Heb. 11: 23). They believed God would preserve their child in a time of great danger. It is much more difficult to trust God for our loved ones than for ourselves, yet Moses' mother was able to do this, for she returned home after she had left the baby by the river, with only his sister to watch to see what became of him. Let us commit not only ourselves and our own lives to God, but our dear ones also.

HIS PARENTS MUST HAVE TAUGHT HIM ABOUT GOD. for when he went to live with Pharaoh's daughter, he remained true to God, and never forgot Him. Nor did he forget his own people. There was much in his new life which might have caused him to forget his early teaching about God, for he lived in luxury, in the midst of royal pomp and surroundings. God can keep us true to Him in the most difficult places, and in the hardest circumstances, when we are standing alone for God. He did this for Joseph, for Moses, for Daniel, and for many today, and He can do it for us if we look to Him and trust Him.

HE WAS A DILIGENT STUDENT. "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7: 22). Probably he had also learned to govern and to rule. All this was preparation for the great work of leading God's people. While you are young, perhaps still at school, remember that your studies are a preparation for future service for God. It may be costing your parents a great deal to give you an education. Be grateful to them and do your part by putting into your studies the most of which you are capable. The greater the work for God, the greater the preparation needed.

MOSES' DECISION (Hebrews 11: 23-27).—

HE HAD TO MAKE A CHOICE between high rank, riches, and power *without* God; and oppression, poverty, scorn and contempt *with* God. He looked on each side and measured one against the other. We, too, must count the cost of living for God, and try to estimate things at their right value. It was "when he came to years" (v. 24) that he made the great decision which was to alter the whole course of his life and the lives of the Children of Israel. While Moses was a minor living with his adopted mother, it was not in his power to decide what he would do, and so he remained in God's training school till the right time came for him to make the break.

HE GAVE UP A HIGH POSITION. "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." When he refused, he did not waver, but in the strength of God held fast to his decision. Think of all he gave up for God. He might have been the heir through his adopted mother to the throne of Egypt.

HE GAVE UP THE PLEASURES OF SIN. Take note of this. It does not say "pleasures" only, but the "pleasures *of sin*," and there is a great difference between the two. Healthy pleasure and recreation are not forbidden to the child of God; rather do they fit him for better service for God. God will show you the difference between the two if you ask Him. The pleasures of sin wreck the life, mentally, physically, and spiritually. Note too that the pleasures of sin are only "for a season." They can confer no lasting benefit upon you, and the feeling of enjoyment is only for a time. You indulge in them and there is nothing left.

HE GAVE UP WEALTH—"the treasures of Egypt." All are not called to do this, for God has need of stewards of money today, but Moses could not retain his riches and take his stand as the leader and champion of the Children of Israel. It is not money which is the root of all evil, but the *love* of money (1 Tim. 6: 10). The summing up at the end by the man who lived only to gain pleasures and riches for himself was this: "All was vanity and vexation of spirit . . . and there was no profit" (Eccles. 2: 10, 11).

HE CHOSE "TO SUFFER AFFLICTION WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD." Taking our side with the people of God often means affliction. The Lord Jesus warned us in John 16: 33, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," but He goes on to say, "but be of good cheer." Paul calls it "our light affliction which is but for a moment" (2 Cor. 4:17).

HE CHOSE THE REPROACH OF CHRIST, and esteemed it greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. If we are reproached for Christ's sake, we are but following in His steps (John 15: 20).

THE SOURCE OF HIS DECISION WAS FAITH. "By faith . . ." (Heb. 11: 24-27). Some might have said that it was patriotism, or ties of blood, but God said it was "by faith." Faith is seeing things as God sees them; faith is holding fast to God (Heb. 3: 12). He estimated things at God's valuation, not man's. He had faith in God. He had faith in God's purposes for Israel, and so he made his choice.

HE HAD FAITH IN THE RECOMPENSE OF THE REWARD. He expected to be the gainer spiritually by his choice, and not the loser. What he left behind was temporal, what he would gain was eternal.

MOSES' MISTAKES.—

HE CHOSE HIS OWN TIME; HE RAN BEFORE GOD. He knew that God had called him to be the deliverer of Israel, but he did not wait God's time. On the impulse of the moment he defended his oppressed fellow-countryman, and thought that it was in this way that God would bring about their deliverance. But Moses himself was not yet sufficiently prepared for the great work God had for him to do. Moses had to wait another forty years, during which time God went on training him. Do not try to force doors, wait for God to open them, and then you will know that you are in His will. God may be using your home life and the difficulties there to train you for His service.

HE CHOSE HIS OWN WAY TO DELIVER ISRAEL. God had to teach him that he must do the work not only in God's time, but in God's way. It was not by killing the Egyptian that the people would be delivered.

MEMORY VERSE.—Hebrews 11: 24, 25—"By faith Moses . . . choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

THE CHOICE OF MOSES

Exodus 2:11-25

Golden Text: Heb. 11:26

I. The Circumstances; Vs. 11-14. Cp. Acts 7:23-29.

1. His sympathy with Israel; V. 11. Cp. Acts 7: 23.
2. His rash act; V. 12. Note he didn't look **up.** 4:13. Moses thought that by his own hand he would deliver Israel. Forty years later he learned it was not **his** hand but **God's** right hand that did the delivering! See Exod. 15:6, 7. (3) His flight; V. 15.

II. The Choice. Read Heb. 11:24-25.

1. The Time. "He was come to years." He was 40. Acts 7:23. No age limit now to be saved. Eccles. 12:1; 2 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 19:14.
2. The Choice. He chose. A definite decision. No one is saved apart from a definite decision for Christ. Perhaps, in all history, there is nothing to compare with this choice. It is the greatest single instance of renunciation on the part of a human being. It was a choice (1) Against his position in Egypt. Egypt a type of the world. Cp. 1 Cor. 1:20-29; Gal. 6:14; Phil. 3:7-9, 20; John 17:16.
   (2) Against the possessions of Egypt. Cp. Mark 8:36; 10:23, 24; 1 Tim. 6:9, 10.
   (3) Against the pleasures of Egypt. Cp.1 Tim. 6:9, 10; 1 Tim. 5:6; Romans 6:23; 1 John 2:15, 16.

   (4) Against the perils of Egypt. Cp. 1 John 5:19; Mark 9:43-48; 2 Peter 3:10; John 3:36, 18.

   (5) Against the persecution of Egypt; Heb. 11:25. "Affliction." John 15:19-21; 2 Cor. 11: 24-28; John 16:33; 2 Tim. 3:12.

   (6) The reproach of Christ; Heb. 11:25; 13:13; Gal. 6:14; Mark 8:38.
3. The Reason. The principles that governed his choice.

   (1) Faith; Heb. 11:24. Cp. Heb. 11:1, 6; Romans 4:5; 5:1; 10:8-17. Faith sees the invisible; Heb. 11:27. Cp. 2 Cor. 4:18; 1 Peter 1:8.
   (2) Respect to recompense of reward; Heb. 11:26, 27. Cp. 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 5:9-14. Especially V. 10.
   What is your choice?

III. The Result—a great life. Who has not heard of Moses, the man of God? Had Moses decided to mount the throne of Egypt and become its Pharoah, he would have been unknown to the vast majority of people, and his body would probably have been an interesting mummy in the Museum at Cairo! True fame and true success consists in putting God first in the life. Matt. 6:33; Joshua 1:5-9; 2 Thess. 1:12.

37. THE CALL OF MOSES

READ parts of Exodus, chapters 3 and 4.

THEME: Sent by God.

TELL THE STORY.

TRAINED FOR SERVICE.—

Forty years before the events of these chapters Moses, in self-confidence, had undertaken to deliver Israel, and had run in front of God. God trained him in the desert, where he did the work of a shepherd for another forty years. Moses, like Joseph, was intended for a great work, and God had to prepare him for it. He had eighty years' training (forty in Egypt and forty in the desert) for forty years' service. In all trades and professions, in fact, in anything requiring skill, the drudgery has to be gone through first. And this is true of work for God. He must train His workers in the hard school of experience. He allows difficulties and trials to come in order that we might learn to look to Him and depend on Him.

THE CALL CAME FROM GOD HIMSELF. He said, "Come . . . *I* will send thee" (Exodus 3: 10). If we are to be used and fruitful in any work for God then He Himself must call us to it. The knowledge that we have been called to any service *by God* will carry us triumphantly through all the difficulties connected with it. If we have been self-appointed, there is sure to be uncertainty, discouragement and failure.

MOSES' OBJECTIONS AND GOD'S ANSWERS.—

THE FIRST OBJECTION, "WHO AM I, THAT I SHOULD GO?" (3: 11.) The mistake of the past was over-confidence in himself; that of the present, lack of trust in God. Moses looked to himself, his limitations, and what he thought was his incompetency, and he failed to look to God and His power. When God calls to any service He always gives the necessary equipment, and we should be ready to reply, "Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint" (2 Sam. 15: 15). Our service may not be that of leadership; on the contrary, it may be a humble, hidden work, but if that is God's choice for us, let us do it. "*Whatsoever* he saith unto you, do it" (John 2: 5).

GOD'S REPLY, "CERTAINLY I WILL BE WITH THEE" (3: 12). Moses had forgotten that *God* would be with him, and therefore he was full of fear. God does not ask us to go anywhere alone. Notice how fearless a small child is when his father is with him. He knows that should he meet with any difficulty his father will meet it for him. God's promise should be to us an all-sufficient assurance.

MOSES' SECOND OBJECTION—"WHAT SHALL I SAY UNTO THEM?" (3: 13.) Perhaps he remembered his former experience when it was said to him, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" (2: 14.) He is afraid now that they may ask for his authority.

GOD'S REPLY—"SAY . . . I AM (GOD) HATH SENT ME UNTO YOU" (3: 14). Here was the commission from God Himself. Do not teach a Sunday school class, help in young people's meetings, or do any other work for God merely because you have been asked to do it, and you do not care to refuse, or because you think it will give you some kind of standing. Be sure that you can say, "I AM (God) hath sent me." It has been said that Jehovah, in taking the title calling Himself "I AM," was furnishing His people with "a blank cheque to be filled in to any amount." He is ready to be to us just what we need. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6: 35). He satisfies our every need. "I am the vine" (John 15: 5). We, as the branches, draw our life and sustenance from Him.

THE THIRD OBJECTION—THEY WILL NOT BELIEVE ME NOR LISTEN TO ME (4: 1). He did not take in God's answer to his last objection, "I AM hath sent me," or he would never have made this one. But God was very patient with him, as He is with us and our objections.

GOD'S REPLY—HE GAVE MOSES POWER AS A PROOF THAT HE WAS SENT BY GOD (Exodus 4: 2-7). If God's power accompanies our words then people will take notice of what we say. The rod changed to a serpent, and Moses' handling of it was to give him confidence. The leprous hand cleansed was to show him that God could and would cleanse Israel from sin. Are there some whom you are seeking to help and you feel so powerless? Are you trying to lead to Christ those in your class at school, or in your office or shop? God will give you power in your own life that will cause others to know that you are God's messenger.

THE FOURTH OBJECTION—"I AM SLOW OF SPEECH, AND OF A SLOW TONGUE" (4: 10). Many of us think that because we do not possess the natural gift of eloquence God cannot use us. In that case we are thinking more of the words than of the message. Power that comes from God is the important thing. Look to him to give the right words.

GOD'S REPLY—"I WILL BE WITH THY MOUTH, AND TEACH THEE WHAT THOU SHALT SAY" (4: 12). How patient God was with Moses and what a gracious promise He gave him. If He is with us then we shall have the real eloquence of the heart. Natural eloquence is of no use in spiritual things if God's power does not accompany it.

MOSES' FIFTH OBJECTION—HE ASKS THAT ANOTHER MIGHT BE SENT INSTEAD (4: 13). Do you ever look round for someone else to do the work God has called you to do? It is so easy to say, "Let someone else do it," and then to quieten our conscience by thinking that because the work is being done, it does not really matter who does it.

GOD'S REPLY—HE SENT AARON (4: 14, 15). Moses had his way, but think how much he missed. God was to have been with Moses' mouth, but God gave him Aaron to be his mouth instead (v. 16). Always choose God's best, not His second best.

MEMORY VERSE.—Exodus 4: 12—"I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

THE CALL OF MOSES

Exodus 2:23—4:17, 27-31

Golden Text: Mark 16:15

I. The Burning Bush; ;2:23—3:3. Someone has said it took Moses 40 years to learn to be something; 40 years to learn to be nothing; and forty years to learn what a great deal God could do with nothing if it was yielded to Him !

1. God's knowledge of their condition; 2:23-25. His eye beheld, His ear heard, His heart knew their sorrows.
2. Moses' Occupation; V. 1. Cp. Exod. 2:15-21. A shepherd for 40 years. Cp. Acts 7:30. From leading a nation to leading sheep. He that is faithful in the least will be faithful in much. Luke 16:10.
2. The great sight; 3:2-4. Cp. Some other great sights; Matt. 27:36; John 1:29; Rev. 1:7. The burning bush that was unconsumed could illustrate (1) The word of God midst the fire of criticism, (2) Christ on the cross, 'neath fire of God's wrath, (3) The church in fire of persecution, and (4) Israel itself as a nation.

II. The Revelation of Jehovah; 3:4-14.

1. Of Himself; Vs. 5, 6. (1) His Holiness; V. 5. Cp. Isa. 6:1-6. Cp. Prodigal Son; Luke 15:22. (2) His Person; V. 6. Cp. Matt. 22:31, 32. (3) Its effect on Moses; V. 6. Cp. Isa. 6:1-5; Dan. 10:5-10; Luke 5:8; Rev. 1:17, etc.
2. Of His Care; V. 7. He had seen all, heard all, knew all. Cp. Psalm 139:1-6; Matt. 6:25-34.
3. Of His purpose; Vs. 8, 9.
   (1) Emancipation, "deliver." Cp. Luke 11:21, 22; Job 33:24; Mark 10:45; Luke 19:10; Matt. 9:13; 1 Peter 3:18; Gal. 1:4; Col. 1:13; Heb. 2: 14-15.
   (2) Separation, "bring out." Cp. John 17:15-19; Titus 2:11-14; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 2:11.
   (3) Possession, "bring in." Eph. 1:3; John 17: 24-26, etc.
4. Of His Choice of Moses; Vs. 10-12. (1) Power; V. 10. "I will send." Cp. "Go." Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8. (2) Promise, "with thee;" V. 12. Cp. "Lo." Matt. 28:19, 20. Cp. Heb. 13:5; Joshua 1:9.

III. The Objections Raised; 3:11 to 4:17.

1. Personal fitness; V. 11. God's answer; V. 12.
2. Words; V. 13. Note God's answer in V. 14, and cp. John 8:58.
3. Authority; 4:1. The answer—a manifestation of Divine authority; Vs. 2-8.
4. Eloquence; 4:10. The answer; Vs. 11, 12.
5. Special adaptation; 4:13-17. The answer. God's commands are His enablings. Moses learned that both his rod and his hand could become either a curse or a blessing; and that with God all things were possible. Cp. 2 Cor. 12:9; 3:5; Phil. 4:13.

IV. The Message to Israel; 4:27-31.

1. Meeting with Aaron. V. 27. God knew where they both were and could therefore bring them together. This explains many so called "coincidences."
2. Meeting with Israel; V. 30.
3. The effect on the people; V. 31. They heard, believed and worshipped.

38. PHARAOH'S REJECTION

Exodus 5:1—6:8

Golden Text: Proverbs 29:1

I. The Message to Pharaoh; 5:1-23.

1. The Message; Vs. 1. (1) Its authority. "Thus saith the Lord." Cp. Matt. 24:35; Num. 23:19; Eccles. 3:14. (2) Its content; V. 1. Plain and simple. Pharoah was not left in any doubt as to what God wanted of him, and neither is the sinner. Read Acts 17:31. It should be the aim of the teacher and preacher to leave the hearer in no doubt as to his state, danger, and the way of salvation; Isa. 58:1.
2. Pharaoh's pride; Vs. 2. "Who is the Lord?" Prov. 6:16, 17; Psalm 18:27; Luke 18:14.
3. His unbelief. "I know not." Cp. Romans 3:3; John 3:18; 12:47, 48; 16:8-11.
4. His rejection. "Neither." Cp. John 5:40; Romans 1:28. Pharaoh here definitely and defiantly refuses to obey God. God's foreknowledge did not prevent Pharaoh's free will. See Exod. 3:19-21. He who chooses error will be blinded by it. Cp. Romans 1:24-26-28; 2 Cor. 2:15, 16; Matt. 21:42; 2 Thess. 2:9-12 (R. V.).
5. The increased burden; Vs. 6-19. How like Satan, who uses all his diabolical power to keep his poor slaves under his mastery when they seek to escape! He will seek to divert their mind from thoughts of salvation by pleasure, lust and pride, etc.
6. The murmur of the elders; Vs. 20-23. Moses is getting his first lesson in the perversity of the children of Israel. He was to have forty years of it. Psalm 95:10.

II. Jehovah's Precious Promises; 6:1-8.

1. The covenant Name; Jehovah, Vs. 1-3.
2. The promise made; Vs. 4-8. Note: The seven "I wills."

   (1) Separation, "bring out," V. 6. Cp. Gal. 1:4, 6:14; John 17:14.
   (2) Emancipation rid . . . bondage. Cp. Matt. 11:28; Isa. 53:5, 6; Isa. 1:4; Romans 5:8; John 8:36.
   (3) Redemption; V. 6. Cp. 1 Peter 1:18; Eph. 1:7.
   (4) Adoption; V. 7. "Take you for a people." Cp. 1 Peter 2:9, 10. John 1:12.
   (5) Portion. "I will be your God;" V. 7. Cp. Matt. 6:9; John 20:17.
   (6) Preservation. "I will bring;" V. 8. Cp. Jude 24; John 10:28-30.
   (7) Possession. "I will give;" V. 8. Cp. 1 Peter 1:3-5; Eph. 1:3; Romans 8:32, etc.
3. The Power to perform; Vs. 8. "I am Jehovah:" Cp. Matt. 3:6; Num. 23:19; Romans 11:29. All the power of God is behind His word. Cp. Eccles. 8:4.

39. THE TEN PLAGUES

READ parts of Exodus, chapters 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12. See verses below.

THEME: No compromise.

TELL BRIEFLY THE STORY of each plague.

1. The river turned into blood (Ex. 7: 19, 20).
2. Frogs (Ex. 8: 5, 6).
3. Lice (Ex. 8: 16, 17).
4. Flies (Ex. 8: 24).
5. Cattle died (Ex. 9: 6).
6. Boils (Ex. 9: 10).
7. Thunder and hail (Ex. 9: 23, 24).
8. Locusts (Ex. 10: 13, 14).
9. Darkness (Ex. 10: 22, 23).
10. Death of firstborn (Ex. 12: 29).

PHARAOH.—

HIS PRIDE. He said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" (Exodus 5: 2.) But Pharaoh was to learn that He is the Almighty God, and that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord . . . he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Proverbs 21: 1). It does not do for anyone to say, "Who is He? I do not care for Him or for what He says? Why should I obey?" Pride leads to presumption. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16: 18).

HIS MOCKERY. He called God's message "vain words" (lies) (Exodus 5: 9). But he was to find out to his cost that what God had said was not "vain words." No one can afford to mock at God's message. It is a solemn thing to despise God's Word or those who bring it to us. "Because . . . ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I will mock when your fear cometh" (Proverbs 1: 25, 26).

HIS OBSTINACY. "Neither will I let Israel go" (Exodus 5: 2). He was determined at all costs to have his own way. To give the Children of Israel their freedom would mean great financial loss to him, but how much he and his people would have been saved had he obeyed God's voice. He afterwards perished in the Red Sea.

HIS HEART WAS HARDENED. The hardening was produced through the message sent by God. When a message from God is heard it either softens or hardens the heart; it makes the person better or worse according to his attitude towards it. The sun softens some materials and hardens others. The Word of God must have some effect because it is a living Word. It is true that it is said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 7: 13), but this was only after Pharaoh had wilfully resisted Him and turned a deaf ear to His message. He had already made up his mind to resist God, and therefore each time he heard the message through Moses, and saw God's judgments, his heart became harder. The heart does not become softer as we grow older. God's message comes to you while you are still young, "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 3: 7, 8).

HIS PROFESSION OF REPENTANCE. He said, "I have sinned . . . the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked" (Exodus 9: 27). But when the judgment was removed, "he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart" (9: 34). This showed he was not truly repentant.

He was not afraid of sin, but of its consequences. Repentance is a change of mind which leads to action. (See Book 1, Lesson 13, page 32.) He even went so far as to ask for forgiveness, and requested Moses to pray for him (Exodus 10: 16, 17), but he did not really desire forgiveness. What he wanted was that the judgment should be removed. There is a vast difference between a fear and hatred of the sin itself, and fear of the consequences of sin. God will never turn away anyone who truly turns to Him in repentance and faith.

PHARAOH'S COMPROMISES.—

"GO YE, SACRIFICE TO YOUR GOD IN THE LAND" (Exodus 8: 25). Worship God in your own way, but remain in Egypt. But it was God's purpose that the Children of Israel should be brought out of Egypt, and separate themselves from all the evil there. They were not only to be separated *from* Egypt, but separated *unto* Him. He knew that there was danger of their putting Jehovah on a level with the gods of Egypt. God says to us, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate . . . and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6: 17, 18).

MOSES' REPLY. "We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as *He* shall command us" (Exodus 8: 27). He meant that they would make a clean break with the old life; they would obey God and not Pharaoh. Many young Christians are not making progress in their spiritual life, because they are trying to hold on to the things which enslaved them before they came to Christ.

"SACRIFICE TO THE LORD YOUR GOD IN THE WILDERNESS, ONLY YE SHALL NOT GO VERY FAR AWAY" (Exodus 8: 28). If he could not keep them *in* Egypt, the land of their bondage, then he would try to keep them *near* it. In effect this is what Satan says to those who wish to follow Christ, "Read your Bible and pray if you wish; do not go too far with your religion. Don't be peculiar, or get too narrow."

THE MEN MAY GO, BUT LEAVE THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN BEHIND (10: 10, 11). *ALL MAY GO, BUT LEAVE YOUR FLOCKS AND HERDS* (10: 24). He knew that if they left their flocks in Egypt they would soon wish to return to them.

MOSES' REPLY: "There shall not an hoof be left behind" (10: 25, 26). Christ wants the whole heart of those who belong to Him, and all that we have is His. He does not wish part of the life and interest to be devoted to Him and the remainder to our old master, Satan. Christ will have all or nothing.

Can you say with Moses, "Not a hoof has been left behind"? I possess nothing that is not His, there is no part of my life that is not devoted to Him? There is no room of my heart the key of which I retain. All has been handed over to Him and to His control.

MEMORY VERSE.—2 Corinthians 6: 17—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing."

THE PLAGUES

Exodus 7 to 10

Golden Text: Hebrews 12:25

I. The Second Visit to Pharoah; 7:1-13.

1. The renewed commission; Vs. 1-9.
2. The true and false power; Vs. 10-13. These two powers in the world today. (1) The power of the Gospel; Romans 1:16. (2) The counterfeit of Satan (Read 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Thess. 2:9-11) to deceive and imitate the real work. (Ill. Matt. 13:24-30, 37-43).

II. The First Plague; 7:14-25. Water turned to blood. The first plague, water to blood—death. The first miracle of Christ—water to wine—life and joy; John 2.

III. The Second Plague; 8:1-15. The plague of frogs.

1. Pharoah again entreated; Vs. 1, 2. Frogs were objects of worship, as also the Nile and flies. They reared temples in honor of the ox and cow and worshipped the sun. Thus God directed the plagues against their idols.
2. The Plague; Vs. 3-7.
3. The Request; Vs. 8-14.
4. The hardening of his heart; V. 15. Note V. 10 "Tomorrow"—God's time is "Now;" 2 Cor. 6:2.

IV. The Third Plague; 8:16-19. Lice.
Note the magician's confession; V. 19; Cp. Mark 1:23, 24.

V. The Fourth Plague; Vs. 20-32.—Flies.

1. The division between the Egyptians and Israel; Vs. 22, 23. Note margin.
2. Pharoah's attempted compromise; V. 25. The world asks the question, Why separate? Why three days journey? But the wilderness is the only place for God's people; Acts 15:14.

VI. The Fifth Plague; 9:1-7.—Murrian. Cattle were venerated by Egyptians.

VII. The Sixth Plague; Vs. 8-12.—Boils. Boils are evidence of corruption within. Mark 7:21.

VIII. The Seventh Plague; Vs. 13-35.—Hail.

1. God's purpose with Pharoah; V. 16. Cp. Romans 9:17; Phil. 2:10, 11.
2. God's provision, Vs. 19-21, for the cattle. The two classes. Believers; unbelievers.
3. The plague of hail; Vs. 22-26.
4. Pharoah's confession; Vs. 27-35; but only superficial. (Ill. Matt. 27:3, 4; 1 Sam. 26:21.

IX. The Eighth Plague; 10:1-20.—Locusts.

1. The Message; Vs. 1-6.
2. The second attempted compromise; 8-11. "Leave the little ones behind." He knew he had them if they did. Many have been brought back in the world who did not take their little ones out with them. Eph. 6:4, etc.
3. The plague and its result; Vs. 12-20.

X. The Ninth Plague; 10:21-29.—Darkness.

1. The third attempted compromise—leave your possessions; V. 24. How true of many today. Their business is not separated to the Lord—thus worldliness is bound to characterize them; Romans 12:1, 2.
2. Pharoah's last message; Vs. 28, 29. He has persistently refused to obey the word of God and each time he hardens his heart it seems more difficult for him to repent. See Heb. 3: 15, 13. Cp. Gen. 6:3.

40. THE PASSOVER

READ Exodus 12: 1-14, 19-36.

THEME: Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. TELL THE STORY.

God had promised Jacob (Israel) that He would make of him a great nation (Gen. 48: 4). The Children of Israel multiplied in Egypt, but were held in bondage by Pharaoh, King of Egypt, until God delivered them. The death of the firstborn was the last of the ten judgments.

PHARAOH — Picture of Satan.

CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — picture of sinners in Satan's power.

THE PASSOVER LAMB.—

IT WAS A TYPE OF JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD (John 1: 29). He is called *our* Passover (1 Cor. 5: 7). Just as the lamb died for the Children of Israel, so "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." The lamb was a divinely appointed victim. God ordained the Lord Jesus to be our Saviour.

THE LAMB MUST BE WITHOUT BLEMISH (v. 5), because it was a picture of the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, Who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7: 26), otherwise God could not have accepted His sacrifice for sin. No one has ever lived on this earth without sin except the Lord Jesus.

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin,
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in."

THE LAMB WAS TESTED.—It was kept four days before it was killed (v. 6). This reminds us of the Lord Jesus Who was tried and no sin was found in Him. Pilate had to confess, "I have found no fault in this Man" (Luke 23: 14). "Nothing worthy of death is done unto Him. I have found no cause of death in Him" (Luke 23: 15, 22). The dying thief said on the cross, "This man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23: 41). Even his enemies could truthfully say nothing against Him. Christ measured up perfectly to God's standard of holiness.

THE LAMB MUST BE KILLED, its blood must be shed (v. 6). The living lamb, even though it were without blemish could not save the Children of Israel from the destroying angel. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22). We are saved by the *death* of Christ, not by His life and example, wonderful though they were. God looked for the blood on the doorpost and, if it were there, the destroying angel passed by. All through Scripture runs the red line of sacrifice. In the Old Testament we have it in picture in the sacrifices, in the New Testament we see it at Calvary, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Himself.

THE PASCHAL LAMB was killed every year and other sacrifices were offered up daily. But Christ did not need to do this "for this He did *once* when He offered up Himself" (Heb. 7: 27). "Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9: 28). The Old Testament sacrifices could not take away sins (Heb. 10: 4), they could only *cover* sin till Christ came. He *takes away* the sin of the world (John 1: 29).

REDEMPTION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.—

THEY WERE SINNERS, AS THE EGYPTIANS WERE. But the Lord put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel (Ex. 11: 7). The difference was this, the Egyptians had no blood on their doorpost, and the Children of Israel had. There are only two classes of people in God's sight; those who are protected by the blood of Christ and those who are not; those who are born of the flesh, and those who are born again — born of the Spirit (John 3: 6, 7).

THEY DESERVED PUNISHMENT, just as the Egyptians did. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23). God passed over, not because there was no punishment for sin, but because the victim had died, and as the penalty could not be exacted twice, the family was clear. God would accept the lamb without blemish, the Divinely appointed victim, in place of the firstborn.

THEY MUST APPLY THE BLOOD (Ex. 12: 7). Even the death of the Divinely appointed lamb would not have saved them if they had not put the blood on the door posts of their houses. He that *believeth* on the Son hath everlasting life (John 3: 36). As many as *received* Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God (John 1: 12). A prisoner may be pardoned, but unless he believes this and accepts the pardon, he remains a prisoner.

THE BLOOD ALONE WITHOUT ANY ADDITION WAS A PERFECT PROTECTION FROM JUDGMENT.—"It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17: 11). When Christ said on the cross "It is finished" (John 19: 30) He perfectly accomplished the great work of our redemption. We can add nothing to that work by our prayers, our good works or anything else.

THE WORD OF GOD.—

IT MADE THEM SURE OF THEIR SAFETY. He said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (v. 13) not when I see your good works, your profession, your prayers or your experience but "when I see the *blood*, I will pass over you."

WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD not when *you* see the blood. Our faith may be so feeble that we may not be able to see the blood, but if we have accepted Christ as Saviour, then God sees the blood upon our hearts.

GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISE.—I *will* pass over you. He will never break His word. God is satisfied with the blood *outside*, we rest satisfied with His Word inside, not on our feelings which have nothing to do with it. Only the blood makes us *safe*. Only His Word makes us *sure*.

MEMORY VERSE.- Exodus 12:13 "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

The Passover Feast. Exodus 12:8,26,27,43.

REMEMBER HOW GOD SAVED US.

The Passover lamb—picture of Christ sacrificed for us.

The Passover Feast—picture of feeding upon Christ Himself.

1. Israel must always keep this Feast to remember how God saved them by the blood of the lamb. We keep the Lord's Supper to remember Christ's death on the cross.
2. The Feast of the Passover was only for those who had been saved by the blood.
3. The lamb was roasted with fire before they ate it. This is a picture of the Lord Jesus Who went through the fire of God's punishment for us. At the Lord's Supper we remember His sufferings.
4. Before they ate the Passover Feast they had to put away all leaven. Leaven is a picture of sin. We must come to the Lord's Table with clean hearts so that we can feed upon Him by faith.

Verse to learn. I Corinthians 11.26. "Ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

THE PASSOVER

Exodus 12:1-36

Golden Text: Exodus 12:13

I. The Condition of the People.

1. They were slaves; Cp. Slaves of sin; Luke 16:13; John 8:34; Romans 6:16.
2. They were sinners; Cp. Romans 3:23. No difference.
3. They were under condemnation; V. 12. As this was a judgment on sin they must also suffer unless a way of escape is provided; John 3:19; John 3:36; Romans 1:18; Acts 17:31. The day fixed, the judge appointed.

II. God's Way of Salvation; Vs. 3-28.

1. One Means of Salvation.—A lamb slain.
   (1) The lamb; Vs. 3-4. Cp. John 1:29.
   (2) Without blemish; V. 5. Cp. Heb. 7:26; I Peter 1:18, 19; 2:22, 23; Matt. 3:17, etc.
   (3) Set apart; V. 6. Tested; Heb. 7:26; 4:15.
   (4) Killed; V. 6. Cp. Matt. 20:28; 16:21; John 3:14; 12:24, 27; 10:15, 17, 18; 11:50-52.
2. One Place of Safety.—Behind the blood.
   (1) Not the blood in the lamb, i. e., Christ as an example. This condemns the best man. John 15:22; Heb. 7:26.
   (2) Not the blood in the basin, i. e., an intellectual assent to facts of Christ's death. That is a fact of history and saves none.
   (3) Not the eating of bitter herbs and unleavened bread, i. e., such things as good works and ordinances cannot save. These follow salvation.
   (4) But the blood shed and applied on the door by hyssop. (Hyssop speaks of faith. It was a common weed and near to all. Cp. Romans 10:8-10), i. e., personal reception of Christ and faith in the blood of Christ; Romans 3:25; Romans 5:1; 8:1; 1 Peter 1:18, 19.
3. One Ground of Assurance. The word of God, "When I see the blood."
   (1) Not their "feelings," "realizings" or "experiences." Many trust to these. Within their houses they could not see the blood, but God could. We cannot see the death of Christ, for this took place long before we were born, but God can, and all who trust in that are safe.
   (2) But God's facts. 1 John 5:9-13; John 5:24. The blood of the lamb applied made them perfectly **safe.** The word of the Lord believed made them perfectly **sure.**

III. God's Judgment; Vs. 29-36.

1. Upon all unsheltered by blood; Vs. 29-30. Death was in every home. Either the death of the lamb or the death of the firstborn.
2. God's coming judgment; Romans 2:4-6; Rev. 20:10-15.
3. What are you sheltering behind? Name some common substitutes such as "good works," "church membership," "ordinances," "good resolves," etc.

41. THE CLOUDY PILLAR

READ Exodus 13: 17-22; 40: 37, 38; Nehemiah 9: 12.

THEME: Guided by God.

TELL THE STORY.

God not only delivered the Children of Israel from Egypt, but He came down in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way to Canaan.

GOD CHOSE THE WAY FOR THEM.—

They saw a short, easy road through the land of the Philistines, but God did not permit them to go that way (Exodus 13: 17, 18). "He led them forth by the *right* way" (Psalm 107: 7). Here are two of the reasons for the longer journey through the way of the wilderness.

LEST WAR SHOULD CAUSE THEIR HEARTS TO FAIL AND THEY TURN BACK. They were new to the manner of life in which God was now leading them, and He would not try them above that they were able to bear. We see from Exodus 14: 11, 12, that they did not yet know their own weakness, how weak was their faith in God, nor how fearful they would be when the enemy came against them. And He is just as tender and gracious in His dealings with us as He was with the Children of Israel. He will not discourage those who are just starting out on the narrow Way of Life—those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour; nor will He lead them by too hard a road. If there are trials and difficulties, be sure that He will not put upon you more than you are able to bear (1 Corinthians 10: 13).

THEY HAD TO LEARN LESSONS IN GOD'S WAY. These lessons they could never have learned in the shorter way through the land of the Philistines. In the wilderness He humbled them and suffered them to hunger (Deut. 8: 2-5). God allows humbling experiences to come to us in order to humble us, to teach us that we are nothing, and that we have no power ourselves. He suffered them to hunger that He might teach them that He could satisfy all their needs. We, too, have to learn that He Himself can be to us all we need, that He can satisfy our every longing.

GOD'S GUIDANCE.—

GOD WENT BEFORE THEM TO SHOW THE ROAD, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night (Neh. 9: 12). The Lord Jesus said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8: 12). We have no pillar of cloud that we can see, but we have the Holy Spirit. "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16: 13).

HE GUIDES IN THREE WAYS.—

BY HIS WORD. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119: 105). How necessary it is then to read His Word every day, so that we may know where the nets are which

the enemy of souls sets for our feet; so that we may know what God would have us do and where He would have us go.

BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT, Who lives in the heart of everyone who has received Christ as Saviour. When we pray and ask God for guidance as to where we should go or what we should do, He will give us inward peace about it if we are about to act according to His will; or a sense of unrest if it is not His will for us. Remember that God will never guide us to do anything that is not in accordance with the teaching of His Word.

BY CIRCUMSTANCES, which either open the way or block it. When these three, God's Word, the Holy Spirit, and circumstances all agree, then we know God's will and way for us. Be careful not to be guided by circumstances alone. Jonah wanted to go to Tarshish, he found a ship about to leave, and he had the fare. *Circumstances* pointed to his going to Tarshish, but God had already told him to go to Nineveh, therefore in going to Tarshish he was acting in self-will and making a great mistake (Jonah 1: 1-4).

THE CLOUD.—

IT WAS BEHIND THEM—A COVER FROM THE ENEMY (Exodus 14: 19, 20). The enemy, though near, had no power to strike because God in the cloud was their defence. Our enemy, Satan, may pursue and harass us, but he will have no power against us if we are in God's way, for He will be our defence (Psalm 89: 18). If we are out of God's will, going our own way, then we are at the mercy of the enemy.

IT NEVER LEFT THEM BY DAY OR BY NIGHT (Exodus 13: 21, 22). The Children of Israel often grieved God, but He did not forsake them; by day and by night He guarded and led them. We have the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13: 5). We can claim the promise given to the Children of Israel, "The Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Deut. 31: 6). The Keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121: 4).

ISRAEL'S PART WAS TO WATCH THE CLOUD AND FOLLOW IT. It was "in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys" (Exodus 40: 36-38). They were not to run ahead or lag behind. When the cloud was taken up they journeyed, and when it was not taken up they remained where they were. They had to keep their eyes on the cloud, which symbolised the Presence of the Lord. Men climbing the Alps must keep their eyes on their guide. If we are to be guided by God we must acknowledge Him in all our ways, and not trust to our own wisdom, thinking that we can find the way ourselves (Proverbs 3: 5, 6). There must be a willingness on our part beforehand, to follow the guidance He gives.

MEMORY VERSE.—Proverbs 3: 5, 6—"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

42. THE WAY THROUGH THE RED SEA

READ Exodus 14 and chapter 15: 1-3.

THEME: Deliverance from the power of sin. TELL THE STORY.

The lesson on the Passover (see Book 1, Lesson 6) teaches deliverance by blood from the punishment and guilt of sin; the Way through the Red Sea teaches deliverance by power from the dominion of sin.

A WONDERFUL DELIVERANCE.—

THE PURSUIT OF THE ENEMY. When Pharaoh saw that the Children of Israel had escaped from bondage, he pursued them in order to bring them again under his power. Similarly, Satan follows those who have been delivered from his power to try to get them to submit again to his rule, to take up again the things they have renounced, and to live a life of defeat. Do not be discouraged then if, after you have accepted Christ as your Saviour, and have been redeemed by His blood, you feel the enemy on your tracks.

THEIR APPARENTLY HOPELESS POSITION. The Children of Israel were shut in with the Red Sea in front, Pharaoh behind, and the mountains surrounding them. Humanly speaking there was no way out; then unbelief conquered and they despaired. They could not see that the same God Who had brought them out of Egypt, and had promised to lead them to Canaan, could make a way through the Red Sea. Let us not limit His power by unbelief. The same God Who has redeemed us by the blood of Christ, can supply the power to overcome sin, and lead us right into Canaan, the place of blessing and victory. It is true that Satan is the "strong man armed," but the "stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him" (Luke 11: 21, 22). Christ has promised, "I give unto you power . . . over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10: 19).

MOSES' WISE ADVICE.—

"FEAR YE NOT" (Exodus 14: 13). The words, "Fear not" occur frequently in God's Word. There is a "Fear not" for you to apply to everything you may come up against. David said, "Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27: 1).

"STAND STILL AND SEE THE SALVATION OF THE LORD" (Exodus 14: 13). They were to get their eyes off the hosts of Pharaoh, the mountains encircling them, and the waves of the Red Sea, and on to God's power. When the servant of Elisha could only see the forces of the enemy, Elisha said to him, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Then Elisha prayed, "Lord . . . open his eyes, that he may see." And he saw the hosts of the Lord round about Elisha (2 Kings 6: 16, 17). We too, need to see, with the eye of faith, the power of God that is available for us.

"THE LORD SHALL FIGHT FOR YOU AND YE SHALL HOLD YOUR PEACE" (Exodus 14: 14). Just as we could do nothing towards our justification, it had to be all of God, so we can do nothing ourselves to enable us to get victory and power in our Christian life. There comes a time when we do not even have to cry to God for victory; we simply trust Him to do it for us. He has promised, "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Romans 6: 14). Let us then trust Him for victory over the world, the flesh and the devil.

GOD'S COMMAND, "GO FORWARD" (Exodus 14: 15). But how were they to go forward with the Red Sea in front of them? They were to go forward in faith, believing that God would act for them. There is to be no going back nor even looking back to Egypt. That was done with. Sometimes we find great difficulties in the way—perhaps at school, in the home, or at business—and we think, how can I go forward in my Christian life, the obstacles are too many or too great? But as we step forward in faith we see the road through the sea. Let us go forward to know Christ better, to know Him not only as Saviour from the punishment and guilt of sin, but our Deliverer from the *power* of sin. "He shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1: 21). Let us go forward in the study of His Word, seeking to get a better knowledge of it day by day, and endeavouring to live out its teaching.

HOW GOD DELIVERED ISRAEL.—

HE MADE A WAY FOR THEM. So He makes a way for all His people. "God is faithful, Who . . . will with the temptation also make a way to escape" (1 Cor. 10: 13).

HE MADE A WAY JUST WHERE THEY THOUGHT IT IMPOSSIBLE. No matter what the temptation, the difficulty or trouble, let us say with Jeremiah, "Lord God! . . . there is nothing too hard for thee" (Jer. 32: 17).

HE MADE WHAT SEEMED AN OBSTACLE INTO A WAY OF DELIVERANCE. It seemed as though the waves would be the means of driving them back to Egypt, back into Pharaoh's power, but, instead, they became the enemy's destruction. Some trouble, some sorrow or difficulty looks as though it is too much for us, that it will drive us back to Egypt, into sin. but God can make it the very means of strengthening our faith and our Christian life, and leading us on to victory.

THE SONG OF MOSES AND ISRAEL.—

This is the first song recorded in the Bible.

THE TIME IT WAS SUNG. "*Then* sang Moses and the Children of Israel" (15: 1). It was when they realised that they were really saved (14: 30, 31; 15: 1), when they had seen the great work God had done for them, and had the assurance of salvation that they were able to sing. It was after David had been brought up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, and his feet were set upon a rock, that he was able to say, "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God" (Psalm 40: 2, 3). We cannot sing from the heart if we are in uncertainty about our soul's salvation. God wants us to be able to say, "We *know* that we have passed from death unto life" (1 John 3: 14).

IT WAS A PERSONAL SONG. "The Lord is *my* strength and song . . . *my* salvation . . . *my* God" (15: 2). Can you say that He is *your* God and *your* salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? You cannot sing this song unless you know that you have been redeemed.

THE SONG WAS ALL ABOUT GOD AND WHAT HE HAD DONE. There was no mention of what Moses and Aaron had done: all the praise was given to God. And we can thank Him, too, that man had no part in our salvation, and in our deliverance from sin; it was God alone Who saved us. Let us give all the glory to Him.

MEMORY VERSE- Romans 6:14 "For sin shall not have dominion over you."

THE RED SEA

Exodus 13—14

Golden Text: Psalm 18:2

I. Preliminary Instructions; chapter 13. Before Israel leaves the land God gives them instructions

1. Of His property rights to the firstborn; Vs. 1-2. Cp. 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.
2. Of their constant remembrance of the Passover; Vs. 3-10. Cp. 1 Cor. 11:23-26.
3. Of the great fact of Redemption; Vs. 11-16. As seen in the type of the redeeming lamb; V. 13. Here is a beautiful illustration of substitution.

   (1) The Ass. (a) Stubborn and unclean; Job 11:12; Gen. 16:12; Prov. 26:3; Romans 8:7. How true of all by nature. (b) Condemned; Exod. 13:13; Eph. 2:3; Heb. 9:27. The law condemned it to death. Cp. Romans 3:20; Gal. 3:10. (c) Redeemed through death of the lamb; Exod. 13:13; 1 Peter 1:18.

   (2) The Lamb. Type of the Lord Jesus. (a) By nature, harmless, gentle, patient, unresisting, clean, acceptable to God; John 1:29; 1 Peter 2:20-22; Heb. 7:26. (b) The substitute. Stood in the stead of the ass so that it could go free. 2 Cor. 5:21; John 3:16; Mark 10:45; John 10:15. Read the tract, "Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment" for an appreciation of this illustration.

   Of His guiding hand; Vs. 17-22.

   (1) Not "by way of Philistines;" V. 17. Cp. 1 Cor. 10:13. It was a "right way;" Psalm 107:7. No "short cuts" to Canaan.

   (2) By the pillar and cloud; V. 21. Now by His word; Psalm 119:105; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

II. The Redeemed People; 14:1-4.

1. Egypt a type of the world; Isa. 31:1. Cp 1 John 2:15-17.
2. His people delivered from its evil; Gal. 1:4; John 17:13-19; Gal. 6:14; Romans 12:1, 2.

III. The Pursuing Enemy; Vs. 5-9.

1. Predicted; Vs. 3-4. Cp. John 16:33; Eph. 6:10-18.
2. The Purpose God Had; V. 4. Cp. Exod. 15:2; Romans 8:28; 9:22, 23; 11:33-36.
3. The Protection God Gave; Vs. 19-20—His presence; Matt. 28:20; Exod. 3:12; John 1:9.

IV. The Great Deliverance; Vs. 10-14, 20-31.

1. Their unbelief; Vs. 10-12. Cp. Matt. 14:27-31; Mark 6:6; Romans 3:3.
2. God's way of salvation; Vs. 13-14. "Stand still." Cp. Isa. 30:15; Romans 4:5; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 12:9, 10. This is still God's way of salvation. Christ has done all that is necessary for the salvation of all who will trust in Him. Get the hearer to "see" this salvation. Isa. 45:22.
3. God's deliverance; Vs. 21-22; Isa. 50:10; Romans 7:24, 25; 1 Cor. 10:13.
4. God's judgment; Vs. 23-30; Romans 2:8-9; 2:2, 3; Gal. 6:7. Show that the Red Sea is a picture of the death of Christ and of the identification of each believer in that death, so that each believer is now viewed by God as being dead, buried, and raised with Him; Romans 6.

43. THE SONG OF MOSES

Exodus 15

Golden Text: Psalm 50:23

I. Its Beginning; Exod. 14:30, 31.
This is the first mention of a song in the Bible, and, as such is an eloquent commentary on the source, nature and purpose of the believer's song.

1. Salvation wrought; V. 30. There can be no song without salvation. Cp. John 17:4; 19:30; Romans 4:24, 25; 1 Cor. 15:1-4. There were no songs in Egypt. The only sounds there were the lash of the taskmaster's whips, the rattle of chains, the cries, groans and prayers of the oppressed, and the harsh command of the slave drivers. This world is a vast prison house of sin. See Luke 4:18.
2. Salvation seen; V. 31; Cp. 2 Cor. 4:3, 4, 6; Romans 10:17.
3. Salvation accepted; V. 31; "believed;" John 1:12; 3:16; 3:36; 5:24; 10:9; Acts 16:31, etc.
4. Salvation experienced; "great work the Lord did;" 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 John 3:14, etc. God's great work here was to separate His people from Egypt. He put the Red Sea of death between them and the land of their bondage. The cross now stands between the believer and the world; Gal. 6:14.

II. Its Object—The Lord; 15:1-19. Nothing of self and all of God. Note the references to Him—His work—His right hand, etc. Cp. Psalm 61:2; 95:1; 96:1; 40:3; Isa. 42:10; 2 Chron. 30:21; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.

III. Its Theme—Gratitude to God for His being, for deliverance experienced and blessings enjoyed.

1. Deliverance; Vs. 1, 6, 7. Cp. Col. 1:12, 13.
2. Blessings enjoyed; Vs. 2, 13, 16, 17, 18. Cp. Eph. 1:3-14.
3. For His Being; V. 2. Cp. John 4:22-24.

IV. Miriam's Song; Vs. 20, 21. Once more a song of praise to God.

V. The Waters of Marah; Vs. 22-26.

1. The Wearisome Way; V. 22. A true picture of this world. Nothing to satisfy. Cp. Deut. 32:10; Luke 15:14-16; Jer. 2:13. They had to learn by experience what God had taught them by picture.
2. The Bitter Waters; V. 23. A picture of the bitter trials, temptations, sorrow, pains, bereavements, and losses of this life that sin has brought in; John 14:33.
3. The Murmuring Multitude; v. 24. "Blind unbelief is sure to err;" Ruth 1:20; Jer. 2:19.
4. The Sweetening Tree; V. 25. A beautiful picture of the blessings that Christ, through His cross of shame and glorious resurrection, brings into the life of the believer; Phil 3:7, 8; Gal. 2:20: 2 Cor. 12:9, 10, etc. Put Him into your troubles and they will be sweetened. As we view everything in the light of "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that followed" the bitter becomes sweet; 2 Cor. 4:14-18.

44. MANNA

READ Exodus 16.

THEME: Bread from Heaven. TELL THE STORY.

MANNA—TYPE OF CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE (John 6: 35).—

NEW LIFE NEEDS NEW FOOD. Christ is as needful to the soul as manna was to the body. Do not be content because you have *received* new life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, but remember that life must be *sustained* by feeding upon Christ. He, as the Bread of Life, satisfies all the wants of the new life. There is still constant need of strength to resist temptation and to do right, of peace in anxiety, comfort in trouble, power for service, and for something to satisfy continually and make the soul grow. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory *by Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 4: 19).

WE FEED UPON CHRIST BY BELIEVING WITH ALL OUR HEART EVERYTHING THAT IS REVEALED ABOUT HIM. In the Word of God we have the Father's witness concerning Him, the Holy Spirit's witness, and His own witness about Himself. Believe that He is all that He says He is.

BY MEDITATING UPON HIM—His wonderful life, His precious death and atoning sacrifice for my sins, His resurrection and ascension (showing that His sacrifice was accepted by God), and His coming again. Feeding upon Christ is not only eating by receiving, but assimilating. We may put money into our pocket and lose it, but what we eat becomes part of us; no one can take it from us.

THE MANNA.—

IT MADE THEM DEPENDENT UPON GOD. They could get it from no one else, they could not produce it themselves, and there was nothing else obtainable in the wilderness. It had to come direct from God. It was "bread from heaven" (John 6: 31). And we in our Christian life are absolutely dependent upon Christ for food to sustain our spiritual life, just as a little child is entirely dependent on its mother for the supply of all its need. This makes us realise that apart from Christ we are nothing, and can do nothing, and leaves no room for pride or self-sufficiency.

THE MANNA WAS SEEN AFTER THE DEW (v. 14). The dew speaks to us of the Holy Spirit. He it is Who glorifies Christ, Who takes the things of Christ and shows them to us (John 16: 13, 14). He reveals Him to us as the altogether lovely one and the chiefest among ten thousand (S. of S. 5: 10, 16). Apart from the Holy Spirit, we could not feed upon Christ, the Bread of Life. The more the Holy Spirit possesses us the more will we think of the Saviour.

EVERYONE GATHERED ACCORDING TO HIS EATING (v. 18). Some had more, some less. Each one got what he wanted, and not more. Some had a greater capacity than others. According to our hunger for Christ so shall we receive. "Blessed are they which hunger . . . for they shall be filled" (Mat. 5: 6). If we have not a great hunger in our hearts for Christ, let us ask Him to produce it in us.

THE MANNA HAD TO BE GATHERED EARLY (v. 21). Before they turned their attention to other things, and to the performance of their various duties, they had to gather the manna or it disappeared: it melted when the sun was up. To feed upon Christ means that we must give Him the first place in our lives, and the first place in the day; so that we obtain from Him strength for whatever we may have to face, power to resist temptation, and food for our souls. Just as we have a set time for meals, so we should have a set time for meeting with Christ and feeding upon Him. Cultivate the habit of meeting with Him before you begin the duties of the day.

IT MUST NOT BE LEFT TILL TOMORROW (v. 19). It could not be hoarded up; it must be gathered afresh each day. We, too, cannot live on past experiences, upon blessing we may have received during special meetings, or perhaps at a camp or convention. The blessing of today will not sustain us for tomorrow. A past knowledge of Christ will not carry us through the present. We should ask ourselves not what did Christ mean to me a year ago, a month, or even a day, but what does He mean to me now—today? The Children of Israel tried, in spite of God's command, to gather sufficient for two days, and the manna was useless; they had to go hungry.

THERE WAS NO LIMIT TO THE SUPPLY. The manna came for forty years (v. 35). If they were ever hungry during that time it was not because God had failed them, but because they did not gather manna. God never forgot them during all those years, and He gave them an abundant supply. There is fulness in Jesus for all our spiritual needs. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebrews 13: 8).

ISRAEL BECAME DISSATISFIED WITH THE MANNA. There came a time when they despised the manna, which at one time was as sweet to them as honey (Exodus 16: 31). They said, "There is nothing at all, beside this manna" (Numbers 11: 6); and again, "Our soul loatheth this light bread" (Numbers 21: 5). Are you now dissatisfied with Christ Who, when first you came to know Him as your Saviour, was so precious to you? Have you lost the joy you formerly possessed and the delight you found in His Word? If so, look for the causes of the change.

REASONS FOR THEIR DISSATISFACTION.—

THEY WERE INFLUENCED BY THE MIXED MULTITUDE who came out of Egypt with them, but who had never really belonged to God (Numbers 11: 4). Perhaps you have been influenced by companions who are not Christians, and you have come to regard lightly that which you once prized.

THEY LONGED FOR THE FOOD OF EGYPT (Numbers 11: 5). It may be that your heart has turned back to the things you gave up for Christ's sake.

THEY WERE DISCOURAGED BECAUSE OF THE WAY (Numbers 21: 4, 5). Are you disheartened because of the hardness of the way? Think what lies at the end of the journey, think of the One with Whom you are travelling, and the trials and difficulties will seem as nothing.

MEMORY VERSE.—John 6: 35—"I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger."

THE MANNA

Exodus 16:1-24, 31-35; John 6:31-36

Golden Text: John 6:51

The manna is a beautiful type of Christ, as indeed are many things in this wonderful book. The aim of the Christian student should be to see Christ in all the Scriptures; Luke 24:27.

I. **Its Necessity;** Vs. 1-3. A starving people in the wilderness. A graphic illustration of man by nature destitute of—

1. Life; 1 John 5:12; John 5:40; 3:36; 20:31; Eph. 4:18.
2. Peace; Romans 3:17; Isa. 57:20, 21.
3. Hope; Eph. 2:12; Job 8:13; Isa. 57:10; Ezek. 37:11.
4. Excuse; Romans 1:20, 2:1; John 15:22; (Marg.) John 12:47, 48.
5. God; Eph. 2:12; 4:18.
6. Christ; Eph. 2:12; Romans 8:9.
7. Escape; Heb. 2:3. If he dies in this state; Romans 2:3; Heb. 9:27.

II. Its Nature.

1. Its Source—heaven; Exod. 16:4. Cp. John 6:33; 3:16. All spiritual gifts are from heaven. Cp. James 1:17.
2. Its Giver—God; Exod. 16:4. Cp. John 6:36-38; Psalm 14:2; John 3:17. God is a great Giver.
3. Its Description—
   (1) White—purity; Exod. 16:31. Cp. 1 Peter 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26.
   (2) Small—humility; Exod. 16:14. Cp. Phil. 2:5-8; Isa. 53:3, 7-9.
   (3) Round—This reveals two things concerning Christ; Exod. 16:14; (a) The eternity of Christ's being; John 1:1, 2; Col. 1:17; (b) The evenness of His character—no flaw; Matt. 3:17.
   (4) Free. "A gift;" Exodus 16:15. Cp. John 3:16; Romans 6:23; 2 Cor. 9:15.
   (5) Sweet; Exodus 16:31. But only the tasters knew. Cp. Psalm 34:8; 119:103; 1 Peter 1:8.
   (6) Within reach of all "on the ground;" Exod. 16:13, 14. The children could reach it easiest, for they had not so far to stoop! Matt. 18:3; "Whosoever;" Romans 10:6-10; John 3:16; Rev. 22:17.

III. Its Result.

1. It was gathered early; Exod. 16:21. Cp. Prov. 8:17; Eccles 12:1; 2 Cor. 6:2; Prov. 27:1.
2. It satisfied; Psalm 105:40. Cp. John 6:35.
3. It was laid up for a memorial, Exod. 16:33, to remind them of their need and His provision. Cp. Luke 22:19. Cp. 1 Cor. 11:23-26.
4. It sustained them all the journey; Exod. 16:35. Christ is the believer's salvation, peace, joy, life, hope, righteousness and provision during his whole life; Gal. 2:20, etc.

45. WATER FROM THE ROCK

READ Exodus 17: 1-7.

THEME: Rivers of living water.

TELL THE STORY.

God tells us that the experiences of the Children of Israel have lessons for us. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples" (1 Corinthians 10: 11).

TESTING.—

ISRAEL TESTED. God led them to Rephidim, where there was no water, in order to test them, to see if they would look to Him, and trust Him for the supply of their need. He had already fed them with manna, and was prepared to give them water. Our Heavenly Father sometimes brings us, in our Christian life, to difficult places, where there is no human help, and where there seems to be no way out, in order that we may look to Him alone and trust Him to do the seemingly impossible thing for us. You may have already received His help in some "dry place"; then trust Him in your present difficulty. Or it may be that you are feeling dry spiritually, the great joy you had when you first trusted Christ seems to have almost disappeared, yet you know of nothing that you have allowed to come between yourself and Christ. May it not be that God is teaching you to depend less on feelings and more upon Him, for "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5: 7). In Isaiah 50: 10 we learn the same truth. Sometimes God withdraws the *consciousness* of His Presence that we may learn to trust Him in the dark.

ISRAEL'S FAILURE WHEN TESTED. Each time they met with difficulty they murmured against Moses, and this was really grumbling against God, for He, not Moses, was ordering their circumstances. God knew what He would do; the water was there, but they did not ask Him for it; they grumbled instead.

GRUMBLING IS THE EXPRESSION OF AN UNGRATEFUL HEART. It blinds people to so many of the things for which they should be grateful to God, to their parents and others who do so much for them. And how depressing it is to live with a grumbler! It is a habit which, if allowed, quickly grows on us, not only making us miserable ourselves, but those around us. God warns against this sin in 1 Cor. 10: 10—"Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured."

GRUMBLING IS INFECTIOUS. With Israel it probably began with a few, and spread through the whole camp till they were almost ready to stone Moses. If wholesale grumbling is tracked down to its source, it is almost invariably found that it started with only one or two. Let

us be so thankful to God for all His leading and provision that we shall infect others with the same spirit of gratitude.

THE ROCK—TYPE OF CHRIST THE ROCK (1 Cor. 10: 4).—*CHRIST IS THE SMITTEN ROCK.* Israel might have gazed and gazed on the rock and still died of thirst. The rock had to be struck before the water could flow out to the thirsty Israelites. If Christ had not been smitten there would have been no water of life for us. It was when He hung on the cross that He was smitten of God, and afflicted . . . that "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53: 4, 5). "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3: 18).

JEHOVAH STOOD ON THE ROCK WHEN IT WAS STRUCK (Exodus 17: 6). God the Father and God the Son together provided for us the water of life. "God was *in Christ,* reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5: 19). "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3: 16). God the Father was willing to give His Son, the Lord Jesus was willing to die.

THE WATER—TYPE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 7: 37, 39). *IT WAS GIVEN AFTER THE ROCK WAS STRUCK.* The Holy Spirit as living water was given as a result of Christ's death upon the cross, and after He rose from the dead. He was given to all who believe on Christ (John 7: 39).

THE WATER WAS FREE. There was nothing to pay (Isaiah 55: 1). Israel could not earn it by good works, for they were utterly unworthy (v. 2). It was the gift of God, just as the living water is a gift to us (Romans 6: 23). All they had to do was to drink. The Lord Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink . . . this spake he of the Spirit" (John 7: 37, 39). "Let him that is athirst *come.* . . . Let him *take* the water of life freely" (Rev. 22: 17). "Drink" and "take" mean to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" as a personal Saviour (Acts 16: 31); to open the door of the heart and let Him in (Rev. 3: 20); to receive Him (John 1: 12).

THE WATER WAS FREE TO ALL. "If *any* man thirst, let him come unto me and drink" (John 7: 37). "*Whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22: 17). Old and young, rich and poor, bad and good, all may drink of the water of life if they will only come.

THE WATER WAS ABUNDANT. "They thirsted not when he led them through the deserts . . . he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out" (Isaiah 48: 21). The Holy Spirit is not only as a *well* of water *in* us (John 4: 14), sufficient for all our own spiritual needs, but He is prepared to be as *rivers* of living water flowing *out* of us in blessing to others (John 7: 38).

MEMORY VERSE.—I Corinthians 10: 4—"They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

WATER FROM THE ROCK

Exodus 17:1-7

Golden Text: John 6:37

I. The Thirsty People; Vs. 1-3.

1. Their location; V. 1. The wilderness. Picture of this world that cannot satisfy. Sin has turned the world into a wilderness. Cp. Isa. 55:1, 2; Jer. 2:13; Eccles. 1:8, 14.
2. Their need—"Water;" V. 2. Man's need—salvation. Not pleasure, power, popularity, treasure, but salvation is what man needs; Acts 16:31; 11:14; 4:12; Romans 1:16; 3:25; 10:1; Ezek. 33:11, etc.
3. Their murmurings; Vs. 2, 4. Cp. Psalm 106: 24, 25; Mark 4:37-40; Psalm 78:40-42; Mark 16: 14, etc. Unbelief the cause.

II. The Interceding Leader; Vs. 4-5. Moses carried his cause to God Who:

1. Knew their needs. Cp. Exod. 2:23; 3:7; Deut. 4:31; 7:8; 9:5; 1 Peter 5:7.
2. Could supply their needs; Isa. 40:26-28; Isa. 41:17-20; Phil. 4:19, etc.
3. Revealed the way of salvation; V. 6. Cp. Isa. 45:19, 21, 22; 59:16; Eph. 2:2-4; John 3:16; Romans 10:8-17, etc.

III. The Satisfying Rock; Vs. 6-7. Cp. 1 Cor. 10: 4. The Rock was Christ.

1. Christ the Rock for —
   (1) Salvation; Psalm 95:1; John 3:17; Acts 4:12. (2) Strength; Psalm 31:2; Heb. 7:25; Phil. 4:13. (3) Stability; Isa. 26:4 (Marg.); John 5:24. (4) Security; Psalm 94:22; John 10:28-30. (5) Shelter; Isa. 32:2; Prov. 30:26; Heb. 6:18. (6) Satisfaction; Deut. 32:13; Phil. 4:11-13; Psalm 107:9; Eph. 1:6.
2. The Rock Smitten. Cp. Psalm 78:15, 16.
   (1) The Source. Not until Christ was smitten was the Holy Spirit poured out, and salvation made possible. Cp. Lam. 3:1; Zech. 13:7; Mark 10:45; John 11:50, 10:10, 16:7-14, 3:14. The divine "must." All our blessings are traced to Calvary; Psalm 88:7, 16, 22:1; John 12:24; Isa. 53:4, etc.
   (2) The flow. (a) Full.—Enough for all the people then and enough for all the world now; John 3:17; 1 John 2:2; Acts 13:38. "Whosoever." (b) Free to all. No price acked. Cp. Isa. 55:1; John 4:10. (c) Within reach of all. Cp. Isa. 46:12, 13; Romans 10:8. (d) Living; John 4:10, 14. Cp. Psalm 46:4. Here is the great river of God's "grace that brings salvation" to all who hear, believe and receive; Titus 2:11. John, on the isle of Patmos, had a vision of the river and its Divine source; Rev. 22:1. This living stream still flows on, and everywhere it goes it brings untold blessings into the lives of those who stoop and drink. See Ezek. 47:9.
   (3) The Result—Saved. Cp. John 4:14; Eph. 2:8; John 7:37-39; but only to those who stooped and drank.

46. AMALEK, ISRAEL'S ENEMY

READ Exodus 17: 8-16.

THEME: Overcoming the enemy.

TELL THE STORY.

AMALEK was a descendant of Esau, who was the enemy of Israel (Jacob). The Amalekites hid on the road (1 Samuel 15: 2) and struck at the weak and feeble who were at the end of the line of the hosts of the Children of Israel when they were faint and weary (Deut. 25: 17, 18). They were the first to oppose Israel after they had been delivered from bondage.

AMALEK—A RELENTLESS FOE.—

AMALEK—A TYPE OF THE FLESH IN US. When we were saved through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, we received a new nature from God, which is the Life of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in us. Then we became conscious of a conflict within and perhaps could not account for it. The reason for this is that we still have the old nature inherited from Adam, and one fights against the other each struggling for the mastery. The old nature always pulls towards the devil, the new nature pulls towards God. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other" (Gal. 5: 17). Only those who have been born again, experience the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, for those who have never received Christ as Saviour have only the old nature which has its way and there is nothing and no one to oppose it. (For Lesson on the Two Natures, see Book 1, Lesson 15.)

WHEN ISRAEL DOUBTED GOD AMALEK ATTACKED ISRAEL. They doubted God's Presence and power; they said, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" (Ex. 17: 7). When we doubt God's power and get into a state of unbelief, then the flesh in us has the stronger pull and draws us away from God. Sometimes we make excuses for ourselves by saying, "I have inherited this temper, this moodiness, this pride; it is my temperament, therefore nothing can be done about it." But this is doubting God's power to overcome—it is unbelief.

AMALEK WAS TOO STRONG FOR ISRAEL. They could not overcome him in their own strength. Paul tried at first to overcome the old nature in his own strength and was defeated (Rom. 7: 18-24). The flesh is too strong for us, but we have the Holy Spirit who is ready to take up the fight and give us victory. But we must throw our weight on His side, and yield ourselves to Him. As we obey Him in all things and trust Him to fight *for* us He will overcome the flesh. Paul found out the secret of victory when he said, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7: 24, 25).

HOW THE FOE WAS DEFEATED.—

BY JOSHUA, who fought with Amalek. He is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2: 10), who will by His Holy Spirit overcome the flesh in us.

BY PRAYER & FAITH—MOSES LIFTING UP HANDS REPRESENTS PRAYER (Ps. 28: 2; 1 Tim. 2: 8). *THE ROD MEANS FAITH* (Matt. 21: 22). When Moses held up his hands Israel prevailed; when he let down his hands Amalek was victorious (Ex. 17: 11). We must co-operate with Christ in the great battle between the flesh and the Spirit. When we are out of touch with Him the old nature is in the ascendancy; when we are walking in the Spirit by faith, prayer and obedience, He overcomes for us. When prayer and faith go together then we see God's power. By faith and prayer we trust in Christ to give us the victory (1 Cor. 15: 57).

AARON AND HUR HELPED MOSES BY HOLDING UP HIS HANDS (Ex. 17: 12). There are many who have grown weary and discouraged in their prayer life. Their hands are heavy and they are just about to give up. Let us, like Aaron and Hur, "lift up the hands which hang down" (Heb. 12: 12), by praying with them and for them. Give them some words of encouragement. "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God . . . will come and save you" (Isaiah 35: 3, 4). Aaron and Hur did not grow weary; they held up the hands of Moses until the going down of the sun (v. 12). Do not be so concerned about your own spiritual life and growth in grace that you fail to uphold those who need your prayers.

BUT AMALEK WAS NOT DESTROYED—HE FOUGHT AGAIN (Ex. 17: 16). "The Lord . . . will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

The old nature represented by Amalek is not done away with. The conflict goes on till we reach heaven, when we shall get rid of the old nature for ever. But day by day we can be "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8: 37).

"JEHOVAH-NISSI—THE LORD MY BANNER" (Ex. 17: 15, margin). Can *YOU* say the Lord is *your* banner, that you go forth in His strength alone, trusting Him for victory. Let *Him* "have war" with your Amalek and win the victory for you.

MEMORY VERSE.—1 Corinthians 15: 57.—"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

REPHIDIM

Exodus 17:8-16; Deuteronomy 25:17-19

Golden Text: Hebrews 7:25

I. The Circumstances; V. 8. "Then came Amalek." Note when it was.

1. Israel had been redeemed from Egypt. Exod. 12-15. They had no fight in Egypt for they had been slaves, helpless to deliver themselves—a graphic illustration of the unsaved under the slavery and bondage of sin and therefore unable to fight.
2. They were journeying to Canaan—the land of promise. Exod. 14-16. This illustrates the present condition of the saved. He is a stranger and pilgrim (1 Peter 2:11; Heb. 12:1) traversing the desert that lies between.

II. The Enemy: V. 8. Cp. Deut. 25:17-19.

1. Who he was. Amalek—Esau's grandson. Gen. 36:12. A type of the flesh. The flesh is that principle of emnity towards God that all have by nature. Cp. Gal. 4:22-29. The hereditary hatred.
2. What he did. V. 8. "Fought." Cp. Gal. 5:17. Cp. Deut. 25:18. It was when Israel was faint and weary. Note "the hindermost." The peril of lagging behind.
3. Our enemies. The Christian has a three fold enemy.
   (1) Internal—The Flesh, that evil corrupt nature all possess through Adam's fall. Romans 5:12; 7:18, 25; 8:3-8. Eph. 2:3. God does not remove this nature at the new birth, but a new nature is given by the Holy Spirit Himself. Gal. 5:17; Eph. 1:13; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19, 20. The flesh is irremedibly bad, incurably wicked. Jer. 17:9, etc.
   (2) External—The World. 1 John 2:15-17. Which appeals to (a) The lust of the flesh. (b) The lust of the eyes. (c) The pride of life. (3) Infernal—The Devil. Eph. 6:11, 12. (a) His Wisdom. Ezek. 28:12. (b) Power. 2 Cor. 4:4; Luke 13:16. (c) Maliginity. Job 1:9-11.

III. The Fight. Vs. 9-10.

1. The Commander—"Joshua"=Saviour. Cp. Heb. 2:10; Heb. 12:2.
2. The intercessor.—Moses supported by Aaron and Hur. The two armies. One of three, the other of thousands. Here Moses is also a type of Christ interceding for His people (Heb. 7:25). Aaron and Hur of His people in fellowship with Him in intercession. 1 Tim. 2:1-4.
3. The Christian's Warfare. (1) The battle-ground—the heart and life. (2) The necessity for fighting. (a) Because commanded. 1 Tim. 6:12; Eph. 6:11; 1 Peter 5:9, etc. (b) For strength. 1 Cor. 9:26. It develops spiritual muscle. (c) For a reward. James 1:12, etc. (3) The Provision—the Armor. Eph. 6:13-18. Note the seven-fold armor. Note also that each Christian must put it on for himself. Eph. 6:11.

IV. The Victory. Vs. 11-16.

1. The rod of power. Vs. 9, 11, 12. Christ is both Leader, Heb. 12:1, 2, and Intercessor. Romans 8:34, 5:10; Heb. 7:25.
2. The discomfited foe. V. 13. Cp. Gal.5:16; Romans 6:13, 14, 19. The Christian called on to yield to God and deny the flesh. Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:5-14.
3. The memorial written. V. 14 A significant verse in view of how the Bible was written.
4. The altar of testimony. "Jehova Nissi." "The Lord, my banner." S. of S. 2:4. Cp. Psalm 20:5; Psalm 60:4.
5. Christ is our Victory. (1) Past at Calvary. Heb. 2:14. (2) Present. 2 Cor. 2:14. (3) Future. 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

47. THE LAW — THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

READ Exodus 19: 5, 7-9; chapter 20: 19-21 and, if time permits, v.1-17.
THEME: The Law shows us our sinfulness. TELL THE STORY.

Tell the story connecting it with the deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage, a type of the sinner's redemption (Ex. 20: 1, 2), also link it with the promise made to Moses from the burning bush (Ex. 3: 12). Then show that God had to teach the Israelites that they were sinners and that they needed a mediator.

SINFUL ISRAEL.— God had to teach them:—

THAT THEY MUST BE KEPT AT A DISTANCE FROM HIM.— Because they were sinners and He was holy they could not approach Him in the holy mount (Ex. 19: 12, 13), so He sent an earthquake, lightning and fire (v. 16-19). The prophet Isaiah, by the Holy Spirit, said, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Is. 59: 2).

THAT THEY NEEDED A MEDIATOR, someone to stand between sinners and a holy God; so Moses became their mediator. "I stood between the Lord and you at that time" said Moses later (Deut. 5: 5).

THE LORD JESUS IS OUR MEDIATOR.—"There is . . . one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2: 5). In the Solomon Islands there were two tribes who were deadly enemies. The day came when one tribe wished to make peace with the other, but how was this to come about? If an ordinary person approached them, they would at once put him to death. Finally, they found a man whose father belonged to the enemy tribe and his mother to the other. They chose him to be their mediator. He was accepted by both sides.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was Son of God. He was divine, but He took upon Him our flesh and so belonged to both "lines." He was God and man, and became our Mediator. Through Him we can approach God, for He made peace. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes (at one time) were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace" (Eph. 2: 13, 14).

THE WORK OF THE LAW.—

IT WAS OUR SCHOOLMASTER (Gal. 3: 24).—A schoolmaster today in no way resembles the person of whom Paul speaks. He was not one who was a master in a school or gave lessons in the school itself, but one who was put in charge of the boys both in school and out of school. The boys were entirely under this man who ruled them with a rod of iron and kept them in constant fear. Paul's idea of the schoolmaster says, the law was our ruler, tutor, governor until Christ came.

IT TEACHES US OUR OBLIGATIONS TO GOD. It sets forth:—

Our duty towards God — Commandments 1-4;

And our duty towards our neighbour — Commandments 5-10.

The Ten Commandments are summed up by our Lord in Mark 12: 30-31. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." They may be summed up in the one word "Love."

IT SHOWS US GOD IS HOLY.—God's "law is holy . . . and just and good" (Rom. 7: 12). There it shows us God's *standard* of holiness. We judge a nation by its laws; and we get a glimpse of God's holiness by His Laws. The Ten Commandments are the perfect law of God and tell us exactly what we ought to be and do.

IT SHOWS US OUR SINFULNESS, for we have broken the law; and the penalty for the broken law is death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18: 4).

IT SWEEPS AWAY ALL OUR EXCUSES.—"That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3: 19). Here are some excuses people make:—

"*I HAVE A SINFUL NATURE* and therefore cannot help sinning." If a criminal in a court of law pleads he has a fallen, human nature and therefore should be forgiven, would the judge acquit him on that account? Certainly not!

"*I AM NO WORSE THAN OTHER PEOPLE*" or, "*I AM BETTER THAN OTHERS.*" But what have I to do with other people, the law is to *me.* God says "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3: 10).

"*I MEAN TO TURN OVER A NEW LEAF.*"—Even if it were possible to be perfect in the future (which it is not) what about all the old offences? You may repent of past sins but repentance cannot wipe them off. And so when the law sweeps away our excuses, it is to make us despair of being saved by our good works.

WHAT THE LAW IS LIKE.—

IT IS LIKE A MIRROR — it shows sin in men's hearts. A mirror can show dirt on a person's face, but it cannot cleanse it. The Law shows sin, but it cannot cleanse it away.

IT IS LIKE A FOOTRULE by which to measure people's lives. It shows that "All have sinned and come short" (Rom. 3: 23). The authorities in the Police Force require that applicants should reach a certain height. It does not matter whether he is one inch short or six inches, if he does not reach the height required he comes short and is disqualified.

It does not matter whether we have broken only one commandment or eight; we come short of God's standard and are therefore rejected.

THE LAW IS LIKE A CHAIN WITH TEN LINKS.—It is only necessary for one link to break for the whole chain to give way. A ship was found drifting on to the rocks just because one link of the anchor chain had broken. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2: 10).

THE LAW WAS OUR SCHOOLMASTER TO BRING US UNTO CHRIST (Gal. 3: 24). When we find out we have broken the Law, that we are lost sinners, we must come to the Lord Jesus Who has borne for us the penalty of the broken law. He then gives us new life and, by His Holy Spirit, fulfils the righteousness of the law in us. Rom. 10: 4 says, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to *every one* that believeth."

MEMORY VERSE- Romans 7:7 "I had not known sin, but by the law."

THE GIVING OF THE LAW

Exodus 19-20

Golden Text: John 1:17

I. The Scene. Chapter 19.

1. The arrival before Sinai. Vs. 1-2.
2. The words of Jehovah. Vs. 3-6. (1) God's goodness in the past, seen in their deliverance from Egypt's bondage and condemnation. Cp. Deut. 32:7-12. Cp. 1 Thess. 1:9, 10. (2) God's grace in the present. "I brought you unto Myself." Their happy position. Cp. 1 Cor. 3:23; Mark 9:41; John 17:9, 10. (3) His promise for the future. Vs. 5-6. Its condition—obedience to His Word. (a) "Peculiar treasure." 1 Kings 8:53; Psalm 135:4. Cp. 1 Peter 2:9. (b) "King priests." Cp. 1 Peter 2:5; Rev. 20:6; 1:5, 6. (c) "Holy Nation." Cp. Lev. 20:26. Cp. 1 Peter 2:9. Heb. 2:11; 3:1; Romans 12:1, 2.
3. Israel's promise. Vs. 7-9. The law was not imposed until voluntarily accepted.
4. The purification of the people. Vs. 10-14. (1) Separation from defilement. Cp. 2 Cor. 6:14-17, etc. (2) God's warning. Vs. 12-13. God's holiness—"far off." The typical word of the law is "Come not near." The typical word of grace is "Draw nigh" Heb. 10:22.
5. The scene on the mount. Vs. 16-25.
   (1) The seven-fold phenomena. Vs. 16-18. How impressive it must have been. Note its effect on the people. Cp. Heb. 12:18-25.
   (2) The second admonition. Vs. 21-25.
   (3) The ascent to the mount. V. 24.

II. The Law Given. 20:1-21.

1. The Ten Commandments—Not ten laws but one law. Cp. James 2:10. (1) It reveals the requirements of God's holiness. The first four involve man's duty to God, the next six man's duty to man. This law is said to be (a) Holy; Romans7:12. (b) Just; Romans 7:12. (c) Fiery, i. e., merciless. Deut. 33:2. (d) Good. Romans 7:12. Suppose all the world obeyed it, what a good world it would be! (e) Spiritual. Romans 7:14. (f) Perfect. Psalm 19:7.
   (2) It reveals the unrighteousness of man. (a) It brings the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:20; 5:20; 7:7. (b) Its shuts the mouth of every man. Romans 3:19. (c) It brings under the curse all who break it. Gal. 3:10-13, etc.
   (3) This law was perfectly fulfilled and made honorable by Christ. Isa. 42:21. (a) His perfect life. 1 Peter 2:22; John 8:46, 29, etc. (b) His vicarious death because of man's failure. Gal. 4:4, 5; Romans 8:3, 4; 2 Cor. 5:21. (c) His resurrection as man's Savior from the curse and doom of the law. Romans 8:1; Gal. 3:13, 14; 5:1-4, etc.
2. The effect on the people. Vs. 18-19.
   (1) Fear. V. 18. (2) Distance. V. 18. (3) Pleading V. 19.
3. Moses' reply. V. 20.

III. God's Provision; Vs. 24-26.

1. An Altar by which to approach Him.
2. Sacrifices by which to be accepted before Him. How good of God to thus provide a remedy for the law-breaking sinner. Here is the severity and goodness of God! Romans 11:22.

48. THE GOLDEN CALF

READ Exodus 32.

THEME: Two leaders contrasted. TELL THE STORY.

CAUSES OF ISRAEL'S TERRIBLE FALL.—

SELF-CONFIDENCE. Perhaps not knowing their weakness, they relied on their own strength. Peter was self-confident when he said to the Lord Jesus, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended"; and again, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee" (Matt. 26: 33, 35). We, too, need to learn that we have no strength; we must look to Christ to keep us. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12).

THEY HAD BEEN LOOKING TO MOSES INSTEAD OF TO GOD. In verse 1 there is no mention of God. Moses, not God, was the object of their faith, consequently when Moses failed to return they became idolaters. They wanted something they could see. Thomas would not believe that our Lord had risen from the dead unless he could see in His hands the print of the nails. The Lord said to him, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20: 29). We are to "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5: 7).

There is a danger, particularly to young people, of looking to Christian leaders whom they admire because they have greatly helped them, and, without knowing it, lean on them. In these circumstances when the prop is removed, they collapse. Let us see to it then that we are looking to and depending on God alone, otherwise we shall not be able to stand.

AARON THE WEAK LEADER.—

HE WAS AFRAID TO RESIST ISRAEL'S DEMANDS. Perhaps he was afraid of the consequences to himself if he did not yield to them. It requires high moral courage to stand against the majority who want you to lead the way in something that is definitely wrong. On the other hand it is easy to follow the path of least resistance, not stopping to think of the consequences. Aaron used his position as leader to lead the people away from God.

HE MAY HAVE BEEN AFRAID OF BECOMING UNPOPULAR. What a contrast to Moses, who thought only of pleasing God. We all like to be thought well of, and there is nothing wrong in this, but we should never sacrifice principle, or be disloyal to God in order to retain popularity.

HE TRIED TO SILENCE HIS CONSCIENCE by saying, it "is a feast to the Lord" (v. 5), but it was nothing of the kind. The so-called feast of the Lord was to be purely an idolatrous one. Do not tamper with your conscience which is God-given; and thus get a defiled conscience (Titus 1: 15), which thinks that wrong is right and right is wrong.

HIS EXCUSES. HE TRIED TO PUT THE BLAME ON OTHERS. He said to Moses, "Thou knowest the people . . . *they* said unto me, Make us gods . . ." (vv. 22, 23). How weak and cowardly this was. Perhaps he now realised the greatness of his sin, but instead of confessing it and asking for forgiveness, he added to his sin by making excuses and blaming the people.

HE TRIED TO MAKE LIGHT OF HIS PART IN THE SIN OF IDOLATRY. He said, "There came out this calf" (v. 24). As if the gold in the furnace could have accidentally formed itself into the shape of a calf! We are tempted sometimes to say, when faced up with certain wrong actions, "It just happened so," or "Circumstances led up to it and there was no other course," but there is never any excuse for deliberate sin.

MOSES REBUKED HIM. He said, "*Thou* hast brought so great a sin upon them (the people)" (v. 21). Aaron was more to blame than the people. He had been placed by God in a position of responsibility and he had betrayed his trust. The higher the position the greater the sin. "Unto whomsoever much is given of him shall be much required" (Luke 12: 48).

MOSES THE STRONG LEADER.—

THE SECRET OF HIS STRENGTH. He was strong because he spent much time with God. He had just been forty days with Him on the mount, and drew courage, strength and power from Him. If we are to be strong to resist temptation, to get courage and strength to stand against public opinion, then we, too, must spend time daily with God, and allow nothing to interfere with it.

HE LOVED ISRAEL, PRAYED FOR THEM AND WAS READY TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF FOR THEM (v. 31). His, not Aaron's, was true love. He desired the very best for the people; while Aaron gave them what they would call "a good time"—singing, feasting and dancing (vv. 6, 18, 19). Moses was prepared to sacrifice himself for their good.

YET HE REBUKED THEIR SIN, SMASHED THE GOLDEN CALF, AND SEPARATED HIMSELF FROM THE SINFUL CAMP, saying, "Who is on the Lord's side let him come unto me." You can best help people by withdrawing yourself from their sins, and seeking to win them over to the Lord's side. It is those who are out and out for God who count most for Him in His service. Compromise will never get you anywhere. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend" (Proverbs 27: 6).

HE REBUKED HIS OWN BROTHER (v. 21). It requires great courage to stand out against our own friends or relatives when they want us to take part in that which we know is definitely against the teaching of God's Word. It is no easy thing to stand out against those with whom we have to live in close association at school, in the home, or at business, for we may get the cold shoulder or even be ostracised; but let it be our ambition to be "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" (2 Tim. 2: 15).

MEMORY VERSE.—2 Timothy 2: 15—"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

THE GOLDEN CALF

Exodus 32

Golden Text: Gal. 3:13

I. The Absent Leader. V. 1.
1. The provision made. Exo. 24:12-14.
2. The purpose of his absence. (1) To receive the law. (2) To obtain the pattern of the tabernacle. (3) To obtain instructions as to the Priesthood.
3. The type—The Saviour absent to (1) Intercede for His own. Rom. 8:33-34; Heb. 9:24; 7:25. (2) Return again. John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:12-18, etc.

II. The Impatient People. V. 1.
1. Their apostasy, seen in their (1) Independent spirit "let us." Cp. Gen. 11:3, 4; Psalms 2:2, 3; Cp. John 15:5. (2) Idolatrous plan "make us gods." See Exo. 20:3-5; Isa. 40:18-21, 28; Exo. 23:13; Deut. 27:15; 1 Cor. 10:14, 19, 20; 1 John 5:21; Rev. 21:8. (3) Ingratitude for past blessings. "As for this Moses." Isa. 43:18; Psalm 103:2; Deut. 32:15, 18; Isa. 1:2; Ezek. 16:17; Hosea 2:8; Luke 17:25; Rom. 1:21.
2. Their idolatry. V. 4. "Calf"—an idea from Egypt. The Egyptians worshipped the calf and the Israelites conceived the idea of combining the Egyptian religion and some of their own ideas!

III. Aaron's Folly. Vs. 2-6.
1. Did not rebuke them. V. 2. Prov. 29:25; Cp. Jer. 1:8; Ezek. 3:8, 9; 2 Tim. 4:2-4.
2. Tried to please both God and man. V. 5. Luke 16:13; Gal. 1:10.
3. Did not confess his sin honestly and humbly. Vs. 21-24.

IV. God's Wrath. Vs. 7-14.
1. Their sin described. Vs. 7-8; Denial of God. Rom. 1:23; Cp. 1 Thess. 1:9, 10.
2. Their character revealed. V. 9. "Corrupt." V. 7. "Stiffnecked." Cp. Rom. 3:10-19; Eph. 2:1, 2.
3. Their doom threatened. V. 10. Cp. Rom. 1:18; 6:23, etc.; Rev. 21:8.

V. Moses Intercession. Vs. 11-14. Note the argument he uses. Cp. Romans 9:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; James 5:16.

VI. Swift punishment. Vs. 15-29.
1. The tables of the law broken. Vs. 15-19.
2. The idol destroyed. Vs. 20.
3. Aaron rebuked. Vs. 21-25. Cp. Deut. 9:20.
4. The call to Separation. (1) The question. V. 26. Cp. 1 Kings 18:21; Joshua 24:15; Matt. 27:22. (2) The test. "Let him come." Matt. 11:28; John 5:40; 7:37; Rev. 22:17, etc. (3) The result. Vs. 27-28. 3,000 slain. Cp. Acts 2:14. 3,000 saved. Here is an illuminating contrast between law and grace.

VII. Powerful Intercession. Vs. 30-35.
1. The Confession. Vs. 30-32; Cp. Deut. 9:13-21.
2. The Promise. Vs. 33-44.

49. THE TABERNACLE

Exodus 25

Golden Text: John 1:14

Get a good book on the Tabernacle. Soltau and Ridout have both written good books on it. It will be impossible to more than touch on this tremendously interesting and profitable subject; but the teacher should be able to give his class a fair idea of its shape, purpose and significance.

I. Its Purpose; Vs. 1-8.

1. A dwelling place for God; V. 8. Note some of God's dwelling places. (1) Past—Cp. Exod. 29:43-45; 1 Kings 8-27. (2) Present—1 Cor. 3: 16; John 14:23; Eph. 2:18-22. (3) Future—Rev. 21:3.
2. A token of His presence among them—the pillar of fire. Num. 9:15; Deut. 4:7; 32, 33.
3. A means whereby atonement could be made. Lev. 17:5.
4. A way of access into God's presence. Exod. 25:22; 29:43.
5. To foreshadow Christ, the true Tabernacle. John 1:14; Heb. 9:11; 10:1, etc.

II. Its Pattern. Chap. 25:9—27:21. Draw a sketch of it, or make a paper model.

Note the minute care with which God gives the pattern to Moses.

1. The Building. (1) The outer court with door. (2) The Holy Place. (3) The Holiest of all.
2. The Furniture. (1) Of Outer Court. (a) The Brazen Altar. (b) The Laver. (2) Of Holy Place. (a) Table of shewbread. (b) Candlestick. (c) Altar of incense. (3) Holiest of all. (a) Ark of Covenant. (b) Mercy seat. Seven pieces in all.
3. The Coverings. From the outside. (1) Badgers skins. (2) Rams' skins dyed red. (3) Goats' hair curtains. (4) Vail of holiest of all. The cost of it has been estimated at $1,500,000.00.

III. Its Picture. All speaks of Christ. Psalm 29:9. (Marg.)

1. The Door of the court. Exod. 27-16; "Christ the Way;" John 10:9; 14:6. Note its size—big enough for all. "Whosoever." John 3:16; Rev. 22:17; Acts 4:12; 13:38.
2. The Brazen Altar. 27:1. Christ our Sacrifice. Heb. 9:22. Cp. Heb. 9:12, 26; 10:8, 14; Heb. 13: 10; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24, etc.; Mark 10:45.
3. The Laver. Cleansing for the priests. Cp. 1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6. Cp. John 13:3-10; Eph. 5:26; Psalm 119:9. The word of God.
4. The Shewbread. Exod. 25:30. Christ our food. Cp. John 6:33-35, 48, 51.
5. The Candlestick. Exod. 25:31. Christ our light. John 8:12; 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:3-6.
6. The Altar of Incense. Exod. 30:1. Worship. John 4:24. Cp. Heb. 13:15; Rev. 8:3, 4. The believer is to worship the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit. Eph. 2:18, etc.
7. The Mercy Seat. Exod. 25:10-22. Fellowship based on sacrifice. Cp. Lev. 16:15-19. Cp. Romans 3:23-26. 1 John 2:2. "Propitiation" = mercy seat.

50. THE TABERNACLE

(1) THE DOOR AND THE COURT.

READ Exodus 27: 9-19.

THEME: The approach to God.

The fact that there are eleven chapters given to the description of the Tabernacle shows us its great importance. We propose, then, to take five lessons dealing briefly with the various parts of the structure. God told Moses to make Him a Tent or Tabernacle. Every part of it was a type of Christ or of His people (Psalm 29: 9). It had two rooms, the larger of which was called the HOLY PLACE, and the smaller and inner room—the MOST HOLY PLACE; these were separated by the VEIL. In the Holy Place was the Golden Altar, the Golden Candlestick, the Table and Shewbread. In the HOLIEST OF ALL—the Ark and the Mercy Seat. The Tabernacle was surrounded by the COURT. Close by the gate was the BRAZEN ALTAR, and between it and the Tabernacle was the LAVER.

THE DOOR OR GATE (Exodus 27: 16).—

THERE WAS ONLY ONE DOOR. A door is a means of approach or entry. There was no other way into the Tabernacle. Jesus said, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10: 9). Some try to enter by trying to reform, turning over a new leaf, trying to be good; others by *trusting* in ordinances or Church Membership, but trusting in these is like trying to get in by some other way than that which Christ provided. Church membership is for those who have already trusted Christ.

THERE WERE TWO SIDES TO THE GATE—OUTSIDE AND INSIDE. You are either outside or inside; there is no alternative. We are by nature *out*side. You may be very near the Gate, thinking of stepping in, but you are still outside. The moment you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, that step of faith brings you *in*side, because you are then "*in* Christ . . . a new creature" (2 Cor. 5: 17).

IT WAS A WIDE GATE. "Whosoever" might be written above it (John 3: 16). High and low, rich and poor, old and young might enter in. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9).

THE COLOURS OF THE GATE—blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen.

BLUE. The heavenly colour represents the Lord Jesus Christ as portrayed in the Gospel of John.

PURPLE is the royal colour. Matthew is the Gospel of the King.

SCARLET. This colour is procured from a worm. The Lord Jesus is seen as the Servant in the Gospel of Mark. Scarlet is a picture of suffering, and represents Christ as the Suffering One.

FINE LINEN typifies personal righteousness (Rev. 19: 8). In the Tabernacle it speaks of the sinless earthly life of Christ. The Gospel of Luke shows Him as the *Man* Christ Jesus.

HOW TO ENTER THE DOOR. It is not sufficient to be *near* the door, we must *enter*, and for this two steps are necessary—Repentance and Faith. *Repentance* toward God, and *Faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20: 21) (See Book 1, page 32).

THE COURT (Exodus 27: 9-19).—

The Tabernacle is a type not only of the Lord Jesus Christ, but also of His people. The court surrounding the Tabernacle was made of linen, with twenty pillars on each side, and ten each end, making sixty in all. The pillars were made of shittim wood, standing in sockets of brass (Ex. 26: 37). There were fillets of silver (connecting rods) linking the pillars to each other (Ex. 38: 19).

LINEN ALL ROUND THE COURT (Ex. 27: 9, 11)—*TYPE OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.* Anyone who went through the door was surrounded by the linen. When we come through the door of salvation, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we are clothed with the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61: 10). God looks at us and sees us, not in our sins under judgment, but as we are in Christ, His righteousness having become ours; therefore we are acceptable to God (Eph. 1: 6).

THE PILLARS—TYPE OF THOSE WHO BELONG TO CHRIST. The Apostles, John and Peter, were pillars of the Church (Gal. 2: 9). "A Pillar in the temple of . . . God" is spoken of in Rev. 3: 12.

THE PILLARS HELD UP THE LINEN to the gaze of the people. It was Paul's ambition that Christ should be magnified in his body (Phil. 1: 20). He said, "Not I, but Christ" (Gal. 2: 20); and John the Baptist said, "He (Christ) must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3: 30). Our business as Christians is not to draw attention to ourselves, but to exalt Christ. Let us, by our likeness to Him, show Him to others.

"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wondrous compassion and purity;
Oh, Thou Spirit Divine, All my nature refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."

A man was once asked under whose preaching he had been converted. He replied, "Not by anyone's preaching, but by my mother's practising."

PINS HELD THE PILLARS IN POSITION (Ex. 27: 19). There were pins in the earth attached to the pillars in order to keep them firm. Here are some of the pins of the Word of God, which will keep us from doubting and give us assurance (John 10: 28). "They shall never perish" (John 5: 24; Exodus 12: 13). God's Word says, "These things have I written....that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (I John 5:13).

FILLETS OF SILVER (joining rods) (Ex. 27: 17). They joined the pillars together all round the court, making them one. Those who belong to Christ are all one — "one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12: 5). When you are tempted to think that you are standing alone for Christ, remember that you are one of the many members of the body of Christ. When Elijah thought he was the only godly man of his time left, God said, "I have left me seven thousand . . . which have not bowed unto Baal" (1 Kings 19: 18).

MEMORY VERSE.—Isaiah 61: 10.—"He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

The Door of the Tabernacle. Exodus 26.31-37.

1. **The Door.** Only the priest went through the door to worship. Only those who are born again and are priests unto God can truly worship Him. Rev. 1.6; John 4.23, 24.
2. **Two Pillars:**
   (a) Made of acacia wood—picture of the holy life of Jesus Christ on earth. Heb. 7.26.
   (b) Covered with gold—picture of Christ in glory.
   (c) Colours: Blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen See Lesson 267, Point 4.
3. **The Veil separated** the Holy Place from the Holiest where the High Priest went alone once a year. Heb. 9.7. The Veil is a picture of the body of the Lord Jesus when He was on earth. Heb. 10.19, 20.
   The Veil not broken showed that He had not yet finished His work, the way into the holiest was not yet open. Heb. 9.8.
4. **The Rent Veil.** The Veil was broken when the Lord Jesus died on the Cross, Luke 23, 45, the way to God was now open and we can now go boldly any time into the Presence of God by the blood of Jesus. Heb. 10.19. 20.
5. **Cherubim**—wings spread out is a picture of God's wings spread out to protect us. Ps. 91.4; 61.4 63.7. **Verse to learn,** Hebrews 10.19, 20.

The Door or Gate of the Tabernacle. Exodus 27.16-19.

God shows the meaning of the Tabernacle in Heb. 9.1-24. Eleven chapters tell about the Tabernacle because it is a picture of the Lord Jesus and His Salvation.

1. **Only one door**—no other way in. It had linen three sides; if a man lifted the linen to come in that way he must die. Some people think good works, leaving the heathen or joining the church is the door, but Jesus is the Door; John 10.9. No other way in. Acts 4.12. The Door had two sides—outside and inside. On which side are you?
2. **It was a wide door**—ALL could go in. **Whosoever** believeth hath everlasting life. John 3.16; Rev. 22.17.
3. **It was a strong door**—four posts held it up. Picture of the four Gospels holding up Christ as Saviour.
4. **Colours of the gate:**
   (a) **Blue**—colour of the heavens, shows Jesus as Son of God in the Gospel of John.
   (b) **Purple**—the king's colour. Matthew shows Jesus as King.
   (c) **Scarlet** (red)—Mark's Gospel shows Jesus as the Servant. We get scarlet from the worm.
   (d) **White linen**—picture of the holy life of the Man Christ Jesus. Luke's Gospel shows Him as Man. But the linen alone did not make the door. We are saved by the death of Christ not by His life.
5. **Foundation posts**—made of brass—picture of judgment. The Lord Jesus went through God's judgment for us. Is. 53.4. **Verse to learn,** John 10.9.

The Court of the Tabernacle.

Exodus 27.9-19.

The Tabernacle is not only a picture of the Lord Jesus but of His people, too.

1. **Linen all round the court**—picture of the righteousness of Christ. When a man went through the door the linen was all round him. Is. 61.10.
2. **Each pillar** is a picture of the believer. We are pillars in God's temple. Gal. 2.9; Rev. 3.12.
   (a) Pillars stood in sockets of brass. Christ went through the judgment of God. We stand on His finished work, we are safe there. John 19.30.
   (b) Pillars held up the linen. We must show out the life of Jesus in our body. II Cor. 4.10, 11.
   (c) The pillars did not show themselves, they showed the linen. Phil. 1.20; 3.3
3. **The pins held them fast.** God gives us some pins so that we do not shake about our salvation. John 10.28; 5.24 Ex. 12.13. Let us say **I know.** I John 2.3, 5; ch. 3.14, 19; ch. 5,13.
4. **Cords for strength.** We need the strength of God to show out Christ's life before the world. Rom. 14.4.
5. **Joining rods** joined the court together. One Tabernacle, one Court but 60 pillars. One body in Christ. I Cor. 12.20.
6. **Silver—redemption money.** We are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. I Pet. 1.18, 19. Lesson 278. **Verse to learn,** I Corinthians 12.20.

51. THE TABERNACLE

(2) THE BRAZEN ALTAR AND THE LAVER.

READ Exodus 27: 1-8; Exodus 30: 17-21; 38: 8; 40: 6, 7.

THEME: Remission of sins (The Altar) and Holiness (The Laver).

THE RED LINE OF SACRIFICE runs through Scripture, beginning at Eden, where blood was shed to provide the coats of skins, in order that the first sinners might be made fit for God's Presence, right on to the death of Christ, when He said, "It is finished" (John 19: 30). From that moment no more blood need be shed.

THE BRAZEN ALTAR—TYPE OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

THE BRAZEN ALTAR WAS AT THE GATE like a sentry guarding the way to God. Every one who wished to approach God would see the Altar. It reminded them that they were sinners, and that apart from the shedding of blood they could not draw near to God. This truth is taught in Heb. 9: 22, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." The Brazen Altar speaks to us of the work of Christ for us on the cross. But the blood of that sacrifice could only *cover* sin till Christ came. He then *took away* sin, "Behold the Lamb of God, which *taketh away* the sin of the world" (John 1: 29).

IT WAS MADE OF SHITTIM WOOD (27: 1), which was white and durable. This tells us of the holy, spotless earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ, who "offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9: 14); He was "without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1: 19); "He did no sin" (1 Pet. 2: 22).

"There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin,
He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in."

IT WAS COVERED WITH BRASS (Ex. 27: 2). Brass in Scripture stands for judgment as in the Brazen Serpent (Numbers 21: 6-9; John 3: 14; 12: 31, 32) (See Lesson 34). Brass can stand the fire—it endures. If the Altar had been made of wood only, the fire would have burnt it entirely, but it was made of wood covered with brass. On the cross the Lord Jesus endured the judgment and wrath of God for our sakes. "He endured" (Heb. 11: 27).

IT WAS HOLLOW (Ex. 27: 8). He "made Himself of no reputation" (R.V., "emptied Himself" Phil. 2: 7). This does not mean that He emptied Himself of His Divine nature, for He was God and man, but only of the outward and visible manifestation of the Godhead; He "took upon Him *the form* of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." The fire was *inside* the altar, not *on* it. The fire of the judgment of God on sin reached the Lord Jesus when He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2: 24); He was "made . . . to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5: 21). This is what caused Him to cry out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27: 46). The prophecy of Lam. 1: 13 refers to the Lord Jesus, "From above hath He sent fire into My bones."

THE ASHES (Ex. 27: 3) showed that the fire had finished its work. Only the *ashes* of the sacrifice on the Brazen Altar remained. The Lord Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished." He finished the

work He had come from heaven to do. He perfectly accomplished the great work of our redemption, He paid the full ransom price. He had wrought out and brought in a perfect salvation. We cannot, by our own efforts, add to that work; "it is finished."

THE ALTAR WAS FOURSQUARE (Ex. 27: 1), and this symbolises the *righteousness* of God. His justice is not greater than His mercy, or His mercy greater than His justice. We are freely forgiven and justified, and yet God remains righteous. How can this be? How can mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other? (Psalm 85: 10). Did God overlook sin in order to forgive us? No, that could never be. A righteous Judge was called upon in court to try his own brother for theft. He did not wish to send him to prison; on the contrary, he longed to show mercy, and allow him to go free. But how could he do this and yet remain righteous and just? He inflicted the heaviest penalty the law would allow, and then paid the fine himself. His brother was justified and allowed to go free, and yet the Judge remained just. God, in the person of His Son, paid the price of sin; the punishment was inflicted on Him, and our sins were forgiven. God, therefore, is "just, and the justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3: 26).

THE LAVER (Exodus 30: 17-21; 38: 8; 40: 7).

THE BRAZEN ALTAR which says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22), is a type of the *finished* work of Christ; *The Laver* which says, "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12: 14), represents the *unfinished* work of Christ. It was made of the women's brass mirrors, and stood between the Brazen Altar and the Tabernacle. The priests washed their hands and feet at it before they went into the Tabernacle to worship.

THE LAVER IS FOR THE CLEANSING OF CHRISTIANS. They have already been to the Brazen Altar, that is, they have trusted Christ for the forgiveness of sins, but before they can enter into God's Presence in the Holy Place, their hands and feet must be washed. We get dirty as we travel along the Way of Life, and need daily cleansing. Christ cannot have fellowship with one who allows sin in his life, but He is willing to cleanse him day by day.

THE LAVER WAS MADE OF LOOKING GLASSES (Ex. 38: 8). The Apostle James likens the Word of God to a mirror (James 1: 23-25). In the mirror of the Word of God we see our hearts, but we must *continue* to look, or we shall forget what we are like.

A MIRROR REVEALS ANY DIRT WHICH MIGHT BE THERE. Let us allow God, by His Word, to do this for us every day, to reveal the pride, the temper, the selfishness and unkind actions, and to show us the place where perhaps we first began to drift from Him.

THE LAVER HELD THE WATER OF CLEANSING. The Laver itself is a type of Christ, the Living Word; the water in the Laver represents the written Word. Let the Holy Spirit apply the water of the Word to your heart day by day to cleanse you (Eph. 5: 25, 26). Washing at the Laver means fellowship with Christ, talking with Him, sharing with Him all that concerns us; we can only do this if there is nothing between us and Him. Our Lord washing the disciples' feet represents

the Laver (John 13). The picture given in v. 10 is that of a person returning from the baths (The Brazen Altar), where he has been cleansed entirely, but his feet become dirty on the way and require cleansing. He is already washed "clean every whit," and "needeth not save to wash his feet" (John 13: 10). Our aim should be to "sin not," but "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous" (1 John 2: 1). Just as water cleanses the body so the Word of God, applied by the Holy Spirit through Christ, cleanses us from the things which may have grieved Him.

MEMORY VERSE.—1 John 2: 1—"These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

The Brazen Altar. Exodus 27.1-8; 38.1-7.

1. **The Brazen Altar was at the gate** like a sentry guarding the way to God. Without shedding of blood is no remission. Heb. 9.22. Old Test. Sacrifices only **covered** sin, the Lamb of God **takes** away sin. John 1.29.

2. **It was hollow** (empty). The Lord Jesus emptied himself of His glory that we might have salvation. Phil. 2.6-8.

3. **It was made of shittim wood**—strong, white wood. Picture of the holy life of the man Christ Jesus. I Pet. 2.22.
Covered with brass—Brass endures the fire. The Lord Jesus endured God's judgment for us. Is. 53.6, 8.

4. **There was fire inside it.** Picture of the sufferings of Christ, made sin for us. Lam. 1.13. II Cor. 5.21. **Ashes,** v. 3, showed that the fire had finished the sacrifice. Christ finished the work He came to do; this was, to bear the punishment of our sin. John 19.30.

5. **Horns on the altar**—horns mean strength, and safety. A man was safe from punishment when he caught hold of the horns of the altar. I Kings 1.50-52; John 5.24.

6. **The altar was foursquare**—it measured the same on every side. v. 1. God is righteous and yet forgives the sinner because Christ took our punishment. Rom. 3.25, 26.

7. **The offerer must lay his hand on the head of the sacrifice,** Lev. 1.4. This means, "The punishment fits my sin, this lamb dies instead of me." Gal. 2.20. **Verse to learn,** Hebrews 9.22.

The Laver.

Exodus 30.17-21; chapter 38.8.

The Laver was only for those who had first been to the Brazen Altar.
The Laver—picture of Christ the Living Word. John 1.1.
Water in the Laver—picture of the Written Word of God. So the Laver teaches us there is daily cleansing by the Word. John 17.17; Eph. 5.26.
Water is also a picture of the Holy Spirit. John 7.38, 39. He must apply (fit) the Word to our hearts.

1. **The Laver was made of brass looking glasses.** God's Word is a glass because we see ourselves in it. We must keep on looking into it or we shall forget what we are like. James 1.23-25.

2. **The water in the Laver cleansed the priests.** v. 19. If a priest did not wash at the Laver he could not go into the Holy Place or walk in the light of the Golden Candlestick or eat the shewbread. If we are not clean we can have no fellowship with Christ. John 13.8, 10. We are cleansed by the Word. John 15.3.

3. **There was no measure for the Laver.** This means we need daily cleansing. We must judge ourselves each day. Brass is a picture of judgment. I Cor. 11.31.

4. **When we are cleansed ourselves we are able to wash one another's feet.** This needs humility and love. Gal. 6.1. **Verse to learn,** Ephesians 5.26.

52. THE TABERNACLE

(3) THE COVERINGS AND THE VEIL.

READ Exodus 26: 1-14; 31-37.

THEME: Access to God.

Over the Tabernacle itself were coverings.

THE FIRST COVERING consisted of ten beautiful curtains, five in each set.

THE SECOND COVERING was made of Goats' Hair Curtains.

THE THIRD COVERING was made of Rams' Skins Dyed Red.

THE FOURTH COVERING (the outside one) was made of Badgers' Skins.

In explaining the typical meaning of the coverings we shall begin from the outside.

BADGERS' SKINS. THEY WERE NOT ATTRACTIVE. Looking at them from the outside only, the rough skins were seen, but the priests inside saw the beautiful curtains which were underneath the skins. These Badgers' Skins were a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is not attractive to those outside — those who do not know Him. To them "He hath no form nor comeliness" (like the long box-like building of the Tabernacle) and "there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isaiah 53: 2); this is like the badger skins. But to those inside, those who know Him as Saviour and Lord, "He is altogether lovely," and we can say of Him, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend" (S. of S. 5: 16).

THEY LOOKED VERY ORDINARY. When the Lord Jesus came from heaven, He looked just like any other person. He was "made in the likeness of men . . . He humbled Himself" (Phil. 2: 7, 8).

THE BADGERS' SKINS PROTECTED THE BEAUTIFUL CURTAINS UNDERNEATH. Nothing was allowed to spoil them. The Lord Jesus in His human body was tempted, but He overcame sin and Satan. He "was in all points tempted like as we are, *yet without sin*" (Heb. 4: 15).

RAMS' SKINS. THE RAM REMINDS US OF SUBSTITUTION. As Isaac looked at the ram on the altar, he knew that it had taken his place, that it had died instead of him. As we think of the rams' skins, may we see by faith the Lamb of God, taking our place, bearing our punishment, "The just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3: 18). "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53: 6).

RAMS' SKINS, DYED RED, speaks to us of the sufferings of Christ and of "the death of the cross" (Phil 2: 8). There is much in the Word of God about the blood of Christ. This means His life poured out for us, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17: 11).

WE HAVE PEACE through the blood of His cross (Col. 1: 20).

WE ARE REDEEMED by His blood (Rev. 5: 9; 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19; Eph. 1: 7).

WE ARE CLEANSED by the blood (1 John 1: 7; Rev. 1: 5).

WE ARE MADE NIGH by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2: 13).

WE MAY ENTER INTO THE HOLIEST by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10: 19).

GOATS' HAIR CURTAINS. A Goat was chosen for the sin offering. In Matt. 25: 32, 33, the sheep are typical of those who belong to God, and the goats of those who do not. Why, then, should the Lord Jesus Christ, who had never sinned, be typified by the goat? Because He became our Sin Bearer. "For He hath made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5: 21).

THE LAST SET WAS CALLED THE TABERNACLE.

THEY WERE VERY BEAUTIFUL. Only the priests inside were allowed to gaze upon their beauty. Only those who are "in Christ," who have received Him as Saviour, see Him as the altogether lovely One. One day we are to see Him literally "in His beauty" (Isaiah 33: 17), but we can now by faith "behold the beauty of the Lord" (Ps. 27: 4).

THE COLOURS—blue, purple, scarlet, linen *and gold.* In the Gate there were four colours only, for the Gate speaks of Christ on earth; the gold speaks to us of Christ in heaven. The three outside coverings teach us about the *work* of Christ for us, the beautiful inside covering of Christ *Himself.*

THE CHERUBIM WINGS on the curtains signify protection. "He shalt cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust" (Ps. 91: 4). "I will trust in the covert of Thy wings" (Ps. 61: 4). Let us remember that if we have come to Christ, we are under His wings.

THE VEIL (Exodus 26: 31-37; Heb. 9: 3).

The Veil shut out men from the Most Holy Place. Only the High Priest went in once a year into the Presence of God (Heb. 9: 6, 7). He could not enter without blood.

IT WAS A TYPE OF CHRIST'S HUMAN BODY before His death —"the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. 10: 20).

THE UNBROKEN VEIL SHOWED HIS WORK WAS NOT COMPLETED. Had Christ not died sin would for ever have shut us out from the Presence of God; we could never enter heaven.

THE RENT VEIL (Matt. 27: 50, 51; Heb. 10: 19, 20).—

IT WAS BROKEN WHEN THE LORD JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS (Matt. 27: 50, 51). The way to God was now open — "a new and living way" through Christ's broken body. We can now enter boldly into the very Presence of God, through the blood of Christ (Heb. 4: 16). We can go direct to God, we need no one to mediate for us, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2: 5).

THE VEIL WAS RENT WHEN IT HUNG BETWEEN EARTH AND HEAVEN. Jesus' body was broken for us when He hung upon the cross. It was after He had cried, "It is finished" (John 19: 30), that the veil was rent.

CHERUBIM WINGS SPREAD OUT TO PROTECT. Not only has a way of access into God's Presence been made for us, but we are protected and sheltered from punishment, because on the cross Christ Himself "bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2: 24).

MEMORY VERSE.—Hebrews 10: 19, 20—"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way . . . through the veil. . . . Let us draw near."

The Curtains—Coverings. Exodus 26.1-14;

1. **Badgers' skins—the outside cover, v. 14. They were only rough skin outside, but the priests saw the beautiful curtains underneath.**
   (a) **Picture of Christ in Isaiah, 53.2. No beauty to make people want Him, but to His own people He is altogether lovely. Song of Sol. 5.10, 16.**
   (b) **Picture of the humility of the Lord Jesus. He took a body like us. He humbled Himself. John 1.14.**
   (c) Badgers' skins kept the beautiful curtains underneath; sun and rain could spoil them.
   Christ as Man—sin did not touch Him, He was holy, separate from sinners. Heb. 7.26.

2. **Rams' skins dyed, v. 14.**
   (a) **Ram died instead of Isaac. Gen. 22.13. Picture of the Son of God Who gave Himself for me. Gal. 2.20.**
   (b) **Dyed red—picture of the blood of Christ and of His sufferings. Heb. 9.22.**

3. **Goats' Hair Curtains, v. 7. Make us think of the sin offering. Picture of the Lord Jesus made sin for us. II Cor. 5.21.**

4. **Last set of curtains called the Tabernacle.**
   (a) Very beautiful—picture of Christ in glory. Only the priests saw them. Only God's people see the beauty of Jesus. Song of Sol. 5.10, 16.
   (b) **Colours: Blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen and gold. See Lesson 267. Gold—picture of Christ in heaven.**
   (c) **Cherubims, v. 1. Wings to protect. Ps. 91.4; 61.4; 63.7.**
   The three outside curtains tell us of Christ's work. The beautiful inside ones tell us of Christ Himself.
   Verse to learn, Song of Solomon 5.16.

53. THE TABERNACLE

(4) THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK AND THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD.

READ Exodus 25: 23-40; Leviticus 24: 5-9.

THEME: Christ the Light and the Bread of Life.

In the Holy Place were the Golden Candlestick or Lampstand and the Table of Shewbread.

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK AND ITS BRANCHES.—

TYPE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST—THE LIGHT (John 1: 9). Before His coming into the world there had been typical lights, such as the Pillar of Fire and the Golden Candlestick, but these only foreshadowed Him — He was the *true light* (John 1: 9).

HE IS THE GUIDING LIGHT for the soul. He said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8: 12).

THE CANDLESTICK WAS ONE BEATEN WORK (Ex. 25: 36)—hammered out. This reminds us of the sufferings of Christ, who was *bruised* for our iniquities (Is. 53: 5). The Candlestick was hammered out in order to make the branches, and we, as branches, are one with Him only because He was wounded for our transgressions.

THE BRANCHES OF THE CANDLESTICK.—

THE BRANCHES AND THE CANDLESTICK WERE ONE—of one beaten work. They were not artificially joined on (Ex. 25: 36). Christ is the Lampstand and we who have received Him as Saviour are the branches, part of Him, one with Him (John 15:1), members of His body.

THE LIGHTS OF THE BRANCHES LIT UP NOT THE ROOM BUT THE CANDLESTICK (Ex. 25: 37). Our chief business is to exalt Christ, to glorify God. "Let your light so shine . . . that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 16). Christ must have the pre-eminence.

SNUFFERS WERE USED TO TRIM THE LAMPS IN ORDER TO KEEP THEM BURNING BRIGHTLY (Ex. 25: 38). If the char was allowed to remain on the wick, the light would become dim. Our light is apt to become dim; therefore we must allow Christ to remove constantly the sins and the things which would hinder our witness for Him. He does this with His own hand, just as the husbandman in John 15: 2 purges the branch. And how does He trim our lamps? By the difficulties, the discipline and the hard things of life. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth . . . chastening . . . afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12: 6, 11).

NO MENTION IS MADE OF AN EXTINGUISHER. In Mark 4: 21, we read of two extinguishers, a bed and a bushel. The bed might represent laziness, slackness, and love of ease; the bushel, those earthly things which engross our attention to the exclusion of the spiritual.

THEY WERE FILLED WITH OIL THAT THEY MIGHT BURN CONTINUALLY (Lev. 24: 2). We need to be filled with God's Holy Spirit in order that we might shine continually for Christ. As the oil was consumed it was constantly replenished, and day by day we need to come to Christ for the filling of the Spirit that we may *remain* filled.

THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD (Ex. 25: 23-30; Lev. 24: 5-9).— The Table had on it twelve loaves.

IT WAS MADE OF SHITTIM WOOD (Ex. 25: 23). This wood was white and durable, and reminds us of the holy, spotless earthly life of the Lord Jesus "Who did no sin" (1 Pet. 2: 22).

BUT IT WAS OVERLAID WITH GOLD. Gold speaks of the Deity and divine glory of the Lord Jesus, so in the New Testament, as here in type, we see Him as God and man. "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3: 16). Even in the types of the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was careful to guard the deity of Christ.

THE SHEWBREAD (Lev. 24: 5-9).—

It was made of fine flour with no leaven. There were twelve cakes —six in each row, and pure frankincense upon each row. They were changed every Sabbath, and those taken away were eaten in the Holy Place by Aaron and his sons.

THE SHEWBREAD was a type of Christ, the Bread of Life (John 6: 35, 48). In the making of the loaves we see what Christ must have suffered for us before we could feed on Him as the Bread of Life.

BEFORE BREAD COULD BE MADE THE WHEAT MUST DIE. Our Lord said of Himself, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12: 24). Therefore, to produce much fruit which would make the bread, the grain had to go into the ground and die. Our Lord had to die before we could feed on Him as the Bread of Life.

THE WHEAT HAD TO BE BRUISED. This makes us think of the bruising of the body of our Lord, His sufferings before He went to the cross, and His agony *on* the cross. "He was bruised for our (my) iniquities" (Isaiah 53: 5).

THE LOAF HAD TO BE SUBJECTED TO THE HEAT OF THE FIRE. Before a loaf is fit for eating it has to be baken in the oven. Lam. 1: 13 is a prophecy of our Lord, "From above hath He sent fire into My bones." The fire of God's judgment came upon the Lord Jesus when He became sin for us, when He bore our sins upon the cross.

FINE FLOUR WAS USED IN MAKING THE SHEWBREAD. It was smooth, with no lumps in it. This, like the shittim wood in the table, speaks to us of the holy earthly life of the Lord Jesus. Pilate had to say of Him, "I find no fault in this man" (Luke 23: 4). The Holy Spirit writes of Him in 1 Pet. 1: 19, "a lamb without blemish and without spot."

FRANKINCENSE WAS PUT ON TOP OF THE LOAVES. In His earthly life the Lord Jesus was well-pleasing to the Father, and in His death for us, He was to God "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5: 2).

THE PRIESTS FED ON THE BREAD. We, too, feed on the Lord Jesus in our hearts by faith. How do we feed upon Him? What does it mean? *We feed upon Him by believing all that is revealed about Him* and *by meditating upon Him.* (See Lesson 23, page 63).

MEMORY VERSE.—John 8: 12—"I am the light of the world."

54. THE TABERNACLE

(5) THE GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE, THE ARK AND THE MERCY SEAT.

READ: Exodus 30: 1-10; Exodus 25: 10-22.

THEME: Prayer.

THE GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE (Ex. 30: 1-10).—

THE GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE stood in *THE HOLY PLACE*. It was made of shittim wood covered with gold. Aaron burned incense on it morning and evening daily. There were no sacrifices offered on it. These were offered on the Brazen Altar outside. The incense was a reminder of that sacrifice.

THE GOLDEN ALTAR WAS A TYPE OF CHRIST OUR INTERCESSOR praying in heaven for His people (Heb. 9: 24). When Moses prayed for the Children of Israel his hands became heavy, so Aaron and Hur held up his hands (Ex. 17: 12), but the Lord Jesus never grows weary in praying for us, for "He ever liveth to make intercession" (Heb. 7: 25). Sinners need the Brazen Altar-type of Christ sacrificed for their sin, but those who have already trusted Him as Saviour and are saved need the Golden Altar — Christ in heaven praying for them.

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE IS ALSO A TYPE OF THE PRAYERS OF CHRISTIANS. David said, "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense" (Psalm 141: 2). And again, in Rev. 8: 3, we read, "There was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints (people who belong to God) upon the golden altar which was before the throne." As Aaron offered this incense morning and evening, so may we offer prayer daily to God.

IT IS A TYPE OF THE PRAISES CHRISTIANS OFFER TO GOD. "By Him (Christ the Golden Altar) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God (the incense) continually" (Heb. 13: 15). Here is something we can *give* to God—worship and praise. But it must be "by Him" (Christ) as this verse says, We cannot offer praises to God unless we do it through Christ.

This sacrifice is to be presented "*continually*," not merely on Sundays, when we go to Church to worship God; "continually" means seven days a week, and just where we are — in the home, at school, in business and wherever we go. Not only when we feel happy and joyful, but when we are cast down and troubled. We cannot always be speaking His praise, but we can always be *living* His praise.

WHAT THE SACRIFICE IS—PRAISE TO GOD the fruit of our lips. Sometimes He calls on us to offer this sacrifice when it costs us something to own that we belong to Him — it is indeed then "a sacrifice," and therefore all the more precious to Him.

THE ARK AND THE MERCY SEAT (Ex. 25: 10-22).—

Inside the *Holiest* or *The Most Holy Place* was a small box called *The Ark*, which was made of shittim wood overlaid with gold. Inside it were the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden pot of manna (Ex. 16: 33, 34; Hebrews 9: 4). The Ark had a lid, which was called *The Mercy Seat.* This was made of pure gold, and on it were two cherubims of gold, which faced the Mercy Seat and covered it with their wings. Blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat.

THE ARK.—

IT WAS A TYPE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Wood represented the earthly life of the Lord Jesus, and the gold His Deity.

THE LID WAS A MERCY SEAT, NOT A JUDGMENT SEAT. How could this be? How could God, who was holy and righteous, show mercy to sinners? Only because of the blood. Had there been no blood on the Mercy Seat it would have been a Judgment Seat. We are freely forgiven through God's mercy and yet He remains righteous because He did not overlook sin — His Son bore the punishment of our sin. (For illustration see Lesson 28, page 77.)

THE BLOOD WAS SPRINKLED ON THE MERCY SEAT SEVEN TIMES. Seven in the Word of God signifies completion. When on the cross the Lord Jesus said, "It is finished," He meant that He had finished the work which He had come from heaven to do — bearing the punishment of our sin. He perfectly accomplished the great work of redemption. Jesus paid the full ransom price. He had wrought out and brought in a perfect salvation.

THE CHERUBIM. Their special work seemed to be to guard God's holiness. In Gen. 3: 22-24, we see them guarding the tree of life against man, who, in spite of his sin, would put forth his hand and take of the tree of life. The Cherubim then held a sword of fire. Here they gazed on the blood, a picture of the blood of Jesus Christ. In 1 Sam. 6: 19, we read of some men who looked inside the Ark and were punished. They must have lifted off the lid and God could not then see the blood, He only saw the Law which men had broken.

THE LAW WAS HIDDEN INSIDE THE ARK. The Law was in the heart of the Lord Jesus (Ps. 40: 8). He perfectly kept it. As Man on earth God's Word was the rule of His life. "It is written," was constantly on His lips. With God's Word He met Satan's attacks (Matt. 4). May we, as His followers, give the Word of God the place He gave it. May we be able to say with David, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119: 11).

MEMORY VERSE—Hebrews 13: 15—"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name."

The Ark and the Mercy Seat.

Exodus 25.10-22.

Inside the Holiest was **the Ark.** The Lid of the Ark was called **the Mercy Seat.** There was no Lampstand there because God Himself was the Light. Rev. 22.5.

1. **The Ark is a picture of Christ.** It is also a picture of God's throne, a throne of grace not of judgment, because the Mercy Seat had blood on it. Lev. 16.14.

2. **The Mercy Seat—picture of Christ's finished work** on the Cross. John 19.30. No seat for the priest because his work was not yet finished. Blood sprinkled seven times. Lev. 16.14. Seven shows a thing is finished.

3. **The Cherubim guarded God's holiness,** Gen. 3.24, yet how could they be on the Mercy Seat? Because they looked on the blood all the time, and so holiness and mercy met together. Rom. 3.26.

4. **Inside the Ark** were the Tables of Law. the Pot of Manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. Num. 17.10; Heb. 9.4.

   (a) **The Tables of Law**—the Ten Commandments—were under the Mercy Seat. The Law says, the sinner must die, but God looked at the blood on the Mercy Seat. The Law hidden inside the Ark is a picture of God's Law in Christ's heart. Ps. 40.8 Is. 42.21. Let us hide God's Word in our heart. Ps. 119.11; Col. 3.16.

   (b) **The Golden Pot of Manna** inside the Ark. The manna on the ground in the wilderness was a picture of the Lord Jesus when He humbled Himself on earth. The Golden Pot of Manna—picture of Christ in glory.

   (c) **Aaron's rod that budded.** Num. 17.10. Picture of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Verse to learn, Hebrews 9.22.

The Table of Shewbread.

Exodus 25.23-30 Lev. 24.5-9.

1. **The Table:**
   (a) Made of acacia wood. Picture of Christ on earth, holy, without sin. Heb. 7.26.
   (b) Overlaid with gold. Picture of Christ in glory.
   (c) A handbreadth of gold. Picture of hands pierced, but the gold shows the glory.

2. **Shewbread**—Christ the Bread of Life. John 6.35, 48.
   (a) Wheat must die before it can be made into bread. Christ had to die to be the Bread of Life. John 12.24.
   (b) Wheat must be bruised between two stones. Is. 53.5.
   (c) The loaf must feel the fire. Lam. 1.13; John 12.27.
   (d) Made of fine flour, no lumps in it, picture of the holy life of Jesus—no sin in Him. II Cor. 5.21.

3. **The priests fed on the shewbread.** We feed on Christ the Bread of Life. John 6.32, 35.

4. **Frankincense on the bread.** Lev. 24.7. Christ's sacrifice was a sweet smell to God. Eph. 5.2. God was well pleased with His Son. Matt. 3.17.

5. **Wave loaves.** Picture of the Church, one body, with Christ the Head. I Cor. 10.16, 17. **Two** loaves, Jew and Gentile one body, v. 17.
   Baked with leaven—leaven is a picture of sin, I Cor. 10.17. We still have the old nature in us.

Verse to learn, John 6.35.

The Golden Altar of Incense.

Exodus 30.1-10.

1. **The Golden Altar**—picture of Christ our Intercessor praying in heaven for His people. Heb. 9.24; 7.25.
   (a) **Wood** of the Golden Altar—picture of the earthly life of Jesus.
   (b) **Gold**—picture of Christ on the throne.
   (c) Altar picture also of us as we offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God. Ex. 30.8; Heb. 13.15.

2. Incense picture of Christ—a sweet savour unto God. Eph. 5.2. Incense was made of things bruised and beaten. This is a picture of Christ bruised for our sins. Is. 53.5.

3. **Incense is also a picture of prayer.** Rev. 8.3; Ps. 141.2. The prayers of Christ make our prayers go right up to God and bring down blessing on His people. It is also a picture of our prayers.

4. **The Foundation of the incense offering** was the fire from the Brazen Altar. Lev. 16.12. The foundation of all our prayer and praise is the finished work of Jesus Christ. Our praise and prayer could not go up to God without our Great High Priest. Rev. 8.3.

5. **The law of the incense offering,** v. 9. He shall offer no strange incense. What is strange incense?
   (a) Singing praises to God and offering prayer to Him with our lips only. Matt. 15.8; Matt. 6.5.
   (b) Saying we yield everything to God and holding back part like Ananias and Sapphira did. Acts 5.1-11.

Verse to learn, Hebrews 13.15.

The Golden Candlestick.

Exodus 25.31-40.

1. **Lampstand or Candlestick:**
   (a) Picture of Christ. John 1.9; 8.12; Rev. 4.5.
   (b) Seven—the number of perfection or fullness. Christ was full of the Spirit. Rev. 4.5; 3.1.
   (c) The work of the lamps was not to light up the room but to light up the lampstand. The Holy Spirit in us glorifies Christ. John 16.13.

2. **The Lampstand and its branches:**
   (a) Picture of Christ joined to His people, John 15, tells us of the Vine and the branches.
   (b) It was hammered out, v. 36. Picture of the Lord Jesus Who was bruised for our sins. Is. 53.5. The branches were hammered out, too. We share the sufferings of Christ. Phil. 3.10.
   (c) Hammered out of one piece, v. 36. The branches were part of the lampstand. We are one with Christ, members of His body.

3. **The Branches:**
   (a) Picture of Christ's Church. Every one who truly believes in Christ is a member of this one true Church.
   (b) Aaron trimmed the wicks to make them burn. Only the High Priest could do this. Our Great High Priest trims our wicks to make us shine. Rev. ch. 1, ch. 2.
   (c) Aaron poured in oil so that they would keep burning. The Holy Spirit keeps us shining for Jesus. John 5.35; Phil. 2.15; Matt. 5.16.

Verse to learn. John 1.9.

55. The Boards of the Tabernacle.

Exodus 26.15-30.

The Tabernacle was a house for God to live in. Ex. 25.8. The Church is now God's house. Eph. 2.19-22. So the Tabernacle is not only a picture of Christ but of His people.

1. **Silver sockets.** Picture of redemption because they were made of atonement money. (See Lesson 278.)

2. **The Boards.** Picture of those who belong to Christ. Eph. 2.19-22.
   (a) **They were all joined together.** We are fitted together to form the Church (all who truly belong to Him).
   (b) **The boards were separated** from the earth by the sockets. We are in the world but separated from it because of our redemption. II Cor. 6.17.
   (c) **Boards covered with gold** and the wood could not be seen. God sees us covered with the righteousness of Christ. When we are born again God gives us His own Divine nature. II Pet. 1.4.

3. **The boards are also a picture of Christ.**
   (a) **Made of acacia wood** which grew in a dry place. As man, Jesus was like a root out of a dry ground. Is. 53.2.
   (b) **Covered with gold**—picture of Christ's glory. This shows us Jesus as God, God manifest in the flesh. I Tim. 3.16; John 1.14.

4. **Bars** joined the boards together. The Lord Jesus Christ is the One Who joins God's people together. One body in Christ and members one of another. Rom. 12.5.

Verse to learn. Eph. 2.21, 22.

The Atonement Money.

Exodus 30.12-16.

Every man of the Children of Israel had to pay a ransom for his soul, v. 12. **Ransom means** something you pay to set a prisoner free from punishment.

1. **Every man needed a ransom,** high and low, rich and poor because all have sinned. Rom. 3.23. If they did not bring a ransom God's judgment would fall on them, v. 12; Ezek. 18.4.

2. **Every one must pay the same,** v. 15; I Tim. 2.6. God's beloved Son is the price God fixed to pay out for our sin, nothing else would do. "There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin; **He** only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in." Acts 4.12.

3. **The price was a shekel.** A shekel was made of silver, white and precious. This is a picture of the pure, holy life of the Son of God. Heb. 7.26.

4. **The shekel must weigh the same as the shekel of the temple.** the holy place of God, v. 13. Christ was tried by the holy Law of God and He kept it altogether.

5. **Every one must bring his own ransom,** v. 12. No man can redeem his brother. Ps. 49.7. To be saved everyone must receive Christ for Himself, as His own Saviour. John 1.12.

6. **All the ransomed people must serve,** Num. 1.45. We who are saved are called to serve Christ. Acts 27.23; Rom. 12.1.

Verse to learn, Acts 4.12.

The Anointing Oil.

Exodus 30.22-33.

Oil was used for the body to refresh it; for food to strengthen and for light in lamps.

1. **This is a picture of the Holy Spirit** Who refreshes us, strengthens us and makes our lives shine to witness to others. Phil. 2.15.

2. **The anointing oil was holy,** v. 31. It was used to separate God's people for His work. The Holy Spirit's work is to make us holy. He is the Spirit of holiness. Rom. 1.4.

3. **The holy oil was used for anointing Aaron and his sons for service,** v. 30. Aaron is a picture of Christ, Aaron's sons a picture of all true believers. Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, Acts 10.38, and we have that same anointing to give us power for service. I John 2.27.

4. **The holy oil was used to sanctify all the vessels,** v. 26, 29. this means to separate them and make them holy. Everything belonging to those vessels had oil on them, too. We are vessels. Acts 9.15; II Tim. 2.21.
Our hearts. our work, our talk, our will, and all that we have must have the mark of the Holy Spirit on them. "Holiness unto the Lord should be written across them." Zech. 14.20.

5. **No one must try to make oil like it,** v. 33. We cannot make power or make our own lives holy. Power belongs to God. Ps. 62.11. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Acts 1.8.

Verse to learn, I John 2.27.

Workers for God.

Exodus 31.1-6.

1. **God chose men from all tribes for His work,** high and low. rich and poor. He called Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah, the first tribe, and he called Aholiab of the tribe of Dan—the last tribe. God is no respecter of persons. Acts 10.34.

2. **What God looks for in His workers:**
   (a) First of all they must be born again. Bezaleel's grandfather's name means "born free".
   (b) **Humility**—Bezaleel means, "In the shadow of God." We should hide ourselves in God's shadow. Is. 42.2; Col. 3.3.
   (c) They should be filled with the Spirit, v. 3. Eph. 5.18.
   (d) Willing for "all manner of work," great or small, v. 3.

3. **God calls some to train others,** who can go out and do the work, or carry o, after we are called Home, Ex. 35.34. But He calls some to be helps, all cannot be leaders and first teachers. I Cor. 12.28; II Cor. 6.1.

4. **How they did the work.** God gave them a pattern, Ex. 25.40, and they copied it, 39.43. Let us do God's work in God's way. "according to the pattern."

5. **The work was finished,** Ex. 40.33. Many start work and then leave off. Like the Lord Jesus and Paul let us finish the work God gives us to do. John 17.4; II Tim. 4.7.

6. **The work was examined to see how it had been done,** 39.43. We must all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ when our work will be tried. Rom. 14.10.

Verse to learn, Rom. 14.10.

56. THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD

Exodus 28:1-5; 29:1-12, 15-21

Golden Text: Heb. 9:14

I. The Necessity for the Priesthood.

1. A sinning people. Psalms 95:10; 106:24 ,25; Cp. Rom. 3:10-19, 23.
2. A holy God who hates sin and must punish it. Habak. 1:13; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Rom. 6:23; 1:18; 2:3 ,etc.

II. The Work of the Priesthood.

1. To offer up sacrifices to God. Exo. 30:10, etc.; Lev. 6:7; Heb. 8:3.
2. To mediate between God and man. Heb. 9:7; Exo. 29:42; Heb. 5:1, etc.
3. To purify the unclean. Lev. 15:30, 31, etc.
4. To teach the law. Deut. 33:10.

III. The Installation of the Priesthood. A wonderful type of Christ's work.

1. The preparation. The holy garments. Exo. 28: 2-4. For glory and beauty.
   (1) The Ephod. Vs. 6-7. (2) The girdle. Vs. 8-12. (3) The Breastplate. Vs. 13-30. (4) The robe of blue. Vs. 31-35. With its border of bells and pomegranates (Testimony and fruit). (5) The Mitre. Vs. 36-38. (6) The robe of fine linen. V. 39.
2. The clothing. Exo. 29:1-6.
3. The anointing. V. 7. Cp. Heb. 1:8, 9.
4. The Offering for their sin. Vs. 10-18; Cp. Heb. 5:3; 7:26, 27.
   Note: (1) Identification. V. 10. (2) Death of Victim. V. 11. (3) Atonement. V. 12. (4) Judgment satisfied. (5) Acceptance. Vs. 13-14.
5. The Consecration. Vs. 19-28. (1) The sweet savour offering. V. 25. (2) The blood applied. V. 20. (a) To the ear—Godward—hear. Cp. John 10:27; Matt. 13:9. (b) To the hand—manward—work. Eph. 2:10; Titus 3:8; Col. 3:22-24; Gal. 6:10, etc. (c) To the feet—earthward—walk. Eph. 2:1, 10; 4:1, 17; 5:1, 8, 15. (d) To garments—character—life. Rom. 12:1; 6:13, 19; 2 Cor. 5:15, etc. (3) The Consecration. Vs. 23-26. Set apart for God alone. To consecrate is to "fill the hands." A consecrated life is one filled with Christ and set in motion for God.

IV. Its Type.

1. Man a sinner. Rom. 3:10-19, etc.
2. God holy and sin hating. Ex. 34:6-7.
3. Christ the High Priest.
   (1) His Incarnation. Heb. 2:14; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:14-16.
   (2) His absolute holiness. Heb. 7:26; 2 Cor. 5:21.
   (3) His Sacrifice—Himself. Heb. 9:11-14, 26; 10:4-14.
   (4) His powerful advocacy. Heb. 7:24-25, on behalf of those who trust Him.
   (5) There is therefore no longer need for the Levitical priesthood which was done away in Christ. Heb. 10:11. He is first Saviour, then great high Priest to every believer.

57. THE RENEWED COVENANT

Exodus 33:1—34:10, 28-35

Golden Text: Exo 33:14

I. The Repentant People. Exo. 33:1-10.

1. God's message. Vs. 1-3.
2. Their humiliation. Vs. 4-6.
3. The Tabernacle's new location "outside the camp." V. 7.
4. Separation unto God the true test of the reality of their repentance. V. 7; Cp. Heb. 13: 13-15; Prov. 28:13; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 7:1.

II. The Interceding Leader. Vs. 9-13.

1. The petition described. V. 11. What intimacy is here suggested!
2. The petition. Vs. 12-13. (1) Acknowledgment of God's grace in the past. Vs. 12. (2) Desire for God's grace and presence for the present. V. 13. (3) Desire to see God's glory. V. 18. What Moses desired and God granted is what each believer needs and which God, in His grace, has supplied.

III. The Promise of God. Vs. 14-23.

1. His presence assured. Vs. 14-15, 17; Cp. Heb. 13:5; Matt. 11:28-30; Matt. 28:19, 20; Isa. 41:10, 13, 14; Isa. 26:3, 4.
2. His revelation promised. Vs. 17-20. The reason. V. 17. "Found grace." Cp. Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 2: 11; Rom. 11:6; 2 Cor. 8:9; 9:8; John 1:14, etc.
3. His Protection provided. Vs. 20:23.—What God gave him. (1) A Place "By Me." Cp. Eph. 2:6; John 17:24; Eph. 2:13, etc. (2) A position "on a rock." Cp. 1 Cor. 3:11; Psalm 18:2; Matt. 7:24; 21:44. (3) A Provision "in a clift." Isa. 32:2; Prov. 30:26; Psalm 32:7. "In Christ." (4) A Protection. "Cover thee." Jude 24; John 10:27-30; Jude 1. (5) A Portion—God's revelation of Himself. The word "back parts" would be better rendered "afterglow." Exo. 34:5-9; Cp. 2 Cor. 4:6; 2 Cor. 3:17-18.

IV. The Revelation of God. Ch. 34:1-10; 28:35.

1. The Command. Vs. 1-4. God's holy requirements still the same. God does not abate His demands because of man's sin. God is unchangeable in His Divine attributes.
2. The Revealing. Vs. 5-7. What a marvelous revelation. Analyze this.
3. The Effect. Vs. 8-9. (1) Humiliation. (2) Worship. This is always the effect upon man. See Isa. 6:1-5; Job 42:5, 6; Dan. 10:7-10; Rev. 1:12-17.
4. The Promise. V. 10. The renewed covenant. Cp. The new covenant made by the Lord Jesus at the cost of His own blood. How far this one is exceeded by "the better covenant" Luke 22:20; Heb. 7:22.
5. The Shining Face. Vs. 28-35. Cp. 2 Cor. 3:18 and 2 Cor. 4:6

58. THE OFFERINGS

Leviticus 1:1-6; 2:1-3; 3:1-2; 4:1-7; 6:1-5

Golden Text: Hebrews 9:12

As in the case of the Tabernacle it will be impossible to more than lightly touch on this important subject. It should, however, be taught, and the great truth of substitutionary sacrifice emphasized.

I. Their Necessity. Because of

1. God's holiness. Lev. 19:2; Habakkuk 1:13; Heb. 1:9; Isa. 6:3.
2. Man's sinfulness. Lev. 4:2, 13, 20, 22, 27, 31; Gal. 3:22; Isa. 1:4, 6.
3. God's righteousness, justice and love. Rom. 3:21-26.

II. Their Variety. 5 in all.

1. Burnt. Ch. 1.
2. Meal. Ch. 2.
3. Peace. Ch. 3.
4. Sin. Ch. 4.
5. Trespass. Ch. 5-7.

III. Their Significance to the Offerer.

1. It acknowledged God's claim of perfect holiness.
2. It admitted that the offerer was destitute of it.
3. It reveals that the offerer realized he deserved death because of his sin.
4. It indicates that he owned he needed an offering to bear his sins and take his place in death.
5. It shows that this offering must be acceptable to God.
6. It signified that this offering took his place and was accepted in his stead.

IV. Their Ritual.

1. Presentation. 1:3. Individually—publicly he thus acknowledged his sin. Cp. John 1:29.
2. Identification. 1:4; 2:2; 4:4, etc. The transference, in picture, of his sin to the offering. Cp. Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18.
3. Substitution—death of the victim. 1:5. "Kill," etc. Death must take place. "Blood." Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:20.
4. Application—the blood applied. God's justice satisfied. 1:5; 2:2; 4:6; 5:9, etc. Heb. 9:10-12; 10:1-2, 12-14.
5. Acceptation. The offerer accepted through the offering. 1:4; 4:31; 5:6, etc. Cp. Eph. 1:6; Rom. 3:24; 1 John 2:12, etc., etc.

V. Their Meaning to Us.

1. The Burnt Offering—Christ's perfect dedication of Himself to God. Eph. 5:2; Rom. 12:1.
2. Meal Offering—Christ's offering of Himself to God for the service of man.
3. Peace Offering—Christ's work made peace with God for us. Col. 1:20; Eph. 2:14; Rom. 5:1.
4. Sin Offering—Christ made sin for us. John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; Rom. 8:3. Christ died for what I **am**, sin.
5. Trespass Offering—Christ delivered for our sinful acts. Rom. 4:25. Christ died for what I **did**, sins.

59. NADAB AND ABIHU

Leviticus 10:1-11

Golden Text: Isa. 55:8

I. Their Privileges.

1. They had a godly father—Aaron. What an advantage this is!
2. They had a good upbringing. (1) Had the word of God in their home. (2) Doubtless read it. (3) Doubtless heard its instructions and knew way of approach to God. Privilege brings responsibility; Cp. John 12:47, 48; Matt. 11:20-24; Amos 3:2; Luke 12:47, 48. "Light rejected bringeth night." "Thou knewest . . . thou oughtest." Matt. 25:26-27.

II. Their Presumption—"offered strange fire."

1. Their own fire; V. 1. They took their own way. (Ill. Cain); Cp. Prov. 14:12. The worship of selfwill. How like many today who refuse to acknowledge God's way of approach, and substitute for God's way of salvation their own ideas, and declare: "I have my own religion."
2. Rejected God's instructions; Cp. Lev. 16:12. Fire speaks of God's (1) Righteousness; Deut. 33:2; Heb. 12:29. (2) Favor; 2 Chron. 7:1. (3) Word; Jer. 20:9. God is a jealous God and will not share the place of preeminence and authority with any one. Isa. 42:8. So also with the Gospel. See Gal. 1:8. Cp. Exo. 20:5. There is but one Saviour and one way of salvation. To reject the former and ignore the latter is to perish in one's sins.
3. Tried to force their way into presence of God. Cp. Lev. 16:2. Their's was the boldness of presumption. Cp. the boldness of faith; Heb. 10:19-22.

III. Their Punishment; Vs. 2-11.

1. The Judgment. V. 2. They perished by that which they had rejected; Cp. Matt. 21:42-44. The rejected Saviour becomes the accusing Judge; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9. Their priest's coats did not save them, neither their position nor their privileges. Note other cases of those who were slain by the Lord. Korah, Uzzah, Ananias and Sapphira. Num. 16; 2 Sam. 6; Acts 5.
2. The Lesson; Vs. 3-7. (1) God must be sanctified in the worshipper; Cp. John 4:23-24; Heb. 10:14; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; Jude 1. (2) God must be approached with reverence and glorified before all; John 13:31; 2 Thess. 1:12, etc. (3) God must be first in all things. Not our thoughts but God's word is the only true guide.
3. The Application; Vs. 8-11. (1) The warning as to strong drink; V. 9, Cp. Prov. 20:1; 23:20-35. This seems to indicate that both Nadab and Abihu were under the influence of strong drink at the time. The teacher would do well to point out the evils of intemperance and the advisability of total abstinence. (2) The distinction between clean and unclean; V. 10; Cp. 2 Cor. 6:14-18. (3) The necessity for right teaching; V. 11, Cp. 2 Tim. 2:15.

60. THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER

READ Leviticus 13: 44-46; 14: 2-8, 14-17.
THEME: Cleansing from sin.

LEPROSY IS A TYPE OF SIN.—

LEPROSY IS A DISEASE OF THE BLOOD. The spots were only the symptoms of the terrible and loathsome disease within. Acts of sin are only the expression of the state of sin within the heart. The root must be dealt with. Sins are *acts* which are the manifestation of the *state* of the heart, and of the *nature* which is enmity toward God. That God should use such a loathsome disease as leprosy for a picture of sin shows us what He thinks of sin.

THE PRIEST PRONOUNCED THE MAN UNCLEAN — HIS DECISION WAS FINAL (13: 44). We hear much today about the "divine spark in man which needs only to be developed," but God's Word says man in his natural state is unclean and sinful. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Is. 64: 6). "*All* have sinned, and come short" (Rom. 3: 23). Let us accept *God's* estimate of us and His statement as to our condition.

THE LEPER MUST LIVE OUTSIDE THE CAMP (13: 46). He could not go into the temple, nor take any part in the worship; he was an outcast. The leper was unclean. God's Word speaking of the sinner says, "For this ye know, that no . . . unclean person . . . hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ" (Eph. 5: 5). "There shall in no wise enter into it (heaven) anything that defileth" (Rev. 21: 27).

THERE WAS NO HEALING FOR THE LEPER APART FROM GOD. He might try by every means in his power to get healing but it was impossible. All he could do was to put a covering on his upper lip and say, "Unclean, unclean" (Lev. 13: 45). The sinner can do nothing to rid himself of sin (Rom. 4: 4, 5). He may try, as Adam and Eve did, to cover his sin, but it is hopeless. (See Book 1, Lesson 2, page 5.)

HOW THE LEPER WAS CLEANSED.

THE PRIEST SOUGHT THE LEPER, NOT THE LEPER THE PRIEST. He went to where the leper was (Lev. 14: 3). All through Scripture we see God seeking man. When Adam and Eve sinned and hid from God, He came seeking them and called, "Where art thou?" The Good Shepherd went after the lost sheep (Luke 15: 4); the father ran to meet the prodigal son (Luke 15: 20); the Lord Jesus left His Father's home in glory and came to earth where sinners were; He came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19: 10).

BLOOD WAS SHED FOR HIM (Lev. 14: 5). *THE BIRD KILLED* was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ crucified for us. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5: 8). "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5: 6). "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15: 3). The blood of Jesus Christ alone cleanses from sin. If Christ had come only to live a sinless and blameless life on earth, we should never have been saved and cleansed. He must die, for "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22).

THE LIVING BIRD REPRESENTS THE LORD JESUS RISEN AND ASCENDED, bearing away the leper's stain, making a "new and living way" for us. The living bird had first been dipped in the blood of the bird that had been slain, and as it flew upward it had blood on its wings. Christ when nailed to the cross bore our sins; He rose from the dead without one of those sins on Him. He was delivered for our offences (the bird slain), and was raised again (the living bird), for our justification" (Rom. 4: 25). There is no record of sin against those who have trusted Him as Saviour; they are free from all guilt. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 1).

THE PRIEST PRONOUNCED THE LEPER CLEAN after he had been sprinkled with the blood (Lev. 14: 7). When by faith we have received Christ as Saviour, and our hearts have been sprinkled with His blood, God says our sins have been purged (Heb. 1: 3). His blood was shed for the remission of sins (Matt. 26: 28). When God says, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions" (Is. 44: 22), let us believe it. Take God at His Word, this is not presumption but faith. "These things have I written . . . that ye may *know that ye have eternal life*" (1 John 5: 13).

AFTER THE CLEANSING.—

AFTER THE LEPER WAS CLEANSED BY THE PRIEST, HE WASHED HIS CLOTHES (Lev. 14: 8, 9). For his cleansing the leper did nothing, but after the blood was sprinkled on him and the bird let loose he began to wash his clothes and himself in water. After we are saved and cleansed we must go to the Word of God (the water) and cleanse our habits and our ways. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (2 Cor. 7: 1). There must be no compromise with sin, no reverting to the old habits which once enslaved us. But there is not only defilement of the flesh, but of the spirit. It is not enough to avoid the glaring sins of the outward life, but of the inner temple, that part of our life which only God sees. For this cleansing God demands our will only. Directly we are willing and eager, He steps in and does all the rest. Let us co-operate with Him.

OIL WAS PUT ON THE LEPER'S EAR, HAND AND FOOT (Lev. 14: 17). Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit. Let us *yield our ear* to Him to listen to His voice speaking to us through His Word, and to turn away our ear from listening to anything that would grieve Him—the questionable joke, unkind tales and criticisms of others. *Let us yield our hand* to Him so that we may do only those things that may please Him, and that everything we do may be done in the power of the Spirit. *Let us yield our feet* to Him that we may go to no place of which He would not approve; on the contrary, that we may run to do His bidding. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us power to live a holy life. Let us "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5: 16).

MEMORY VERSE.—1 John 1: 7—"The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER

Leviticus 14:1-9, 11-18

Golden Text: Rom. 4:24, 25

A beautiful picture of man's desperate need through sin and God's wondrous remedy in Christ.

I. **The Significance of Leprosy.** It is the supreme type of sin as seen in God's word.

1. In its insignificant beginning "scab, boil," etc.; Lev. 13:19; Rom. 5:12; James 2:10, etc.
2. In its progress in the body, affecting every part. See the full length description of man in Romans 3:10-19; Lev. 13:7, 8. Cp. James 1: 15; Gen. 6:5, etc.
3. In its loathsomeness, "unclean;" Lev. 13:8. Cp. Isa. 64:6; Psalm 14:3; Eph. 2:12.
4. Often hereditary; Cp. Psalm 51:5; Rom. 5:19.
5. Incurable in its nature except by Divine intervention; Cp. Eph. 2:8; Rom. 10:3; John 3:3; Jer. 2:22; Job 9:30, 31; Jer. 13:23; Rom. 5:6.
6. In its separating influence—"outside;" Lev. 13:45; Cp. Isa. 59:1, 2; Rev. 21:27.
7. In its result—death; Cp. Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:4.

II. **The Cleansing;** Vs. 1-9.

1. The leper does nothing; Vs. 1-3. "Shall be brought;" Cp. Rom. 4:4, 5; Eph. 2:8, 9. The sinner helpless to save himself.
2. The priest seeks the leper; V. . Cp. Luke 19: 10; Titus 2:11. Illus. Luke 10:33.
3. The two birds; V. 4. (1) Alive; Cp. Life of Christ seen in activity for God. (2) Clean—spotlessness of Christ; Cp. 1 Peter 2:22; Matt. 3:17; John 8:29.
4. One killed in earthen vessel over running water—Christ through the eternal Spirit (running water) offered to God; Heb. 9:14. Put to death in flesh (earthen vessel); Cp. 2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Peter 3:18.
5. Live bird dipped in blood and released—Christ raised for our justification; Cp. Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:17.
6. The blood applied; V. 7. Under the blood; Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7; Rom. 3:25.
7. Cleansing pronounced; V. 8. Cp. 1 Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5; 1 John 4:16-19.

III. **The Result;** Vs. 11-18.

1. The offering of the Lamb; Vs. 10-14. Christ's death and resurrection as it affects (1) Our hearing; John 5:24; Luke 8:18. (2) Our working; Mark 16:15. (3) Our living; 2 Cor. 5:15.
2. The application of the oil—Vs. 15-18—type of the Holy Spirit as He affects (1) Our hearing; Cp. Rev. 2:7. (2) Working; Cp. Rev. 22:17; 1 Cor. 12:4. (3) Living; Gal. 5:16, 22-25.

Witchcraft.

Read Leviticus 19.26, 28, 31; Ch. 20, 27.

Things God forbade Israel, and forbids us also in the New Testament.

1. **Eating blood:** Acts 15.29.
2. **Spoiling the body** which is God's temple. I Corinthians 6.19, 20.
3. **Witchcraft.** Galatians 5.20, 21. This means finding out things with hot stones, making a swear, listening to evil spirits who are sent by Satan, and many other things. We are not to trust evil spirits to keep us from sickness or trouble, to make our gardens grow, to help us catch fish, or to help us in anything. Psalm 104.14, 15, 25.
4. **Observing times,** means taking notice of signs when we are going to do any special thing and changing the day for fear of evil spirits. Psalm 118.24.
5. **God hates every kind of witchcraft.** He destroyed the Canaanites for doing it and punished Israel with death. God says, "Come out and be separate." **Verse to learn,** II Corinthians 6.17.

61. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Leviticus 16:1-22

Golden Text: Lev. 17:11

I. Its Character.

1. The greatest day for the children of Israel; Cp. the greatest day in life of sinner—the day he is saved.—"Happy day!"
2. The countless sins of whole year removed. See Vs. 30, 34; Cp. John 1:29. Note the various expressions used to describe sins. (1) Transgressions which means a going beyond God's law. Num 14:41. (2) Trespass which means unfaithfulness to a trust or a slipping away from God's requirement. Matt. 6:14. (3) Iniquity which means moral perversity, self will. Rom. 6:13. (4) Ignorance. Lev. 4:13. The failure to know God's will. (5) Sin which means a coming short of a given standard. Rom. 3:23. (6) Sins of omission—the failure to do what we should have done. James 4:17.

II. Its Scope. Atonement was made for—

1. Aaron and his house; Vs. 6.
2. Holy Place and Tabernacle; V. 16.
3. Altar and outer court; Vs. 18-19.
4. Whole congregation; Vs. 22-24.
5. For all iniquities, transgressions and sins; Vs. 16, 21, 22. Cp. 1 John 2:2; 1 Tim. 1:5, 6. "All." John 3:16, 17; Heb. 9:26.

III. Its Ritual. The two-fold aspect of Christ work seen in the two goats.

1. Only the high priest—all done by him, none other; Cp. Heb. 1:3; Acts 4:12.
2. Priest in spotless white; V. 4; Cp. Heb. 9:14; 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21. Christ's sinlessness.
3. The goat slain—(Jehovah's lot); V. 15; Cp. John 11:52; 12:24; 10:15, 17, 18; 1 Cor. 15:3.
4. Its blood taken in holiest of all; Vs. 15; Cp. Heb. 9:11, 12; 10:19. Before the mercy seat, satisfying all laws demands; Cp. Heb. 9:7, 8.
5. The result — Atonement — "covering" for all their sins; Cp. Heb. 9:14; Rom. 3:25, 26.
6. The living goat; Vs. 20-21. (1) Identification their sins laid on it; V. 21; Cp. Isa. 53:6; 2 Cor. 5:21. (2) Sent away; V. 21; Cp. "Bore away;" John 1:29; 1 Peter 2:24, 25, etc. (3) Where sent wilderness—never to return; Cp. Ps. 103:12; Jer. 31:34; Micah 7:19; Isa. 38:17; Rom. 5:1; 8:1, etc.

IV. Its Limitation. It had to be repeated each year. Point out the difference between atonement and expiation. Atonement simply means "to cover." The word is used in Gen. 6:14. The blood of these sacrifices could not take away, but merely covered up their sins. See Heb. 10:4. Christ came, not to cover up sins, but to put them away eternally. Heb. 9:26; 10:10-22. The word is not used in the N. T. The N. T. word is "reconciliation." Rom. 5:11 margin. Atonement covered the sins, but did not change the sinner. The Reconciliation of Christ not only removes the sinner's sins, but gives him a place of acceptance before God as a worshipper.

The Two Goats.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Read Leviticus 16.7, 8, 10, 21, 22.

Two Goats—Christ our Sacrifice. v. 8.

1. **One goat must die.** God is a holy God and must punish sin. Christ died for our sins; He took our punishment.
2. **The live goat**—Aaron put the sins of Israel on the scape goat which carried them right away until Christ blotted them out on the cross. But God has laid our sins on Jesus Christ. "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." I Peter 2.24.
3. The live goat carried away **all** their sins. God forgives **all** our sins. Psalm 103.3.
4. No one could find that goat again. No man can find our sins after God forgives us. They are put away. Psalm 103.12.
5. The people repented of their sins. "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3.17.

Verse to learn, Hebrews 10.17. "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

62. THE FEASTS OF JEHOVAH

Leviticus 23:1-38

Golden Text: Psalm 144:15

These were occasions when God's people could meet together and rejoice before Him. God desires a rejoicing people. God gives the way to obtain true blessedness or happiness in His word. It consists of—

1. A need realized; Matt. 5:6. (1) Man's state revealed; Rom. 3:10-19. (2) His need stated; John 3:3; Matt. 18:3; Luke 13:3.
2. A proclamation heard; Psalm 89:15. The gospel; Rom. 10:15-17; Matt. 13:9, 16, 17; John 5:24.
3. A testimony received; John 20:29; Cp. Heb. 11: 1, 6; 1 John 5:9-13.
4. A pardon experienced; Psalm 32:1.

I. Their Necessity.

1. Remembrance; V. 43; Cp. Exo. 12:25-27. The sin of forgetfulness; Deut. 4:9; 8:11-14.
2. Repentance; V. 27; Cp. Rev. 2:5.
3. Rejoicing; Cp. Deut. 16:14, 15, 17; 26: 10, 11; Neh. 8:10.

II. Their Number. 7 in all.

1. Passover; V. 5.
2. Unleavened bread; Vs. 6-8.
3. First fruits; Vs. 9-14.
4. Pentecost; Vs. 15-23.
5. Trumpets; Vs. 24-25.
6. Atonement; Vs. 27:32.
7. Tabernacles; Vs. 33-38.

III. Their Significance. All these feasts are typical and show, in brief, the events in Christ's life from the cross to the glory. They also have a practical bearing on the believer's life.

1. Passover—Christ's death for us; V. 5. Cp. 1 Cor. 5:7.
   This brought to their remembrance (1) Their state; Cp. Exo. 1:11-23. The bondage of sin; (2) God's care; Cp. Exo. 2:24; 2:7, 8. (3) God's way of salvation. (a) The Lamb slain; Exo. 12:6. Cp. 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6. (b) The blood applied; Exo. 12:22; Rom. 3:25. (c) The assuring word; Exo. 12:13. Cp. 1 John 5:9-13; John 5:24; Rom. 8:1.
2. Unleavened Bread—Christ's perfect life. This can illustrate the separate walk. Leaven is a type of evil, and God wants His people to be separated from all known sin. Num. 23:9; Cp. 1 Cor. 5:6-8.
3. First fruits; Vs. 9-14. Christ in resurrection, Cp. 1 Cor. 15:23. This brings to remembrance goodness of God; Matt. 5:45; Rom. 2:4.
4. Pentecost; 15-23. The coming of the Holy Spirit; Acts 2:1-4; John 15:26; 16:7-14, etc Faithfulness of God; Gen. 8:22.
5. Trumpets—Vs. 15:23. The second coming of Christ; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58. Our gathering to Him; 2 Thess. 2:1.
6. Atonement—The manifestation of Christ as Messiah to Israel; Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7. The justice and righteousness and provision of God for their sins.
7. Tabernacles—The rest and peace of Christ's reign on the earth; Isa. 11:6-10, etc.

63. THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

Leviticus 25:8-17, 47-55

Golden Text: Psalm 89:15

A type of the acceptable year of the Lord. Luke 4:19.

I. The need of it.

1. It was a recognition of God's ownership of land. Deut. 15:1-4. V. 23.
2. Condition of the Hebrew slave. (1) His poverty. V. 47. Cp. Eph. 2:12. What the sinner is said to be without. He is described as being without God, Christ, the Spirit, life, hope, peace, righteousness, excuse and escape from the just judgment of a holy God if he dies in that condition. (2) His servitude. V. 47. "Sold." Cp. Rom. 7:14; 1 Kings 21:20; 2 Kings 17:17; Isa. 50:1; 52:3.

II. The Basis of it—Atonement. V. 9.

1. The people's sin. Cp. Lev. 16:16, etc. Rom. 3:23; Isa. 64:6.
2. God's remedy—Blood See notes on day of atonement. Heb. 9:22.
3. The result—proclamation of jubilee—joy. Cp. Acts 10:38-43; 13:38, 39.

III. The Proclamation of it. Trumpets. V. 9. God wanted all to hear. (Picture a slave working in field. What happens when he hears trumpet and believes?) Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 4:18, 19. Here is the royal proclamation from the lips of the Son of God Himself, the antitype of all the Old Testament types and symbols.

IV. The Provision in it.

1. Liberty. V. 10. Cp. John 8:36; Gal. 5:1; Rom. 8:1; Rom. 8:21.
2. Forgiveness; V 35; Acts 13:38 ;Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:13; 1 John 2:12.
3. Restoration. Vs. 13; Cp. Eph. 1:11; Rom. 8:17-23; 1 Cor. 3:21-23.
4. Rest. V. 5; Cp. Matt. 11:28-30; Heb. 4:3.
5. Provision. Vs. 19-21 Cp Abundant (1) Grace. 1 Tim. 1:14. (2) Mercy. 1 Peter 1:3. (3) Pardon. Isa. 55:7. (4) Life. John 10:10. (5) Provision. S. S. 5:1. (6) Ability. Eph. 3:20. (7) Peace; Psalm 72:7. (8) Joy, Phil. 1:26. (9) Satisfaction. Psalm 36:8. (10) Entrance. 2 Peter 1:11.
6. Fellowship. V. 17. Reunion and brotherly love. Cp. Acts 2:41, 42; Heb. 10:25.
7. Rejoicing—jubilee—joy. When a sinner is saved. (1) God rejoices. Zeph. 3:17. (2) Christ. Luke 15:6; Heb. 12:2. (3) The church. Acts 15:3. (4) The saved one himself. Luke 15:24; Rom. 15:13. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" Our word "jubilation," denoting joy, comes from this word "jubilee." The "gospel" means good tidings. Rom. 10:15; The angel who proclaimed Christ's incarnation spoke of "good tidings of great joy." Luke 2:10. Let us proclaim this jubilee!

64. THE SILVER TRUMPETS

Numbers 10:1-13

Golden Text: Matt. 28:19, 20

A type of the Gospel proclamation.

I. The Trumpets.

1. The number. V. 2. This could illustrate the extent of God's message—the Old and New Testament. The Old Testament pointing forward to Christ, the New Testament revealing Him. The number two also speaks of the completeness of testimony "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall everything be established" Matt. 18:16.
2. The Material—silver, picture of redemption, the theme of both Old and New Testaments. Exo. 30:11-16; 1 Peter 1:18.
3. The construction—a whole piece. The two Testaments are one book. Heb. 1:1, 2; 10:7; John 5:39. In the Old Testament the New Testament lies concealed. In the New Testament the Old Testament is revealed.

II. The Sounders—Aaron's sons. V. 8. Only God's people can sound the trumpets. There is a great army of unregenerate men and women who imagine they have been fitted by a religious education to sound the Gospel trumpet,. See Psalms 50:16, 17; Matt. 15:14. Aaron's sons are a type of Christians who have been

1. Called. Num. 8:6. Cp. Matt. 11:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 1:7; 1 Thess. 1:8.
2. Cleansed. Num. 8:6. (1) By blood—sacrifice. V. 8. The basis of cleansing. 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 John 1:7; Heb. 9:14. (2) By water. V. 7.—By the word. Cp. Eph. 5:26; John 15:3; Psalm 119:9. (3) By separation from world. V. 14. Cp. John 17:16; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 John 2:15, 16.
3. Offered. Num. 8:15; Cp. Rom. 12:1, 2.
4. Given. Num. 8:19. Cp. John 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12; John 10:29.
5. Serving. Num. 8:15, 19; 2 Cor. 5:15; Col. 3:24; 1 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 9:14.

III. The Message. It was varied. They sounded

1. The call of atonement. V. 10; Cp. Isa. 1:18; John 1:29; Acts 16:31.
2. The call to gather. V. 4. Cp. Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19; Acts 10:43; 13:38; Matt. 11:28; Isa. 55:1, 2.
3. The call to journey. V. 6. Cp. 1 Peter 2:11, 12. To walk. See Eph. 2:2; 2:10; 4:1; 4:17; 5:2; 5:8; 5:15.
4. The call to conflict. V. 9; Cp. 1 Peter 5:8, 9; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7; 2 Cor. 10:9; Eph. 6:10-18.
5. The call to alarm. V. 5; Cp. 1 Tim. 5:1-6; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Rom. 13:11-14; Eph. 5:14.
6. The call to remembrance. V. 10. "The glad and solemn days." (1) The Lord's supper. 1 Cor. 11:23-26. (2) The Lord's goodness. Malachi 3:16-17; Heb. 10:33-37. God's people must seek to be skilful trumpeters of the word of God by diligent study, prayerful preparation and faithful presentation of the Gospel. See Isa. 58:1; Cp. 1 Cor. 14:7-9; Ezekiel 33:1-9.

65. THE LUSTING MULTITUDE

Num. 10:29-11:25, 30-35

Golden Text: Psa. 106: 24, 25

I. The Invitation. 10-:29.

1. The Confession. "We are journeying." Cp. 1 Peter 2:11; Heb. 11:13; John 14:1-3.
2. The Invitation. "Come." Cp. Gen. 7:1; Isa. 1:18; Matt. 11:28; Rev. 22:17, etc.
3. The Promise. "Do good." Psalm 4:6. The good things God gives. Psalm 84:11; Salvation, Peace, Joy, Heaven, etc. James 1:17.
4. The Testimony. "Spoken good." Exo. 3:8; Isa. 3:10; John 10:27-30, etc.

II. The Refusal. V. 30. He preferred his own country and kindred. Illustrate by showing some other refusals. Rich Young Man. Mark 10:22; Pilate. Matt. 27:24; Judas. Matt. 27:3-5. What is your answer?

III. The Journey. Vs. 33-36.

1. The Van-Guard. V. 33. The Ark was the symbol of the incarnate Son of God. He it is Who leads the way and commands His people. "follow Me." Cp. John 10:3, 4, 27. How does God lead now? By His word. Isa. 30:21, etc.
2. The token of God's presence. The shekinah cloud of the glory of God. V. 34.
3. The Benediction. Vs. 35-36. Cp. 2 Cor. 13:14.

IV. The Mixed Multitude. 11:1-5.

1. Their Origin—from Egypt—and of Egypt. This "mixed multitude" has been the curse of Christendom. Unregenerated people, through the indifference and ignorance of those who should have known better, have been allowed to become "church members" and "church workers" and even so called "ministers," to the great confusion of the true church and its testimony to the world. Cp. 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 15:33.
2. Their murmuring. V. 1. Cp. Exo. 16:8; Job 15:11; 1 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:14.
3. Their cry. Vs. 4-5. The lusts of the flesh. Cp. 1 John 2:16. They remembered the food of Egypt but forgot their bondage, the lash of the taskmaster and their tears and groans at the cruel oppression. Exo. 2:23-25.
4. Their despising. Vs. 6-9. Despised God's provision. Manna, a type of Christ. Isa. 53:3; Acts 13:41; Rom. 2:4; Luke 10:16; Heb. 10:29.

V. Moses' Request. Vs. 10-15. The burden of the children of Israel. Cp. 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 12: 9; James 1:5; Isa. 40:29-31.

VI. God's Supply. Vs. 31-32. No limit with God's power. Cp. Psalm 106:15. It is a sad day for the child of God when he gains worldly prosperity, and ease at the cost of spiritual health. See 3 John 2. God does not guarantee to supply our "wants," but our "needs." Phil. 4: 19. He knows best what our needs are. Matt. 6:25-34.

VII. God's Judgment. Vs. 33-34. Upon their murmerings, despisings and lusts. Cp. Gal. 6:7; Psa. 58:11; 1 Cor. 11:28-32.

66. THE TWELVE SPIES

READ Numbers 13; 14: 1-11.

THEME: The sin of unbelief.

TELL THE STORY.

The Children of Israel were encamped on the borders of Canaan, the beautiful, fertile land God had promised to give them. Here they could have had rest, and their own homes, fields and vineyards. They should have entered in at once, but unbelief shut them out, and they wandered in the wilderness for forty years, when they might have been enjoying the good land.

CANAAN IS A PICTURE OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE—holy, happy, victorious and fruitful. There are many who truly belong to God, they have trusted Christ as Saviour, but they are not victorious. They are being defeated. They have not yet entered into Canaan. They are like the Children of Israel, wandering in the wilderness. What is the reason? Why is it that some are living the life of victory and power, and others are not? There are certain conditions to be observed if we would experience the blessing of which Canaan is the type.

"If ye be *willing* and *obedient*, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1: 19). We must be *willing to yield* to the Holy Spirit in everything, and *obedient* in all that He tells us to do. God sets this life before us, but we must "go in and possess" (Deut. 1: 8). Do not be content to remain in the wilderness with an up-and-down experience, living a life of defeat and failure. This life of victory is not for the favoured few, but for *all* Christians.

GOD'S COMMAND. "I have set the land before you; go in and possess" (Deut. 1: 8). This life of victory and fruitfulness may be yours *now*. Do not try to make yourself better; trust Christ to do it for you. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5: 4). Claim by faith God's victory for you over temper, pride, selfishness, and all the things which cause you to be defeated. God *gives* the land — we go in and possess it.

GOD'S PROMISE. "I will make all thine enemies turn their backs" (Ex. 23: 27). Notice it was *the Lord* who was to overcome their enemies for them. Leave Him to overcome for you the enemies in your spiritual life. Do not think that the reward of faith lies out of present reach, that you must wait till you get to heaven before your enemies can be overcome.

THE UNBELIEF OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.—

THEY DOUBTED GOD'S PROMISE. They asked for men to go and search the land (Deut. 1: 22). They would rather believe the report of the men who would see the land than God's description of it. Believe what God says about a victorious life, that it is possible for *you*. It is not a mirage, but a blessed fact.

THEY DOUBTED GOD'S POWER. They thought they must overcome the enemy in their own strength. They believed the spies who said, "We be not able . . . we were . . . as grasshoppers" (Num. 13: 31, 33). They looked at themselves instead of to God, otherwise the Canaanites would have appeared to them to be the grasshoppers. Do you say, "I

was born with this bad temper, I have inherited this, that, and the other, therefore it cannot be overcome"? Or do you say, "I cannot be a Christian who is 100 per cent. for God; there is too much to overcome, or too many difficulties in the way"? This is unbelief; it is doubting God's power.

THEY SHUT THEMSELVES OUT OF CANAAN BY UNBELIEF (Heb. 3: 19). It was not God's fault that they should have wandered in the wilderness for forty years. This was entirely their own fault. God wanted them to go in *at once* and possess the land, but because of unbelief they refused.

UNBELIEF LIMITS GOD'S POWER. Israel "limited the Holy One of Israel" (Psalm 78: 41). When we doubt God's power to overcome sin in our lives we, too, limit His power. The Lord Jesus was frequently prevented from doing many mighty works because of unbelief (Mark 6: 5; Matt. 13: 58). The disciples were unable to cast out devils because of unbelief (Matt. 17: 16, 20). The Lord rebuked them for their unbelief (Matt. 17: 17). God calls it an *evil heart* of unbelief (Heb. 3: 12). He warns us against the sin of unbelief, which shuts us out from the life of victory and blessing (Heb. 4: 11).

THE SPIES.—

THE TEN SPOILED THEIR REPORT BY THE WORD "NEVERTHELESS." They said, "Surely the land floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it, NEVERTHELESS" (Num. 13: 27, 28).

There are many Christians who acknowledge that there is a life of power, blessing and victory. They have perhaps seen it in the lives of others. They may even long for it, but they put in "nevertheless."

NEVERTHELESS "THE PEOPLE BE STRONG" (Num. 13: 28). The power of the enemy was greater to them than the power of God. It does not do for us to minimise the power of the enemy, whether it be that of Satan or the flesh in our own lives; but let us beware of minimising the power of God—limiting the Holy One of Israel, and magnifying the power of the enemy.

NEVERTHELESS "THE CITIES ARE WALLED" (13: 28). We are to see later how God caused the walls to fall down flat. We may take these walls to mean the circumstances of our lives, we think we cannot possibly get past them, they are too much for us—yet they are nothing to God. These obstacles are there that we might, by the power of God, overcome them.

NEVERTHELESS "WE BE NOT ABLE TO GO UP AGAINST THE PEOPLE" (13: 31). They thought only of their own weakness. Of course *they* were not able, but God was. "Abraham . . . was strong in faith . . . and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. 4: 20, 21). Let us say, "We be not able, nevertheless *God* is able."

THE OTHER TWO SPIES, CALEB AND JOSHUA, stood out against the ten. They said, "Let us go up *at once,* and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13: 30). God rewarded their faith, for they alone of that multitude entered Canaan.

MEMORY VERSE.—Hebrews 4: 11—"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

THE SPIES' REPORT

Numbers 13:17—15:45

Golden Text: Heb. 4:2

I. The Search. Vs. 17-25.

1. Their own desire. Cp. Deut. 1:20-22. They might have gone right in. See Num. 13:20, and Cp. Exo. 3:8. They doubted God's description.
2. The earnest or proof of the goodness of the land. Vs. 23-24. Cp. The believers earnest. 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14. The Spirit of God.

II. The Two Reports (13:26-14:10) or the folly of unbelief and the wisdom of faith.

1. The majority report. 13:26-33. What they saw: (1) A wonderful country. V. 27. (2) The walled cities and the giants. V. 28. (3) Themselves as grasshoppers! Vs. 32-33.
2. The minority report. V. 30; 14:6-8. What they saw: (1) A wonderful country. V. 7. (2) The giants and cities. V. 9. "As bread for us." "Faith's trust." Cp. Heb. 11:1, 6. (3) God with them to possess the land. V. 8, 9. (4) Exhortation to possess the land. V. 9. "Well able." Num. 13:30.

III. The Result. 14:1-9. The fruits of unbelief.

1. Weeping. V. 1. Instead of joy.
2 Murmuring. Vs. 2-3. Instead of praise.
3. Rebellion. V. 4. Instead of obedience. Neh. 9:17. See Psa. 106:12, 25. They believed—and sang. They doubted—and murmured. Cp. Phil. 2:14. "Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan His works in vain."

IV. The Intercession. Vs. 10-39.

1. The glory appears. Vs. 10-12.
2. The plea of Moses. Vs. 13-19. A beautiful example of intercession. (1) The basis for it—God's honor. Vs. 13-16. His Name's Sake. Cp. Psa. 23:3; 1 Tim. 2:13; Malachi 3:16. (2) The Promise pleaded. Vs. 17-18. Cp. Micah 7:18, 19; Hosea 11:9. (3) The Precedent for it. V. 19. His continued mercy and grace.
3. God's answer. Vs. 20-39. (1) The plea granted. V. 20. (2) The change of purpose. Vs. 21-35. (3) The promise to Joshua and Caleb. Vs. 24-38. What faith did. (a) Confirmed promises of God. 13-27. (b) Shows proof of God's faithfulness. 13:26. (c) Exhorts to possession. 13-20. (d) Mourns unbelief. 14-6. (e) Trusts wholly in God and His word. 14:8-9.
4. The people's mourning. V. 39. Mourned too late. Mourned for what sin had brought, not for the sin that brought it.

V. Israel's Rashness. Vs. 40-46.

1. Acted in unbelief. V. 40. "We will."
2. Apart from God. Vs. 31-44.
3. Defeat the result. V. 45.

VI. Significance to the believer. Heb. 4:7—5:11. We can only enjoy God's best as we "trust and obey." Why be "border line" Christians, when by faith we may enter into the land of promise?

67. THE JUDGMENT OF KORAH

Numbers 16:1-50

Golden Text: Prov. 28:26

I. The Cause. Vs. 1-3; 12-14.

1. Their position. One of privilege. Privilege brings responsibility. Prov. 24:12; Amos 3:2; Prov. 1:24-30.
2. Their accusation. Vs. 3, 14. Speaking against the Lord's anointed. Cp. Prov. 16:27; 15:1; Matt. 12:34, 35; Acts 23:5; 1 Tim. 5:13. One of the greatest curses today is the whispering bickering and evil speaking amongst the Lord's people. It kills the spirit of harmony and brings the blight of death to the Gospel testimony.
3. Its origin in—(1) Envy. Cp. Prov. 14:30; 27:4; S. of S. 8:6; Matt. 27:18. (2) Pride. Cp. Job 11:12; Psa. 101:5; Prov. 13:10; 15:12, 25, 32; 30:12. (3) Unbelief. Deut. 18:19; Psa. 95:9-11; Isa. 53:1; Jer. 8:9; John 3:18.
4. Their disobedience. Vs. 12-14. They added insult to injury. They suggest it is Moses and not God who has brought them up. Note their deliberate defiance of the authority of their God appointed leader.

II. The Test. Vs. 16-36.

1. The Censors, in which incense was burned. It was the symbol of their priestly office.
2. The warning of Jehovah. Vs. 20-22. Moses' intercession for Israel. Another example of intercessory prayer. Cp. 1 Tim. 2:1-4.
3. The exhortation. Vs. 23-28. (1) God's call to separation. V. 24. Cp. 2 Cor. 6:14-16. (2) Moses warning V. 26. Cp. 2 Chron. 19:2; Psa. 1:1; 6:8; Prov. 9:6; 24:1; Jer. 15:17; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 15:33; Eph. 5:11. The perils of evil companionship.
4. The judgment. Vs. 28-35. (1) Unexpected. Vs. 30. 1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Peter 3:3-10. (2) Sudden. Vs. 31-35; Cp. 2 Thess. 1:8, 9; 1 Thess. 5:3; Prov. 29:1. (3) Merited. V. 38. "Sinned against own soul." Cp. Prov. 8:35, 36; Ezek. 33:4; Mark 16:16; John 3:18, 36. Picture the dreadful doom of the Christ rejecters who shall be cast into the lake of fire. Rev. 20:11-15. Show that God can by no means clear the guilty. Cp. however Num 26:11..

III. The Result. Vs. 37-50.

1. The memorial. Vs. 36-40. God's object lesson for the generation to come. Every judgment of God is a warning. Wise are those who see and take heed. Prov. 22:3.
2. The murmuring. Vs. 41-43.
3. The Plague. V. 46.
4. The Mediator. Vs. 47-48; Cp. 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Job 9:32, 33; Mark 10:45; John 11:49, 50.
5. The Result. V. 50. The plague stayed. Cp. Heb. 7:25, etc.

68. AARON'S ROD

Numbers 17

Golden Text: Acts 5:31

Aaron, of course, is a type of Christ, the great high Priest of His people.

I. The Representative Rods. 1-7.

1. Rod the symbol of authority, power and blessing. See Exo. 4:2; 14:16; Lev. 27:32; Num. 17:8; Exo. 17:6; Psa. 23:4; 2:9.
2. The name the symbol of character. Cp. Prov. 22:1; Matt. 1:21; Acts 3:6; 4:10; Phil. 2:9, 10.
3. All were laid up together. All looked the same. Cp. Isa. 53:2. To many, Christ was only "the carpenter's son." Matt. 13:55. They saw no beauty in Him.

II. The Representative Man. Aaron a Type of Christ.

1. In His name. Aaron—"Enlightener." He was chosen of God to speak out His mind. Exo. 4:14. Cp. John 1:18; 4:34; 3:34; 8:12, etc.
2. In His work. Offerer of sacrifices. Charge of holy things and high priest. Num. 18:8, 15, etc. Cp. Heb. 9:24-28; Matt. 11:27; John 5:22, 26; Heb. 3:1, etc.
3. In His anointing. Num. 18:8; Cp. Psa. 133. Symbol of Spirit of God. John 3:34; Heb. 9:14; Luke 4:1, etc.
4. In His blessing. Num. 6:24-26, and His seed in him. Cp. Eph. 1:3; Isa. 53:10, 11; Col. 2:10; Rom. 8:32; Num. 6:22-27.
5. In His portion. Num. 18:20. In God Himself. Cp. John 17:5; Psa. 73:26.

III. The Conclusive Proof. Vs. 8-9. The Rod showed.

1. Life "buds." Cp. John 1:4; John 11:25; 10:18.
2. Beauty "blossoms." Cp. Acts 10:38; 1 Peter 2:22,23; John 8:29; Matt. 3:17. "What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone around Thy steps while here below."
3. Fruit. "Almonds." John 12:24. He was the blessed and fruitful man of Psalm 1. These three things characterized the life of the Lord Jesus on earth and marked Him as the eternal Son of the Eternal God. See the witnesses of His deity that He calls in John (1) John the Baptist. Vs. 32-35. (2) His Own works. V. 36. (3) The Father. V. 37. (4) The Scriptures V. 39. (5) The Holy Spirit. John 15:26. (6) The believer. John 15:27; Acts 1:8. The resurrection was the culminating proof that He was all He claimed to be. Rom. 1:4. Cp. Heb. 7:23-25; 1:8, 9. Christ is preeminent in all things.

IV. The Treasured Testimony. Vs. 10-13.

1. Remembrance. V. 10. Cp. 1 Cor. 11:23-26.
2. Warning. V. 13; Heb. 2:1-4.
3. Encouragement. V. 10; Cp. Heb. 12:1-3; 4:15, 16

69. MERIBAH

Numbers 20:1-13

Golden Text: Romans 6:9

I. The Murmuring People. Vs. 1-5. The old story repeated so often during their wanderings in the wilderness. See Psalm 78:56-58.

1. Their rebellion. Vs. 1-2; Cp. 1 Sam. 15:23; Prov. 17:11. All sin is rebellion against the authority of God; therefore all, by nature, are rebels. Rom. 8:5-8; Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21.
2. Their complaint. V. 3. Complaining is quarreling with God. Cp. Num. 11:1; Jude 16.
3. Their charge. Vs. 4-5. Their own unbelief had brought them to this place. Cp. Num. 14:27-32.

II. The Revelation of Jehovah. Vs. 6-8.

1. His glory. V. 6. Now revealed in Christ. 2 Cor. 4:6. God's infinite holiness, justice, righteousness and truth. Cp. Exo. 33:18; Isa. 6:3, 4; Isa. 42:8; John 2:11.
2. Their attitude. V. 6. Humiliation and Worship. Cp. Isa. 6:5; Luke 5:8; Dan. 10:7, 8; Job 42:5, 6.
3. His instructions. V. 8. (1) To take the rod. (2) To speak to the rock.

III. The Provoked Leader. Vs. 9-11.

1. The wrong persons. "Must we." Cp. Isa. 42:8. God was not honored.
2. The wrong means. "Smote the rock." Moses thus disobeyed God.
3. The typical significance. (1) The Rock is Christ. Cp. 1 Cor. 10:5. See notes on water from the rock. (2) The Rock once smitten. Exo. 17:6. Christ once smitten. Note the "Once" in Hebrews (a) Of limitation. Heb. 9:7. (b) Completion. 9:12. (c) Manifestation 9:26. (d) Condemnation. 9:27. (e) Substitution. 9:28. (f) Purification. 10:2. (g) Sanctification. 10:10. Christ once smitten can be smitten no more. Cp. Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:18. (3) Thus, in type, Christ's finished work was dishonored by the resmiting of the rock. We do not have to smite Christ to get blessing, but speak. Cp. Rom. 10:6-10; Acts 9:5. Even though God was dishonored by Moses, God honored His servant's commission; but Moses lost the reward that should have been his.

III. The Censure. Vs. 12-13.

1. The Cause. V. 12. (1) Unbelief, cause of all failure. (2) Failure to honor God. Vs. 12; Cp. Psa. 29:2; Isa. 42:8; 1 Sam. 2:30. (3) Unadvised speech. Cp. Psa. 106:33; Cp. Eccl. 5:2.
2. The Sentence. V. 12. Cp. Num. 27:14; Deut. 1:37.
3. The Name. V. 13. Meribah or "strife." Cp. Paul's great aim: "To finish my course with joy," with no "meribah" to mar his life and ministry for Christ. Acts 20:24. How often one hasty ill advised action has marred a hitherto unblemished record. 1 Cor. 10:12.

70. THE BRAZEN SERPENT

READ Numbers 21: 5-9; John 3: 14, 15.

THEME: Look and live. **TELL THE STORY.**

SERPENTS BIT THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL—THIS WAS GOD'S JUDGMENT ON SIN. Satan, who is called that old serpent the devil (Rev. 12: 9), poisons people with unbelief and sin. We see the sin of the Children of Israel in the following:—

THEY QUARRELLED WITH GOD'S WAY. "The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God" (vv. 4, 5). But it was *God's* way. He had chosen it for them in wisdom and in love. Yet they wanted to choose their own way. Self-will is sin. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53: 6).

THEY DESPISED AND LOATHED GOD'S FOOD—THE MANNA. They said, "There is no bread . . . our soul loatheth this light bread" (v. 5). We saw in Lesson 23 that manna was a picture of Christ, the Bread of Life. Christ was "despised and rejected of men." To-day, men and women, boys and girls, are despising and rejecting Him; this is the greatest of all sins and must, if continued in, bring upon them the judgment of God. We must either accept or reject Him, honour or despise Him; we cannot be neutral.

THE BITE OF THE SERPENT WAS FATAL. "Much people of Israel died" (v. 6). "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23). This does not mean ordinary death, for those who have trusted Christ as Saviour also die. It means spiritual death. Those who have not yet received Christ have not that eternal life of which He speaks in John 3: 16. They are even now "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2: 1); they are "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4: 18). Spiritual death is carried on into the future, and is called "the second death" (Rev. 21: 8), for it means eternal separation from God.

ISRAEL ACKNOWLEDGED THEIR SIN. They said, "We have sinned" (v. 7). This was repentance. When they saw themselves as sinners, God provided a remedy. A saving faith is always preceded by repentance. "The Lord is . . . long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9). But we must come to Him as sinners needing a Saviour, because He came not "to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:13).

THE BRAZEN SERPENT ON A POLE.—

IT WAS A TYPE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. The Brazen Serpent was not a picture of His life on earth, for "in Him is no sin" (1 John 3: 5); He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7: 26), but was a type of Him when He hung upon the cross, when He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2: 24), when God "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5: 21). The Brazen Serpent had no venom in itself, but it took *the form* of a serpent. The Lord Jesus was sinless, but in some way, which we cannot understand, He took our sins upon Him as He hung upon the cross, and it was then that the Father turned away His face from Him.

THE REMEDY WAS PROVIDED BY GOD. Neither Moses nor the priests could save them from death. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3: 16). There was only one Brazen Serpent. They might not make another. There is one Saviour and only one. He is the Way of Salvation provided by God, and if people reject His Son, there is no other way for them to be saved, no other way to escape the second death.

THE REMEDY WAS—"LOOK AND LIVE." It was easy to see, for the serpent of brass was lifted up on a pole. Perhaps it seemed too easy a way for some, as it does to many to-day who are trying to *earn* salvation. God said, "Look unto me, and be ye saved . . . for I am God, and there is none else" (Is. 45: 22). The look which saves is a look of faith. The one who looks places all his hopes in Christ. He knows he can do nothing for himself, and he therefore abandons all self-effort.

"EVERYONE . . . WHEN HE LOOKETH UPON IT, SHALL LIVE" (v. 8). *All* without exception lived. It did not matter if they had just been bitten, and scarcely felt the effects of the poison, or those who had been bitten some time and were at the point of death. *EVERYONE* who looked lived. God's promise is, "That *whosoever* believeth in Him (Jesus) should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). Salvation is for all—none is too young or too old—if they will look in faith to Jesus as Saviour.

WHEN HE BEHELD THE SERPENT OF BRASS, HE LIVED (v. 9). It was not a gradual cure; it was immediate. It was not a partial cure; it was complete. We get life the moment we accept Christ as Saviour, the moment we look to Him in faith. We may not know the exact moment we received life, but there has been such a moment when we passed from death unto life. Our growth in grace is gradual, but our salvation is immediate and complete.

HE LIVED (v. 9). The man who was bitten looked at the serpent of brass and received healing for his body. We receive something far more than bodily healing when we look in faith to Jesus; we receive eternal life—Divine life, the same kind of life as God has.

NO ONE COULD SAVE ANOTHER, EACH ONE MUST LOOK FOR HIMSELF. A man could not be healed by anything anybody else could do for him. A mother could not save her child, or a child a mother. If they had trusted to the prayers of Moses, or of the priests, for them, they would have died. Each one had to look to the serpent of brass himself. It is true that the Brazen Serpent was lifted up for all, but only those who looked lived. Christ died for the whole world, but only those who look to Him in faith as their *Saviour* will be saved.

LET US POINT OTHERS TO CHRIST. No one could save another, but he could urge him to turn his eyes to the brazen serpent. Let us uphold Christ as Saviour, and urge others to look to Him as the only One who can save them. Let us not obtrude ourselves and hide Him from their gaze. Let us say with John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29).

MEMORY VERSE.—John 3: 14, 15—"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

THE BRAZEN SERPENT

Numbers 21:4-10

Golden Text: John 3:14, 15

I. The People's Sin. Vs. 4-5.

1. Against God. V. 5. All sin is against Him. Cp. Isa. 51:4. Sin is (1) Disobedience to God. 1 John 3:4. (2) Unrighteousness before God. 1 John 5:17 in thought, word or deed. (3) Unbelief in God. Rom. 14:23. (4) A wrong attitude towards God. A graphic description of us all. Rom. 3:11-19, 23, etc.
2. Against His servant. V. 5. "Moses."
3. Against His provision V. 5. "Manna." They loathed that which God provided. Manna a picture of Christ. Some (1) Despise Him. Heb. 10:29; Matt. 12:24; John 9:29; Isa. 53:3. (2) Reject Him. Matt. 27:22; Acts 18:6; John 12:47. (3) Neglect Him. Acts 17:32; 24:25; 26:28; Heb. 2:3. (4) Accept Him. John 1:12; Acts 16: 31-34, etc.

II. The Punishment. V. 6.

1. God must punish sin. Exo. 34:7; Habak. 1:13.
2. Their fearful condition—snake bitten. Ours—sin bitten. Rom. 3:23.
3. The sad result. "Many died." V 6; Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:4; Rev. 20:13, 14; James 1:15.

III. The Repentance. V. 7. Their change of mind seen in their change of attitude.

1. Their Confession. V. 7. "We have sinned." Cp. Prov. 28:13; Josh. 7:20; 2 Sam. 12:13; Job 7:20; Psa. 41:4; Luke 15:18.
2. Their Cry. V. 7. "Take away." Cp. Job 33:27, 28; Luke 18:13.

IV. The Way of Salvation. V. 8.

1. Revealed to Moses. V. 8; Heb. 1:1, 2; Cp. Acts 13:38; John 3:16.
2. Simple. "Look." Cp. Isa. 45:22. Note this verse particularly. "Look," the easiest possible thing. "Unto Me," the greatest possible Person. "And be ye saved," the greatest possible blessing. "All ye ends of the earth," the greatest possible number. "'For I am God," the greatest possible Authority. "Believe in." John 3:15. "Come." Matt. 11:28. "Receive." John 1:12. "Take." Rev. 22:17.
3. Effective. "Live." Cp. John 5:24; 10:28; Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:1, etc.

V. The Result. V. 9.

1. The serpent lifted up. V. 9. Cp. John 3:14, 15. Trace out the "as" of Num. 21 and the "so" of Christ.
2. The look of faith. V. 9. Picture some of the snake bitten Israelites seeking some other way to be healed. One by his good resolves to live a better life in the future; another by home made poultices, others by prayer, some by making something for the tabernacle, etc. Apply some present day attempts such as good works, ordinances, sincerity, church membership, etc.
3. The happy effect. V. 9. "Lived." Cp. Eph. 2:1; John 10:10; 6:33; 1 John 5:13.

71. BALAAM

Numbers 22 to 24

Golden Text: Numbers 23:19

I. The Historic Setting. 22:1-6.

1. The victorious army. Cp. Num. 21:21-25; 33-35.
2. The fearful foe. Num. 22:1-4.

II. The Insistent Ambassage. Vs. 5-41.

1. The message; Vs. 5-14. (1) To curse God's people and thwart God's purpose. Cp. Gen. 12:1-3; Psa. 2:1, 2; Isa. 54:17; Rom. 8:35-39. (2) The bribe; V. 7. (3) The inquiry and its answer; Vs. 8-12. Note its definiteness. (4) The answer; Vs. 13-14.
2. The further message; Vs. 15-21. (1) The increased bribe; Vs. 15-18. Cp. Deut. 16:9; Prov. 15:27; Eccl. 7:7. (2) The temporizing prophet; Vs. 19-21. He played with the temptation, though he knew God's mind in the matter.
3. The journey; Vs. 22-35. The miracle of the speaking ass. Cp. 2 Peter 2:15-16.
4. The arrival; Vs. 36-41. The querulous king.

III. The Prophecies. 23:1; 24:9.

1. The preparation; Vs. 1-6.
2. The prophecies; Vs. 7, 24:9. (1) The first prophecy. Note the position; V. 9, "top of rocks." Cp. "Heavenlies;" Eph. 1:3, 20; 2-6. What he saw. The separation or sanctification of Israel; V. 10. What was true of Israel is true of every believer. Cp. Acts 15:14; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1:30; Heb. 2:11; 10:11, 14. (2) Second prophecy; Vs. 18-24. (a) The character of God; V. 19. (b) The justification of Israel; V. 21. What a statement in view of Exod. 16:8; 32:9, 10; Num. 21:5, etc. Cp. Rom. 3:24-26; 5:1; 8:1. There are some things God cannot see. In the Tabernacle the blood covered the mercy seat and thus their sins were covered from God. Cp. 1 John 1:7. (c) Their security; V. 23. Cp. Rom. 8:28-39. (3) The third prophecy; 24:1-9. He saw Israel glorified. Note V. 7 reaches into future.

IV. The Evil Counsel. V. 14. Cp. Num. 31:16; Rev. 2:14. "The doctrine of Balaam"—the intermingling of the children of God and the Moabites. Cp. 2 Cor. 6:14-18; John 17:14-17, etc.

V. His Character, Privileges and Guilt.

1. His character and privileges. (1) He was brought into touch with God; 22:9, 12, 20. Ill. Judas. (2) He acknowledged God before others; 22:38. Cp. Luke 6:46. (3) He had God's word in his mouth; 23:5. Cp. Jer. 1:9; Rom. 10:8. (4) He saw the vision of God; 24:3-4. (5) He was at times moved by the Spirit of God; 24:2. (6) He desired to die death of righteous; 23:10.
2. His guilt and end. (1) Loved wages of unrighteousness; 2 Peter 2:15. (2) Taught people to sin; Rev. 2:14; Num. 31:16. (3) Went back to his own place; Num. 24:25; 1 John 2:19; Acts 1:25. (4) Came to a bad end; Josh. 13:22.

72. THE CITIES OF REFUGE

READ Joshua 20: 1-9; Deut. 19: 2-13.

THEME: Refuge from Judgment.

TELL THE STORY.

Six Cities of Refuge were appointed for the manslayer, three on each side of the Jordan (Numb. 35: 14). They were central to the adjacent districts and easily accessible. The fact that God provided these Cities of Refuge for the manslayer does not mean that He passes over sin, for He by no means clears the guilty (Numb. 14: 18). God is able to forgive our sin only because the Lord Jesus took our punishment on the Cross of Calvary, therefore God can "be just and (yet) the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3: 26).

CITIES OF REFUGE-TYPE OF CHRIST OUR REFUGE.—

THE MANSLAYER WHO FLED TO THE CITY OF REFUGE, LIVED. He was perfectly safe there, the avenger could not touch him (Deut. 19: 5). The Lord Jesus is our Refuge from punishment "That . . . we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us . . . even Jesus" (Heb. 6: 18, 20). If we come to Him and receive Him as our Saviour, He will be our Refuge from punishment.

NO OTHER CITIES WOULD DO. There were many other cities into which the manslayer might have fled, but in none would he have been safe. God has provided a way whereby we may escape eternal punishment, and there is no other (Acts 4: 12; John 14: 6).

THEY WERE FOR THE STRANGER ALSO. God said, "*whosoever* . . . might flee thither and not die" (Josh. 20: 9). The salvation God offers is not for special people or for a chosen few but for all who will accept it. "That *whosoever* (any one at all) believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). Old and young, rich and poor, the wise and the ignorant may flee to Christ for Refuge.

THEY WERE EASILY ACCESSIBLE (Deut. 19: 3). "The roads were kept in good repair; clearly-written directions at the cross-ways indicated the route; and, according to Jewish tradition, runners, learned in the law, were stationed at various stages to direct and help the fugitive" (F. B. Meyer).

In His Word, God has given clear and simple directions to sinners

so that they may find their refuge in Christ, and receive eternal life. Clear directions were given to the Philippian Jailor (Acts 16: 30, 31) and to the people by Peter in Acts 3: 19.

THE GATES WERE OPEN NIGHT AND DAY so that *at any time* a refugee might enter the city. Jesus said, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10: 9). The door of life is open now but, at any time it might be shut. Enter, before it is too late.

CONDITIONS OF SAFETY.—

THE MANSLAYER HAD TO DO ONLY ONE THING — run into the city of refuge quickly. He did not need to know all about the city, its history, its geography, its inhabitants, etc., before entering. He would learn those facts gradually when he was inside. To receive salvation, we need simply to know that we are sinners needing a Saviour, and then run to Him for refuge and eternal life. The Holy Spirit comes into our heart to give us life and to teach us to know Christ (John 16: 13, 14).

OUTSIDE THE CITY MEANT DEATH FOR THE MANSLAYER. If we are not "*in* Christ" (2 Cor. 5: 17), then we are *outside*, we are yet in our sins. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23; Ezek. 18: 4). This does not mean physical death for, unless our Lord comes first to take His people home, then *all* must die, but it means eternal separation from God.

INSIDE THE CITY WAS SAFETY, LIFE, FOOD AND EVERYTHING HE NEEDED. In Christ we have not only eternal life, but joy, spiritual food, satisfaction and blessings too numerous to recount. He Who has given us eternal life will sustain that life if we look to Him day by day.

MEMORY VERSE.—Heb. 6: 18, 20—"We . . who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us . . . even Jesus."

THE CITIES OF REFUGE

Numbers 35:6-28; Deut. 19:1-10; Joshua 20:1-9

Golden Text: Heb 6.18, 19

These cities of Refuge are a beautiful type of Christ and salvation.

I. The Necessity. Num. 35:6, 9-15; Deut. 19:4-6.

1. The slayer; Num. 35:11. Picture the scene of the accidental death.
2. The avenger; Deut. 19:6. In hot pursuit. Cp. Rom .6:23; Ezek. 18:4, etc.
3. The provision—the cities of Refuge. Cp. Heb. 6:18, 19; 2 Sam. 22:3; Isa. 25:4.
4. The type. As the man slayer had something to escape from, so the sinner has need to escape from (1) The curse of a broken law; Gal. 3:10. (2) The justice of God. Exo. 34:7. (3) The consequences of sin; Heb. 10:26-27. (4) The wrath to come; 1 Thess. 1:10. (5) The guilt of sin; Rom. 3:19. (6) The dominion of sin; Rom. 6:19. (7) Satan and his fearful power; Col. 1:13.

II. The Provision—A Refuge.

1. Its source—God. It had a Divine origin Num. 35:9, "The Lord." Cp. John 3:16; Eph. 2:4; Rom. 5:8; Hosea 11:9; Micah 7:18.
2. Its scope—"All." Num. 35:15. Cp. Rom. 3:22, 23; 10:12; John 3:16, 17. "Whosoever;" Rev. 22:17; Rom. 2:11; 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 1 John 2:2.
3. Its accessibility to all is seen. (1) In that there were six of these cities; Num. 35:15. They were nigh to all. Cp. Rom. 10:8; Isa. 46:12, 13. So also is Christ; John 10:10; Rom. 10:13. (2) They were set on a hill—Lifted up; Josh. 20:7, 8. Cp. John 12:32. (3) The roads were well kept and plainly marked. "The way." John 14:5, 6; Isa. 35:8; Acts 13:38. "Be it known unto you."
4. Its security—All safe when inside. (1) Cp. The door; John 10:9; Acts 4:12; Matt. 11:28. (2) And the security; John 10:27-30; Rom. 8:33-39. Note (3) The Guarantor. Num. 35:24. Our High Priest shall never die. Cp. Heb. 7:25; Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:18.
5. Its provision; Josh. 20:4. All needs supplied given a "place." Cp. Eph. 1:3; Phil. 4:19; Matt. 6:33; Heb. 13:5, 6, etc.

III. The Names—Typical of Christ. Josh. 20:7, 8.

1. Kedesh = "Holy." Cp. Luke 1:35 ;Matt. 3:17; Acts 4:30; Heb. 1:9; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22-24.
2. Shechem = "Shoulder or Support." Luke 15:5; John 10:28; Heb. 7:25; Isa. 9:6, 7.
3. Hebron = "Fellowship." Eph. 2:13-22; 1 John 1:3, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:9.
4. Bezer = "Stronghold." Heb. 6:18, 19. "In Christ;" Eph. 1:3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 13, etc.
5. Ramoth = "Exaltation." Phil. 2:5-11; Acts 2:33; Heb. 1:1, 2; Eph. 1:20; 2:6.
6. Golan = "Joy." John 15:11; 17:13; Heb. 12:2; Phil. 3:1; 4:4; John 16:24. "Thou, O Christ, art all I want."

74. THE SONG OF MOSES

Deut. 31:24—32:29

Golden Text: Deut. 32:4

I. The Book and Its Repository; Deut. 31:24-30.

1. The completed record; V. 24. Moses, the writer of the Pentetuech. Cp. Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:45-47.

2. The repository; V. 26. The most precious possession in the most holy place. Cp. Psa. 119:11. Is it there?

3. The purpose; V. 26. A witness. Cp. John. 12: 47, 48; Heb. 4:12, 13.

4. The apostasy prophecied; Vs. 28-30. Cp. Acts 20:28-30; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3, 4.

II. The Song; Deut. 32:1-29.

1. God's character unfolded; Vs. 3-4. The name of Jehovah revealed in a seven-fold way. See V. 4. Cp. Psa. 9:10. These attributes reveal His name. Cp. Exo. 34:5-7.

2. Israel described; V. 5. Cp. Rom. 3: 10-19, 23; Isa. 1:2-6. What a fearful indictment and true description of all by nature!

3. God's dealings with Israel; Vs. 7-14. (1) Exhortation to remembrance; V. 7. Cp. Eph. 2: 11-13; Titus 3:3-7; Isa. 51:1. (2) God's purpose in Israel; Vs. 8-19. What a wonderful statement! Cp Eph. 1:11, 18; 1 Cor. 3:21-23; 6:19, 20; Rom. 12:1, 2. (3) God's grace towards Israel; Vs. 10-14. A beautiful picture of a sinner saved by grace. (a) Found; V. 10. Note where. Cp. Luke 15:4-6; 2 Cor. 4:3. (b) Encircled; V. 10 (marg.); "In Christ." Eph. 1:4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13. Encircled with Christ; Col. 3: 3, etc. (c) Kept. V. 10. Note how. Cp. John 10:27-30; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 1, 24. (d) Led; Vs. 11-12. Note the illust. used: Rom. 8:14; John 10:3-5, 27, etc. (e) Seated; V. 13. Cp. Eph. 1:20; 2:6; 1:3; Rom. 8:30; Col. 3:1. (f) Fed; Vs. 13-14. A good provision; 1 Peter 2:2; Eph. 1:3; Phil. 4:19, etc. (g) Growth; V. 15; 2 Peter 3:18.

4. Israel's sin; Vs. 15-28. Note the various stages of their apostasy: (1) Self-satisfied; V. 15. (2) Forsook; V. 15. (3) Lightly esteemed; V. 15. (4) Provoked; V. 16. (5) Idolatry; V. 17. (6) Forgot God; V. 18. Apply to present day.

5. God's judgment; Vs. 19-28. A hidden face and its consequences.

6. The appeal; Vs. 29-31. Cp. Isa. 48:17, 18; Jer. 2:19.

7. The testimony; V. 31. Cp. Psa. 18:1-2; 46:1, etc.

75. THE BLESSING OF MOSES

Deuteronomy 33:1—34:12

Golden Text: Psa. 90:12

I. Their Position; Vs. 3, 12, 27.

1. In His hands; V. 3; for salvation and security. Cp. John 10:28. Hands speak of power. Cp. (1) Delivering hands; Deut. 5:15. (2) Protecting; Isa. 49:2. (3) Ruling; Ezek. 20:33. (4) Keeping; John 10:28. (5) Guiding; Psa. 78:72, etc.
2. At His feet; V. 3. For learning. Cp. Luke 10: 38-42; Acts 22:3; Matt. 11:29, 30; Titus 2:11-13.
3. By His side; V. 12. For fellowship; 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:3-7. S. of S. 3:8; Gen. 5:24.
4. On His shoulders; V. 12. For power and intercession; Isa. 9:6; Luke 15:5, etc. Exodus 28: 29; Heb. 7:25, etc.
5. In His arms; V. 27; for rest. Isa. 26:3-4; Psa. 37:4-7. Rest (1) of Conscience; Heb. 10:2. (2) Assurance; Luke 7:50; John 5:24. (3) Confidence; Acts 2:26; (4) Consecration; Matt. 11:29; (5) Heart; Phil. 4:6, 7. (6) Mind; Acts 9:31; (7) Glory at His return; Heb. 4:9.

II. Their Blessing; Vs. 6-24. Note carefully the distinguishing feature of each blessing and apply the truth to the believer; e. g., Rueben, V. 6—"Life." Judah, V. 7—"Prayer." Levi, Vs. 8-11—"Communion." Benjamin, V. 12—"Abiding." Joseph, Vs. 13-17—"Fruit." Zebulun, V. 18—"Joy." Gad, Vs. 20-21—"Growth." Dan., V. 22—"Vigor." Naphtali, V. 23—"Satisfaction." Asher, V. 24—"Ministry," etc., etc.

III. Their Portion; Vs. 25-29. All found in God Himself who was:

1. Their refuge; V. 27. Cp. Psa. 18:2; 46:1; 9:9; 57:1; Heb. 6:18.
2. Their rest; V. 27. Cp. Exo. 33:14; Psa. 116:7.
3. Their Redeemer; Vs. 27, 29—"Saved by the Lord."

IV. Moses' Death; 34:1-7, 10-12.

1. The place; Vs. 1-4. Mount Pisgah. Alone with God.
2. The death; V. 5. Note his title—The servant of the Lord! What an honor!
3. The burial; V. 6. Note Who buried him. God not only buried Moses, but He buried his grave and the cemetery too. Read Mrs. Cecil Alexander's beautiful poem entitled, "The Burial of Moses."
4. The description of Moses; Vs. 7, 10-12. His life divided into three periods, each of 40 years. See Acts 7:23, 30, 36. Cp. Deut. 33:1—"The man of God."

V. The New Leader; Vs. 8-9.

1. The mourning; V. 8.
2. The new commander; V. 9.

76. JOSHUA'S CALL TO SERVICE

READ Joshua 1: 1-9; Chapter 5: 13-15; Chapter 6: 1, 2.

THEME: Our Helper or our Captain?

TELL THE STORY FROM THE BIBLE.

GOD'S CALL TO JOSHUA.—

HE WAS CHOSEN BY GOD FOR SPECIAL SERVICE. He was to succeed Moses and lead Israel into Canaan (ch. 1: 1, 2). We cannot all be chosen for great positions of leadership, but every Christian is called to serve Christ in some capacity, it may be in the home, at school or in business. God has chosen our sphere of service and the recognition of this fact will cause us to regard *all* our work as sacred. By working for thirty years as a carpenter, the Lord Jesus himself sanctified for all time the "daily round and the common task."

HIS QUALIFICATIONS.—

HE WAS A MAN OF FAITH. He was one of the twelve who went to spy out the land, and he and Caleb alone had the faith to believe that God would conquer all their enemies. If we are to accomplish anything for God, we, too, must be people of faith.

HE SERVED FIRST AS A SERVANT TO MOSES. The faithful performance of humble and maybe menial duties is a good preparation for greater service. Our Lord Himself "took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil. 2: 7) and we should therefore count it a privilege to serve even in the humblest capacity.

GOD'S COMMANDS TO JOSHUA.—

BE STRONG AND OF A GOOD COURAGE (Josh. 1: 9). Strength and courage are infectious and inspire others to attempt great things for God. We are, however, to be strong *in the Lord* (Eph. 6: 10). It is *His* strength upon which we are to draw.

MEDITATE UPON THE WORD (Josh. 1: 8). It is not sufficient to read God's Word, we need to meditate on it — to consider it thoughtfully and prayerfully. But even meditating on it is not sufficient we are to

OBEY IT (John 13: 17). Be ye *doers* of the Word and not hearers only (James 1: 22).

GOD'S PROMISES TO JOSHUA.—

HE PROMISED HIM VICTORY (Josh. 1: 5, 8). He has promised us *victory over sin* (Rom. 6: 14); *victory over the flesh* — the old sinful nature (Rom. 7: 24, 25); *victory over Satan* (Luke 10: 19) and He has provided the armour (Eph. 6: 13-17).

HE PROMISED HIS PRESENCE (Josh. 1: 5). We, too, have this assurance (Matt. 28: 20; Heb. 13: 5).

THE MAN WITH THE DRAWN SWORD (Ch. 5: 13).—

THIS MUST HAVE BEEN THE MAN CHRIST JESUS. The Lord Jesus comes to us with the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6: 17). Let us allow Him to apply this Word to our hearts and lives.

JOSHUA'S ATTITUDE TO HIM. When he said, "Art thou for us?" (v. 13) he thought that he himself was captain and that the Man would be his helper. We, too, sometimes make this mistake. *We* make the plans and ask the Lord to approve them.

THE MAN'S REPLY TO JOSHUA. "Nay, but as *captain* . . . am I now come" (v. 14). He comes to us not as Helper but as Captain, not to assist but to give orders. He is the Commander-in-chief.

HOW JOSHUA MADE THE LORD CAPTAIN.—

HE HUMBLED HIMSELF AND EXALTED THE LORD (v. 14). He said, "My Lord . . . His servant." He realised now that he himself was only a servant and that the Man was Lord.

HE WAS NOW WILLING TO TAKE ORDERS FROM HIS DIVINE CAPTAIN. "What saith my Lord unto His servant" (v. 14). This was Paul's attitude at his conversion (Acts 9: 6). Our Lord said, "Ye *call* me Master and Lord . . . and . . . so I am" (John 13: 13), but we must show by our lives that He is really our Master and Lord, the One Whom we obey in everything. Can we say, "Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my Lord the King shall appoint" (2 Sam. 15: 15).

VICTORY FOLLOWED (Josh. 6: 2). The Lord as Captain was now able to take charge of the situation. If we make Christ Captain of our lives, He will overcome our Jerichos — the difficult things in our natures and in our circumstances.

MEMORY VERSE.—2 Samuel 15: 15—"Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint."

JOSHUA—CALL AND COMMISSION

Joshua 1:1-18

Golden Text: Joshua 1:9

We are now introduced to the new leader of Israel whose history we shall follow for the next eight lessons.

I. His Preparation. He had a long period of preparation. This is true of all God's servants. He must be faithful in the little things of life before he can be entrusted with the greater responsibilities. 1 Tim. 3:6, 10.

1. A courageous soldier; Exo. 17:13. Cp. 2 Tim. 2:3; 1 Tim. 6:11, 12.
2. A devoted servant; Exo. 24:3. He who would lead must first serve. Cp. 2 Kings 3:11; 1 Tim. 3:10; John 13:12-17; Prov. 15:33; Mark 10:45.
3. A true worshipper; Exod. 33:11. Cp. John 4: 23, 24.
4. A faithful witness; Num. 14:6-9. He stood out against the popular opinion and witnessed for God. Cp. 2 Tim. 1:8-12; 4:1-5; Rom. 1:14-16; Prov. 14:25.
5. Taught in the Word; Exod. 17:14. Cp. 2 Tim. 2:15; Titus 1:9.
6. Spirit filled; Num. 27:18. Cp. Eph. 1:13; 5:18; Gal. 5:22, 23.
7. Divinely appointed; Num. 27:18-23. Cp. John 15:16, etc. Note his name—Joshua means "Jehovah, Saviour;" translated "Jesus." Heb. 4:8, and a wonderful type of Christ.

II. His Commission; Josh. 1:1-18.

1. The charge from God; Vs. 1-2.
2. The promise; Vs. 3-4. Note that personal appropriation was essential. They must possess their possessions. So with the Christian—he has "all things;" 1 Cor. 3:21-23; and "all blessings," Eph. 1:3; but only enjoys that which he appropriates himself. See Gen. 14: 17, 18 "Arise and walk through the land."
3. The encouragement; Vs. 5-6. (1) The promise of God's presence; V. 5. Cp. Exo. 33:14, 15; Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20; 2 Tim. 4:16-18. (2) Exhortation to strength and courage; V. 6. Cp. 2 Tim. 1:7, 8; 2:1; 1 Cor. 16:13, etc.
4. The command; Vs. 7-8, 9. The secret of true success and prosperity is the place that God's word has in the heart and life of the believer. There can be no success without it. (1) To memorize it; V. 8—"Mouth." (2) To be meditated on; V. 8. (3) To be acted on; V. 8. Obedience is the best commentary. (4) The result: Prosperity and wisdom (marg.). This is what all are seeking for, but here is the only true method. Cp. Prov. 1:7, 5; 2:3-5; 3:13-26; 2 Tim. 2:13; 2 Peter 3:18. The best way to make sure of a successful past is to have a successful present.

III. The Preparation of the People; 1:10-18.

1. Faith obeys God's commands; Vs. 10:11.
2. The people's recognition of Joshua's authority; Vs. 16-18. God not only prepared Joshua but the people too.

77. RAHAB AND THE SCARLET LINE

READ Joshua 2: 1-21.

THEME: Saved by faith.

TELL THE STORY FROM THE BIBLE.

RAHAB.—

SHE WAS A VERY SINFUL WOMAN yet she and her family alone were saved. This shows us that none is too bad to be saved. She lived in a condemned city which was ripe for God's judgment, therefore she, with others, was under condemnation, this means that sentence of death had been passed upon them. "He that believeth not is condemned already." (John 3: 18).

SHE BELIEVED THE REPORT OF GOD'S GREATNESS AND POWER (vv. 10, 11), that He was able to save or destroy as He had saved Israel and destroyed the Amorites. She did not treat lightly all that she had heard. She was afraid of God's judgment and therefore she pleaded for mercy. Let us like Rahab take heed of God's warnings. (Rom. 6: 23).

SHE DID NOT KNOW MUCH ABOUT GOD BUT SHE BELIEVED THE LITTLE SHE HAD HEARD. You do not need to know everything about God and His Word before you can be saved, any more than you need to know everything about a lifebelt before you put it on, or a lifeboat before you get into it. Believe what you have already heard or read from God's Word about repentance and faith; come as a sinner to Christ and trust Him to save you.

SHE HAD NEVER SEEN JOSHUA BUT SHE BELIEVED THE SPIES WHOM HE HAD SENT. She trusted the promise they gave her and she was saved. Our Lord said, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20: 29).

SHE PLEADED FOR HER FAMILY ALSO (v. 13). She was not selfishly content because she herself was escaping punishment (vv. 12, 13) and God used her to save their lives. We, too, who are saved, need to have a deep concern for those whom we love, that they also may share in this salvation.

THE SCARLET LINE.—

IT WAS THE APPOINTED MEANS OF SAVING RAHAB'S LIFE. It was not merely *a* thread or *a* line—it was *the scarlet line.*

She did not substitute a green, a blue or a white line. We believe the colour, scarlet, had a deep significance. It was like the blood on the lintel and the two side posts of the houses of the Children of Israel when the angel of death passed over them, and the firstborn was spared (Ex. 12: 23). (See Book 1, Lesson 6). Let us see to it that it is a *scarlet* line which is hung in our window. God has provided a way whereby we may escape judgment and our sins be forgiven — this is through the death of His Son; We are redeemed by His blood (Rev. 5: 9). If we do not avail ourselves of the provision He has made there is no other way (Acts 4: 12).

RAHAB LOST NO TIME BUT SEIZED HER OPPORTUNITY (vv. 18, 21). No sooner had she heard by what means her life could be spared than she availed herself of that means and carried out the command of the spies. Had she delayed, she would have perished with the other inhabitants of Jericho. Do not put off the all-important matter of your salvation and your eternal welfare or it may be too late. "*Now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2).

RAHAB'S HOUSE DIFFERED FROM THE OTHERS ONLY IN ONE RESPECT, IT HAD THE SCARLET LINE. This made the difference between life and death. All within the house with the scarlet line were saved, all outside were lost (v. 19). There are only two classes of people in God's sight — those who are sheltering under the blood and those who are not; we are either in one class or the other; inside the house-part of the household of faith, or outside it.

THE SCARLET LINE WAS A "TRUE TOKEN" (vv. 12, 18, 19). God said to Israel, "And *the blood* shall be to you for a *token* . . . and when I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Ex. 12: 13). God has given *us* a true token and we can rely upon His Word: "He that heareth my Word, and believeth on Him that sent me *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5: 24).

GOD IS NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH (2 Pet. 3: 9). If all Jericho had repented and believed as Rahab had done, they, too, would have been saved. But to many our Lord has to say, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5: 40).

MEMORY VERSE.—Colossians 1: 14—"We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

RAHAB

Joshua 2:1-24; 6:25

Golden Text: Rom. 10:17

Here is another beautiful picture of God's salvation.

I. Her Position; 2:1; 6:1, 2.

1. She lived in a condemned city. Under the judgment of God. Cp. John 3:18; 3:36; Rom. 5:12; Gal. 3:10; 1 John 5:19; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
2. She lived among an unbelieving people; Rom. 11:32; Eph. 2:2, 3; Gal. 3:22; Rom. 3:23, etc. They had as much evidence as she, but did not act on it.
3 She was a Gentile. Cp. Eph. 2:11, 12; and as such outside God's covenants of Israel.

II. Her Condition. 2:1.

1. Morally wrong; 2:1. A harlot. The corrupt nature manifested itself in open sin. Rom. 3: 10-19; 8:6-8.
2. Helpless to change herself. She needed a new nature. Cp. Jer. 13:23; 2:22; Job 9:30, 31; John 3:3.
3. Unable to avert the doom of the city. Rom. 6: 23; Ezek. 18:4; Jude 14-15; 2 Peter 3:9, 10.

III. Her Privileges. 2:1-15.

1. She heard of the God of Israel; Vs. 8-11. She had heard of His power in redemption, deliverance, provision and protection and judgment. Well might she tremble! Cp. Rom. 10: 17. Have you heard of your need, your danger, God's way of salvation? Privilege brings responsibility.
2. She believed in His person; V. 11. She turned from the idolatrous worship, and believed in the true God.
3. She believed in His word; V. 9. Cp. John 3: 32; Rom. 3:3-5.
4. She acted upon what she believed thus proving her faith; 4:12-15; Heb. 11:31; Rom. 4:5; James 2:17-26.

IV. Her Deliverance.

1. Outside of herself. She did not plan it. Cp. John 3:16; 1 John 4:10; Eph. 2:2-9; 1 Cor. 1:29.
2. All of grace—she was the least deserving. Cp. 2 Cor. 8:9; Deut. 7:7-9; 1 Tim. 1:15; Matt. 9:13.
3. The scarlet line—true picture of the precious blood of Christ. (1) The scarlet line made her safe; 2:18. Cp. Exo. 12:13; 1 Peter 1:18; Rom. 3:25. (2) The word made her **sure;** 2:12, 18. Cp. 1 John 5:10-13; John 5:24, etc., etc.
4. Her salvation; Joshua 6:25. God is true to His word. Cp. Num. 23:19; Isa. 45:19.
5. Her missionay spirit; Josh. 2:13: 6:22, 23, 25. The unselfishness of faith. Have you sought to bring your friends and relatives under the shelter of the blood? Rom. 10:9, 10; Luke 8:39; Mark 16:15, etc.
6. Her blessing; V. 25. Brought into fellowship with a redeemed people. Cp. Eph. 2:19-22; Acts 2:41, 42.
7. Her posterity; Matt. 1:5. One of the line through whom the Messiah came. What hath God wrought?

78. CROSSING JORDAN

READ Joshua 3: 1, 17; Chapter 4: 5-9, 18, 20-24.

THEME: The Life of Victory.

TELL THE STORY.

Canaan a land of blessing, of joy and provision; a place where the Children of Israel became victors over their enemies. Israel had been delivered from Egypt and bondage and, at the Red Sea, from Pharaoh and his hosts. But they still wandered in the wilderness and had been doing so for forty years. This was not God's intention. He had planned that they should enter at once into Canaan, but their disobedience and unbelief kept them out.

What does all this teach us? At the Cross of Christ we have been set free from sin and the power of Satan. But many are living in the wilderness, not having yet learned the secret of victory over sin. They have never crossed Jordan and entered Canaan.

CROSSING JORDAN.—

IT WAS A NEW WAY TO THEM. They had not passed this way before (ch. 3: 4). It was a new experience.

THEY PASSED CLEAN OVER JORDAN. In chapter 3: 1 we read that the Children of Israel "came to Jordan" and, in verse 17 "they passed clean over." There was no compromise, they knew on which side of the river was their rightful possesion. Have *you* passed "clean over Jordan," leaving behind the life of wilderness wandering, of failure and defeat? Christ Jesus is willing to lead you into a life of victory and blessing if you are willing to trust Him.

GOD'S MIGHTY HANDS BROUGHT THEM OVER (ch. 4: 24). They could not possibly have done it by their own efforts. All they had to do was to obey God's orders, believing that *He* would do the rest. God has promised us victory (Rom. 6: 14); our part is to trust Him and obey Him. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Is. 1: 19) and this applies spiritually to us.

The human hand stands for authority and power. If the hand belongs to a person in authority, it has power.

In God's hands is *strength* (Gen. 49: 24);
In His hands is *healing* (Job 5: 18);
In His hands is *guidance* (Psalm 78: 72);
In His hands is *blessing* (Luke 24: 50);
In His hands is *support* (Psalm 18: 35).

THE TWELVE WILDERNESS STONES BURIED IN JORDAN (v. 9).—

THEY WERE BURIED to show that Israel was to leave behind the old life of grumbling and backsliding. No more were they to return that way. This to us, is a picture of being buried with Christ, being dead to the ways of sin, so that they will no more have power over us.

THE TWELVE STONES IN GILGAL.—

THEY WERE TAKEN UP FROM THE RIVER BED, the place of darkness and death. They are a picture of resurrection. We are risen with Christ, setting our affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3: 1, 2).

THEY WERE CARRIED TO CANAAN'S SHORE — the place of victory and blessing. This is where we should be, living the life of victory, overcoming by God's power the sins which so easily beset us (Heb. 12: 1).

THEY WERE SET UP "PITCHED" IN GILGAL (v. 20). They were not just thrown anywhere, or to be moved or knocked about. Each stone had its place in relation to another stone. God has set us just where we are; we have not come there by chance. There is also another thought. We are commanded to be *steadfast, unmoveable* (1 Cor. 15: 58).

THEY WERE TO BE WITNESSES TO GOD'S POWER. When their children should ask them what was the meaning of these stones, they were to tell them that it was *God* Who had dried up the waters and brought them into Canaan. We are *God's living stones* (1 Pet. 2: 5). We are to be witnesses wherever God has placed us.

THEY WERE STONES OF MEMORIAL. God has given us other memorials — Baptism, which is a picture of death and resurrection (Rom. 6: 3-5) and the Lord's Supper to commemorate His death. In this feast we remember: The Lord Jesus living in us; dying for us; in heaven for us; coming again for us (1 Cor. 11: 23-26).

MEMORY VERSE.—1 Corinthians 15: 58—"Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN

Joshua 3:1—4:18

Golden Text: Rom. 6:10, 11

I. The Preparation; 3:1-13.

1. The removal to Shittim; V. 1.
2. The directions; Vs. 2-4. The ark (a type of Christ) to be the guide on the untrodden pathway. Cp. John 10:4; Psa. 23:1-2; Heb. 12: 1, 2.
3. The command and the promise; V. 5. Cp. 2 Cor. 6:14; 7:1; John 17:17; 1 John 1:7-9.
4. The encouragement; Vs. 7-8. God's commands are His enablings. Behind Joshua was the eternal God to Whom all things are possible.
5. The further directions; Vs. 9-13; Note V. 11.

II. The Crossing; 3:14-17.

1. The miracle of the divided waters; Vs. 14-16. What a sight it must have been. Note the period; V. 15; the time of overflow.
2. The sheltering ark; V. 17. Note where the ark stood. It remained there until all had safely crossed.
3. The safe crossing, "all;" V. 17. None lost. Cp. John 17:12; Heb. 7:25.

III. The Memorial 4:1-24.

1. The representative men; Vs. 1-2.
2. The typical stones; Vs. 3-9. Taken up, carried over, laid down and set up.
3. The purpose; V. 6. A memorial. Picture the children of furture generations asking "What mean these stones?" Cp. other memorials God has given. Exo. 12:26, 27; 13:13, 14; Deut. 6:20-25; Psa. 44:1; 78:1-8. Present memorials: Baptism, Matt. 28:19; The Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. 11:23-26. Explain: What mean ye by this service?

IV. The Type.

1. The passage of the Jordan is a type, picture or illustration of the believer's death with Christ. Cp. Rom. 6:1-11; Eph. 2:5, 6; Col. 3:1-3. God views the believer as identified with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection and ascension. As the believer reckons this to be true and acts upon it he will be enabled to enter into his spiritual inheritance and enjoy it.
2. Picture of the gospel, in that the passage of the Jordan, like God's way of salvation, was (1) A strange way; Acts 17:18-20, unexpected. (2) A new way; Josh. 3:4; Heb. 10:20. (3) An easy way; Eph. 2:8, 9. No works, bridges of man's making, etc. (4) A short way; John 6: 47; no long detour such as ceremonials, penance, resolutions, etc. (5) A safe way; John 10:28: V. 17. All "clean over." (6) A divinely appointed way; Josh. 3:7, 8. Joshua did not devise it and the people did not ask for it; John 3:16, etc. (7) The only way; Acts 4:12. If they had refused to accept it they could not have crossed.—Alf. Sandham.

79. JERICHO OVERCOME

READ Joshua 6.

THEME: Victory by faith.

TELL THE STORY.

JERICHO shut up, awaiting God's judgment (v. 1), was a picture of this sinful world, awaiting God's judgment which is under condemnation (Rom. 3: 19; Rom. 2: 3; John 3: 18).

There was only one way of escape — to hide in the house with the red line. This was too humbling for proud men and seemed foolish to them. To many today, the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness (1 Cor. 1: 18). There is only one way of escape for us. "He that believeth on him (Jesus Christ) is not condemned" (John 3: 18).

CANAAN REPRESENTS THE LIFE OF VICTORY IN CHRIST.—

ISRAEL ENCOUNTERED OPPOSITION. Their enemies did their utmost to keep Israel from gaining possession of Canaan. Satan and the powers of darkness try to overcome the Children of God in order to prevent them from gaining the blessings God has for them and living the life of victory (Eph. 6: 12). Satan makes special attacks on those who are determined to follow Christ at all costs. Half-hearted Christians experience little, if anything, of this conflict, because Satan knows they are powerless to affect his kingdom.

BUT GOD HAD ALREADY GIVEN JERICHO TO ISRAEL. He said, "*I have given* into thy hand Jericho . . .," (v. 2) the first stronghold. All they had to do was to go in and possess it. And for us, God has made every provision for victory in our Christian life; if we are defeated, or make no attempt to go in and possess the land of blessing God has promised, then it is our own fault.

ISRAEL COULD NOT POSSESS THE LAND BY THEIR OWN STRENGTH. "They got not the land in possession by their own sword . . . but *thy* right hand and *thine* arm" (Psalm 44: 3). *The Ark* (type of Jesus Christ) must go before them (v. 9) and they must follow it. We shall never know victory in our lives, till we cease to depend on our own strength and claim Christ's strength and power.

ISRAEL'S PART.—

THEY MUST CO-OPERATE WITH GOD. It is true that we cannot live the life of victory by our own efforts. "This is the victory that overcometh the world . . . even our faith" (1 John 5: 4). Works are the expression and outcome of faith. After Israel had crossed the Jordan, they were not to be idle and merely wait till the walls crumbled away by degrees. There was not one day without obedience to the great Captain of the host. Then the Ark had to be carried on the shoulders of the priests. We, too, are to obey the Captain of our salvation and to win in His Name. We co-operate with God *by testimony, by serving* Him in the path of obedience and, above all, *by faith.*

THEY MUST DO THE WORK IN GOD'S APPOINTED WAY, according to the detailed instructions given by God. We also have our instructions given to us in the Word of God and, if we follow these, the difficulties will be removed, the problems will be solved and our Jerichos, the things which are too high for us to surmount, will fall down flat.

THEY WENT ROUND JERICHO DAILY AND WAITED SEVEN DAYS. They worked with patience and courage. Let us not grow impatient and discouraged if the walls of our Jericho do not fall immediately. If we do not see the enemy capitulating quickly, if we do not see the answer to our prayers, let us not grow faithless. It was "*by faith* the walls of Jericho fell down," but only "after . . . seven days" (Heb. 11: 30). They had before them the difficult walls with no sign of collapse, yet they kept on in faith going round the city. Let us keep on with the prayer of faith even though we see no sign of the answer.

GOD'S DELAYS ARE NOT DENIALS. After our Lord had received the urgent message from Martha and Mary that Lazarus was sick, he waited four days before going to them, but when He did come He exercised His mighty power (John 11: 6, 43, 44). During those seven days while the Children of Israel waited, their faith was being tested and strengthened. "Lord, increase *our* faith" (Luke 17: 5).

THERE WAS TO BE NO COMPROMISE WITH THE ENEMY, they were to use nothing which belonged to him (vv. 18, 21, 24). After victory, we have sometimes yielded to temptation, we have again taken up things which God has forbidden and there is sad defeat. We shall see an illustration of this in our next lesson. God wants us to live an *uninterrupted* life of victory. "Each victory will help you some other to win."

MEMORY VERSE.—Zechariah 4: 6—"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

THE FALL OF JERICHO

Joshua 5:12—6:27

Golden Text: 1 Cor. 1:21

I. The Unseen Commander; Josh. 5:12; 6:5.

1. The new food; Vs. 11-12. For forty years God had sustained them by the manna. Cp. 1 Peter 2:2; 1 Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 5:12-14. Cp. John 12:24; 6:57. The manna spoke of Christ in humiliation. The corn of the land speaks of Christ in exaltation. The Christian must be occupied, not only with a Saviour who has died for him, but with one who ever lives to keep and satisfy His own. Christ crucified, saves. Christ glorified, satisfies.
2. The wondrous vision; Vs. 13-14. One of the many theophanies of the O. T., i. e., a manifestation of God to men by actual appearance. These theophanies were undoubtedly appearances of the second Person in the Trinity. Cp. Gen. 18; Ex. 23:20; 32:34; Judges 6:12-14; 13:15-21. Note marg. of V. 18, and Cp. Isa. 9:6. Read also Isa. 6:1-3, and Cp. John 12:41, etc., etc. (1) The question; V. 13. (2) The answer; V. 14. The captain. Cp. Heb. 2:10. (3) The effect; V. 14. Cp. Isa. 6:5; Luke 5:8; Dan. 10:8; Job 40:4, 5; 42:5,6, etc. (4) The command; V. 15. Cp. Exo. 3:5; Heb. 1:1-3; John 1:1-3; 17:5. His eternal glory and intrinsic holiness.
3. The revelation; 6:2-5; of the plan of campaign. (1) The assurance; V. 2. (2) The plan; Vs. 3-5. God's command and man's obedience both necessary.

II. The Compassed City; Vs. 6-25.

1. The order of the march; Vs. 6-16. Note the position of the ark—"in the midst;" V. 9. Cp. John 15:5; Matt. 18:20. Christ in the midst. (1) On the cross; John 19:18. (2) In the church; Matt. 18:20; Rev. 1:13. (3) On the throne ;Rev. 5:6. Picture the solemn march, day after day with a silent army encompassing the city. Perhaps the people of Jericho jeered at them from the walls as day by day passed with not a word spoken or an attempt made to storm the walls.
2. The warning; Vs. 17-19. Cp. 2 Cor. 6:17. See 1 John 2:15-17.
3. The final shout; Vs. 16, 20.
4. The astonishing result; Vs. 20-24. To the eyes of the people of Jericho it probably looked foolish to see the encompassing army, but Cp. 1 Cor. 1:18-29.
5. Rahab saved; Vs. 22-25 According to the promise given her.

III. The Lessons to be Learned. The principles governing victory.

1. Rolling away the reproach; 5:9, 10; Separation. The knife of the word applied to the flesh.
2. Obedience; 5:11.
3. Feeding on old corn; 5:11.
4. A commander revealed; 5:13.
5. A worshipful spirit; 5:14.
6. A listening ear; 5:14.
7. An obedient heart; 5:15.
8. A revealed plan; 6:3-5.
9. Obedience implicit and unwavering to that plan; V. 16.
10. Victory always the result. Cp. 1 John 5:4, etc.

80. DEFEAT AT AI

READ Joshua 7.

THEME: Causes of Defeat.

TELL THE STORY.

CAUSES OF DEFEAT.—

THEY UNDERRATED THE STRENGTH OF THE ENEMY and overestimated their own, therefore they sent only a few men. They did not depend on God as at Jericho. Later, when God gave them orders, He instructed them to take *all* the men of war against Ai (Josh. 8: 1). Do we not frequently make the same mistake? The very difficult things we bring to God and trust Him to gain the victory for us, but the smaller things we think we can manage ourselves and the result is failure and defeat.

THERE WAS SIN IN THE CAMP. In 1 Chron. 2: 7 Achan is called "the troubler of Israel." Sin not only brings trouble upon ourselves but also upon others. We are bound together in families and the sins of the parents affect the children. The sins of the children often break the hearts of the parents. We are also bound together in community life, in business and in social life, therefore our actions affect others. "None of us liveth to himself" (Rom. 14: 7).

ISRAEL COULD NOT HAVE GOD'S PRESENCE OR VICTORY UNLESS THEY PUT AWAY SIN (vv. 12, 13). It is of no use to *say* we are sorry for sin if we do not put it away. "Whoso confesseth and *forsaketh* them (his sins) shall have mercy" (Prov. 28: 13).

ISRAEL'S REPENTANCE.—

JOSHUA AND THE ELDERS HUMBLED THEMSELVES BEFORE GOD. They asked Him to show them *why* they had been defeated (v. 6-9). If we, as Christians, ask God the cause of our defeat, He will reveal it. Then let us use David's prayer, "Search me, O God . . ." (Ps. 139, 23, 24).

JOSHUA WAS CONCERNED FOR GOD'S HONOUR (vv. 8, 9). When Christians are not living victorious lives, shame is brought upon God's Name and we hinder others from coming to Christ.

THEN GOD REVEALED THE CAUSES OF THEIR DEFEAT. They were: Disobedience, theft and deceit (vv. 11, 13). God had clearly laid down His commands and therefore there was no excuse for Achan. Disobedience to parents, to teachers and, above all to God, is the cause of failure and defeat in the lives of many young people.

STEPS IN ACHAN'S DOWNFALL.—

"I SAW, I COVETED, I TOOK" (7: 21). Here we have the same downward steps as in the fall of Eve — "she saw, she desired, she took of the fruit" (Gen. 3: 6). God had forbidden Israel to take for themselves anything which belonged to Jericho or punishment would surely follow (6: 18). It is probable that Achan continued to look at the spoil. Do not play with temptation. Give sin a wide berth (Psalm 119: 37).

"I COVETED." To covet is to eagerly desire that which is unlawful, or belonging to another. God's warnings against this sin are given in Eph. 5: 3. Covetousness led Gehazi to lie and deceive, and Ahab to murder (1 Kings 21: 13, 14). "Thou shalt not covet." *"I TOOK."* It is a short step between coveting and stealing. There are many forms of stealing. Copying another's work and passing it off as your own is, in reality, stealing. Stealing is forbidden (Eph. 4: 28; 1 Pet. 4: 15).

ACHAN TRIED TO HIDE HIS SIN but God's Word says, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numb. 32: 23). It is possible to hide our sin from others for a time, but not from God (Heb. 4: 13).

HE MADE A FULL CONFESSION ONLY AFTER HE HAD BEEN FOUND OUT. There was no evidence of repentance and therefore there was no forgiveness. There is a difference between sorrow for the *consequences* of sin, and repentance. Confession of sin should be accompanied by prayer for forgiveness. (Ps. 51: 1; Ps. 25: 11). Where there is true repentance toward God (a forsaking of sin), and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20: 21), forgiveness and cleansing will follow (1 John 1: 9).

When Israel had put away sin, God again gave victory (Joshua 7).

MEMORY VERSE.—Numbers 32: 23—"Be sure your sin will find you out."

THE SIN OF ACHAN

Joshua 7:1-26

Golden Text: Prov. 28:13

I. The Sin. V. 1.

1. The plain warning; 6:17, 18. Cp. Matt. 18:7.
2. The deliberate disobedience; V. 1. The essence of all sin is disobedience. Cp. 1 John 3:4; 5:17; 1 Sam. 15:23. Note: all Israel is affected by the one transgression; Rom. 5:12; Prov. 8:36; 1 Cor. 12:26.

II. The Result. Vs. 2-5.

1. The spies sent out; Vs. 2-5.
2. The defeat; Vs. 4-5. Sin weakens; Isa. 1:10-17. Cp. Deut. 32:30; Lev. 26:7, 8; Illus. Judges 16:6-21.
3. The effect; V. 5. "Melted." Cp. Eccl. 9:18.

III. Joshua's Cry; Vs. 6-9.

1. Humiliation; V. 6.
2. His cry; Vs. 7-8. Note this carefully.

IV. God's Answer; Vs. 10-15.

1. The charge; Vs. 10-11. Cp. Jer. 4:18; Rom. 3: 10-19, 23; Heb. 1:13.
2. The remedy; Vs. 12-15. (1) Separation; V. 13. There can be no toleration with unconfessed and unjudged sin. (2) Confession; V. 14; 1 John 1:9; Psa. 51:2. (3) Judgment; V. 15. Unsparing and complete; Rom. 6:23, etc.

V. The Examination; Vs. 16-18.
What must the feelings of Achan have been as the search narrowed itself down to him! Cp. Num. 32:23. Impress this. Cp. 1 Tim. 5:24; Matt. 12:36; 10:26, 27; Luke 12:2, 3; Rev. 20:10-15. Be sure your sin will find you out—if not in time then in eternity!

VI. The Confession; Vs. 19-23. "I have sinned." Cp. Exo. 9:27; Num. 22:34; 1 Sam. 15:24; Matt. 27:4; Job 7:20; Luke 15:21. Note the stages of his sin.

1. Saw; V. 21. Cp. Gen. 3:6; 2 Sam. 11:2; 1 John 2:16.
2. Coveted; V. 21; Exod. 20:17; 1 Tim. 6:9-10.
3. Took: V. 21. The next natural step. Doubtless Achan looked each way before taking it, but he didn't look **up.**
4. Hid. Nothing can be hidden from God; Heb. 4:13; Psa. 139:1-12; Prov. 5:22; Isa. 57:20.

VII. The Punishment; Vs. 24-26.
Cp. The great assize to come; Rev. 20:10-15. What fearful secrets will there be revealed unless sheltered by the precious blood! John 5:24; Rom. 8:1; 1 John 1:7.

1. The day has been appointed; Acts 17:31.
2. The Judge has been selected; John 5:22.
3. The evidence is being gathered; Matt. 12: 36, 37.
4. The witnesses subpoenaed; Matt. 12:41, 42.
5. The accused will all be present; Rev. 20:12.
6. The books will be opened; Rev. 20:12.
7. The sentence will be executed; Rev. 20:14.

81. THE LEAGUE WITH GIBEON

Joshua 9:1-27

Golden Text: Prov. 22:3

I. The Historic Setting.

1. The fall of Jericho followed by the overwhelming defeat of Ai had struck terror into the hearts of the Gibeonites as well it might. Cp. Isa. 26:9.
2. The altar in Ebal; 8:30, 31.
3. The reading of the blessings and the curses of the law. Cp. Vs. 32-35; Deut. 27:11-26. Cp. Gal. 3:10-13. Picture the solemn scene and apply the truth of Rom. 7:7-14. Contrast Rom. 6:14 and see the blessings under grace. John 1:17.

II. The Wily Ambassage; Vs. 3-14. What these people confessed through guile should be the true confession of every sinner without any deceit. Note their state.

1. They knew their need of a peace to protect them; V. 24. Cp. Isa. 57:21; Rom. 8:5-8; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:18; Col. 1:21, etc. They saw their need—have you?
2. The wine bottles old, rent and bound up; Matt. 9:17. All the attempts of self-reformation in vain. "A new creature" is what God requires. Cp. John 3:3; Jer. 2:22; 13:23. Cp. Eph. 1:13; 1 Cor. 12:13; 3:16; 6:19, 20; 2 Cor. 5:17. The wine bottles could also illustrate the pleasures of sin which for a while bring happiness, but soon fail to thrill and leave the soul barren and thirsty.
3. The old garments; V. 5. Cp. Isa. 64:6. The filthy rags of the sinner's self-righteousness. Cp. Phil. 3:4-9; Rom. 10:3. Cp. Isa. 61:10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 3:24-26; Gal. 2:16, etc.
4. The moldy bread; V. 5. The world's perpetual famine; Luke 15:14; Isa. 55:2; 1 John 2:15-16. "The world has nothing left to give." Cp. John 6:35; Phil. 4:19, etc.
5. The far country—where every sinner is by nature. Cp. Isa. 59:1, 2; Luke 15:13; Eph. 2:13.
6. They heard the news; V. 9. Of redemption by blood; Exo. 12. Of deliverance by power; Exo. 14. Of miraculous provision; Exo. 16. Of divine preservation. Cp. Acts 13:38; Rom. 10:17; John 3:16; Mark 16:15, 16, etc.
7. They took the place of servants—humbled themselves. Cp. Rom. 6:16, 17; John 8:34; Luke 14:11.

III. The League; Vs. 14-15.

1. The fatal omission; V. 14. They depended on their own judgment. Cp. 1 Sam. 16:7. "The arm of flesh will fail us, we dare not trust our own."
2. The covenant made; V. 15. A covenant of life. Cp. Heb. 10:11-17; Isa. 55:3; Matt. 11:28; John 5:24; 3:16, 36; 10:10, etc.
3. The discovery; V. 16; but the covenant must stand. If the word given by man must stand; how much more of the covenant of God! 1 Tim. 2:13; Rom. 11:29; Heb. 6:17-20.
4. The service; Vs. 22-27. Cp. Rom. 6:17-22.

82. THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

Joshua 10-11, 14

Golden Text: Joshua 21:45

I. The Conquest of the South; C. 10. A map is essential to a proper grasp of this lesson. Study the positions carefully.

1. The federation of the kings; 10:1-5. Notice, however, all was in the line of God's purpose; see 11:20. Cp. Psa. 2:1-2; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 3:18, etc.
2. Gibeon's plea; V. 6. Based on the promise made to them by Joshua. Cp. Rom. 5:10.
3. The encouragement; V. 8. Cp. Josh. 1:6-8; Acts 18:9, 10; Heb. 13:5, 6.
4. The victory; Vs. 9-15. All of God. (1) The rout; V. 10. (2) The storm of hailstones; V. 11. What a fearful scene it must have been. Compare a future storm yet to burst; Isa. 28: 16-23. Note V. 21; Nah. 1:6; Matt. 3:2; 2 Thess. 1:8. Who may abide? Answer: Rom. 8:1. Are you there? (3) The sun and moon stand still; Vs. 12-14. He who created the sun and moon can control their movements. The Creator is always greater than the thing He creates. Gen. 18:14; Eph. 3:20.
5. The execution of the kings; V. 16:27.
6. The further victories; Vs. 28-43. This completed the conquest of the South.

II. The Conquest of the North. C. 11.

1. The further federation; Vs. 1-5.
2. The promise renewed; V. 6.
3. The complete conquest; Vs. 10-23. Note V. 23. What God promises He performs.

III. Caleb's Inheritance. C. 14:6-15; 15:13-19.

1. His character. (1) His confidence in God's power; Num. 13:20, and faithfulness to perform what He had promised. (2) His wholehearted devotedness; Num. 14:30. He followed God fully. Cp. Phil. 3:8; Rom. 6:13, 14; 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 2 Cor. 5:15. (3) His consistency and endurance. After 40 years he was still going on with God; Josh 14:8, 10. Cp. 1 Cor. 15:58. (4) His courage; Josh 14:11. Cp. 1 Tim 6:12; Phil. 1:28; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-18. O for more Calebs!
2. His request; Vs. 6-12. (1) His testimony to God's goodness; V. 7. (2) His faith in the promise of God; V. 9. (3) His appropriation of God's promise to him to possess his possessions. See Obad. 17.
3. His inheritance; Vs. 13-15. Hebron, the place of many memories. Hebron means "fellowship." Cp. 1 John 1:3.
4. Possessing the possession; Josh. 15:13-19. Are we possessing what is ours in Christ? We are "accepted in Him;" Eph. 1:6. Are we seeking to be "accepted of Him?" 2 Cor. 5:9. We have eternal life in Him; John 5:24. Are we seeking to lay hold on eternal life? 1 Tim. 6:12. Illust. of possession, without appropriation. 1 Kings 22:3.

83. JOSHUA'S LAST WORDS

Joshua 23-24

Golden Text: Prov. 1:7

I. The First Gathering; C. 23.

1. Note the period—six years had passed. The land had been distributed and Joshua was old; V. 1.
2. The call for conference; V. 2. The periodic coming together of God's people for prayer, exhortation and ministry has a good foundation in the word of God.
3. Joshua's speech. Note carefully its elements; Vs. 2-16. (1) Testimony; Vs. 2-4. To the faithfulness, power and grace of God. (2) Promise; V. 5. Of complete deliverance from all their enemies, conditional, however, on their cooperation with His purpose. (3) Exhortation; Vs. 6-10. (a) To obedience to the Word of God; V. 6. (b) To separation; V. 7. Cp. 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11. (c) To whole-hearted devotion; V. 8-11. Cp. Acts 11:23; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:20, 21. (4) Warning; Vs. 12-16. (a) Against the unequal yoke; V. 12. (b) The glowing testimony; V. 4. Note this carefully and Cp. Deut. 7:8, 9; 9:5; 1 Sam. 12:22; 1 Chron. 28:20; Psa. 89:28, 33, 34; 119:65, 89; 2 Tim. 2:13. (c) Against apostasy; Vs. 15-16. Compare this speech with the last words of the great apostle to his son in the faith, Timothy. In view of the apostasy he warns Timothy and seeks to encourage him in the things of God. 2 Tim. 4:1-8.

II. The Second Gathering. C. 24.

1. The recital of God's goodness; Vs. 1-13. This illustrates the history of a soul. (1) From idolatry (V. 2). (2) To the promised land (V. 13), and (3) the grace of God all between! Cp. Eph. 2:12-19. Note the similarity.
2. The exhortation; V. 14. Note "the fear of the Lord." It is (1) The beginning of wisdom; Psa. 111:10. (2) A fountain of life; Prov. 14:27. (3) Secret of a holy life; Prov. 8:13. (4) Secret of assurance; Prov. 14:26. (5) Secret of true prosperity; Prov. 22:4; 15:16.
3. The bold decision; V. 15. See some other decisions. Abraham's; Gen. 12:1. Moses'; Heb. 11:25. Noah; Gen. 7:1-5. Ruth; Ruth 1:16, 17. Prodigal son; Luke 15:8, etc. What is yours?
4. The reply; Vs. 16-18. The result of testimony. Is anyone else a Christian because you are one?
5. The warning; Vs. 19-22.
6. The practical application; V. 23. Cp. James 1:22; 2:14-26. Practical Godliness is the best proof of a whole-hearted decision.
7. The death of Joshua; Vs. 24-31. A good beginning is necessary for a good ending. Note the reference to the written word of God. Cp. Deut. 31:24. This was written by Divine inspiration; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 2:21.

84. DEBORAH'S VICTORY AND SONG

Judges 4-5

Golden Text: Psa. 9:10

The key phrase to the book of Judges is "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes" and this explains the monotonous record of failure that it describes. Jer. 10:23.

I. The Historic Setting. Chapters 1-3.

1. The failure of Israel; C. 1. Note Vs. 19, 21, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35. Whose fault was it? Cp. Micah 2:7; 2 Cor. 6:12.
2. The warning; V. 2:1-5. Thus God faithfully warned His people of the danger of the unequal yoke and of spiritual apathy. The more sin is tolerated the less evil it appears.
3. The wearisome round; C. 2-3. The history of Israel under the Judges seems to be an ever recurring sequence of (1) Their sin; (2) God's punishment through their enemies' oppression; (3) Their repentance and confession; (4) Deliverance and restoration. Illust. Judges 2:11-19. Apply this spiritually.
4. The first Judges; C. 3. (1) Othniel; 3:1-11. (a) Note the sad condition of Israel; Vs. 5-7. From intermarriage they had gone into open idolatry. Cp. 1 John 2:15, 16. (c) The deliverance; Vs. 9-11. Note when; V. 9. Note how; V. 10. By the Spirit; Zech. 4:6. (2) Ehud; Vs. 12-30. (3) Shamgar; V. 31. Note the weak things that God uses in Judges and by means of which His strength is made perfect; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; 2 Cor. 12:9. The left hand; 3:21; Ox-goad, 3:31; a nail, 4:21; barley cake, 7:13 pitchers and trumpets, 7:20; a millstone, 9:53; jawbone of ass, 15:16, etc.

II. The Victory. C. 4.

1. The servitude; Vs. 1-3. Note for how long. Cp. Jer. 2:19, 13; 3:22-23.
2. The prophetess; Vs. 4-5. A unique character. An evidence of the paucity of Israel in real men.
3. The revelation; Vs. 6-9.
4. The Lord's battle, not Barak's. Cp. Psa. 24:8.
5. The execution of Sisera; Vs. 18-22, by the hand of a woman.

III. The song. C. 5. Cp. other songs; Exo. 15:1; Psa. 40:1-3; Rev. 5:9.

1. God's interposition; Vs. 1-5.
2. The people's apostasy; Vs. 6-8.
3. Deborah's testimony; Vs. 7, 12.
4. The rebuke to those who did not go to battle; Vs. 16-17, 23. Note especially V. 23. The sin of omission. Compare the hundreds of professing Christians today who take no responsibility in the service of the Lord, but leave it to the faithful few. James 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:58. The Lord deliver us from the curse of Meroz. The people who did nothing.
5. The battle described; Vs. 19-22.
6. Sisera's death; Vs. 24-30.
7. Conclusions; V. 31. Cp. Psa. 84:5-7; 2 Tim. 2:1; Eph. 6:10.

85. GOD'S CALL TO GIDEON

READ Judges 6.

THEME: Call to Service.

TELL THE STORY.

Because of their sin God delivered Israel into the hands of the Midianites. For seven years Israel lived in fear and was under the heel of the enemy. When the harvest was ripe, the Midianites came and reaped it. When they cried to the Lord, He raised up a deliverer for them. Gideon was God's man for the hour.

THE LORD ENCOURAGED GIDEON.—

THE LORD IS WITH THEE (v. 12). What greater encouragement could we have than this — the assurance of the Lord's presence? We dare not take up any work for God without this. Moses would only go forward if God went with him (Ex. 33: 15). In this knowledge we can go forward with confidence.

THOU MIGHTY MAN OF VALOUR (v. 12). Yet Gideon was fearful, weak and discouraged. How can the apparent contradiction be accounted for? God was thinking of Gideon not as the man he then was, but as the strong man of God he was to become. Our Lord said to Peter, "Thou *art* Simon . . . thou *shalt be* called Cephas — a stone" (John 1: 42). God has a plan for each life and, as He works upon us, He thinks of His plan as already accomplished.

THE LORD LOOKED ON GIDEON (v. 14).—

IT WAS A LOOK OF EXPECTATION. Gideon felt that the angel expected him to save Israel. If we expect something worthwhile from another, he will invariably rise to the occasion. Let us be encouragers of others.

IT WAS A LOOK OF ENCOURAGEMENT. "I will be with you" and, if our eyes are fixed upon Him we shall hear Him say, "My grace is sufficient. Go in this thy might."

IT WAS A LOOK OF STRENGTH — GIVING MIGHT. God does what our friends cannot do, He imparts power and strength, to enable us to carry out His commands.

THE LORD CALLED HIM.—

GO IN THIS THY MIGHT (v. 14). This might was to be the consciousness of God's presence and the knowledge of God's strength and his own weakness. To have a strong and loved friend with us imparts confidence and strength.

GOD GAVE HIM THE ASSURANCE OF VICTORY. "Thou shalt save Israel" (v. 14). What a great promise. We also have great and precious promises.

GOD GAVE HIM A SENSE OF VOCATION. "Have not *I* sent thee." If we are certain *God* has called us for a special work, it will carry us through all difficulties, and we shall not become offended and give up when things go wrong or we are criticised for what we are doing.

GIDEON'S EXCUSES.—

HE DOUBTED GOD'S PRESENCE. If the Lord . . . why . . . (v. 13). This was the language of unbelief. It was because of sin on Israel's part that God had allowed the enemy to overcome them.

HE DOUBTED GOD'S POWER. "Where be His miracles?" (v. 13). But our Lord said, "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matt. 9: 29).

HE SAID HE WAS UTTERLY INADEQUATE. "Wherewith shall *I* save Israel?" (v. 15). Contrast Paul who said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4: 13).

He said *HE HAD NO SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS.* "I am the least . . . " (v. 15). He was probably thought to be of no account by his family. You may have only five loaves and two fishes but God can use them if you surrender them to Him. "What is that in thine hand?" said God to Moses (Ex. 4: 2).

HE SAID HE WAS LACKING IN FINANCE AND POSITION. "My family is poor" (v. 15), but that is nothing with God. "The silver is mine and the gold is mine," said the Lord.

HE ASKED FOR A SIGN. This was not a sign of faith but of weakness that must have something he could see.

THE LORD'S REPEATED ASSURANCE (v. 16)—

HE ASSURED GIDEON OF HIS PRESENCE. "Surely I will be with thee." Here we see God's tenderness and patience with His doubting servant.

HE ASSURED HIM OF VICTORY. "Thou shalt save Israel" (v. 14).

HE GAVE HIM A SIGN (v. 21), but our Lord said to Thomas, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20: 29).

HE GAVE HIM PEACE. Gideon now learned to know God as Jehovah Shalom (the Lord send peace), Peace that comes from knowing we are in His will.

MEMORY VERSE.—Judges 6: 14—"Go in this thy might . . . have not I sent thee ?"

GIDEON'S CALL

Judges 6

Golden Text: 1 Cor. 1:27

I. The Condition of the People. 6:1-6.

1. The old story of sin and its consequences; V. 1.
2. Their pitiable state; Vs. 2-5. Reduced to a state of famine. Cp. The prodigal son; Luke 15. Sin withers, blasts and impoverishes. True of the Christian as well as the unsaved. James 4:3, 4.
3. Their cry; V. 7. Cp. Deut. 4:26-31. They had a promise to plead. Cp. 1 John 1:9; 2:1, 2.
4. The prophet's message; Vs. 8-10. (1) A reminder of past blessings and deliverances. (2) Of His command; V. 10. (3) A reminder of their sin; V. 10.

II. The Divine Messenger; Vs. 11-24.

1. Who the messenger was. Note Vs. 14, 16, etc. Another of those wonderful Christophanies.
2. The salutation; Vs. 11-12. Note Gideon's occupation; V. 11. A message of encouragement; V. 12.
3. Gideon's complaint; V. 13. There is a reason for all God's dealings with His people. Cp. Heb. 12:5-11.
4. The message; Vs. 14-16. (1) Its content. (a) The command; V. 14—"Go!" (b) The commission, "Shalt save." (c) The authority, "I sent." (2) The objection; V. 15. Refreshing humility. Cp. Exo. 3:11; Luke 14:11; Eph. 3:8. (3) The promise; V. 16. Cp. 2 Cor. 12:9; Matt. 28:19, 20; 2 Cor. 9:8; 3:5. Illustration, an empty glove is powerless to do anything, but when placed on the hand, is clothed with all the strength of the arm.
5. The sign; Vs. 17-24. A Divine phenomenon.
6. The altar; V. 24. Note its name. Cp. Eph. 2: 14, 17; Col. 1:21; Rom. 5:1; Phil. 5:6, 7.

III. The Destroyed Idol. Vs. 25-32.

1. The command; Vs. 25-26. (1) To break down; V. 25. (2) To set up; V. 2. God destroys the bad that He might give the best. Cp. Acts 20:21. "Repentance," break-down; "faith," build-up. 1 Thess. 1:9.
2. The obedience; V. 27. A brave act in the face of popular opinion.
3. The result; Vs. 28-32. The test of common sense; Vs. 30-31. The foolishness of idolatry; Psa. 115:4-8; Isa. 40:18-22. Cp. 1 Kings 18:27. If the idol could not protect itself, what protection could it possibly give to anyone else? All man-made gods are silent and powerless in the hour of need. Cp. the gods of pleasure, fame, sport, business, money, etc.
4. The equipment; V. 34. (See marg.). Literally, "The Spirit of God clothed Himself with Gideon." Cp. Dan. 11:32. Yet Cp. John 16:16, 17.
5. The sign of the dew on the fleece; Vs. 36-38.
6. The sign of the dew on the ground; Vs. 39-40.

86. GIDEON TESTED

READ Judges 6: 24-40.

THEME: Gideon's Consecration. TELL THE STORY.

GIDEON'S CONSECRATION.—

HE BUILT AN ALTAR TO THE LORD (v. 24). Before God could use him, he must yield himself to God for His service. There are no conscripts in God's army, each soldier is a volunteer. We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice (Rom. 12: 1).

HIS CONSECRATION WAS TESTED (v. 25). He was given a very hard thing to do. God will test us also to see if our consecration is absolute and real. Do not be discouraged when these testings come.

HE WAS TESTED THAT SAME NIGHT (v. 25). Had Gideon had such an experience that he would stand the test? Perhaps to test our sincerity God sometimes tests our faith after we have made a covenant with Him and taken a stand for Him.

GOD'S TEST.—

IT CAME TO HIM IN CONNECTION WITH HIS FATHER'S HOUSE (v. 25). He was to throw down the altar of Baal. Perhaps Gideon *thought* he had yielded all to God, but God could not use Gideon and give victory while one idol remained. Sometimes, after we have yielded, as we thought, everything to God, He reveals something that perhaps unconsciously to ourselves we are holding back from Him. An idol to us is anything that usurps the place of Christ, anything to which we have given first place. It takes courage to take a stand for God and for righteousness in our own home. "Go home . . . and tell . . . " (Mark 5: 19).

HE WAS TO CUT DOWN THE GROVE, not only to destroy the idol. He was not to allow anything to remain that would make it easy for him to set up the idol again.

HE MUST BUILD AN ALTAR TO GOD IN ITS PLACE. There was to be no vacuum. There must not only be the pulling down but the building up — positive as well as negative. It is not sufficient to give up things which hinder us, we must be able to put something better in their place. The Cross of Christ is the substitute for the things pertaining to the old life.

GIDEON'S OBEDIENCE.—

HE DID AS THE LORD HAD SAID — there was no compromise. There is only one proof of our consecration and our love to Christ and that is obedience (John 14: 15).

HE OBEYED WITHOUT DELAY in spite of his fear (v. 27). If we are afraid of tackling something, delay only makes it worse. But what a sense of relief comes when the deed is done. True courage is that shown by the one who is afraid, and yet does that of which he is afraid. The one who knows no fear is not the courageous one.

RESULTS OF GIDEON'S OBEDIENCE.—

THERE WAS OPPOSITION FROM THE UNGODLY. Our Lord, when on earth experienced this.

HIS FATHER CAME OUT ON GOD'S SIDE. He should have been the one to resent the destruction of the idol (v. 31). God can and does use the consistent Christian witness in the home as the means of the family altar being set up.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD CAME UPON GIDEON IN POWER. Fitness for the service of God can only be found in the Spirit of God.

In spite of all this Gideon asked for two further signs (vv. 37, 39). He had some distance yet to go in the path of faith. "Then shall I know," he said (v. 37).

GIDEON'S FOLLOWERS TESTED (Ch. 7).—

When Gideon blew the trumpet a great many followed (ch. 6, v. 34).

THE FOLLOWERS WERE TOO MANY FOR GOD (v. 2). Could 32,000 be too many for 120,000? (8: 10). The glory must be all God's. He will not give His glory to another (Isaiah 42: 8).

THE FEARFUL WERE TO RETURN AND DEPART EARLY (v. 3). The presence of the fearful is always a hindrance to advance in God's work and influences others. Therefore 22,000 dropped out and only 10,000 remained. God's warriors have to be weakened and reduced to bring them up to real efficiency in His presence.

A SECOND TEST (v. 4). The first who returned went of their own free will, now the purging is to be done by God. Much that we would pass for wheat, His fan will prove to be only chaff (Jer. 23: 28). "That no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1: 29).

A CONSECRATED BAND (vv. 5-7). Those who lapped the water with the hand (vv. 5-7) had a keener sense of urgency. Those who bowed down were taken up with their own selfish gratification and personal comfort. All were no doubt alike thirsty but we do not live to eat and drink, we eat and drink to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10: 31). As the servants of God, let us lap thankfully of the wells of providence God may open before us by the way, but let us not bow down to them or we shall become unfit to join the *victors* in the battle of the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE.—Hosea 14: 8—"What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him and observed him."

87. GIDEON'S LAMPS, PITCHERS AND TRUMPETS

READ Judges 7: 16-22.

THEME: Earthen Vessels. TELL THE STORY.

The equipment of Gideon and his men was very simple—a trumpet, an empty vessel, a lamp and an example (Gideon). This is how God works today.

PITCHERS — earthen vessels represent our bodies. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4: 7).

LAMPS OR TORCHES represent the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4: 4). They represent also Jesus the Light of the world, in us (2 Cor. 4: 6).

PITCHERS.—

THEY WERE ONLY EARTHEN VESSELS. They were neither beautiful nor strong. In ourselves we are nothing and of little value. It is good for us to remember that we are only *earthen* vessels. "If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. 6: 3).

THEY HAD FIRST TO BE EMPTY (v. 16) before the lights could be put inside, otherwise there would have been no room. Before God can fill us with His power to enable us to reflect Christ and to show forth the Gospel of Christ, He must empty us of our own power, strength, pride and wisdom. This emptying is not easy.

THEY THEN HAD TO BE BROKEN in order to show the light inside. At Peniel God had to break Jacob taking away from him his own strength and self-reliance. (See Series 2, Lesson 10 Gen. 32). Not till then was his name changed from "Supplanter" to "Israel" — a prince with God. If we are to manifest Christ to others then we must be willing to be broken, and the self-life yielded to be kept in the place of death. The Lord Jesus allowed His body to be broken for us, should we not be willing to be broken for Him in order that He might shine through our life?

THE LIGHT.—

IT WAS PUT INSIDE AN EARTHEN VESSEL, not a gold or a silver one. God has placed His treasure in earthen vessels — our frail bodies — in order that we and others might know that the vessel is nothing and Christ is everything (2 Cor. 4: 7; Isaiah 42: 8).

THE LIGHT-FIRE BURNED INSIDE THE PITCHER FIRST. The light touched every part of it. The angel touched Isaiah's lips with a live coal and cleansed them (Is. 6: 6, 7). The Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost like as fire (Acts 2: 3). Are we willing for the fire of God to touch every part of our life, in order to burn up the rubbish?

TRUMPETS.—

These are a picture of the Gospel message to be sounded out.

THEIR USE. The trumpets in Ezek. 33: 3 were for warning. We are to warn others of the coming judgment. If they do not take heed to the warning, then the responsibility is theirs not ours (Ez. 33: 4), but if we do not give them warning then their blood will be required at our hand (Ezek 33: 6).

EVERY MAN HAD A TRUMPET (v. 16). Gideon's men blew the trumpet to bring judgment on their enemies; we are to blow the trumpet to warn men in order that God's judgment will *not* come upon them. What are you doing with yours? You may not be able to teach or preach but, by speaking a word for Christ you can blow the trumpet God has placed in your hands.

ALL THE TRUMPETS HAD TO BE BLOWN AT THE SAME TIME, then the Lord worked for them (v. 22). There is no power unless there is unity among Christians, unless they are joined together in love. Join with the Christians who are making a stand for God at school or at business and identify yourself with them. When the disciples met with *one accord* the Holy Spirit came upon them in power (Acts 2: 1-4). We can expect God to work only if we are united.

THE LIGHT WAS HELD IN ONE HAND AND THE TRUMPET IN THE OTHER. The trumpet of warning and the light of the Gospel must go together. Paul warned others in love, even with tears (Acts20:31).

EVERY MAN STOOD IN HIS PLACE (v. 21). They stood in the place their captain had chosen for them. They obeyed his orders. Let us do this even though the post may be a difficult one, one we would never have chosen for ourselves. The success of the battle depends on each one standing just where God has placed him. You are only one, but you are necessary.

GIDEON.—

HE WAS AN EXAMPLE. He said, "Look on me and do likewise" (v. 17). Are our lives such that we can say that? Other Christians may be waiting to see what you will do and they will copy you. Paul said, "Be ye followers of me" (1 Cor. 4. 16). Let us encourage others to do likewise.

HE PUT GOD FIRST. "The sword *of the Lord* and of Gideon," he said in v. 18. He knew that he was only God's instrument and that, apart from Him, he was powerless. One of the secrets of power and victory is to put God first in everything.

THERE WAS ONLY ONE SWORD AMONG THEM (v. 20), but it was enough for it was the sword *of the Lord*, and the hand of Gideon grasping it. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is the only effective weapon (Eph. 6: 17).

SECRETS OF COMPLETE VICTORY.—

UNITY. When the singers were as one, glory filled the house (2 Chron. 5: 13).

OBEDIENCE. They followed Gideon's example. They did not merely talk, but they acted (Matt. 7: 21).

FAITHFULNESS. Every man stood in his place (v. 21). When we stand in our rightful place, God will take His. When these conditions were fulfilled God gave victory (Zech. 4: 6. "Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit saith the Lord of hosts").

MEMORY VERSE.—2 Cor. 4: 7—"We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

GIDEON'S VICTORY

Judges 7

Golden Text: Isa. 57:15

I. The Tests; Vs. 1-8.

1. The necessity for it; Vs. 1-2. There was an army of 32.000. Cp. 1 Cor. 1:26-29; John 6:63; Matt. 11:25, 26; Deut. 8:11-18; Isa. 10:13.
2. The first test; V. 3. Cp. Deut. 20:8 The result: Two-thirds of the army depleted. Cp. 2 Tim 2:3; 1 Cor. 16:13; Phil. 1:28; 2 Tim. 1:7.
3. The second test; Vs. 4-7. To test their earnestness, energy and eagerness for the battle of the Lord by denial of self-indulgence. The result: Only 300 left. Cp. 1 Peter 1:7; 1 Cor. 15:58; Titus 2:11, 12; 1 Cor. 9:27.

II. The Encouragement; Vs. 9-15.

1. The visit to the camp. Vs. 9-12.
2. The dream; Vs. 13:14. God's purpose in dreams in the O. T. Job. 33:14-17. This was for Gideon's encouragement.
3. The effect; V. 15.

III. The Plan; Vs. 16-18.

1. To human eyes—foolishness, as also is God's way of salvation through the crucified and risen Son of God. 1 Cor. 1:18; 3:18-21. God uses weak things—the jawbone of an ass; Judges 15:15. The stone of a shepherd boy; 1 Sam. 17: 40. The little maid; 2 Kings 5:2, etc., etc.
2. The equipment—very simple; Vs. 16-17. A trumpet—an empty vessel—a lamp—an example. A picture of how God works today through His people. (1) The trumpet—Picture of the gospel message to be sounded out; Ezek. 33:3-6; Acts 13:38; 1 Cor. 14:8; Mark 16: 15, 16.
   (2) The empty vessel—picture of the redeemed sinner. Cp. 2 Cor. 4:7. If he is to be used by God he must be emptied of all pride, self esteem, self sufficiency and all that would hinder the purpose of God through him. See 2 Tim. 2:21.
   (3) The torch or fire brand—Light=testimony. Cp. Matt. 5:16. See also Phil. 2:15. Like John the Baptist the Christian should be "a burning and a shining light." John 5:35. Only as we burn for Him shall we shine.
   (4) A leader—an example. Cp. Heb. 12:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:21. Cp. "Follow Me and I will make you to become" Matt. 4:19. Christ is our example in (a) Love, John 13:34. (b) Self denial, John 12:24, 25. (c) Service, John 13:14, 15. (d) Humility, Phil. 2:5-8. (e) Walk, 1 John 2:6. (f) Suffering, 1 Peter 2:20, 21.

IV. The Victory; Vs. 19-25. Picture this scene: The darkness and silence of the night broken by the shrill trumpets and the blazing lights and the triumphant cry.

1. The Surprise; Vs. 19-22.
2. The confusion; V. 22. Note the source of it.
3. The rout; Vs. 23-24.

88. ABIMELECH AND JEPHTHAH

Judges 9-11

Golden Text: Isa. 57:20, 21

Once again, in these chapters, is the record of the confusion that reigned in Israel during this period of the Judges.

I. Abimelech's Treachery; 9:1-6.

1. The cause of it—Love of power, popularity and position. How many a man since has lost his soul for these same things! Ill. Pilate, Agrippa, Judas. Cp. Mark 8:36, 37.
2. The effect of it—his fearful sin. What God has to say about the sanctity of human life. Gen. 9:6; Psa. 73:3-12. Often the ungodly seem to prosper but the reckoning day is yet to come; Rev. 20:10-15; Heb. 9:27.

II. Jotham's Parable; Vs. 7-21. Really a fable.

1. Its purpose; V. 7; to bring home the sin of Abibelech to the people. The chief point in it is to drive home the fact that no worth while and useful person would have acted thus; but only a worthless bramble like Abimelech. Cp. Nathan's parable; 2 Sam. 12; and Christ's Matt. 13:3, etc.
2. The parable; Vs. 8-15.
3. The application; Vs. 16-21.

III. Abimelech's death; Vs. 22-57. His reign was short and turbulous. Cp. Isa. 57:20, 21; 2 Kings 9:22; Hos. 8:7; Gal. 6:7; Job 4:8. There is no reduction in the wages of sin; Rom. 6:23; Eccl. 5:8.

IV. Tola and Jair. C. 10.

1. Tola; 10:1-2.
2. Jair; 10:3-18. Note the description of Israel's condition. (1) Their idolatry, V. 6. A good Bible dictionary will give a description of these idols. (2) The punishment; Vs. 7-9. (3) Their confession and God's answer; Vs. 10-14. (4) Their repentance; Vs. 15-16.

V. Jephthah the Deliverer. C. 11.

1. The outlaw; Vs. 1-5; the despised one.
2. The plea; Vs. 6-8.
3. The ambassage to Ammon; Vs. 12-28. Jephthah's reply to the King of Ammon reveals the common knowledge of the history of Israel, obtained from the scriptural record.
4. The preparation; V. 29. This special enduement is mentioned often in Judges—trace the work of the Spirit of God in the O. T.
5. The vow; Vs. 30-40. (1) His vow; Vs. 30-31. Jephthah was not acting on God's orders when he made his rash vow. It was purely his own idea. Scripture simply records the history of it, but in no way commends it. (2) Victory; Vs. 32-33. (3) His grief; Vs. 34-36. Verses 37-40 seem to indicate she was not put to death but rather took a vow of perpetual virginity. Note especially Verse 40 (margin).

89. SAMSON—HIS EARLY LIFE

Judges 13-14

Golden Text: Prov. 20:1

The story of Samson is the tragic record of the weakest strong man of Scripture. It contains much in the way of warning concerning the danger of making shipwreck of one's life. Samson's promised much and yielded so little for God.

I. The Divine Messenger; Vs. 1-23.

1. The condition of Israel; V. 1. The same story again with the same condition brought about by their own sin.
2. The promise of the son; Vs. 2-5. (1) Another of the Christophanies—the manifestation of the Son of God. (2) The promise; V. 3. (3) The warning; Vs. 4-5. Cp. Numbers 6:1-5. The practical application—denial of self and separation unto God; 2 Cor. 6:17; 7:1; 2 Tim. 2:21, 22; 1 Cor. 9:25-27. (4) The plea; Vs. 6-8.
3. The second appearance; Vs. 9-23. (1) The emphasized conditions; Vs. 9-14. The blessings of temperance. (2) The offer; Vs. 51-17. Note V. 16 and Cp. Matt. 19:17. (3) The revelation of His name; V. 18. See marg. and Cp. Isa. 9:6. "Wonderful." Wonderful in (a) His birth, (b) in His life, (c) in His works, (d) in His words, (e) in His death, (f) in His resurrection, (g) in His present ministry, (h) in His coming again. (4) The offering; Vs. 19-23. What a marvelous sight!

II. The Birth of Samson; Vs. 24-25.

1. The fulfilled promise; V. 24. Cp. Num. 23:19; Joshua 21:45, etc.
2. The preparation; V. 25.

III. Samson's Riddle; V. 14.

1. His visit to Timnath; Vs. 1-4. Notice Samson's answer to his father's objection: "She pleaseth me." Here is the key to his weakness—self pleasing. There are three kinds of pleasers: (1) The God-pleasers. How? Rom. 8:8; Heb. 11:6; 1 John 3:22; Psa. 69:31; Col. 1:10; Phil. 2:12, 13; Psa. 51:19. (2) The self-pleasers; Rom. 15:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. (3) The men-pleasers; 1 Thess. 2:4; Gal. 1:10; Col. 3:22; Eph. 6:6. To which class do we belong? True greatness consists of living the God-pleasing life. See Heb. 11:5.
2. The lion slain; Vs. 5-6. Note the power for this superhuman task of slaying a lion single handed. How sad to think that such a strong person could become so weak! What great possibilities for God and His people were Samson's, and how little were these possibilities realized because of his lack of co-operation with God!
3. The strange sight; Vs. 7-9. Sweet from the strong; life from death. A good illust. of the blessings that flow to man through Christ's finished work—Life and sweetness; 2 Tim. 1: 10.
4. The riddle; Vs. 10-14.
5. The strategy; Vs. 15-17.
6. The solution; V. 18.
7. The result; Vs. 18-20.

90. THE FALL OF SAMSON

READ Judges 13: 8, 12, 24; Chapter 14: 3, 6; Chapter 16: 7, 11, 14, 21-25.
THEME: A wrecked life.
TELL THE STORY.

This is the history of a man who *began* well but ended tragically. He only "began" to deliver Israel (ch. 13: 5). He was like a ship that had gone safely past many reefs and rocks, but finally went on to one and wrecked his life. Where ships have been wrecked lighthouses have been built in order to warn other ships. As a warning to us God has written the history of some shipwrecked lives such as Lot, Esau, Saul, Demas and Samson.

SAMSON'S PRIVILEGES.—

HE HAD GODLY PARENTS (ch. 13: 8, 12). If you have this privilege then thank God for it. But privilege brings with it responsibility. God expects more from you than from others (Luke 12: 48).

HE WAS BLESSED BY GOD (13: 24). To have the blessing of God is worth far more than wealth, position and worldly honour (Prov. 10: 22).

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD MOVED HIM (13: 25). As long as he was led by the Spirit, he was controlled by Him and walked in His paths. It was when Samson ceased to be controlled by the Spirit that he fulfilled the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5: 16).

HE HAD GREAT STRENGTH (14: 6). The source of his strength was God. It was when he ceased to realise this that he lost his power. The source of *our* strength is God (Is. 26: 4). It was because Peter relied on his own strength that he fell so grievously in denying his Lord (Matt. 26: 33, 72).

IN SPITE OF HIS GREAT PRIVILEGES HE LOST HIS STRENGTH. And the sad part was that he did not know it (ch. 16: 20). Loss of power may be unconscious because it is so gradual. Insects do their work within the trunk of the tree so gradually that no one knows of it till there is a great crash. Spiritual declension is also gradual (Hos. 7: 9).

CAUSES OF SAMSON'S LOSS OF POWER.—

SELF-WILL. When his parents remonstrated with him about wanting to marry an unbeliever, he replied, "get her for me for *she pleaseth*

me well" (14: 3). How many lives have been wrecked on the rocks of self-will — a determination to have their own way at all costs. Contrast our Lord's words in John 8: 29, and Paul's in 1 Thess. 4: 1.

HE MADE A WRONG CHOICE AND MARRIED AN UNBELIEVER. Such a marriage could only bring disaster. We are warned against being unequally yoked together with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6: 14-18) in marriage, friendship or pleasures. Let us be a companion of those who fear God. (Ps. 119: 63).

HE PLAYED WITH TEMPTATION by pretending to tell his temptress Delilah the secret of his strength (ch. 16: 7, 11, 14). We are to resist the devil by *standing*, having put on the whole armour of God (Eph. 6: 11). But there are some temptations which can only be resisted by flight, and this is what Joseph did (Gen. 39).

HE YIELDED TO TEMPTATION. When we play with temptation, yielding to it is almost certain to follow. His vow as a Nazarite was broken and his strength was gone.

RESULTS OF SAMSON'S DEFEAT.—

HE WAS BLINDED (16: 21). The one-time champion of Israel, the man who had fought God's battles is now blind and bound. He is like many who were once servants of God; they loved Him and served Him. But darkness has now shut out all joy, there is no light on God's Word and the light of their witness has been put out (Matt. 5: 15). "Take heed that the light that is in *thee* be not darkness" (Luke 11: 35). Follow Christ and walk in the light (John 8: 12).

HE WAS RIDICULED BY UNBELIEVERS (16: 25). The world has no respect for backsliders. They may sneer at consistent Christians but, in their hearts, they respect them.

HE CAUSED GOD'S NAME TO BE BLASPHEMED. This was the saddest result of all. The false god was praised when Samson fell (v. 24). What dishonour comes upon God's holy Name when Christians backslide. That is what happened when David sinned (2 Sam. 12: 14).

BUT HE REPENTED AND GOD ANSWERED HIS PRAYER. There was hope even for Samson, for we see God's mercy to the backslider (16: 22). But though his strength came back, and he died fighting gloriously yet he never recovered his sight or his liberty or his living power in Israel. Sin does not pay. Let us guard our separation.

MEMORY VERSE.—Hosea 7: 9 — "Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not."

SAMSON—HIS DOWNFALL AND DEATH

Judges 15-16

Golden Text: 2 Tim. 2:1

By definite steps he descended until he was ruined.

I. His Great Feat of Strength. C. 15-16:3.

1. Its Source. Cp. 15:14, 19; 14:6, etc. See also Isa. 40:29-31; 30:15; 26:4; Psa. 18:1; 138:3; 95:4; Eph. 3:16.
2. Its Condition—Separation unto God. Psa. 52:7; Judges 8:21; Psa. 31:3, 10; 147:10, 11.
3. Its Manifestation. "Weak things." 15:9-20; Cp. 1 Cor. 1:27-29. Only as Samson yielded himself to the Lord was he given that strength which made him famous. His strength was in the Lord.

II. His Folly and Downfall. A picture of the Backslider. Chap. 16:4-30.

1. The Unequal Yoke. V. 4; Cp. Deut. 7:2-4; Ezra 9:1, 2, 12; 2 Cor. 6:14-18, Hosea 7:9.
2. The Temptation. Vs. 5-16. Instead of fleeing from it he played with it. Cp. James 1:13, 14; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Cor. 10:13; Illust. Joseph, Gen. 39. Notice her question: "Tell me, pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth?" In what does the believer's strength lie? (1) In the Lord. Psalms 46:1; 140:7; 73:26; 84:5. (2) By prayer. Isa. 40:31. (3) By a separated life. Job 17:9. (4)By the joy of the Lord. Neh. 8:10. (5) By consciousness of our own weakness and reliance on Him. 2 Cor. 12:9. (6) By faith. Romans 4:20; Heb. 11:24. (7) By the Word of God. 1 John 2:14. The neglect of any of these results in spiritual weakness and failure.
3. The Sleep. Vs. 17-20. On the knees of his temptress, in the midst of his enemies. How foolish! Cp. Luke 22:46. 1 Thess 5:5-8; Prov. 24:33, 34; Eph. 5:14; Romans 13:11, 12. A sleeping Christian is a menace and stumbling block to the unsaved. Beware of the sleep of worldliness, formality, self indulgence. It leads to loss of power.
4. The Capture. Vs. 20, 21. (1) His pitiable ignorance. V. 20. Is it true of us? (2) His ignominious defeat.
5. The Pitiable Bondage. V. 21. (1) Blinded—walking in darkness. Cp. Isa. 59:8-10; John 8:12. The light of testimony put out. Matt. 5:16; Cp. Luke 11:33-36. (2) Caused God to be blasphemed. V. 24. Cp. 2 Sam. 12:14; Romans 2:24; 1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:5. (3) Made an object of ridicule instead of fear. V. 27. The world has no respect for the backslider. (4) Grinding in the prison. V. 21. Cp. Romans 6:13, 16. The Devil dines, wines, blinds, binds, and grinds his victims.

III. His Death. 16:25-31.

1. The forgotten lesson. V. 22
2. The Prayer. V. 28; Cp. Psalm 51:12; Jer. 3:12, 22; 31:20; Hosea 14:4; 2 Chron. 7-14; 1 John 1:9, etc.
3. The Result. V. 30. Thus ended a life that promised so much for God, but accomplished so little.

91. RUTH AND NAOMI

READ Ruth 1.

THEME: A great decision.

TELL THE STORY.

NAOMI AND HER FAMILY.—

THEY WERE TESTED (v. 1). Famine was often a time of testing and discipline of God's people (Gen. 12: 10; Gen. 26: 1, 2; 2 Sam. 24: 13, Psalm 105: 16). Adversity reveals character. Naomi and her family would find conditions easier in Moab. There they would be sure of their food, so they chose the easier way. But it was a heathen land; the people were idolaters who offered human sacrifices (2 Kings 3: 27). Adversity and difficulties test our love and loyalty to Christ.

THEY INTENDED ONLY TO "SOJOURN" THERE (v. 1), stay temporarily, but they remained for ten years. In this heathen land their roots went down and it was not till Naomi's husband and two sons died that she seemed to have thought of returning to her own land. How easy it is to choose a path that leads away from God's people, and delude ourselves that it is only for a time to tide us over some difficulty. The longer they remained in Maob the harder it was for them to uproot themselves.

NAOMI'S INFLUENCE. She recommended Ruth and Orpah to return to their home and *their gods* instead of urging them to join her in the worship of the true God. Although she was obviously loved by them, she seemed to have little concern for their *spiritual* welfare. Perhaps she had grown accustomed to the idea of idolatry.

TRIAL EMBITTERED NAOMI. She no longer wished to be called "Naomi" (Pleasant) but "Mara" (Bitter) (v. 20). Sorrow either softens or hardens hearts; draws them nearer to God or drives them further from Him. True happiness is not found in our circumstances but in our attitude towards them. If we accept them as from God, then we receive blessing from them.

SHE BLAMED GOD (v. 21). "I went out full and *the Lord* hath brought me home again empty . . . *the Almighty* hath afflicted me." It is true that her husband and sons were dead. but this left her free to come back to her people and her God. She had no son, but she had

an affectionate daughter-in-law in Ruth. She was very poor, but it was through her poverty that Ruth was brought into contact with the great and good man, Boaz, who redeemed her inheritance (4: 9). Instead of repining she should have recounted her blessings. There are two ways of taking trouble — Jacob's (Gen. 42: 36) or Paul's (Rom. 8: 28).

RUTH.—

SHE MADE A GREAT DECISION (v. 16). There comes a time when we, too, must make a choice. As soon as we are of an age to choose between the evil and the good, God holds us responsible. Our whole life on earth and our future for eternity depends on whether we choose Christ or self and Satan. Ruth was not influenced by Orpah who turned back, she held fast to her decision.

RUTH CHOSE GOD FOR HER GOD (v. 16). It was not now merely a matter of living with Naomi who belonged to God, she chose God for her own. Coming to Christ must be a personal matter, an acceptance of Christ as your *own* Saviour. Ruth said, "thy God shall be *my* God." Can you say, "*my* Saviour (Luke 1: 47); the Son of God who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*" (Gal. 2: 20). Ruth had come to trust under the shadow of God's wings (ch. 2: 12). Under the bird's wings are *safety, comfort* and *happiness,* and so it is with the one who comes to Christ. He finds in Him safety from punishment, peace, rest and joy.

RUTH'S REWARD. She gave up her idols, but she found God. She lost her own people and friends — she gained the love of Boaz. Christ becomes to those who receive Him, more precious than any earthly friend. She chose poverty with Naomi — she gained an inheritance.

MEMORY VERSE.—Joshua 24: 15—"Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

THE STORY OF RUTH

Ruth 1-4

Golden Text: Ruth 1:16

I. Ruth Deciding. C. 1.

1. The Wrong Choice; vs. 1, 2. (1) The Famine, cp. 1 Kings 8:35, 36. Its cause and cure. (2) The sojourn in Moab—the place of stagnation; Jer. 48:11; cp. other disastrous sojourns; Abraham, Gen. 12:10; Issac, Gen. 26:1; Lot, Gen. 13:11-13, and their consequences.
2. The Fearful Consequences; vs. 3-5. Death and desolation; Jer. 2:19; Heb. 3:12; Prov. 13:15.
3. The Glad Tidings, v. 6, of revival and provision, due to confession and self judgment. See Judges 3:9, 15, 4:3, 6:6,. The great need of the church today is revival. Revival is a stirring up of the soul after God and His word, will and way. See Psalms 85:6; 138:7.
4. The Great Decision; Vs. 8-18. (1) Naomi the backslider. (2) Orpah the mere professor. (3) Ruth the real possessor. Which are you? Note the appeal; Vs. 12-15. The response; Vs. 16, 17. The result; V. 18. Compare other great decisions. Rebekah's; Gen. 24. Joshua's; Josh. 24, Moses'; Heb. 11. Prodigal Son; Luke 15, etc.
5. The Sad Confession; Vs. 19, 20; Cp. Jer. 2:19.

II. Ruth Gleaning. C. 2.

1. The Kinsman with the right to redeem; Vs. 1, 20. Cp. Ours; Heb. 2:11, 14-17, Gal. 4:4-6.
2. The Service; Vs. 2, 3.
3. The Blessing and the Gleaning; Vs. 4-23. (1) The blessing. Vs. 4-13. (2) The provision; Vs. 14-23. Gracious, abundant, free! Cp. Psalm 107:9; 2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 4:19.

III. Ruth Resting. C. 3.

1. Her Position—at His Feet; Vs. 1-7. The place of blessing; Cp. Luke 7:38; 8:35, etc.
2. Her Relation—Kinsman; V. 9. Near and with right and will to redeem. Boaz means "In him is strength." How like the Lord Jesus, the strong Son of God and Son of Man! The great Kinsman Redeemer! Ps. 80:15; 89:8.
3. Her Promise; Vs. 11-14.
4. Her Earnest; Vs. 15-18; Cp. 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14

IV. Ruth Rewarded. C. 4.

1. The Redemption; Vs. 1-12. Here is a beautiful type of Christ the Redeemer. According to the law, the redeemer must possess five qualifications. (1) He must have the right as Kinsman. Lev. 25:47-49. Christ earned this right by becoming Man. Heb. 2:14. (2) He must be willing to redeem. V. 10. Christ revealed His willingness. See Mark 10:45; John 10:10; 6:37. (3) He must have the power. a slave cannot redeem a slave, he must be a free man. So Christ had no sin. Death had no claim on Him—He magnified the law Isa. 42:21. (4) He must have the price. Christ as Redeemer paid the full price—His Own precious blood. 1 Peter 2:9; 1:18; 1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 5:25. (5) He must have the receipt. See V. 8. The receipt is the resurrection and glorification of our Redeemer. Romans 4:25 etc.
2. The Relationship; V. 13. His Bride.
3. The Rejoicing; Vs. 14-17.

92. THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL

1 Samuel 1—2:11

Golden Text: Eph. 3:20, 21

I. A Sorrowful Woman. Vs. 1-8.

1. Childless; Vs. 1-2. A reproach in Israel; Cp. Gen. 30:23. Apply spiritually; Gal. 4:19; 1 Cor. 4:15.
2. Provoked; V. 6. Note by whom. "The Adversary," Cp. 1 Peter 5:7-9.
3. Vexed in soul; Vs. 6-8.

II. A Fervent Prayer. Vs. 9-18.

1. Its cause—bitterness of soul; Cp. Psa. 107:5, 6, 12-13, 18-19, 27-28, etc. Man's extremity—God's opportunity.
2. Its object—"Lord of Hosts." The God of the impossible.
3. Its reality. (1) From the heart; Vs. 10. (2) Definite; V. 11. (3) Earnest; V. 15. "Poured out soul." (4) Persevering "continued;" V. 12; Cp. Matt. 6:6; Eph. 6:18; James 5:17, 18. (5) Someone has pointed out five things that prayer does. (a) It makes God's presence real. (b) It makes God's power felt. (c) It makes God's will clear. (d) It makes God's service easy. (e) It makes God's blessings available. Prayer expresses our own need and helplessness and God's supply and omnipotence.

III. A Misunderstanding Priest; 12-18. The prayerful person must be prepared to be misunderstood even by those from whom it is least expected.

1. His wrong conclusion, V. 13, based on mere outward observance. John 7:24. Cp. 1 Sam. 16:7; Matt. 7:1-5.
2. His hasty rebuke. V. 14. James 1:19.
3. Her humble reply. Vs. 15-16. She didn't fly into a rage and rebuke him for his harshness. Prov. 15:1.
4. His benediction. V. 17. Eli was not too old to learn nor too proud to own his mistake.

IV. A Wonderful Answer; Vs. 19-28.

1. The child; V. 20. The name and its meaning. She saw in her child a perpetual reminder of God's faithfulness.
2. The vow performed; Vs. 22-28. Cp. V. 11; Cp. Eccl. 5:2-6; Acts 5:1, 2; Cp. some other mothers; Moses; Heb. 11:22; Timothy's; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15.

V. A Joyous Response; 2:1-10. Her song of victory. Study this carefully. Compare it with Mary's song; Luke 1:46-55.

1. Praise for His salvation; V. 1.
2. Worship for His holiness; V. 2.
3. Testimony to His faithfulness and power; Vs. 3-9.
4. Prophecy as to His future work; V. 10. Compare some other songs of the Bible; Psa. 40:1-3; Exodus 14:31; 15:18; Rev. 5:9-14. Hannah should be an example of true motherhood. The child was given in answer to prayer, born in the atmosphere of prayer, dedicated to the Lord by prayer and the object of continued care. Is it any wonder that Samuel turned out to be one of the greatest prophets? The great need of today is Christain mothers of the Hannah stamp.

93. THE CHILD SAMUEL

READ I Samuel 3: 1-21.

THEME: God's Call.

TELL THE STORY OF HIS BIRTH AND CALL.

SAMUEL'S PARENTS.—

THEY WERE GODLY PEOPLE — his father was a priest and his mother a great woman of prayer. Samuel was already serving God in the temple yet he did not yet know the Lord personally. Perhaps he was living on the faith of his parents. It is not sufficient to have godly parents, we must learn to know God for ourselves — first, by receiving Christ as Saviour and then by reading His Word. The reason Samuel did not know God was that the Word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10: 17). How important it is then to read the Bible daily.

GOD'S CALL TO SAMUEL.—

IT CAME TO HIM WHEN HE WAS STILL A CHILD. It is to those who are young and impressionable, whose hearts have not yet become hard, whose lives are not yet filled with those things which are likely to drown God's call to them, that the call most often comes. God had a special work for Samuel to do and He began to shape and mould him for this purpose while he was yet a child. Many of God's servants, now in the Mission Field, were called by God to this work while they were children, and their life preparation for it then began.

GOD CALLED HIM BY NAME. Samuel could not possibly think that the call was for someone else. God's call is always to the individual.

GOD CALLED HIM REPEATEDLY. He called him four times before he responded, because he did not recognise God's voice. How many times has God called *you* to come to Him and you have not responded? He may have called you through some message from God's Word, through sickness, trouble or bereavement. If you have already come to Him as Saviour, then how may you know the call to His service? The call will become more insistent as you pray about it. God sometimes helps us to test His call by the wise advice of godly friends who have trodden the path before us. Eli helped Samuel to know God's call.

IT WAS AN URGENT CALL. Four times God called him. At first He called the lad once by name, but after three unsuccessful attempts to make Samuel hear, He uttered the name twice with strong urgency in the appeal. This has been called "God's double knock."

SAMUEL'S CHARACTER AS A CHILD.—

HE GREW. He needed a new coat every year (2: 19), showing us that he grew physically. But he also grew spiritually, "The child Samuel was in favour both with the Lord and also with men" (2:26). As he became older "the Lord was with him and did let none of his words fall to the ground" (3: 19).

HE WAS OBEDIENT. Three times he rose from his bed and ran to Eli — not an easy thing to do in the middle of the night! In learning to obey Eli it would be easier for him to obey God. He was forming a habit which would help to mould his character as he grew older.

HE WAS COURAGEOUS. He was to tell Eli of the coming judgment upon his sinful sons. This called for great courage on Samuel's part and, though he was afraid, he delivered the whole of the message to the aged Eli. God sometimes entrusts children with difficult tasks but, if they rely on His strength, He will enable them to perform them.

SAMUEL'S PRAYER.—

"SPEAK; FOR THY SERVANT HEARETH" (v. 10). Many are afraid to say this to God because of what God might ask them to do. If we are really prepared for Him to speak to us then we shall hear His voice.

"SPEAK LORD." For some reason which we do not know, Samuel left out the word "Lord," from the sentence Eli had given him. Do you know anything of the Lordship of Christ, not only as Saviour but as Lord of your whole life? "Christ . . . died . . . that He might be Lord" (Rom. 14: 9).

SAMUEL'S WITNESS.—

ALL ISRAEL KNEW THAT SAMUEL WAS TO BE A PROPHET (ch. 3, v. 20). Do others know by your life that you belong to God? "The Lord revealed Himself to Samuel" (v. 21). "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hos. 6: 3).

MEMORY VERSE.—I Samuel 3:9—"Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."

94. THE ARK LOST AND RETURNED

1 Sam. 4:1-18; 5:1-12; 6:1-20

Golden Text: Isa. 42:8

I. The Ark Lost. 4:1-18.

1. The victorious enemy. Vs. 1-2. Their defeat due to their own spiritual condition. Cp. Deut. 20:1-4; John 7:11, 12; Judges 2:13, 14; 13:1; Rom. 6:13, 16; Eph. 6:10-18.
2. The worldly wise expediency. Vs. 3-4; Prov. 14:14. The ark symbolized the presence of God but it was only a symbol. They used the ark as an object of superstitious awe. They worshipped the form but denied the power. Instead of "Let us confess" they said "Let us fetch." They sought God afterward instead of at first. God is not an object of convenience! Cp. 1 Cor. 4:20; Psa. 78:60; 93:5; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 3:13. Cp. The dead ritualism of Christendom today which makes "a fair show in the flesh" and appeals to the mere emotionalism and religious instinct in man. The cross is worn and waved. Creeds are recited and ordinances observed with great pomp and circumstance, but God is not in it at all. Gal. 6:12.

   There is no substitute for personal holiness. Religious excitement is no guarantee or substitute for spiritual power; Zech. 4:6.
3. The Philistines dread, Vs. 5-9, and their brave avowal. The Philistines, like the worldlings of today, hadn't seen much of God in the lives of those who professed to be His people and whom they had brought under their domination.
4. The capture of the ark. Vs. 10, 11. The ark was not God, but merely symbolized His presence. They had long since turned their back on Him but "wist not that the Lord was departed from them" Judges 16:20. They had clung to the ark instead of cleaving to the Lord.
5. The effect. Vs. 12-18.

II. The Ark in the hands of the Enemy. 5:1; 6:12.

1. Their presumption. Vs. 1-5. If man fails, God will vindicate His own name. Their religion completely upset! Cp. Psalm 115:1-9. The folly of idolatry Cp. Isa. 44:9. An idol is anything that puts God in a secondary place. Cp. 2 Cor. 6:14-16.
2. Their punishment. Vs. 6-12. Cp. Isa. 42:8; Romans 1:18-20; Psalm 90:14, 15.
3. Their perplexity. 6:1-6.
4. Their plan. Vs. 7-12.

III. The Ark Returned. Vs. 12-21.

1. The Return. V. 12. God's miraculous intervention. Cp. Mark 10:27.
2. Their rejoicing. Vs. 13-15. Cp. Psalm 51:12; 85:6.
3. Their presumption. Vs. 19-21. Cp. Exod. 15: 11. They exposed themselves to the holy law that knows no mercy. Cp. Romans 7:7-14; 2 Cor. 3:6, 7.

95. RESTORATION AT MIZPEH

1 Samuel 7

Golden Text: 1 Peter 5:6, 7

I. Preparation. Vs. 1-6.

1. The withdrawal of the Divine presence. V. 2. No fellowship, no blessing, no usefulness. Backsliding
   (1) Its cause—heart departure from God. Hosea 11:7.
   (2) Evidences of it.
   (a) Neglect of God's word.
   (b) Neglect of private prayer.
   (c) Self-will . Prov. 14:14.
   (d) Neglect of gathering together with God's people.
   (3) Results of it. (a) Joylessness, (b) Restlessness, (c) Uselessness, (d) Harmfulness to others who see the bad example.
2. Repentance. V. 2. Their desire for God. Twenty wasted years. Cp. James 4:6-10; Psalms 32:3, 4; 51:8-13; Jer. 6:16.
3. Separation from known evil. Vs. 3, 4. Sin must be judged and put away. (1) It must be wholehearted. V. 3a. Cp. Deut. 30:1-3; Jer. 29:13; Isa. 55:7; Hosea 6:1; Joel 2:12-14. (2) It must be a thorough separation. V. 3. "Put away." Cp. 2 Cor. 7:1.
4. Confession. V. 6. Cp. Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1: 7-10; Psalm 32:5; Luke 15:8. True confession of sin is not a mere "general confession," but a definite and specific confession of the particular sin, an acknowledgement of its evil, a turning from it with self loathing and a taking sides with God against oneself.

II. Intercession. V. 5. By Samuel on their behalf. Cp. Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 4:15, 16; 9:24, etc.

III. Opposition. Vs. 7, 8. The enemy's onslaught. Cp. Eph. 6:12; Gal. 5:17. There is bound to be opposition to restoration from the world flesh and the devil.

IV. Propitiation. V. 9. Sacrifice the basis of all blessing. Cp. Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22, 12-14; 1 John 1:7; Heb. 10:19-22; 1 John 2:1, 2.

V. Restoration. Vs. 10, 11; Psalm 23:3; Isa. 57: 17, 18; Joel 2:25. All done by God on the ground of the sacrifice offered and accepted.

VI. Commemoration. V. 12. "Ebenezer." A look back on God's dealings with them. It is good for the believer to look back and recall all the way the Lord has led him. Deut. 8:2; Isa. 51:1.

1. In their redemption in Egypt. Exod. 12.
2. In their deliverance from Egypt. Exod. 14:31.
3. In their preservation through the wilderness. Exod. 16-19.
4. In their provision in Canaan. Cp. Isa. 51:1, etc. Over the past the believer can write: "Ebenezer"—Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. Over the present he can write: "Jehova Jireh," the Lord will provide . Over the future, all unknown, he can write, "Jehova Shammah"—the Lord is there.

96. THE CHOICE OF A KING

1 Samuel 8-10

Golden Text: Proverbs 1:30, 31

I. The Apostasy of Israel. 8:1-22.

1. Their demand for a King. Vs. 1-5. How soon they had departed in heart from God again. They had to learn the same lesson over and over again.
2. God's message to Samuel. Vs. 6-9. Their demand involved the rejection of God's rule. They preferred monarchy to theocracy. Cp. Heb. 3:12; Phil. 2:21. How soon they forgot the lessons of the past!
3. The description of their King. Vs. 10-18. See how this was fulfilled in the case of Saul (1 Sam. 15:52), and Solomon (1 Kings 12:4).
4. The reasons for their choice. Vs. 19-22. What fearful folly! (1) Conformity to the world. V. 20. "Like nations." Cp. Deut. 14:2; 26:16-19; Exod. 19:5; Deut. 7:6-8; Romans 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4, etc. (2) Desire for human wisdom. "Judge us." Cp. 1 Cor. 1:19-21; Prov. 1:7; 2:6; 2:13; Col. 2:3; 1 Cor. 1:30, 31; Luke 7:30. (3) Desire for human leadership. V. 20. Preferred man to God! Cp. Deut. 8:10-19; Matt. 27:21, 22. See Hosea 13:10, 11.

II. The Choice of Saul. C. 9.

1. His description. Vs. 1-10, 21. (1) Comely. V. 2. (2) Obedient. Vs. 3, 4. (3) Thoughtful. V. 5. (4) Generous. Vs. 6, 7. (5) Humble. V. 21; Cp. 1 Sam. 15:17.
2. God's message to Samuel. Vs. 15-17. God knew both Samuel and Saul and so arranged it that both should be brought together. When the complete history of a soul's conversion comes to be written, it will be seen that the many "accidents" and "coincidents" were all part of God's predestined plan for the salvation of the soul. "Thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God led thee." Deut. 8:2-5.
3. Samuel's message to Saul. Vs. 18-27.

III. The Anointing. 10:1-16.

1. Separation. 9:27—10:1. There is a wealth of spiritual meaning in V. 27. "Stand still a while that I may shew thee the word of God." In a restless world with its whirl, confusion and din, it is difficult to stand still and be alone with God. But we must "stand still" if we are to
   (1) See God's salvation. Exod. 14:13.
   (2) Hear God's message. 1 Sam. 9:27.
   (3) Learn of God's dealings. 1 Sam. 12:7.
2. Promise. Vs. 2-8. As to his (1) Business. V. 2. (2) Bodily needs. V. 3. Cp. Phil. 4:19; Matt. 6:33. (3) Spiritual fitness, vs. 5, 6, for the work ahead.
3. Fulfillment. Vs. 9-16.

IV. The Proclamation. Vs. 17-27.

1. The warning. Vs. 17-19. They went into it open-eyed
2. The Proclamation. Vs. 20-24. "Hidden among the stuff." How many have sought to avoid the call of God for service by hiding behind "the stuff" of fleshly ease, business, ambition, love of pleasure, and love of money, etc.
3. The loyal band. Vs. 25, 26.
4. The despising people. V. 27. A blind eye and deaf ear are often necessary to the servant of God.

97. SAMUEL THE JUST JUDGE

READ I Samuel 7: 12; Ch. 8: 6, 21; Ch. 9: 6; Ch. 12: 23; Ch. 13: 13; Ch. 15: 17-23.

THEME: A long life lived for God.

TELL THE STORY.

What a contrast Samuel's life was to that of Samson. Both had godly parents, both began well but, to the end of his life, Samuel followed and served God, while Samson's life ended in tragedy.

SAMUEL, A MAN OF GOD.—

HE WAS A GODLY MAN (1 Sam. 9: 6). We meet with those who are honest and upright, but they are not people of God; they have no time for Him. But we are not only to live soberly and righteously, but "*godly* in this present world" (Titus 2: 12). Only those who are "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 26) can live a godly life.

HIS REPUTATION AS A MAN OF GOD WENT FAR AND WIDE (ch. 9: 6). His light was not hid under a bushel, all knew what he stood for. Do others know by our lives that we belong to God? Profession alone is valueless.

HE WAS KNOWN AS AN HONOURABLE MAN (9: 6). People had confidence in him; they knew he could be trusted, because his word was his bond.

HE WAS FEARLESS IN REBUKING SIN. He told the people they had sinned in asking for a king (12: 17) and he fearlessly told King Saul of his sin and disobedience (ch. 13: 13; ch. 15: 17-23). Popularity at the expense of character meant nothing to him.

HE SERVED AND FOLLOWED GOD TO THE END. He could look back over a long life of service with a clear conscience (ch. 12: 2). When he defended himself and spoke of his own blameless life (ch. 12: 2, 3), he was not addressing God for then he would have had to say he was an unprofitable servant (Luke 17: 10). But he was speaking of himself as a public man, clearing himself of any charge against him. The people had to acknowledge that he had always been absolutely honest and just (ch. 12: 4). What a record!

SAMUEL, A MAN OF PRAYER.—

HE WAS FAMOUS FOR HIS PRAYERS (Ps. 99: 6; Jer. 15: 1). His prayers are repeatedly referred to in the record of his life. He fought and won Israel's battles by his intercessions.

HE TOOK THE UNKIND CRITICISMS OF HIMSELF TO THE LORD. When he was an old man the people turned against him. They no longer wanted him as a leader and told him they wanted a king. He had loved them and prayed for them and been very patient with them. Now he "prayed unto the Lord" (ch. 8: 6). It had been his life-long habit to tell everything to God and in this way he found comfort and strength.

HE TOLD GOD OF THE FAILINGS OF ISRAEL (ch. 8: 21). He did not make the mistake of carrying his own burdens himself; he handed them over to God. There is another thought here. He told *God* of the failings and sin of Israel. If we must speak of the failings of others let us tell them to God only. Love covers (Prov. 10: 12).

HE WAS A FAITHFUL INTERCESSOR — praying for others. He regarded lack of prayer for others as a sin (ch. 12: 23). He not only prayed for them, but he spent time in teaching them the good and the right way (12: 23). He prayed for the backsliders, and "cried unto the Lord all night" (15: 11). Intercessory prayer is not only of benefit to those prayed for, but to the one who prays (Ps. 35: 13). It was when Job prayed for his friends that God turned his captivity (Job 42: 10).

HIS TESTIMONY.—

EBENEZER. Samuel set up a stone and called it "Ebenezer," saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (ch. 7: 12).

HITHERTO — It is a good thing to *look back* over hard times and easy times, sickness and health, temptation and victory, joy and sorrow and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." We may not have gone very far on life's journey, yet we, too, must have some "Ebenezers" for which we can thank God.

HATH THE LORD HELPED US. Our "Ebenezers" are not to remind us of our own power and strength but that our help cometh *from the Lord* (Psalm 121: 2).

MEMORY VERSE.—I Samuel 12: 23—"God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."

98. THE REJECTION OF SAUL

1 Samuel 12:1-25, 13:1-14, 14:44, 15:1-28

Golden Text: 1 Samuel 15:22

I. Samuel's Testimony. C. 12.

1. As to his own integrity. Vs. 1-5. A blameless life. Cp. 1 Thess 2:1-10; Phil. 2:14-16; 2 Tim. 4: 6-8.
2. As to God's righteous acts. Vs. 6-15. As seen in His dealings with the children of Israel.
3. As to their sin. Vs. 16-19. The divine sign of His righteous wrath. Cp. Romans 1:18.
4. As to their future conduct. Vs. 20-25. (1) Exhortation. Vs. 20,21. (2) Revelation. V. 22. Cp. Mal. 3:6; Eph. 1:4-6, 11, 12. (3) Intercession. V. 23. Cp. Eph. 1:15, 16; 3:14; 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:1-4. How many have been guilty of the sin of "ceasing to pray" for others. Intercession is a holy necessity as well as privilege.
(4) Encouragement. V. 24. What had God done for them? Psalms 126:3, 66:16. Name some of the spiritual blessings that God has bestowed on those who have trusted His Son. Eph. 1:3-13. (5) Warning. V. 25.

II. Saul's Failures. C. 13-15.

1. The forced sacrifice. 13:14-18. (1) Israel's condition. Vs. 5-7. "Trembling." (2) Saul's test. V. 8. God was testing the reality of his faith, love and obedience. Cp. 1 Cor. 10:13. (3) The King's failure. Vs. 9-12. He had no right to intrude into the priest's office. God doesn't want "forced" worship. V. 12. Cp. John 4: 24. Note also his lack of humility and his self justifying spirit. (4) Samuel's rebuke and announcement of his rejection. Vs. 13, 14. (5) Jonathan's brave act, C. 14, and God's intervention.
2. Zeal without knowledge. 14:19-46. The foolish adjuration, V. 4, that almost cost him his son. Compare the legalistic teachers of today whose message is summed up by prohibitions as "touch not, taste not, handle not, which are all to perish with the using" Col. 2:20-23. Saul wished to impose his authority on Israel to bolster up his self respect.
3. Sacrifice without obedience. C. 15. (1) The commission. Vs. 1-3. Cp. Exod. 17:8-14; Num. 24:20; Deut. 25:17-19. Amalek a type of the flesh to be put to death unmercifully. Cp. Gal. 5:17; Romans 13:14; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:5; Romans 6:16, etc. (2) The partial obedience. Vs. 4-9. This was really rank disobedience. (3) God's message to Samuel, Vs. 10-12, and its effect on Samuel. (4) The rejection of Saul. Vs. 13-33. (a) The bleating of incomplete consecration. Cp. Acts 5:2. Note Saul's lie. V. 13. (b) His self-justification. Vs. 15, 20, 21. (c) The consequence. Vs. 16-19. He had proved himself unfitted for his position and was to be set aside. Cp. 1 Cor. 9:24-27. (d) The tragedy of disobedience. Vs. 22, 23. What is better than sacrifice? Matt. 7:24-29; John 2:5. Have you obeyed the gospel? Romans 6:17. His commands? Mark 16:15; Acts 8:36; 1 Cor. 11:25; John 15:17; John 13:17

99. DAVID THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERD BOY

READ I Samuel 16: 1-23.

THEME: Chosen by God.

TELL THE STORY.

Saul, the first King of Israel had been rejected by God, now God was about to choose another to take his place.

DAVID CALLED BY GOD.—

GOD CALLED DAVID WHILE HE WAS YET A LAD. As with Samuel, Joseph, Moses and John the Baptist, God sometimes lays His hand on a child or young person for some special work for him. He begins to prepare and fit them for that work while they are still pliable and can be moulded and shaped into a vessel for His use. God may, even now, be preparing you for your life work.

HE CALLED HIM WHEN HE WAS FAITHFULLY DOING HIS EVERYDAY JOB. David had to be called in from his work to interview the prophet Samuel. David's was quite an ordinary and, some might think, a humdrum occupation. The call came to Moses as he led the flock, to Joseph as he acted as overseer in the prison, to Gideon as he threshed wheat, to Elisha as he followed the plough and to the disciples as they were fishing and mending their nets. In the faithful performance of our daily work, God can be preparing us for our future life-work.

THE LORD LOOKED UPON THE HEART, while man looks on the outward appearance (v. 7). David's brothers looked as though they had the necessary qualifications for kingship, and Samuel thought Eliab would surely be God's choice. Instead, the youngest son, David, was chosen.

GOD ANOINTED DAVID WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. A great blessing came to David that day for the Holy Spirit came upon him in power (1 Sam. 16: 13). We, too, need the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to serve Him just where He has placed us, even to the performance of the daily round and the common task.

TRAINING FOLLOWED GOD'S CALL, so David had to return to the humble work of a shepherd while he was waiting for God's time when he should be proclaimed king. He did not waste his time or think

this work beneath him. He bought up the opportunities which the time alone on the hills gave him, by learning to play the harp and to write psalms and hymns. Time is precious, therefore let us "Redeem the time" (Eph. 5: 16).

DAVID'S CHARACTER.—

HE WAS BRAVE — he had great physical courage (v. 18). He slew a lion and a bear; he went out singlehanded to fight the giant Goliath. Moses said, "be . . . of good courage" (Numb. 13: 20). He told Israel and Joshua to "be strong and of good courage" (Joshua 1: 6, 9). Moses did not mean physical courage, for the work needed moral courage.

HE WAS GIFTED for he was musical and a singer (1 Sam. 16: 18; 2 Sam. 23: 1). Has God endowed you with some special gift? If so, have you dedicated it to Him to be used for Him in His service? The gift of music or of song, or any other natural gift is a talent to be used, not for ourselves but for Him Who has entrusted it to us. Do not bury your talent but see to it that it is developed and used for God.

HE WAS PRUDENT (WISE) in all matters (v. 18). Young as he was he was learning "the wisdom that is from above." How greatly he was going to need this wisdom in later years. We, too, need this wisdom which can be ours for the asking. "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally" (James 1: 5).

HE WAS A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART (Acts 13: 22), the kind of man for whom God was looking. The Lord was with him (v. 18). This mean more to him than all his natural musical gifts or his beauty (v. 18). We dare not step forward without the presence of the Lord. Moses said to God, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Ex. 33: 15). Joseph experienced the presence of the Lord with him in Potiphar's house (Gen. 39: 3), and even in prison (Gen. 39: 23).

HE KEPT HIS LIFE RIGHT WITH GOD EACH DAY. This is the reason that he did not have to make any special preparations as his father and brothers did in order to be present at the feast (v. 5). We should so live that we are fit to come into God's presence at any time (Eccles. 9: 8). If we do soil our garments let us come to God quickly for cleansing (1 John 1: 9).

MEMORY VERSE.—1 Samuel 16: 7—"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

100. THE ANOINTING OF DAVID

1 Samuel 16:1-23

Golden Text: 1 Samuel 16:7

I. The Commission. Vs. 1-3.

1. Samuel's grief for Saul. V. 1. Cp. Romans 9: 1-5. Cp. 1 Sam. 15:29; Num. 23:19.
2. The new commission. Vs. 1-3. Cp. 1 Sam. 13: 14. The man after God's own heart. That is to say, in spite of periods of departure from God, the tenor of David's life was for God.

II. The Examination. Vs. 4-10.

1. The False Conclusion. V. 6. A perfectly natural one. Gen. 49:3. The firstborn. Appearance and actuality are often far apart. We may know how people look but only God can tell what they really are.
2. The Divine response. V. 7. Study this carefully. (1) The divine injunction "look not." (2) The divine distinction "not as man seeth." (3) The divine valuation "the heart." Cp. John 7:24; Matt. 23:28; Luke 18:9; Isa. 55:8; 2 Cor. 10:7, 12; Luke 16:15; 2 Chron. 16:9.
3. The vain search. Vs. 8-10.

III. The Choice. Vs. 11-13.

1. His occupation. V. 11. The shepherd. Cp. 2 Sam. 7:8; Psalm 23:1. David a type of Christ, the Good Shepherd; Luke 15:3-7; John 10:1-18, 27-30; Heb. 13:20; Matt. 9:36; 1 Peter 2:25.
2. His description. V. 12.
3. His anointing. V. 13. Cp. Heb. 1:8, 9. Note David was anointed in the midst of his brethren. Christ "the anointed One." (1) In eternity; Prov. 8:23; "set up,"="anointed." (2) At baptism; Matt. 3:17. (3) For ministry; Acts 10:38. (4) At resurrection; Acts 2:36.
4. His enduement. "The Spirit of the Lord." V. 13. Zech. 4:6. In the Old Testament the Spirit came upon certain individuals for a particular purpose and did not permanently rest upon them. In the New Testament the Spirit **indwells** each believer upon his acceptance of Christ and seals him until the day of redemption. Eph. 4:30.

IV. The Service. Vs. 14-23.

1. Saul's sad state. Vs. 14-17. Doubtless a judgment upon him, resulting in morbid depression, jealousy, and a revengeful spirit. Music would soothe him. Here is stark tragedy in a few words: "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul." He is left to himself and the memory of his lost opportunities. How sad when God has to put a man on the shelf as of no further value to Him! Cp. 1 Cor. 9: 24-27; 2 Peter 1:4-10.
2. David's new occupation. Vs. 18-23. (1)His character. V. 18. (a) Gifted. (b) Brave. (c) Prudent. (d) Beautiful. (e) Godly. Emphasize these points. (2) His occupation. Vs. 19-23. This doubtless fitted him for the position he was afterward to occupy. Cp. Col. 3: 23; Eph. 6:5-7. God was training David for a larger task.

101. DAVID AND GOLIATH

READ I Samuel 17.

THEME: Depending on God for victory.

TELL THE STORY.

GOLIATH THE GIANT.—

HE WAS A FORMIDABLE ENEMY. His height was about 9 ft. 9 in. (v. 4). He is a type of our great enemy Satan (1 Peter 5: 8).

HE TEMPTED AND CHALLENGED ISRAEL forty days (v. 16). He returned again and again to the attack. If Satan cannot overcome us in one way, he tries another. He did this in tempting our Lord (Matt. 4).

HE MOCKED AND DESPISED DAVID (vv. 43, 44) thinking that David would be powerless against him. But he reckoned without God for with God, David must be victorious.

LESSONS DAVID HAD TO LEARN BEFORE HE BECAME VICTOR.—

HE LEARNED TO BE OBEDIENT TO HIS FATHER. Knowing how his brothers regarded him, being sent to them could not have been to him a pleasant duty, but he was quick to obey, *he rose early* and went (v. 20). Before we can learn to rule others we must first learn to obey (Heb. 13: 17). David had been chosen for a great position, yet he was still subject to his father (Eph. 6: 1).

HE LEARNED TO RULE HIS OWN SPIRIT, when Eliab, his elder brother spoke scornfully and angrily to him, accusing him of pride and of leaving his work in order that he might come to see the battle. But David had come in obedience to his father's orders. He was not irresponsible for he left a keeper with the sheep during his absence (v. 20). Eliab's accusation was therefore unjust, in spite of which David exercised great self-control. He answered him calmly, in a few words and turned away (vv. 29, 30). "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16: 32).

HE LEARNED TO BE COURAGEOUS. Because he had experienced victory in the past, he was not afraid now. Let us remember past

deliverances for they will help us to trust God in present difficulties. He attributed the victory to God (v. 37) and trusted Him (v. 47). He inspired others with confidence in the coming victory (vv. 37, 47) and surely by his attitude strengthened their faith also.

HE LEARNED TO USE THE RIGHT WEAPONS. He teaches us the wisdom of keeping to tried weapons. He must have been accustomed to the use of the sling for, since the Philistines had completely disarmed the Israelites, swords and spears were not in the hands of the people (13: 19, 20). It is true that he trusted in neither the stones nor the sling but in God when he said, "The battle is the Lord's" (v. 47), yet he chose his stones carefully. Faith in God is no excuse for sloth. We might take the sling as a picture of faith and the five smooth stones as the Word of God. The Lord Jesus used the Word of God in overcoming Satan. He said, "It is written" (Matthew 4).

SAUL.—

HE WAS A FAITHLESS MAN. Contrast him with David, the man of faith. To Saul and his soldiers God was a name, but little else. He did not think of Him as being present. To David God was real — the *living* God (vv. 26, 36).

HE TRIED TO DISCOURAGE DAVID saying, "Thou art not able" (v. 33) to fight against the Philistine. This was the language of unbelief. Lack of faith in us may discourage a follower of Christ and turn him from a battle he is about to fight for God, a service he is about to render to God, or some venture of faith.

HE STRESSED DAVID'S YOUTH AND INEXPERIENCE and magnified the giant's age, strength and experience (v. 33). But God had chosen the youthful David to be the deliverer of Israel. He often puts important work into the hands of youth, if they are humble enough, and rely upon His strength and power. Paul encouraged Timothy (1 Tim. 4: 12).

HE WANTED DAVID TO WEAR HIS (SAUL'S) ARMOUR AND SWORD (vv. 38, 39). But David had never used these, he had not proved them and so he went along the way God had led him before, and relied upon His strength. Do not try to fight the Lord's battles on the experience and knowledge of others. We must learn for ourselves the secret of victory and only proved weapons will do.

MEMORY VERSE.—1 Samuel 17: 47—"The Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's."

DAVID AND GOLIATH

1 Samuel 17

Golden Text: Romans 8:31

I. The Impudent Challenge.

1. The enemy. Vs. 1-3. The same old foe.
2. The challenge. Vs. 4-10. "Give me a man." What the world needs, though it knows it not, is men of God who will live for Christ and witness for Him before the world. He must be (1) Born of God, John 3:3; 1 John 5:1; (2) A man of God, 1 Tim. 6:11. (3) Sent by God, John 1:6. The inarticulate cry of the world is "Give us a man!"
3. The fear. V. 11. Their eyes were off God and dwelling on outward appearance. 16:17. (Ill. 2 Kings 6.15-17). Cp. Phil. 1:28; 1 Peter 3:14; Psalm 91:5.

II. The Commission. Vs. 12-29.

1. His occupation. V. 15. Whether in the court of Saul or on the hills of Bethlehem David did his task well.
2. His commission. Vs. 17, 18. Sent to his brethren. Cp. Matt. 15:24.
3. His obedience. Vs 20-24.
4. His indignation. Vs. 25, 26. God's honour were his uppermost thoughts.
5. His query. Vs. 28-31. "Is there not a cause?" What was "the cause" of Israel's fear? See Lev. 26:3-8. They had failed to walk in His statues.

III. His Confidence. Vs .32-37.

1. His bold avowal. V. 32.
2. His preparation. Vs. 33-36. God had been fitting him for the task. What a type of Christ Who delivered us from the lion, a picture of Satan; and the bear, a picture of the world which hugs a man to death. Cp. 1 Peter 5:8; Heb. 2:14, 15; Gal. 1:4; John 17:9.
3. His Attestation. V. 37. God given the glory.

IV. His Preparation. Vs. 38-44.

1. The unproved armour. Vs. 38, 39. (1) Of worldly-wise advice. Cp. 1 Cor. 1:19-28. (2) Of human protection. Cp. Jer. 17:5; Psalm 52:7. (3) Of unproved weapons. Cp. Romans 12:1, 2. (4) Unripe experience.
2. The astounding choice. V. 40. God alone must have the glory.
3. The incredulous taunt. Vs. 41-44. The language of unbelief. Cp. John 9:16; Isa. 53:1; Psalm 78:19, 20.

V. His Victory. Vs. 45-54.

1. His confident faith. Vs. 45-47. Here is a man who (1) Knew God by experience. Vs. 33-36. (2) Believed God. That He was able to give him victory. Cp. Eph. 3:20; Psalm 62:11; Romans 8:31; 1 John 5:4, 4:4. (3) He dared for God like Moses, Daniel, Paul, etc. Cp. Dan. 11:32; 2 Cor. 4:13; 1 Cor. 15:58.
2. His wonderful victory. Vs. 48-54 Apply this in type to Christ Who "death by dying slew." Cp. Col. 2:13-15; 1 Cor. 15:37; Romans 8:37; 2 Cor. 2:14; Heb. 2:14.

102. DAVID IN THE KING'S PALACE

READ 1 Samuel 18: 1-18, 28, 29; Ch. 19: 1-4, 9, 10; Ch. 20: 4.

THEME: The gift of friendship. TELL THE STORY.

In this lesson we have contrasted love and hate, friendship and enmity, good and evil.

DAVID THE SERVANT.—

HE WAS OBEDIENT TO SAUL, he went wherever Saul sent him (vv. 2, 5). It was not easy for David to serve Saul loyally, but God's Word says, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (1 Pet. 2: 18).

HE WAS HUMBLE AND RESPECTFUL in the presence of Saul. He answered him humbly though forcibly. He calls himself a servant of the king and owns that he is only a shepherd who had no sheep of his own, but served under his father (17: 34). He was *tactful*, he did not wish to infer that the king was afraid of Goliath, so he said, "Let *no man's* heart fail because of him" (17: 32).

HE BEHAVED HIMSELF WISELY. This phrase is repeated four times in this chapter as though God wished to lay special emphasis on it (vv. 5, 14, 15, 30). Because David walked wisely before God, his life commended itself to men, all Judah and Israel loved him (vv. 5, 16). David's name was much set by because the people were impressed by his beauty of character (v. 30). But his popularity with the people, his position at the palace and the love and favour of Prince Jonathan did not make David top-heavy. David's life was a rebuke to Saul who stood in awe of him (v. 15).

THE LORD WAS WITH HIM (v. 14). It is a grand thing to have the Lord with us and to be conscious of His approval.

JONATHAN THE MODEL FRIEND.—

HE WAS UNSELFISH AND SELF-SACRIFICING. Jonathan stripped himself and gave his robe, his garments, his sword, his bow and his girdle to David. Jonathan loved David as his own soul. What a beautiful thing is true friendship!

BECAUSE HE LOVED HE SERVED. He was ready to do *anything* for David (20: 4). True love never counts what it does for the loved one. "By love serve one another" (Gal. 5: 13).

HE DELIGHTED MUCH IN DAVID (19: 2). The friendship was a great joy to Jonathan as all true friendship is, and he spoke well of David to his father. If anyone had cause to be jealous of David, Jonathan had, because he was heir to the throne and David was to take his place. But Jonathan's heart was so filled with love for David, that there was no room for jealousy. At the risk of breaking relations with his father, he spoke bravely and plainly to him of David's loyalty (v. 4), and of how God had used him to kill the Giant Goliath. He delighted in recounting the brave deeds of his friend, though he said nothing about his own.

HE SUFFERED FOR DAVID. He braved the anger of his father and risked his life for his friend (20: 30-33).

STEPS LEADING TO SAUL'S FAILURE.—

Saul started well, a good young man (9: 2). He was humble at first and did not retaliate when others despised him, yet he ended in tragic failure.

HE FAILED TO OBEY GOD (15: 22) and he failed to speak the whole truth when Samuel questioned him about his disobedience (15: 15, 20).

He tried to shift the blame on to others. "*The people* took of the spoil," he said (15: 21).

HE WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT HIS OWN REPUTATION THAN ABOUT HIS SIN. In his confession, which was only a partial one, he insisted on saving his face. "I have sinned; yet honour me now . . . before . . . my people" (15: 30). And now in this chapter we see him as a bitter enemy.

HE WAS CONSUMED WITH JEALOUSY because the people praised David for his victories more than they praised himself (18: 8). "Jealousy is cruel as the grave" (Song of Solomon 8: 6). We may envy others their talents, their position, their popularity or their looks. Watch against the seeds, the first signs of jealousy which produce much poisonous fruit. Every evil work is the result of envy (James 3: 16); "Neither be thou envious" (Ps. 37: 1).

RESULTS OF SAUL'S JEALOUSY.—

HE BECAME DAVID'S ENEMY CONTINUALLY (19: 1, 10). Enmity is an inevitable result of envy. We misconstrue the words and actions of the one of whom we are jealous and our minds become so embittered against them that we can see nothing good in them.

AN EVIL SPIRIT CAME UPON HIM (19: 9). If people do not make room in their hearts for the Spirit of God, they leave themselves open to attacks of Satan and his evil spirits, and there is no knowing where it will all end.

HATE AND MURDER CAME INTO HIS HEART (v. 11). Three times he tried to kill David (ch. 19: 1, 11, 9). What a terrible thing then jealousy is, and to what awful sin it may lead.

SAUL WAS AFRAID OF DAVID BECAUSE THE LORD WAS WITH HIM AND HAD DEPARTED FROM SAUL (18: 12). It was the evil afraid of the good. "Herod feared John knowing that he was a just man and an holy" (Mark 6: 20). No doubt David's whole life and actions were a rebuke to Saul.

MEMORY VERSE.—Proverbs 17: 17—"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

THE PERSECUTION OF DAVID

1 Samuel 18-21

Golden Text: Matthew 5:11

I. The Covenant of Love. 18:1-4. A beautiful gospel illustration.

1. The union of love. V. 1. Remember what Jonathan had seen. (1) The terrible enemy; 17:10, 11. (2) The fear of the people; 17:24. (3) The man of God's choice. V. 17:40. (4) The mighty victory. V. 51. Apply this to Christ, "great David's greater Son." Heb. 10:5-14, etc. Can you say 1 John 4:19? 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 2:20; 1 Peter 1:8, etc.
2. The covenant of love. V. 3. Cp. S. of S. 2:16. Can we say this? Mine by (1) Donation; John 17:2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 24. (2) Choice; Eph. 1:4. (3) Purchase; Acts 20:28. (4) Adoption; Romans 8:15. (5) Decision; John 1:12. (6) Union; Eph. 5:30. (7) Forever; John 10:28; Acts 27:23.
3. The sacrifice of love. V. 4. "Stripped," all given to David. Have we thus treated Christ? Cp. Phil. 3:7, 8; Romans 12:1, 2; Rev. 5:12, 13; Phil. 1:21.

II. The Jealous King. Vs. 5-16.

1. David's character. V. 5. Obedient, prudent, accepted before the people.
2. The king's envy. Vs. 6-9. Cp. Prov. 14:30; 27:4; Matt. 27:18; James 3:16.
3. The dastardly attempt. Vs. 10, 11.
4. The effect on Saul. Vs. 12-16.

III. The Persecution of David. C. 19-21. Persecution has been the lot of the true church through this age. John 15:18-27.

1. Jonathan's intercession; 19:1-7.
2. Saul's fresh attempt to kill David. Vs. 8-10.
3. David flees to Naioth. Vs. 11-24. (1) Michal's strategy; 11-17. (2) God's intervention. Vs. 18-24.
4. Jonathan the faithful friend; 20:1-42. (1) David's complaint. Vs. 1-3. (2) The response. V. 4. (3) The plan. Vs. 5-23. Note verses 14, 15. 17. (4) The message. Vs. 24-42.
5. The flight to Gath. Cp. 21:1-15. (1) The interview with Ahimelech; 1-9. David's deceit. His eye was off God and his faith wavered. David looked at God in the light of his circumstances instead of his circumstances in the light of God's promises to him. Here is the real distinction between a spiritual pessimist and an optimist! The Christian life is a life of faith. The believer must (a) Live by faith; Gal. 2:20. (b) Walk by faith; 2 Cor. 4: 7. (c) Work by faith; 1 Thess. 1:3. (2) The flight to Gath, vs. 10-15, and his conduct there. How often we fall through our strongest point—he was now "David the fearful!" Cp. Moses: Num. 12:3, 20:10. Abraham; Gen. 12:10-13. Peter; Mark 14:66-72.

103. DAVID FLEEING FROM SAUL

READ I Samuel 20: 1-3; Ch. 21: 1, 2, 8-15; Ch. 22: 3, 7-22.

THEME: David's lack of faith.

TELL THE STORY.

DAVID FLED TO Nob to Ahimelech the priest (21: 1) then to Achish of Gath (v. 10) then to the Cave of Adullam (22: 1) and from there to Moab.

DAVID.—

DAVID IN SUFFERING AND PERSECUTION. We see David from now on to the end of this book as a wanderer. God allowed suffering and persecution because these were to be used in training him for the position he was destined to fill. But there were compensations as there always are to the child of God. He had Jonathan for his friend, one on whom he could always count (ch. 20, v. 3, 5-8). Yet there was much in David's circumstances which he had brought upon himself by forsaking the way of blessing.

DAVID IN FEAR OF SAUL because his faith had become weak. His eyes were taken off God and on to Saul (21: 10). This is what happened to Elijah when he looked at Jezebel instead of God. When we are afraid of the opinion of others or their criticism of us, our faith in God becomes weak.

DAVID IN FEAR OF DEATH (20: 3). Because his time had not yet come, he had no need to fear death. He forgot that he had been anointed king, and that God's purposes must be fulfilled. Could this be the same David who had gone out against the giant Goliath single-handed? If our trust has been placed in Christ as our Saviour, then we have no need to fear death. Contrast David's words later (Ps. 23: 4).

DAVID LYING FROM FEAR. He left off part of his armour, the girdle of truth. He lied glibly to Ahimelech the priest (21: 2, 8). In the description of the armour of the Christian soldier, the girdle of truth is mentioned (Eph. 6: 14). We are Christian warriors. Let us be always strictly truthful and absolutely honest and sincere in all our words and actions — "truth in the inward parts" (Ps. 51: 6).

RESULTS OF DAVID'S BACKSLIDING.—

THE PRIEST AND HIS PEOPLE WERE MURDERED (22: 22). God forgave David and restored him, but there are certain consequences of sin which even God, because of His justice cannot avert. (Jer. 2: 19; Gal. 6: 7). David had to confess that it was his fault that Ahimelech and his people lost their lives. Our wrongdoing not only affects ourselves but also others for, "None of us liveth to himself" (Rom. 14: 7). Let us watch and pray lest we enter into temptation and thus forsake the path of blessing.

JONATHAN.—

HIS LOYALTY TO HIS FATHER. Loyalty of which he was an outstanding example, seemed to have been the keynote of his life. In the last lesson we saw him as the loyal friend, suffering for David. Now we see him as the loyal son and subject, true to his father and king. Even after Saul had publicly insulted him and tried to murder him (20: 30, 33) he remained at his father's side when he longed to go with his friend David. Loyalty to his father and king must come before his love for his friend and in ch. 20: 41, 42, the painful parting between David and Jonathan is described.

HIS RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION. Saul's anger (v. 30) was the result of bitter jealousy, hate and fear. Jonathan's fierce anger (v. 34) which had no real bitterness against his father, was righteous indignation at the injustice done to his friend. In this incident we see sinful anger as in Saul, and righteous anger as illustrated in the words and actions of Jonathan. "Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4: 26).

There are times, such as when an injustice is being done to another, or he is being falsely accused, or when the weak are being oppressed, when it is wrong to remain silent.

MEMORY VERSE.—Jeremiah 2: 19—"Know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God."

104. DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN

READ I Samuel 22: 1-4; I Chron. 12: 1, 2, 16-18, 33.

THEME: Valiant for God.

TELL THE STORY.

AT THIS TIME David was in exile and his life in constant danger from Saul who would gladly have taken his life if he could have captured him. Yet it was at such a time that certain men came to David and made him their captain. This was a very brave thing for them to do and, in days to come, David would not forget it. These were the people who became David's mighty men.

THEIR CONDITION BEFORE THEY CAME TO DAVID.—

THEY WERE IN DISTRESS of body and of mind and in desperate need. They are a picture of the sinner who comes to Christ because of his condition. He is distressed in mind and in soul because of his sin.

THEY WERE IN DEBT and had no means of paying their debts. This, too, is a picture of the sinner who is in debt to God and cannot possibly pay the debt. The sinner owes to God a life of obedience to His law, of allegiance to His Son and a life of service for Him. All this he has failed to give. Some folk think they will pay the debt by their own good works or perhaps they make good resolutions that they will never again go into debt. But the past debt still remains. The Lord Jesus, however, has paid it in full and, if we accept Him as Saviour, the debt is cancelled and we can go free.

THEY WERE DISCONTENTED "Bitter of soul" (margin). How could they be otherwise when they were in distress and in debt? We can only gain true contentment by coming to Christ.

WHAT THEY BECAME (1 Chron. 12).—

DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN (v. 1). What a contrast to their previous life when they were weak and fearful! Daily contact with David changed them and their whole life and outlook. The Lord Jesus is greater than David. He can change people into God's mighty men if they will only come to Him and allow Him to control their lives. Faith in our risen Lord alone will make us God's mighty men. In Hebrews 11 we see the names of many of God's heroes who, by faith, accomplished the great deeds mentioned.

HELPERS OF THE WAR (v. 1). There is a spiritual warfare going on and God has need of helpers in this fight. We are needed to

engage in conflict with Satan and the powers of darkness. Let us not be like Meroz who came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty (Judges 5: 23).

MEN WHO COULD HANDLE WEAPONS (v. 8). God has provided us with armour and weapons. Let us learn to use "the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6: 17). If we do not, we shall be powerless against the enemy.

THEY WERE WELL BALANCED, able to use both the right hand and the left in shooting arrows (v. 2). They were not strong on one side only and weak on the other. A strong, fine character can be marred because of one weakness. Christ can make our weak places opportunities for the display of His great power.

THEY WERE MEN WHO COULD KEEP RANK (v. 33). What sort of soldiers would they have been if they could not keep in line with others? Let us learn to keep step with others in God's service. Too many like to break rank, to work independently of others. "Unity is strength."

THEY PROVED THEIR LOVE AND LOYALTY TO DAVID.—

THEY SEPARATED THEMSELVES UNTO DAVID (v. 8) and were no longer entangled with Saul and his soldiers. They were separated *from* the old life and separated *unto* David. We should be separated *from* Satan and *unto* God.

THEY SHARED DAVID'S SUFFERINGS, standing by him in the time of his rejection. Let us be willing to share Christ's sufferings (Phil. 3: 10) by enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2: 3).

THEIR LOYALTY WAS UNDIVIDED (v. 33). They were absolutely sincere in their loyalty to David and to one another. Unless God's soldiers are loyal and true to each other as well as to God, they themselves, their fellow-soldiers and God's work will all suffer. Let us think over these qualities David's mighty men possessed and claim them from God for ourselves.

THEIR REWARD. Not one was forgotten by David, their names were recorded. Not one thing we have ever done for Christ will be forgotten (Matt. 10: 42).

MEMORY VERSE.—2 Timothy 2: 4—"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

DAVID THE REJECTED KING

1 Samuel 22-25

Golden Text: Psalm 18:2

I. The Cave of Adullam; 22:1, 2. A fine gospel illustration "David's D. D's."

1. What they were. (1) Distressed, in desperate need. How true of the sinner. In distress of (a) Mind; Eph. 4:18. Ill. Luke 8:26-35. (b) Soul; Luke 7:37, 38. (c) Circumstances; Ill. Luke 8:23, 24. (2) Debtors—what the sinner owes God. (a) A life of obedience to His law. (b) Of reverence to His name. (c) Of allegiance to His Son. (d) Of service to His glory. All this we have failed to give. Ill. Luke 7:41, 42. (3) Discontented. They were discontented with their (a) position; (b) person; (c) prospect. Are you?
2. What they did. Went down to David. The anointed, the deliverer, the rejected and despised man of God's choice. They went "down and out" to David. Here is humiliation, identification, and separation, the three essentials of a true conversion.
3. What they became. They emerged from the cave an entirely new set of "D. D's." (1) The Distressed were delivered; Psalms 107:6; 116:8. (2) The debtors were discharged; Acts 13:38; 1 John 2:12; 1 Cor. 6:11. (3) The discontented were delighted; Psalm 16:3; Neh. 9:25; 1 Sam. 19:2. (4) They all shared David's glory when he was exalted. Cp. 2 Cor. 4:17; Matt. 10:38, 39; Mark 10:28-31; 2 Tim. 2:11-13.

II. The Massacre of the Priests; 22:6-23. Saul's fearful revenge. Note David's word to Abiathar. V. 23. Invitation, encouragement, promise, security.

III. The Victory at Keilah; 23:1-7. Note David's expression of dependence upon the Lord. "He enquired of the Lord." Cp. Psalm 27:4; Phil. 4:6-8.

IV. Saul's Pursuit; 23:8—24:22.

1. God's protection of David. Vs. 9-14. Cp. Psalms 46:1; 18:1, 2. Is God your refuge?
2. The covenant renewed. Vs. 15-18. Note v. 17. This makes Saul's sin all the more grievous. He sinned against light.
3. Saul's insistent search. Vs. 19-29. Cp. Psalm 142.
4. David's magnanimity; 24:1-22. Cp. Romans 12:19-21. The man of God can afford to wait God's time for his vindication.

V. The Wisdom of Abigail. C. 25.

1. Samuel's death. V. 1. The end of a great life lived for God Psalm 116:15.
2. Nabal's folly. Vs. 2-13.
3. Abigail's intervention. Vs. 14-31.
4. David's thanksgiving. Vs. 32-36.
5. Nabal's death. Vs. 37, 38.
6. Abigail's betrothal. Vs. 39-42.

105. DAVID'S WANDERINGS

READ I Samuel 23: 1-29.

THEME: David's trust in God.

TELL THE STORY.

DAVID SEEKS GOD'S GUIDANCE.—

HE INQUIRED OF THE LORD whether he should go and fight against the Philistines (v. 2). He is not going unsent this time as he did in the last lesson. He knows now that he must get his orders from God (v. 2). Form the habit of asking God's guidance in everything, the small things as well as the great and He will direct (Prov. 3, 5, 6). "In *everything* by prayer" (Phil. 4: 6).

HE WANTED TO BE CERTAIN. He would not be turned aside by the advice of his men, but perhaps he was a little shaken by what they said, so "he inquired of the Lord yet again" (v. 4). God had already revealed His will to David, but He was very patient with him and again told him to go, assuring him of victory. Let us take our orders from God, following the advice of Mary (John 2: 5). Again he inquired of God (vv. 11, 12). Several times in this chapter David appealed to God for direction as though he were afraid to move one step without Him.

AT ZIPH.—

DAVID WAS AT ZIPH IN "THE PLACE FOR REFINING SILVER." He had just left Keilah where the people were prepared to betray him into the hands of Saul — now at Ziph the people had planned to do the same thing. God was using these varying circumstances of life to refine and purify David, purging the dross from his character. Sometimes God puts us into the fire of difficulty, testing, pain, sickness, sorrow or bereavement and then patiently sits there till the fire has done its work till He can see His own image reflected in us. Read Psalm 54 which describes David's attitude to God at this time.

SAUL AT ZIPH. Saul honoured God with his lips only (Matt. 15: 8). He used God's Name saying God had delivered David into his hands (v. 7). He pretended to bless the people of Ziph, "Blessed be ye of the Lord" (v. 21). Let us beware of using pious phrases when our

heart is not right with God (Matt. 7: 21).

THE SIN OF INGRATITUDE.—

THE PEOPLE OF KEILAH were under a deep debt of gratitude to David who had saved their lives and their city. They paid it by base ingratitude for they were prepared to betray him to Saul. The chief butler (Gen. 40: 23) and the nine lepers (Luke 17: 17) were examples of ingratitude. Are you also guilty of this sin in being guilty of ingratitude towards those who have done so much for you — your parents, teachers and others who have helped you. The worst ingratitude however is shown toward Christ Who died to save sinners.

JONATHAN THE TRUE FRIEND.—

HE STRENGTHENED DAVID. Always when we read of Jonathan he is giving something to David or doing something for him instead of seeking what he could get from him. His was not a selfish self-seeking love which sought to centre David's thoughts upon himself. Note that it was not merely encouragement he gave his friend, but he strengthened his hand *in God*, probably by encouraging him to look to God, to put his trust in Him and to rely upon Him. David had many enemies but probably the love and friendship of Jonathan compensated for them all.

GOD'S OVERRULING PROVIDENCE.—

GOD USED SEEMING DEFEAT FOR DAVID'S DELIVERANCE. God used the invasion of the Philistines to deliver David from Saul. God can turn even the wrath of man to praise Him and use such events to deliver His people. Let us see God's hand not only in these circumstances which come to us as individuals but in the events which affect nations. King Nebuchadnezzar had to confess, "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven . . . and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4: 35).

MEMORY VERSE.—Proverbs 3: 6—"In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths."

106. DAVID SPARES SAUL

READ I Samuel 24: 1-22; Chapter 26: 7-12, 21.

THEME: Forgiving our enemies. TELL THE STORY.

The incidents recorded in chapters 24 and 26 show the nobility and greatness of David's character. When Saul was placed in David's power, he would not abuse that power.

DAVID.—

HE WAS WRONGLY ADVISED BY HIS FRIENDS who told him to kill Saul and said, *the Lord* has delivered him into your hands (v. 4). But David had higher ideals than they. Opportunity does not make a wrong thing right. It is easy to say in some circumstances that *the Lord* has given us opportunity to do certain things and to deceive ourselves into thinking we are carrying out God's wishes. Jonah found a ship going to Tarshish and he had the fare, but God had told him to go to Ninevah. (Jonah 1).

HE CUT OFF A PIECE OF SAUL'S ROBE (v. 4). In conversation or criticism we may cut off a piece of another's reputation or character. We lower them in the esteem of others and perhaps hinder their influence. A piece of robe may be sewn on again but unkind or perhaps untruthful words about another cannot be recalled.

HIS CONSCIENCE SMOTE HIM (v. 5), because what he had done seemed dishonouring to God's anointed king. God wants us to have a *good* conscience (Heb. 13: 18). Guard it, listen to it so that you may have a conscience "void of offence" (Acts 24: 16). David spared Saul's life a second time (1 Sam. 26).

DAVID'S SPEECH TO SAUL.—

HE SAID HE HAD BEEN MALIGNED BY MEN who accused him of wishing to injure Saul (v. 9). Spreading untrue and damaging reports about others is a hateful sin which brings much trouble and sorrow upon them. In Psalm 7: 1-5 David speaks of what he suffered through the evil speaking of others against himself but, he safely left his affairs and defence in God's hands (Ps. 7: 10).

THE LORD AVENGE ME OF THEE (v. 12). Like Job (ch. 5: 8) he committed his cause to God (ch. 26: 10), "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19).

MINE EYE SPARED THEE . . . I have not sinned against thee (vv. 10, 11). David forgave and protected his enemy. If we find it difficult to forgive those who injure us, let us remember the example of the Lord Jesus who prayed for those who crucified Him (Luke 23: 34) and of Stephen who prayed for those who stoned him (Acts 7: 60).

SAUL'S RESPONSE TO DAVID'S WORDS.—

HE WEPT (v. 16). But it was only his emotions that were touched and not his heart. Saul was penitent (sorry) but penitence is not repentance. There was no real change in his heart because he retained the same old enmity toward David. Repentance is a change of mind leading to action. True repentance shows itself in the life (Is. 55: 7).

HE SAID, "I HAVE SINNED" (ch. 26: 21). In the Word of God we have other instances of confession without repentance — Pharaoh, Balaam, Achan, Saul and Judas all used the words, "I have sinned," but they did not repent. On the other hand, David, Nehemiah, Job, the prodigal son and others truly repented when they said, "I have sinned," and were forgiven. Saul confessed, but went on sinning.

HE SAID, "I have played the fool" (26: 21), but he returned to his folly.

GOD'S DEFINITION OF A FOOL.—

HE DESPISES INSTRUCTION (Prov. 1: 7), that is, he will not listen to the teaching of God's Word or heed advice.

HE MOCKS AT SIN (Prov. 14: 9). The fool mocks at sin, but God is not mocked, "as we sow, we reap" (Gal. 6: 7).

HE MAKES NO PREPARATION FOR THE FUTURE. The rich fool lived only for this life, laying up treasure on earth and nothing in heaven. He thought he needed great barns but he needed only a little grave, for he had to leave all his possessions behind. (Luke 12: 20, 21). What a wasted life was Saul's when it might have been such a useful one in God's service.

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 5: 44—"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you."

107. David among the Philistines.

I Samuel 27.1-12; chapter 28.1-2; chapter 29.1-4, 9, 10.

Philistia was outside Palestine, away from God's Presence and away from God's people. It was full of heathen temples where the people worshipped idols, and there were many heathen priests.

WHY DAVID WENT THERE.

1. **Because he was afraid of man.** Where was the faith he had when he went to fight Goliath? The fear of man brings a snare—gets us into a trap. Prov. 29.25.

2. **His backsliding first began in his heart** when he forgot God and said, there is nothing better for me than to go to the Philistines, v. 1, but the Lord was his helper and would never leave him nor forsake him.

3. **Because he forgot God's promise to make him king.** But God will never break His promise. He cannot lie. Heb. 6.18.

4. **Because he was afraid of hard times.** And so he lost his blessing.

5. **What David did in Philistia:**
   (a) **He joined with unbelievers.** He first backslid in his heart, then in his life. II Cor. 6.14.
   (b) **He pleased the heathen king** who gave him a high place, like Lot had in wicked Sodom, Gen. 19.1. Then David had to obey the King instead of obeying God.
   (c) **He told lies** and brought shame on God's Name. James 2.7.

Verse to learn, I Cor. 10.12.

108. DAVID AND NABAL

READ I Samuel 25: 1-20, 23-33, 37-39.

THEME: A gracious woman. TELL THE STORY.

NABAL'S ADVANTAGES AND PRIVILEGES.—

HE HAD WEALTH AND POSITION (v. 2) and could have been a great influence for God for he employed many. Wealth and position are a trust from God.

HE BELONGED TO THE GODLY LINE OF CALEB (v. 3). Great privileges bring great responsibilities (Luke 12: 48). We must all give account to God (Rom. 14: 12).

HIS CHARACTER.—

HE WAS CHURLISH (harsh, sharp, rude) (v. 3). He was insulting to David's men and rude apparently to his wife and to all with whom he came in contact. Some people pride themselves on their plain speaking and make this an excuse for their rudeness. Contrast King Solomon who showed a fine courtesy to his mother (1 Kings 2: 19) and the graciousness of the Lord Jesus (Luke 4: 22). "Be courteous" (1 Pet. 3: 8) is an injunction we do well to remember in these days of hurry and bustle. But the place where this grace and courtesy is sometimes least shown however, is in the home, between brothers and sisters, who, when they enter the door, leave their manners outside! Let us say with David, "I will walk *within my house* with a perfect heart" (Ps. 101: 2).

HE WAS EVIL IN HIS DOINGS (v. 3), for he was coarse and brutal and a drunkard (v. 36). What a terrible record to leave behind!

HE WAS UNGRATEFUL to David who thought it a suitable time to ask something of Nabal, according to Eastern custom, in return for the services he had rendered to David's shepherds (vv. 15, 16). David had sent a courteous salutation to Nabal (v. 6) but Nabal sent a rude and insulting reply (vv. 10, 11). He was prepared to accept all that David had done for him and to give him nothing in return.

HIS END. (The Lord smote Nabal that he died) (v. 38). God had the matter in his own hands and there was no need for David to act.

ABIGAIL, THE GRACIOUS WOMAN.—

SHE WAS WISE, OF GOOD UNDERSTANDING (v. 3). She had learned to "lean not to her own understanding, but in all her ways to acknowledge God so that He would direct her paths" (Prov. 3: 5, 6). How came she to be married to such a man as Nabal? Probably, according to Eastern custom, she herself had had no say in the marriage which had been arranged by her people. She was also beautiful (v. 3), but she possessed qualities of mind and heart which were much more important than beauty.

SHE WAS GENUINELY GOOD for she loved and served God. Her enforced contact with her drunken, coarse husband did not quench her courage or contaminate her wise, beautiful spirit. She had been forced to "Lie among the pots" yet she was as the wings of a dove, covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold (Ps. 68: 13).

Joseph remained unsoiled in Potiphar's house, as did Daniel in Babylon. It is wonderful to know that though our lot may be to lie among the pots, that is, we may be surrounded by evil, yet God can keep us as though we are covered with silver. Abigail did not allow her husband's conduct to embitter her or drive her away from God.

SHE PLEADED WITH HER HUSBAND FOR DAVID though he was so unworthy (vv. 25: 28). She tried to bring her husband to a better frame of mind, by speaking well of David.

HER WISE WORDS TO DAVID.—

She reminded him of three things:—

THAT THE LORD HAD KEPT HIM BACK FROM AVENGING HIMSELF WITH HIS OWN HAND (v. 26). In the previous lesson we see that he refrained himself from taking matters into his own hands and avenging himself on Saul but now he is in danger of forsaking that attitude.

THAT HE WAS FIGHTING THE BATTLES OF THE LORD (v. 28), not his own and therefore, what he had contemplated doing, wiping out Nabal's line, was not worthy of God's warrior.

THAT HIS LIFE WAS BOUND UP WITH GOD in the bundle of life (v. 29). In John 15 we are taught that all who belong to Christ are united to Him as the branches to the vine, sharing His life, drawing their nourishment from Him.

SHE ENCOURAGED HIS FAITH by reminding him of the promises of God. "The Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house" (v. 28) and that his enemies should be slung out as a stone out of a sling (v. 29). God will do this and more for us.

HE WOULD NOT HAVE TO REPROACH HIMSELF LATER FOR HIS HASTY ACTION (v. 31). Let us aways look at circumstances from the viewpoint of the future and not be tempted now to do things for which we would be sorry later.

DAVID'S RESPONSE.—

HE YIELDED TO ABIGAIL'S PLEADING and spared her husband and his household.

HE BLESSED ABIGAIL FOR HER WISE ADVICE (v. 33). He was not above taking advice from Abigail and thanked her for it.

HE THANKED GOD FOR BRINGING ABIGAIL ACROSS HIS PATH (v. 34), and preventing him from sinning against God in his haste and anger against Nabal. What a great thing it is to be kept from sin by the restraining hand of God. Sometimes God does this directly; at other times He does it through someone whom He sends across our path just at the moment we need them. Let us thank God for the many times He has stepped in to keep us from sin, and for those whom He has used to restrain us from wrong and hasty actions.

MEMORY VERSE.—I Samuel 25:31—"That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart . . . that my lord (David) hath avenged himself."

109. DAVID RECOVERS ALL FROM THE AMALEKITES

READ I Samuel 30: 1-26.
THEME: Share and share alike.
TELL THE STORY.

In chapter 27 David is again in fear of Saul and again he forgets God's promises and flees to the land of the Philistines, taking with him his 600 men. David had joined the heathen King of Gath. While David was absent from Ziklag, his headquarters, the Amalekites raided it, burnt the city, taking the inhabitants captive, including Abigail.

DAVID.—

HE WAS OUT OF GOD'S WILL. When he acted without God in going to the Philistines, the enemy came and took everything (v. 3); his own men held him responsible and talked of stoning their leader (v. 6). Those who step out of the will of God will always find themselves in difficulty and out of blessing.

IN HIS TROUBLE HE TURNED TO GOD (v. 6). Note the words, "*his* God." God was to David a personal friend. In Ps. 18: 2, he said, *My* God, *my* rock, *my* fortress. Though he had gone unsent to the King of Gath, God was still *his* God and in his trouble he turned to Him. He would encourage himself by going over God's promises and over past deliverances. How much he needed God's help at this time, for his own men spoke of stoning him, his family were captives and his own life was in danger.

HE PRAYED, God told him what to do and he acted. God assured him that he would recover all he had lost (v. 8). God invites us to call upon Him in trouble (Ps. 50: 15).

HE RECOVERED ALL (vv. 18, 19). Had he been in the will of God he would not have lost all. When David turned to God, He enabled him to recover all he had lost. Such is God's mercy, grace and forgiveness.

THE FAINT SOLDIERS.—

THEY WERE FAINT BUT NOT FEARFUL. Two hundred out of the six hundred fell out of the ranks. It was not their fault that they were not strong enough for the battle. They were, however, able

to take care of the stuff while the other four hundred went to fight. All cannot go into the front line, but people are needed behind the lines also. If, because of health, home ties or other responsibilities, you cannot take up full-time service for the Lord there is still much you can do for the extension of Christ's kingdom abroad or at home.

THEY REJOICED WHEN THEIR LEADER RETURNED and went to meet him (v. 21). They rejoiced with those who had been able to go to the front lines and with their captain over the victory won.

DAVID SALUTED THEM (v. 21). He did not blame them for staying behind. He knew they would have gone to the battle had they been able to do so. Later, when David himself longed to build the temple for God, he was not allowed to do so. God, however, said to him, "Thou didst well that it was in thine heart" (1 Kings 8: 18). God appreciates the *desire* to do certain things for Him, even though it is not possible to carry them out.

DAVID DEFENDED THEM. Some of the 400 advised David not to give any of the spoils of victory to those who had been unable to go forth to the battle. This was pure selfishness and greed. The 400 men had rendered valuable service by guarding the stuff of the men who had fought therefore they, too, deserved a reward. David made a grand rule when he said that all should share alike (vv. 24, 25). In the day when our work is tested and rewards given, it will not be for the size of our work but for its quality, not according to whether we have served in the front line or behind the lines, for all work is great if done out of love for our Lord and Master.

DAVID WAS GRATEFUL TO ALL WHO HAD HELPED HIM when he was a wanderer and a fugitive and he sent them some of the spoil. No one was forgotten (v. 31). In your success do not forget those who have helped you in your need.

JONATHAN'S DEATH. In David's grief for his loved friend David sums up the quality of Jonathan's great love for him, in the words, "thy love to me was wonderful" (2 Sam. 1, v. 26). What a wonderful gift is that of a true friend. *Saul* had great possibilities and opportunities in his life, but he missed out. Let us take warning from such a life.

MEMORY VERSE.—1 Samuel 30: 24—"As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike."

110. SAUL'S DOWNFALL AND DEATH

1 Samuel 26-31

Golden Text: Hebrews 12:14

I. David's Further Forbearance. C. 26.

1. Saul's promise broken. Vs. 1-4. Cp. 24:19; 19:20. Saul persistently pursued the downward path knowing all the while that he was going contrary to the revealed will of God. His heart became "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" Heb. 3:13.
2. David's reconnoitre. V. 5.
3. The sparing of Saul. Vs. 6-12. Note Vs. 9-10. David was content to leave his case in good hands. Cp. Heb. 10:30, 31; Romans 12:19-21.
4. The revelation. Vs. 13-20.
5. Saul's confession. V. 21. "I have played the fool" Is it yours? God's definition of a fool —One who (1) Despises instruction; Prov. 1: 7; 1 Tim. 6:3, 4. (2) Denies God; Psalm 53:1. (3) Mocks at sin; Prov. 14:9. (4) Talks foolishly; Prov. 19:1. (5) Does not prepare; Luke 12:20; Prov. 22:3. (6) Hears and does not; Matt. 7:24-29. Now read 1 Cor. 3:18, 19.

II. Saul's Fearful Sin. C. 28.

1. A silent heaven. Vs. 3-6. The penalty of sin; Hab. 1:13; Psalm 39:11; 1 Cor. 14:38; Psalm 104:29.
2. A terrible deed. Vs. 7-25. Saul tried to get through hell what only can come from heaven. (1) Spiritism is no new thing. (a) There are unseen evil spirits; Eph. 6:12; 1 Tim. 4:1-3. (b) These evil spirits can communicate with man; Lev. 19:31; 20:6. (c) They can possess man; Matt. 17:18; Acts 16:16-19; Mark 5:1-20; Matt. 8:28. (d) Intercourse with evil spirits strictly forbidden of God; Deut. 18:9-14; Lev. 19:31; 20:6; 1 Cor. 10:20, 21; Isa. 8:19; 2 Kings 21:1-6; 1 Chron. 10: 13, 14. He who ventures into spiritism disobeys God's explicit command. (2) The awful seance; Vs. 8-14. (3) The message of doom; Vs. 15-20. No doubt God intervened to give Saul the last message.

III. David's Victory. C. 30.

1. The raiding Amalekites. Vs. 1-3.
2. David's counsel—what a contrast to Saul! Vs. 4-10.
3. The pursuit and victory. Vs. 11-20.
4. The equal division. Vs. 21-25. A most important decision. All work is alike great if done in the will of God. John 4:36. 1 Cor. 3:5-9. The Lord's work is one work, and all kinds of workmen are required and essential to the whole. The lowly worker is often lost sight of in the blaze of publicity that surrounds the platform man: but the judgment seat of Christ will determine the true value of all service done for Him. Romans 14:7-12; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; Rev. 22:12.

IV. Saul's Sad End. C. 31.

1. Gilboa's tragic scene. Vs. 1-3.
2. Saul the suicide. Vs. 4-6. What a sad end to a life that promised much at the outset. The only safe course is to "trust and obey."

111. DAVID CROWNED KING OVER ALL

READ 2 Samuel 5: 1-7, 17; 1 Chron. 11: 1-4, 9; 2 Samuel 3: 17, 18.

THEME: King over all.

TELL THE STORY.

Saul was dead and David had been appointed by God to succeed him. Israel wanted to choose one of Saul's family, so the majority of the tribes set up Ishbosheth, Jonathan's son, to be king. Civil war began between the two parties. When Abner, who was at the head of Saul's party went over to David's side and began to persuade the tribes to make David king, all the tribes came to Hebron to carry this out. In this lesson we wish to think particularly of the application to our own lives, and of crowning Christ Lord of all.

THE PEOPLE CROWNED DAVID KING (2 Sam. 5).—

BECAUSE OF HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THEM (v. 1). The ties of earthly relationship are strong and demand loyalty. Christ became flesh, taking our nature upon Him (John 1: 14). When we receive Him as Saviour we become members of His body (Eph. 5: 30). We are then bound to him by even closer ties than we are to one another by earthly relationship. This union brings with it privileges and responsibilities.

BECAUSE HE WAS THEIR TRUE LEADER AND DELIVERER (v. 2). The Lord Jesus is the Captain of our salvation Who *has* delivered us from death, He *is* delivering us from sin and Satan now, and He will yet deliver us (2 Cor. 1: 10).

THEY CONFESSED THAT SAUL HAD REIGNED OVER THEM (v. 2). Saul was a picture of the flesh, self. A country can have only one ruler at one time. If the true King, the Lord Jesus is not on the throne in our hearts then the flesh (self) reigns. Christ is the only One Who can deal with the old nature and dethrone it, but to make it possible for Him to do this for us we must, by an act of the will crown Him King. He died *that He might be Lord* (Rom. 14: 9). Do you know Him not only as Saviour but as Lord? He *is* King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19: 16), let us make Him so in reality in our lives, obeying His orders implicitly and allowing Him to do what He wills with us.

THE RESULTS OF CROWNING HIM KING.—

DAVID MADE A COVENANT WITH THEM (1 Chron. 11: 3). On their behalf He was prepared to use all his wisdom and power. The Lord Jesus is prepared to do this for us. He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification (holiness) and redemption (1 Cor. 1: 30), if we hand over our lives completely to Him and place our all at His disposal.

DAVID GREW STRONGER AND THE HOUSE OF SAUL WEAKER (2 Sam. 3: 1). There was war between the house of Saul and that of David. The war between the flesh and the Spirit (Gal. 5: 17) is long, but if Christ is crowned King, the victory is sure. As we own Christ Lord and King, not only once but daily, the inevitable result will be that the flesh will grow weaker and weaker. John the Baptist said, "He (Christ) must increase but I must decrease" (John 3: 30).

THE PHILISTINES CAME AGAINST ISRAEL (5: 18). They were stirred up to fight but the Lord gave a great victory. Do not think that when you make Christ King everything will become easy. On the contrary Satan will do his utmost to hinder and defeat you because he knows that you now count for God, that you are to be reckoned with because you will make inroads into his kingdom.

ABNER'S ADVICE.—

NOW THEN DO IT. Abner said to Israel, "Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you: *NOW THEN DO IT* (2 Sam. 3: 17, 18). David at this time was king over only part of the tribes, now the people must decide to crown him king over all. Perhaps up to the present you have allowed Christ to rule over *part* only of your life; you have often thought of making Him King over the whole of it, but so far you have not done it. He has a right to the whole of your life. He is your rightful King because He has purchased you with His own blood (Rev. 5: 9). Will you then, "Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all." NOW THEN DO IT.

MEMORY VERSE.— Rev. 19-16 King of kings and Lord of lords

DAVID MADE KING

2 Samuel 1—5:3

Golden Text: Hebrews 1:3

I. The Lamentation. C. 1.

1. The false report and its consequence. Vs. 1-16.
2. The mourning for the dead. Vs. 17-27. Note the tribute to Jonathan. Vs. 25-27.

II. The Warfare. C. 2:1—3:1.

1. David anointed king over Judah. Vs. 1-7.
2. Ish-bosheth made king of Israel. Vs. 8-11.
3. The long war. Vs. 12-3:1. (1) The duel of the strong men. Vs. 12-16. (2) The battle and the pursuit and death of Asahel. Vs. 17-24. Note v. 30 "and Asahel." (3) The truce. Vs. 25-31. Note v. 26 and cp. Gal. 5:15; 1 Cor. 3:3, 4; 12:13-27; James 3:16.
4. The effect of the war; 3:1.

III. The Coronation; 3:12-5:3.

1. Abner's ambassage; 3:12-21.
2. Abner's death. Vs. 22-39. Note David's query "Died Abner as a fool dieth?" Here is a good illustration of the gospel, for Abner died as a fool. (1) Abner knew the law of the avenger of blood; Deut. 19:6. He had shed blood and therefore must expect vengeance. Cp. Ezek. 18:4, 20; Romans 6:23. (2) He made no preparation for this vengeance. Have you? Cp. Prov. 22:3; Psalm 2:12; Amos 4:12. Ill. Luke 12:15-20. (3) A city of refuge was close by, Hebron. See V. 27. Cp. Josh 20:7. All he had to do was run in, and he would have been safe. He was "almost saved." Cp. Romans 10:8; Psalm 34:18; 145:18; Heb. 6:18; John 10:9; Acts 13:38. Illus. Acts 26:28. (4) He was not bound—he was free. V. 34. Cp. Man's free will. Whosoever will; Rev. 22:17. God doesn't coerce. "Let him come," etc. (5) Abner, therefore, died needlessly. Will you die as a fool? Luke 12:20. Note David's lamentation for him. Vs. 33-39.
3. Ishbosheth's death. C. 4. An inglorious end to a mere puppet King.
4. David made king over Israel. C. 5:1-3. Notice their reasons for making him king. Apply them to the King of Kings. Why make Christ King of your life? Because of His (1) relationship. V. 1. Cp. Christ incarnation; Heb. 2:11, 14-18; 4:14, 15; Phil. 2:6-8; Gal. 4:4, 5. (2) Deliverance from the enemy. V. 2. Christ has defeated Satan and put away sin. John 1:29. Cp. Col. 2:13-15; 1 Sam. 17:46. (3) Guidance. V. 20; Psalm 23:1; John 10:27; 8:12; etc. (4) Provision. V. 2. "Feed." Cp. John 6:35, etc. (5) Authority. "The Lord hath said," V. 2. Cp. Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Acts 10:38; 17:30, 31. (6) Covenant. v. 3. Cp. Isa. 55:3; Luke 22:20; Heb. 9:15. Is Christ your Savior and the enthroned Lord of your heart? Rom. 10:9-10.

112. DAVID BRINGING HOME THE ARK

READ 2 Samuel 6: 1-15, 17.

THEME: Doing God's work in God's way.

TELL THE STORY.

The Ark had been taken by the Philistines and returned by them to Kirjath-jearim where it remained in the house of Abinadab for twenty years. David now brings it back to the city of David (v. 12).

THE ARK.—

It was THE SYMBOL OF GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER. It was captured by the Philistines and lost to Israel because of their sin. Sin comes between us and God (Is. 59: 2). Moses was afraid of losing the consciousness of God's presence (Ex. 33: 15). The presence of God brings *conviction* of sin (Isaiah 6: 1-5). The more we are conscious of His holiness and His presence, the more we feel our own unworthiness. The presence of God *brings rest* (Ex. 33: 14; Matt. 11: 28), rest of heart and rest from our burdens. The presence of God brings protection (Ps. 31: 20).

DOING A RIGHT THING IN A WRONG WAY.—

DAVID DID NOT FIND OUT GOD'S WILL. If he had looked into the law of the Lord he would have found out how to bring home the Ark. If he had inquired of the Lord as he had done in chapter 5: 19, 23, he would have avoided the trouble which was the result of doing a right thing in the wrong way.

THEY PLACED THE ARK ON A NEW CART (v. 3). This may have looked very attractive for the cart had never been used for any other purpose, but it was not *God's* way. He had commanded that the Ark should be carried on the shoulders of the Levites (Numb. 4: 15; 7: 9; 1 Chron. 15: 15). Do you ever bring new carts to God by making new resolutions and placing the Ark of God upon them? Do you use wrong methods in God's work? God wants, not new carts, but consecrated lives which are wholly surrendered to Him for His service.

THE ARK WAS GIVEN TO ABINADAB TO CARE FOR instead of to the Levites. God had chosen the Kohathites of the tribe of Levi for this work. Only those whom *God* has chosen for a special work should do it. When an apostle was to be chosen to take the place of Judas the apostles prayed, Lord . . . show whether of these two *Thou* hast

chosen (Acts 1: 24). "So send *I* you," said Christ (John 20: 21).

GOD MADE AN EXAMPLE OF UZZAH, who was a Levite. He therefore knew God's order and that the penalty for disobeying that order was death (vv. 6, 7; Numb. 4: 15). God sometimes makes an example of one that others may fear (Acts 5: 10, 11). In ordinary life today we sometimes see one dealt with very severely, as a deterrant to others. Then again God expected more from Uzzah who knew God's order. The more light and knowledge we have the more God expects of us.

DAVID WAS DISPLEASED WITH GOD'S ACTION (v. 8). Contrast him with Abraham concerning the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 18: 25). Let us never question God's love or justice in His dealings with us or with others. David apparently examined himself later, for he said, "How shall the Ark of the Lord come to me?" (v. 9) and God showed him the reason (1 Chron. 15: 2, 12, 13).

GOD GRACIOUSLY BLESSED OBED-EDOM who was a Philistine, a Gittite (vv. 10, 11). God's judgment was followed by an act of grace for he blessed Obed-edom and all his household because of the presence of the Ark in his house (vv. 10-12). Do *you* know the blessing of the presence of the Lord? Is he in your heart, in your home, your business and with you in all your activities? It is a grand thing to be bessed of the Lord (Prov. 10: 22; Ps. 115: 13).

DOING A RIGHT THING IN A RIGHT WAY.—

THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES SANCTIFIED THEMSELVES to bring up the Ark (1 Chron. 15: 14). Those who do God's work must live clean, holy lives. He will not use those in whose lives known sin is practised. He will not use a dirty vessel (Isaiah 52: 11).

THERE WAS GREAT JOY AND GLADNESS (vv. 12, 15). This will be the result of doing God's work in God's way. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13: 17). This is true joy, joy such as the world cannot give.

MEMORY VERSE.—Exodus 33: 15—"If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."

THE ARK BROUGHT TO ZION

2 Samuel 5:4-6:23

Golden Text: Proverbs 10:22

I. David's Progress; 5:4-12.

1. "Going and growing" (marg.). V. 10. Here are two essentials for the Christian's spiritual progress (a) "going." Cp. 1 Cor. 15:58; Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19; 21:28; 1 Tim. 6:11, 12. (b) "growing." Cp. "grace"; 2 Peter 3:18; "Knowledge." 2 Peter 3:18. "Faith," 2 Thess. 1:3; "love," 2 Thess. 1:3; Eph. 4:15; 2 Peter 1: 5-8.
2. The capture of Zion. Vs. 6-9.
3. The defeat of the enemy. Vs. 17-25. (1) Guidance humbly asked. V. 19. (2) Obedience to God's word. V. 19. (3) Fought in God's Name. V. 20. This will always ensure victory.

II. The Breach of Uzzah; 6:1-8. God's work must be done in God's way. The word of the Lord must guide the work of the Lord.

1. David sought not God's will. Cp. 5:19, 23.
2. He searched not in God's word; see Num. 4: 14, 15; 7:9; 18:3.
3. He relied on his own way. "A new cart." Cp. 1 Sam. 6:7. He copied the world. How true a picture of present day ecclesiasticism! "Modern methods" have superceded scriptural authority and confusion is the result. See Exodus 25:40; 26:30; Num. 8:4, etc.
4. Disaster assuredly followed. Vs. 6, 7. Apply this to present day conditions as to the church, its origin, organism, ordinances and order.

III. The Blessing of Obed-Edom. Vs. 9-12. The ark, the symbol of God's presence!

1. What the presence of the Lord brings. (1) Conviction of sin; Isa. 6:1-5. (2) Salvation; Acts 3:19. (3) Rest; Exod. 33:14. (4) Joy Psalm 16:11. (5) Confidence; Ex. 33:15. (6) Protection; Psalm 31:20. (7) Glory, honour, strength and gladness; 1 Chron. 16:27.
2. What the absence of the Lord brings. (1) No peace; Isa. 57:20. 21; John 6:17, 18. (2) No hope; Eph. 2:11, 12. (3) No life; 1 John 5:12. (4) No excuse; Romans 1:20. (5) No Christ; Romans 8:9; Eph. 2:12. (6) No escape; Heb. 2:3.
3. The blessing of Obed-Edom—Is it yours? Is He in your heart, home, business? Matt. 6: 33; Prov. 10:22.

IV. The Bringing of the Ark. Vs. 12-23.

1. The scriptural method followed. Vs. 12, 13.
2. Based on sacrifice. Vs. 13, 17. God given the rightful place of preeminence and authority.
3. The resultant joy. Vs. 14-19.
4. The worldly-wise criticizer. Vs. 20-23. They will always be present. Cp. Luke 15:2. The Christian's business in life is to please God and, as he does so, he is bound to displease some. See Paul's ambition; Gal. 1:10. She paid the price in barrenness.

113. MEPHIBOSHETH THE LAME PRINCE

READ 2 Samuel 4: 4; Chapter 9; Chapter 19: 24, 28, 30.

THEME: The King's kindness and love.

TELL THE STORY.

MEPHIBOSHETH—PICTURE OF THE SINNER.—

HE HAD FALLEN AND WAS LAME (2 Sam. 4: 4; 9: 3). When Adam disobeyed God, he too, fell (Gen. 3) and, since that time, man in his natural state has been unable to walk in God's ways (Rom. 5: 12; Jer. 13: 23).

HE LIVED IN LODEBAR—THE PLACE OF NO BREAD (9: 4). The rebellious dwell in a *dry land* (Ps. 68: 6). There can be no true joy and lasting happiness for those who are away from God. They may enjoy the "pleasures of sin," but they are only "for a season" (Heb. 11: 25).

DAVID'S KINDNESS—A PICTURE OF GOD'S KINDNESS (Tit. 3: 4).—

DAVID SOUGHT OUT MEPHIBOSHETH who had not sought out David, nor had he done anything to merit the royal favour. Nothing is said about his being attractive, on the contrary he was lame and probably a sickly invalid. So God came seeking man. When Adam sinned, God sought him out and He has been seeking man ever since. The father ran to meet the prodigal son when "he was yet a great way off" (Luke 15: 20). This is a picture of God the Father seeking us out when we were estranged from Him. Christ came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19: 10).

DAVID WAS KIND TO MEPHIBOSHETH FOR JONATHAN'S SAKE (9: 7). Mephibosheth himself had done nothing to merit David's kindness, which was shown to him on account of another. Between David and Jonathan (Mephibosheth's father) a covenant had been made (1 Sam. 20: 14-16) and it was because of this promise that Mephibosheth fared as he did. "The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3: 4, 5). God is merciful and kind to us for Christ's sake (1 John 2: 12; Eph. 4: 32).

DAVID CALMED MEPHIBOSHETH'S FEARS — "Fear not; for I will surely show thee kindness" (v. 7). Saul, Mephibosheth's grandfather, had been David's enemy, therefore he had reason to fear David.

We were enemies to God (Rom. 5: 10) and had every reason to fear His wrath and judgment but because of the death of Christ when "he bare our sins" (1 Pet. 2: 24), God is able to say to all who receive His Son, "He that believeth . . . hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5: 24).

DAVID MADE MEPHIBOSHETH HIS SON (v. 11). This was a privilege and honour which carried with it obligations. It was only when Mephibosheth came to David that he was made David's son. We are not born into this privilege by earthly birth (though we are by the new birth); we do not gain it by becoming a church member, or by ordinance. We cannot earn it. When we receive Christ as Saviour, we become children of God (John 1: 12; 1 John 3: 1).

DAVID RESTORED TO MEPHIBOSHETH HIS INHERITANCE (9: 7). All that he had lost David gave back to him. Instead of living in poverty he was now a comparatively rich man. God has blessed His children with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1: 3). All that we lost because of Adam's sin, God has restored to us in Christ.

DAVID ALLOWED MEPHIBOSHETH TO EAT AT HIS TABLE CONTINUALLY (vv. 7, 10, 11, 13). Because of this new relationship he was never to know want again. Those who love the Lord find that "He . . . filleth thee with the finest of the wheat" (Ps. 147: 14). Christ Himself fully satisfies those who come to Him (John 6: 35). But Mephibosheth would have to be present at the king's table in order to obtain the food and, similarly, we must go daily to the Word of God to obtain food for our souls.

MEPHIBOSHETH AS ONE OF THE KING'S SONS.—

HE FELT HIS OWN UNWORTHINESS (v. 8). God's grace (his undeserved favour, love and kindness) always has this effect. The more conscious we are of His grace, the more unworthy we shall feel. Paul had this experience (1 Cor. 15: 9; Eph. 3: 8; 1 Tim. 1: 15).

HE LOVED DAVID GREATLY AND SHARED HIS SUFFERINGS (2 Sam. 19: 24). Love begets love (1 John 4: 19). Mephibosheth was more taken up with David himself than with all his gifts. May we be more taken up with our Lord than with all the blessings He bestows upon us.

MEMORY VERSE.—Titus 3: 4—"The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared."

MEPHIBOSHETH

2 Samuel 9:1-13

Golden Text: Psalm 116:7, 8

Note the historical setting. Saul and Jonathan have been killed. David is seated upon the throne and his memory recalls the friendship of Jonathan from the first meeting until the last. The result of his reminiscence is this beautiful incident full of Gospel truth.

I. His Name. V. 6. Marg. (1) Mephibosheth, "out of my mouth proceeds reproach." (2) Meribbaal, "rebellion." Thus his name reveals the state of all by nature. Reproach because of sin. Cp. Prov. 14:34; Romans 3:10-19, etc. Rebels; Col. 1:21; Eph. 2:12; Romans 8:7, 8.

II. His Condition. V. 3. "Lame on both feet." Couldn't walk straight. Note why; 2 Sam. 4:9. He fell through another's fault. Cp. Romans 5:19; Eph. 2:1-3; Isa. 53:6; Romans 3:12. Here Scripture clearly teaches man's deformity and inability to walk in a straight path.

III. His Position. V. 5. Lo-debar, "the place of no pasture," a true type of the world. Plenty of pleasure, power, popularity, pomp and treasure but no pasture. Nothing to satisfy. Cp. John 4:13; Eccles. 1:2-18. "Afar off." Isa. 59:1, 2; Eph. 2:13.

IV. His Remembrancer, David. V. 3. Mephibosheth may well have been afraid of vengeance but no! Cp. Jer. 29:11; Psalm 103:10, 11; Isa. 55:8; John 3:16; Romans 5:7, 8, etc. Note why, "Jonathan's sake." Cp. Eph. 4:32.

V. His Invitation. V. 5. "The king sent." Cp. Matt. 11:28; John 10:10; 2 Cor. 5:19; Luke 14:21-23; Mark 16:15; Rev. 22:17. It was not Mephibosheth's prayers that finally gained David's ears and heart. He did not "pray through" to David. It was purely grace on the part of David.

VI. His Reception. Vs. 6-9.

1. His attitude. V. 6. "On face." The place of humility, need and blessing.
2. His confession. V. 8. "Servant," "dead-dog," his D. D. degree!
3. His comfort. V. 7. "Fear not." Cp. God's "fear nots;" Gen. 15:1; 21:17; 26:24; 46.3; Num. 21:34; Josh. 8:1; Judges 6:23; Isa. 43:1; Matt. 10:26-28; 14:27; 1 John 4:18; Heb. 8:5, 6, etc.

VII. His Provision. Vs. 7-13.

1. An inheritance. V. 7. Cp. Eph. 1:11; Romans 8:17; Col. 1:12; 1 Peter 1:5.
2. Sonship. V. 11. Cp. John 1:12; Gal. 4:6; Romans 8:14, 15; Psalm 113:5-8. "As one of the King's sons." 1 John 3:1, 2.
3. Provision. "King's Table." Eph. 1:3; Phil. 4:19; Psalm 81:16, etc. What has God provided for His own? All they need for time and eternity. Romans 8:32.
4. Position. "at table;" his lameness not seen. 1 John 4:19, Eph. 1:4; Col. 3:3.
5. Devotion to David; 2 Sam. 19:24. Shared his rejection as well as his glory.

114. GOD'S PROMISE TO DAVID

2 Samuel 7

Golden Text: Luke 24:44

I. David's Desire. Vs. 1-3. A laudable one. To provide a place for the ark, symbol of God's presence. Notice God's dwelling places.

1. In Eden; Gen. 3:8; with man in innocency.
2. In the Tabernacle; Exod. 29:43-45.
3. In the Temple; 1 Kings 8:27; 9:3.
4. In the believer; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; John 14:23; Eph. 2:18-22; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 1:13.
5. In the eternal state; Rev. 21:3. Notice Isa. 57:15. God has two thrones; one in the highest place of heaven, the other in the lowliest heart. May David's desire be ours. Psalm 132:4, 5.

II. God's Message to David. Vs. 4-16. One of the great Messianic prophecies of the Bible. Cp. Gen. 3:15; 12:1-3; Deut. 18:15-18, etc.

1. The heavenly reminder. Vs. 5-11. Good to be reminded of what we were. Cp. Isa. 51:1. Remember (1) the pit; Psalm 40:2; (2) the rock; Isa. 51:1; (3) the darkness; Col. 1:13; (4) the pollution; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; (5) the wrath; John 3:36; (6) death; John 5:24; (7) the slavery; Romans 6:17. etc.
2. The heavenly promise. V. 12. God would build David a house which should last forever. (1) The seed. V. 12. The Son of David and Son of God; Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 1:35. David's Son and David's Lord; Matt. 22:42-45. (2) The service. V. 13. "He shall build an house." Cp. Heb. 3:1-6. (a) The foundation; 1 Cor. 3:11. (b) The superstructure; Eph. 2:19-22; 1:22, 23; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 10:21. (c) The purpose; 2 Cor. 6:16. (d) The consummation; Eph. 5:25-27. (3) The suffering. V. 14. Clark's Trans. "When iniquity is laid upon him, I will chasten," etc. Cp. Isa. 53:5, 6, etc. (4) The sequel. Vs. 16. An everlasting kingdom. Christ will yet reign. Cp. Isa. 2:3, 4; 9:6, 7: Psalm 2:1-12; Isa. 11:1-12, etc.

III. David's Response. Vs. 18-29. David sat in the presence of the Lord. Three results will always follow when the believer gets into the presence of God. David got

1. Right thoughts about himself. Vs. 18, 19. "Who am I?" Cp. Isaiah's confession; Isa. 6, etc. Cp. Eph. 4:8; 1 Cor. 15:9; 1 Tim. 1:15; Gal. 6:3.
2. Right thoughts about God. V. 22. Cp. Isa. 57:15; 40:18-28; Romans 11:33.
3. Right thoughts about God's people. Vs. 23-29. Chosen, redeemed, delivered, brought in and covenanted. Cp. Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Peter 1:3-8; 2:9, etc.

115. DAVID'S GREAT SIN

READ 2 Samuel 11: 1-27.
THEME: A great fall.
TELL THE STORY.

David had followed God from the time he was a lad. He was a man of faith and prayer; he had stood many tests and had won many victories. Yet this was the man who had such a terrible fall that the consequences of it were felt to the end of his life. What a warning to us! (1 Cor. 10: 12). God gives us a true portrait of David, showing his faults and failures as well as his good points and his victories.

WHAT LED UP TO DAVID'S SIN.—

HE TOOK MANY WIVES (2 Sam. 5: 13). God's original plan was that a man should have but one wife and that he should keep only to her (Gen. 2: 24). In taking many wives David disobeyed God and made much trouble for himself.

HE BECAME LAZY. It was the time of the year when kings usually went forth to fight, yet David tarried still in Jerusalem (v. 1). He forsook the path of duty to enjoy comfort at home. Under these conditions it was easy for him to yield to temptation. We must rest if we are to maintain our health; we need recreation also, but let us see to it that we are not waiting behind when we should be at the place of duty. We need to guard our leisure hours.

HE BECAME CARELESS and possibly vain for he had had a succession of victories for many years. He stood for God in adversity but not in prosperity. There are special dangers to which the successful are subjected.

HOW HE FELL INTO SIN.—

HE LOOKED. Like Eve, he fell in the first place through a look (Gen. 3: 6). Lot first *looked* at wicked Sodom then entered it. Lot's wife *looked* back and became a pillar of salt (Gen. 19: 26). How we need to guard eye-gate. Beware of what your eyes gaze upon and be careful of the books you read (Ps. 119: 37).

HE COVETED Uriah's wife. Coveteousness is desiring or eagerly longing for that which belongs to another or that which God has rightly withheld from us. Achan saw, he *coveted*, he took (Josh. 7: 21). Paul

warned the Christians against coveteousness (Eph. 5: 3). If only David had continued to pray in the words of Ps. 119: 36, how much sorrow and remorse for sin he could have been saved.

HE TOOK Bathsheba. It is but a short step between coveting and taking, and so he allowed passion to have its way unchecked and committed a terrible sin.

HOW HIS SIN GREW.—

HE TRIED TO HIDE HIS SIN. Sin loves the dark (John 3: 19, 20) but, "he that covereth his sins shall not prosper" (Prov. 28: 13). Achan tried to hide his sin but God had said, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numb. 32: 23). Sin should be confessed quickly to God (1 John 1: 9). If, however, we have wronged another, we must confess to that one also and do all in our power to right the wrong. This may mean restitution and a humbling of our pride. To try to cover one sin, David had to commit another and almost worse sin.

HE BECAME A MURDERER for he was responsible for the murder of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband. How quickly sin grows and how far David must have wandered already in heart from God.

HE MARRIED BATHSHEBA hoping his sin would never be found out. He thought in doing this he was putting everything right, but his action displeased the Lord (v. 27). His sin could not be put away till he had confessed it with a broken heart and asked God for forgiveness.

HE BECAME SELF-RIGHTEOUS. His conscience must have been asleep for when the prophet told him the parable of the wealthy man who took the poor man's one ewe lamb (meaning David himself), David, not recognising that Nathan was speaking of him, said that the wealthy man must die, and the lamb be restored fourfold (ch. 12). How easy it is to judge another, to see the mote in his eye and be unconscious of the beam in our own (Matt. 7: 3).

God has promised, "Sin shall not have domination over you" (Rom. 6: 14) but we must walk humbly with God, watching and praying that we enter not into temptation, and trusting His power to keep us from sin.

MEMORY VERSE.—Psalm 119: 37—"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity."

116. DAVID'S DEEP REPENTANCE

READ 2 Samuel 12: 1-23; Psalm 51.

THEME: God's forgiveness. TELL THE STORY.

In the previous lesson we saw the greatness of David's sin, in this one we see the depths of his repentance.

NATHAN THE PROPHET.—

HE WAS SENT BY GOD TO DAVID (v. 1). God would not and could not allow His servant to go on with hidden and unconfessed sin in his life. David thought that no one but himself and Bathsheba knew of his sin but God had told Nathan. We can thank God for sending to us His servants, to warn us, to deal plainly and sometimes drastically with us. Let us not resent their plain speaking but take it as from God (Prov. 27: 6).

HE WAS FEARLESS IN REBUKING SIN, though it was the king he was addressing. We see the same fearlessness in John the Baptist when he rebuked Herod for his sinful life. Isaiah and Ezekiel were both told by God to show God's people their sins (Is. 58: 1; Ezek. 2: 7). It is only fools that make a mock at sin (Prov. 14: 9).

HE TOLD DAVID, "THOU ART THE MAN" (v. 7). When God deals with sin it is with the individual who has committed the sin. He speaks to us of our own sins and not that of others.

HE REMINDED DAVID THAT IT WAS GOD WHO HAD MADE HIM KING and done so much for him. He asked him why he had despised the commandment of the Lord (vv. 7-9) (breaking the sixth, seventh and tenth commandments). This was how he had repayed God's great love and goodness to him (Rom. 2: 4).

DAVID'S REPENTANCE.—

HIS CONFESSION "I have sinned against the Lord" (v. 13). God's arrow of conviction had awakened his sleeping conscience and pierced his heart. Notice he said, "I have sinned *against the Lord*" (not only against Uriah). In Psalm 51 (which should be read carefully and prayerfully) we get a glimpse into the heart of David at this time (Ps. 51: 4). When we see sin as against a holy God then we know what a terrible thing sin is.

HIS SORROW FOR SIN. In this chapter (v. 13) we have only six words expressing David's repentance but to see how true and deep his repentance was we should read Psalm 51. He says, "my transgressions" (v. 1); "mine iniquity" (v. 2); "my sin" (v. 3). He stresses the personal note, "my" and "mine" and had a broken heart because of his sin. A broken heart was evidence of his true repentance (v. 17).

HIS PRAYER FOR CLEANSING (Ps. 51). "Have mercy . . . blot out my transgressions (v. 1); wash me, cleanse me (v 2); purge me, wash me (v. 7); blot out mine iniquities (v. 9); deliver me from bloodguiltiness" (v. 14). The child of God can never be happy again until the sin he has committed has been cleansed and forgiven.

HIS PRAYER FOR RESTORATION (v. 12). He does not pray for salvation to be restored, for once having received that he could never lose it (John 10: 28; John 5: 24). But he does ask that the *joy* of salvation might be restored to him (Ps. 51: 12). This he had lost for the time being, because of his sin. If there is some known sin unconfessed and therefore unforgiven, there can be no joy and no fellowship with God. "Make me to hear joy and gladness" (v. 8).

HIS PRAYER ANSWERED. The moment David comes in true repentance to God Nathan said to him, "The Lord . . . hath put away thy sin" (2 Sam. 12:13). God not only forgives, but He *puts away* the sin, separating the sin from the sinner. This He is able to do because of Christ's sacrifice for sin on Calvary. How wonderful is the grace of God (1 John 1: 9). God's forgiveness was, however, qualified. The words of forgiveness were followed by the word, "howbeit" (v. 14).

THE BITTER FRUIT OF SIN.—

DAVID HAD TO BEAR THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS SIN. Because He is just and holy, God could not altogether take away the consequences of sin. There is a divine, moral law, as well as a natural law that, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6: 7). To the end of his life David had to reap the bitter fruit of what he had sown. It is no light thing for the child of God to fall into sin (Jer. 2: 19). The following are some of the results of David's sin:—

IT BROUGHT SHAME UPON GOD'S HOLY NAME. David's sin caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme (v. 14). Here was a man of God who had often publicly testified of God's power, yet it was he who committed this terrible sin. Many of those who do not belong to God are hindered from coming to Christ because of the sins and inconsistencies they see in those who profess and call themselves by His Name.

IT BROUGHT SORROW INTO DAVID'S HOME, for the child died (v. 19). He had broken up the peace of Uriah's home, and peace left his own. He had defiled Bathsheba and later his own daughter was defiled. He had murdered Uriah, and his own son, Absalom murdered Amnon his brother.

SIN LEAVES A MARK UPON OUR LIVES. God has said, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8: 12), but David himself could not forget what he had done. "My sin is ever before me," he said (Ps. 51: 3). A father wished to bring home this fact to his little lad. Telling him to drive some nails into a piece of wood, he then said, "Now pull them out." The lad did so. "Now," said the father, "pull out the holes." This, of course, he could not do, for the nails had left marks which could not be removed. So it is with sin. It leaves a mark upon our lives. One short time of sin and David suffered for it for the remainder of his life.

MEMORY VERSE.—Galatians 6: 7—"Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

DAVID'S SIN AND RESTORATION

2 Samuel 11, 12; Psalms 51:1-17; 32:1-5

Golden Text: 1 John 1:9

I. The Crime. C. 11:1-27.

1. Carelessness. Vs. 1, 2. Satan still has work for idle hands to do.
2. Covetousness. Vs. 3-5. Exod. 20:7; Hab. 2:9; Mark 7:22; Luke 12:15; Heb. 13:5.
3. Callousness. Vs. 6-27. One sin leads to another in a vain attempt to cover it. How different is God's word from men's biographies where all the good deeds and none of the bad are recorded!

II. The Concealment. Psalm 32:3.

1. David was silent to (1) self, (2) man, (3) God.
2. Sin always tries to conceal itself. Ill. Adam, Gen. 3; Achan, Josh. 7. It loves the dark: John 3:19-21. Cp. Prov. 28:13.
3. Motives for David's silence; (1) Pride; (2) Shame; (3) Fear.

III. The Chastisement; Psalm 32:3, 4. Note.

1. The nature of it. (1) Physical "bones." (2) Mental "groaning." The conscience lashing him. (3) Spiritual "dried up." A dried up testimony, service, worship. Truly a valley of dry bones. Ezek. 37.
2. The source of it. Divine. "Thy hand." Cp. Heb. 12:5-11.
3. The character of it. Incessant. "By day in his thoughts, by night in his dreams."
4. The purpose. To bring repentance, confession, self-judgment and cleansing.

IV. The Conviction; 2 Sam. 12. Conviction means "to satisfy by evidence." God produced. within the soul of David, this conviction which deepened until it became intolerable.

V. The Confession. V. 13. Psalm 51:1-13.

1. The parable. Vs. 1 6.
2. The application. Vs. 7-12. Nathan's boldness. Cp. Isa. 58:1; Ezek. 2:6. Nathan left David in no doubt as to his fearful sin.

Psalm 32:5. Study this carefully. If his sin was great, then his confession was equally great. Note his merciless self-judgment; Psalms 32:5; 51:1-4.

2. His desire for cleansing and forgiveness; Psalm 51:7.
3. His appeal for restoration; Psalm 51:8, 12.
4. His plea for further use to God's glory; Psalm 51:13.

VI. The Cleansing; 2 Sam. 12:13. Cp. 1 John 1: 9; 2:1, ; Heb. 7:25. No wonder David could sing of the joy of this forgiveness.

VII. The Consequences. Vs. 14-23.

1. On the world. V. 14. How true is this even in the present day. Every infidel uses David as an argument against Christianity.
2. On his family. Vs. 15-23. David lost four sons after this.
3. On himself. He sowed seed that brought a bitter harvest; Gal. 6:7, 8. This is a divine principle that has never been abrogated.

117. DAVID AND ABSALOM

READ 2 Samuel 14: 25; Ch. 15: 1-6, 13-23; Ch. 18: 2, 3.

THEME: Loyalty to our King. TELL THE STORY.

Absalom was the third son of David. Because of his beauty, he was praised by all Israel (14: 25). Then pride came in and led to his undoing. He rebelled against his father and led an army against him. His army was defeated and he himself was killed. In this lesson we are going to take David the true king as an illustration of Christ, the King of Kings, and Absalom, the false king, as an illustration of Satan.

ABSALOM.—

PRIDE LED TO HIS DOWNFALL. As a result of the praise of men he became proud and determined to take his father's throne. How like Satan whose heart, when he was in heaven, was lifted up because of his beauty (Ezek. 28: 17). He said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the Most High" (Is. 14: 13, 14). Let us beware of pride, which is a hateful sin in God's sight (Prov. 8: 13). "Pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16: 18) as it did with both Satan and Absalom.

HE LIED AND TALKED AGAINST DAVID THE TRUE KING. He sought to turn the hearts of the people from their allegiance to David in order to induce them to follow himself (vv. 2-5). Absalom's servants believed his lies, they followed this false teacher and were defeated with him. This is the line Satan takes, slandering God, persuading men that he is unjust or else that He is so merciful that He will not punish sin. He deceives the whole world (Rev. 12: 9). He blinds the minds of those who do not believe lest the light of the Gospel should shine unto them (2 Cor. 4: 4). He is a liar and the father of it (John 8: 44).

DAVID THE TRUE KING.—

HE WAS AT FIRST REJECTED by the people who did not wish him to reign over them, for their hearts went after Absalom (15: 13). They even cursed David and threw stones at him and his followers (16: 13).

DAVID WAS VICTORIOUS AT THE END. How like our Lord Who was despised and rejected of men and finally was crucified. But He *must* reign. "He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11: 15).

"Our Lord is now rejected and by the world disowned,
By the many still neglected and by the few enthroned
But soon He'll come in glory, the hour is drawing nigh
For the crowning day is coming, by and by."

Are you among the many who reject Him, or one of the few who has enthroned Him?

DAVID'S SERVANTS (15: 15).—

THEY WERE READY TO FOLLOW HIM ANYWHERE and to follow Him in His rejection. It is not a hard thing to follow one who is praised by all, but a different matter to take his side when the majority are against him. There are those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever

He goeth" (Rev. 14: 4). These are the kind of followers for whom Christ is looking; those who will follow Him anywhere He may lead, over rough places and smooth, up the mountains or down in the valleys. They owned Him as King, even though the majority had rejected Him. Is Christ *your* Lord and King?

THEY WERE READY TO DO WHATSOEVER HE APPOINTED (15: 15). If only we would take as our motto the words of this verse, what victorious lives we should live. "Whatsoever" means, "anything at all." David's servants were willing for their king to appoint their duties for them and they were prepared to obey. The mother of our Lord gave wise advice to the servants, "Whatsoever He (Jesus) saith unto you, do it" (John 2: 5).

THEY WERE READY TO SUFFER WITH HIM, to be despised and persecuted (16: 13). We, too, should be ready to suffer with Christ (John 15: 20). Yet sometimes we are afraid or ashamed to take Christ's side openly before others who despise Him. We shrink from being called "pi" or some such name. But these men who followed David were rewarded. We cannot imagine his forgetting those who had stood by him in his rejection, and neither will our Lord forget those who have been true to Him and have suffered for Him (2 Tim. 2: 12).

THEY KNEW HE WAS WORTH TEN THOUSAND OF THEM (18: 3), so greatly did they love him and exalt him. To them no-one could compare with David. Is our Blessed Lord to us, the Chiefest among ten thousand (Song of Sol. 5: 10). Do we see Him as the bright and morning Star (Rev. 22: 16), as the Lily of the Valleys (Song of Sol. 2: 1)?

THE KING'S WORDS.—

I WILL SURELY GO WITH YOU MYSELF (18: 2). Our Lord has promised to be with us (Heb. 13: 5; Matt. 28: 20). We can rely upon His promise.

WHY ARE YOU THE LAST TO BRING BACK THE KING? (19: 2). In contrast with the others of whom we have spoken, there were some who were shaky in their allegiance to the king, and it was to them David spoke these words. When they heard this, their hearts were touched and they sent word to the king to return (19: 14). How does your heart respond when you hear the words of the Lord Jesus, "Surely I come quickly?" Is there a shade of fear or a wish that He might delay His return because you know you are not quite ready to meet Him? Let us reply, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22: 20).

ITTAI THE FAITHFUL FOLLOWER (15: 19-22).—

HE WAS READY TO FORSAKE ALL FOR DAVID though he had known him only for a short time. Many of the Christians in heathen lands have known the Lord but a short time, yet they put us to shame in their willingness to forsake all for Him (Luke 5: 11).

HE WAS TESTED BY DAVID. David did not wish to have half-hearted men so he first put Ittai to a severe test (vv. 19, 20). So it is with our Lord (Matt. 8: 20-22).

HE WAS WILLING TO SUFFER, WILLING TO LIVE OR DIE FOR DAVID. This reminds us of Paul's devotion to Christ. If God saw fit to spare him to serve Him a little longer on earth, Paul was willing; if he were called upon to lay down his life for Christ, then he was willing for that also (2 Tim. 4: 6).

HE WAS GIVEN A HARD PLACE IN THE BATTLE (18: 2). It is an honour to be entrusted by God with a difficult task or to be put in the front line.

MEMORY VERSE.—2 Samuel 15: 15—"Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint."

David and Absalom.

II Samuel 15.1-23, 30.

1. **Absalom the false king picture of Satan:**
   (a) He was beautiful but proud, v. 1; ch. 18.18. Pride caused Satan to fall from heaven. Is. 14.12-14. Ezek. 28.17. Let us watch against pride. Prov. 16.18.
   (b) He lied and talked against David the true king, V. 2-3. Satan deceived the whole world, Rev. 12.9.
2. **Absalom's servants.** They believed his lies, they followed a false leader and then were lost with him. The god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of those who do not believe in Christ. II Cor. 4.3, 4.
3. **David the true king.** He was rejected by the people 16.13, but he had victory at the end. Christ is despised and rejected now but He must reign. Rev. 11.15.
4. **David's servants** were ready to follow him anywhere, v. 15; and to suffer shame with him, 16.13.
5. **Ittai the Gittite,** v. 19-22.
   (a) He had only known David for a short time but he was ready to forsake everything for him. Luke 5.11.
   (b) David tried him first (v. 20) because he did not want half-hearted men. Matt. 8.20.
   (c) He was willing to suffer, willing to live or die for David. Rev. 14.4. Do we follow Jesus like that?
   (d) Then David showed he trusted him by giving him a hard place in the battle. II Sam. 18.2.

A Great Fight.

II Samuel, chapters 18 and 19.

1. **Two Leaders:**
   David the true king picture of Jesus the true King. Absalom the false king picture of Satan the false king.
2. **Two Camps—two sides:**
   All who love David, picture of all who love Jesus.
   All who follow Absalom, picture of all who follow Satan.
3. **The Great Fight:**
   In the wood of Ephraim, v. 6. By and by on this earth. David's side win the fight. Jesus must win. Absalom loses the fight, v. 7, 8. Satan must lose the fight. A great pit, 18.17. The bottomless pit. Rev. 20.3.
4. **David's servants—picture of Christ's servants:**
   (a) They said "You are worth ten thousand of us," 18.3. Jesus is the chiefest among ten thousand. S. of S. 5.10.
   (b) They fight for David, they help to get back the kingdom for him. We say to the Lord, "Thy kingdom come." Luke 11.2.
   (c) They run with news of victory, not for earthly reward but because they loved their king, v. 19. We run with news of Christ's victory, not for earthly reward, but because we love our King, Jesus Christ.
5. **The king's word:**
   (a) I will go with you, v. 2. Jesus said, "I am with you alway." Matt. 28.
   (b) David said, "Why are ye the last to bring back the king?" 19.11. Then the people answered, "Come back," v. 14. Jesus says, "Surely I come quickly," Rev. 22.20. Let us answer, "Even so come Lord Jesus." Rev. 22.20.

Verse to learn, Revelation 22.20.

118. ABSALOM'S REBELLION AND DEATH

2 Samuel 14-19:15

Golden Text: Luke 14:11

I. The Strategem of Joab. C. 14:1-33.

1. The circumstances leading to it; 13:23-39. Truly a black chapter.
2. The woman's plea. Vs. 1-20 on Absalom's behalf. Note particularly vs. 14—A fine gospel message. Note (1) A universal realization "die." Cp. Heb. 9:27. (2) A humble confession "water." Water is the symbol of utter weakness, instability—truly a graphic picture of humanity. (3) A true statement "respect;" Romans 2:1 ; 3:10-19. (4) A devised plan "devise." Cp. The great plan of salvation. God thought it out, the Son of God wrought it upon the Cross and the Holy Spirit applies its benefits to the believer. (5) A God honoring result. "Be not expelled." God not willing for any to perish but that all should come to Him. See Ezek. 18:21-23; 33:11. Cp. Matt. 25:46. "These shall go away," i. e., expelled.
3. The result. Vs. 21-28. Note v. 28. Is this true of us? Cp. S. S. 2:14; Heb. 4:14, 15; 10: 19-22. Doubtless in this period of two years of estrangement the seeds of his rebellion ripened. David had not been treated thus by God. See Eph. 4:32.

II. Absalom's Rebellion; 15:1-17:29.

1. The treachery; vs. 1-6. The snake in the grass. Note his vanity; 2 Sam. 14:25, 18:18. Cp. Psalm 41:9 and Matt. 26:14, 15.
2. The plan. Vs. 7-12.
3. The flight. Vs. 13-16:14. (1) The escape from Jerusalem. Vs. 13-18. (2) Ittai the loyal. Vs. 19-23. (3) David's resignation to the will of God. Vs. 24-30. Cp. Psalm 3. (a) Trial. Vs. 1, 2. (b) Trust. Vs. 3-7. (c) Triumph. V. 8. This did not prevent him from planning. (4) The plan. 15:31-37. (5) Ziba's deception; 16: 1-4. (6) The cursing of Shimei. Vs. 5-14. Note David's reply. Vs. 11-12.
4. The defeated counsel; 17:1-14. Cp. 1 Cor. 1: 27, 28.
5. The news to David; 17:15-22.
6. The suicide of Ahithophel. Vs. 23. 24.
7. David's loyal band. Vs. 27-29.

III. Absalom's Defeat and Death; 18:1-33.

1. The battle. Vs. 1-8.
2. The death of Absalom. Vs. 9-18.
3. The tidings. Vs. 19-32. Note v. 22. The man without a message. Cp. Romans 10:15.
4. The Lamentation. Vs. 33-19:4. See David's three laments—for Jonathan, Abner and Absalom. There is much of spiritual meaning in these laments.
5. The return of the King; 19:5-15. (1) Joab's expostulation. V. 7. (2) The return of David. Vs. 8-15. Note v. 10. Cp. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 22:20.

119. DAVID NUMBERS THE PEOPLE

READ 2 Samuel 24: 1-25.
THEME: David's failure. TELL THE STORY.

God did not punish Israel for one man's sin (David's) only. Israel, too, had sinned and so it looks as though this punishment which came upon them was for David's present sin in numbering the people, but also on account of the previous sin of the people (v. 1).

In verse 1 we are told that *God* moved David against the people to number them and, in the account in 1 Chron. 21: 1 of the same incident we read that *Satan* provoked David to number Israel. How can these two statements be reconciled? We know that God and Satan can both operate in one and the same circumstance. God *tests* us by allowing Satan to *tempt* us. It was Satan who tempted the Lord Jesus but this was permitted by God (Matt. 4: 1). Temptation resisted is one of the means by which our character is strengthened and our spiritual life deepened.

DAVID'S SIN IN NUMBERING THE PEOPLE.—

THE NUMBERING WAS NOT DONE ACCORDING TO GOD'S ORDER. There was no command against taking a census; on the contrary Moses was told by God to do it (Numb. 1: 2, 3). But the numbering in this chapter was not done through the priests and Levites but by the military officers, Joab and his captains.

THERE WAS NO ATONEMENT as God had commanded in connection with the numbering of Israel (Ex. 30: 12). All had to pay a shekel as a ransom for his soul. A ransom is the price paid for redemption from captivity or punishment. Everyone had to pay the same amount. God has put one price for souls, the precious blood of Christ. "He gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2: 6).

PRIDE MOVED DAVID. He wanted to think of himself as a great military power, to glory in the greatness of his kingdom instead of walking in humble dependence upon God. We see this same sin in Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32: 27-31), in Uzzah (2 Chron. 26: 15), and in Nebuchadnezzar. Let us ask the Lord to make us meek and lowly in heart.

DAVID'S CONFESSION OF HIS SIN (v. 10).—

IT WAS A PERSONAL, FRANK AND FULL CONFESSION. He did not make light of the sin or try to shift the blame on others (1 Chron. 21: 17).

HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE SINFULNESS OF HIS SIN. He was truly sorry for the sin itself and not merely for the consequences of that sin. His was true repentance.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF DAVID'S SIN.—

HE HAD TO REAP WHAT HE HAD SOWED. Although God forgives and cleanses those who truly repent, He cannot remove entirely the consequences of sin (Gal. 6: 7).

HE LEFT THE CHOICE OF HIS PUNISHMENT TO GOD (v. 14). He knew that it was a safe thing to be in the hands of God rather than in those of man and that God chastens only in love (Heb. 12; 6; Rev. 3: 19).

DAVID'S REPENTANCE AND GOD'S REPENTANCE (v. 16). There is a sense in which God cannot repent (Numb. 23: 19). Verse 16 of this chapter does not mean that God acknowledged that He had made a mistake in sending the pestilence; but it does mean that God would not have repented if David had not. When Moses on behalf of the people humbled himself before God, when Hezekiah . . . besought the Lord, when the people of Ninevah turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which He thought to do to His people (Ex. 32: 14; Jer. 26: 19; Jonah 3: 10).

COSTLY GIVING TO GOD.—

DAVID WOULD NOT GIVE TO GOD THAT WHICH COST HIM NOTHING (v. 24). To give only that for which we have no use ourselves, or that which is left over after we have acquired everything we need for ourselves is not giving at all. Yet how often we give to God merely the "leftovers."

IF OUR GIVING COSTS US NOTHING IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO GOD. Giving applies to money, our service to God, and our time. Work done for Him without preparation, the "leftovers" of time used in His service — these cost us nothing and therefore mean nothing to God.

This site, the place where the burnt offerings were sacrificed was afterwards the site of Solomon's temple.

MEMORY VERSE.—2 Samuel 24: 24—"Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing."

David's sin in numbering the people.

II Samuel 24.1-14.

God did not punish Israel for one man's sin only. God was angry with Israel because they, too. had sinned, v. 1. It was Satan who tempted David to number Israel. I Chron. 21.1.

1. **Perhaps David became proud** because of his mighty men. Joab tried to stop him from numbering the people, I Chron. 21.3, but he went on. After a time of victory let us watch against temptation and pride. Matt. 26.41.
2. **Satan tempted David to trust the number of his soldiers instead of trusting God.** God helped Uzziah till he was strong then he fell. II Chron. 26.15. Peter trusted himself, then he denied his Lord. Matt. 26.74, 75. David learned he could do nothing without God's power. John 15.5 Zech. 4.6.
3. **David's confession to God, v. 10.**
   (a) "My sin is great." He made no excuses.
   (b) "I have done foolishly." He now saw his mistake.
   (c) "Take away **the sin** of Thy servant." Notice that he asked God to take away the sin not the punishment of that sin. This was true repentance.
4. **Yielding to Satan and doing our own will** always brings trouble. We must reap what we sow. Gal. 6.7.
5. **David wanted God to choose the punishment** because he knew that God chastened him in love; His mercies are great, v. 14; Rev. 3.19.
6. **David would not give to the Lord that which cost him nothing.** What do your gifts to God cost you? v. 24.

Verse to learn, Revelation 3.19.

120. DAVID'S PREPARATION FOR THE TEMPLE

READ 1 Chron. 29: 1-10, 14; 1 Kings 8: 18, 19.

THEME: Helpers together.

MEMORY VERSE.—1 Chron. 29: 14—"All things come of Thee and of Thine own have we given Thee."

David longed to build a House for God. But he had been engaged for many years in warfare which, although necessary, for by it God had delivered His people yet it debarred him from doing that which he longed to do. God would not allow him to build the temple, though he did much in its preparation. Solomon, the man of peace, was to build it. There were many who helped to build the temple — David gathered the materials, Solomon and the princes did the great work of building, and strangers and foreigners in all parts of Israel and Judah took their share.

GOD APPRECIATES THE DESIRE TO DO A SPECIAL WORK FOR HIM.—

"THOU DIDST WELL THAT IT WAS IN THINE HEART" (1 Kings 8: 18), He said to David. There are some who longed to do some special work for God either at Home or in the Mission Field, but they have responsibilities at home which cannot be left to another. Others may have to continue their work in the office, the shop, the factory or in the home, and they feel they have been put into "a back seat." But this can be a blessed place if *the Lord* has put us there.

HOW DAVID REACTED TO GOD'S DECISION.—

HE SAT BEFORE THE LORD (2 Sam. 7: 18). What a blow it must have been to him to learn that he was not to be allowed to build the temple. Yet he took the *dis*appointment as *God's* appointment. He had learned to take everything to God in prayer and there to find comfort.

HE REMEMBERED ALL THAT GOD HAD GIVEN HIM instead of thinking of what God had denied him. In other words he counted his blessings (vv. 18-21).

HE MADE PREPARATIONS FOR ANOTHER TO CARRY ON THE WORK. Most of us like to begin something of our own and carry the project through without other people's help. David, however, did his part by throwing himself heartily into the building of the temple. He gathered the materials though another was to build the famous structure (1 Chron. 22: 14). We may not be called to do a great work but we can *add something* to the work of another.

HE PREPARED WITH ALL HIS MIGHT (v. 2). God has no time in His service for half-hearted people (Eccles. 9: 10).

HE PLANNED THE BUILDING ACCORDING TO GOD'S DIRECTIONS. It was not to be built from plans made by men. God gave to David instructions about the details of the work of the pattern of the porch . . . of the houses . . . of the treasuries (ch. 28: 11). God has a pattern for each life. May we follow the pattern. If we wait upon Him, he will teach us the details of our work so that we may do it according to the pattern.

HE UNDERSTOOD THE DETAILS OF THE PLAN. He was able to say, "*the Lord* made me to understand." David not only prayed "teach me," but, "make me to understand" (Ps. 119: 27). Let us look to God for directions for the day, so that we may *understand* His plans for us.

GIVING TO GOD (1 Chronicles 29).—

DAVID GAVE GIFTS TO THE HOUSE OF GOD (v. 3). The motive of his giving was love to God and love delights to give. David gave generously "over and above" (v. 3). He also inspired others to give and to work (v. 5).

THE PEOPLE GAVE PRECIOUS AND COSTLY THINGS (v. 8). God is worthy of the best we have. Like Mary, may we bring that which is precious and costly to our beloved Lord (John 12: 3). That which is costly to us is precious to Him.

THEY GAVE THEIR SERVICE (v. 5). God wants not only our monetary gifts but our service also. There is work which each of us can do for God whether our talents and opportunities be many or few. If we cannot teach or preach, we may "serve tables" — do the lowly or menial tasks in order to set others free for their particular service. If we have no special talents, we can be "helps" (1 Cor. 12: 28).

THEY GAVE WILLINGLY AND WITH A PERFECT HEART (vv. 6, 9). They gave, not from a sense of duty, or for a love of display but because they delighted to give. No pressure was brought to bear upon them.

THEY REJOICED, they thanked the Lord and praised His Name (vv. 9, 13). David thanked the Lord for making it possible for them to give. He realised that he was only giving back to God what was already His own. God loves a cheerful giver.

Giving to God.

I Chronicles 29.1-9; II Samuel 7.

1. **God was pleased with David** because he wanted to build a temple for Him. He said. "Thou didst well that it was in thine heart." I Kings 8.18. When we cannot do all we should like to do for God, yet He is pleased because we **want** to do it.

2. **But God chooses each man's work.** David was not cross because God chose Solomon to build the temple instead of him; he prepared everything and brought gifts. If God chooses another man to do the work you would like to do, do not be jealous but do all you can to help in that work.

3. **Gifts to God.** I Chron. 29.

   (a) David gave gifts for the temple to show his love, v. 3. He said This house is not for man but for God, v. 1.
   (b) The people gave precious things, v. 8; II Sam. 24.24.
   (c) They gave not only their gifts but their work, v. 5. Who is willing to consecrate his service? v. 5.
   (d) The people gave willingly and with a perfect heart, v. 6, 9. God loves a cheerful giver. II Cor. 9.7.

4. **They rejoiced:**

   (a) Giving to God willingly, brings joy. They thanked the Lord and praised His Name, v. 13.
   (b) They thanked God for letting them give because they only gave back to God what belonged to Him already, v. 14, 16.

121. DAVID'S LAST WORDS AND SOLOMON'S CHOICE

READ I Kings 2: 2-4; Ch. 3: 3-13; I Chron. 28: 9, 10, 20.

THEME: Wise advice.

TELL THE STORY.

DAVID ENDING LIFE'S PILGRIMAGE.—

DAVID'S END DREW NEAR. He had had a wonderful life which was now drawing to a close (v. 1). When David wrote the shepherd Psalm he looked ahead to this time which had now come and he knew he had nothing to fear (Ps. 23: 4). When that day comes for us we, too, shall have nothing to fear if our faith is fixed in Christ our Saviour (John 5: 24).

HE MUST HAND OVER THE THRONE TO SOLOMON. Workers for God come to the end of their life's work and their places must be filled by young men and women. Is God calling *you* to fill a vacant place in the ranks of God's army? "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" (1 Chron 29: 5).

DAVID'S WISE ADVICE TO SOLOMON.—

HE WAS WELL ABLE TO ADVISE HIS SON because of the experiences through which he had passed. We can learn much from God's servants who know the road yet untrodden by us. He would have Solomon avoid the mistakes he himself had made, and he would point him to the source of all strength.

BE STRONG AND SHOW THYSELF A MAN (1 Kings 2: 2). We can only do this by relying on *God's* strength (2 Tim. 2: 1; Eph. 6: 10). Solomon had a great work ahead of him and must show himself a man by shouldering his responsibilities. No longer must he lean upon others or cling to childish things (1 Cor. 13: 11). This applies also to our spiritual life. God wants us to grow up, not always remaining a babe in spiritual growth and experience (Eph. 4: 13, 14).

WALK IN GOD'S WAYS, keep His statutes and commandments (v. 3). Solomon had only the law of Moses; we have the whole Bible which gives us clear directions as to the way we should go. We cannot always mount up with wings as eagles. Life for most of us is a steady walk, but let it be a walk with God (Gen. 5: 22); a walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing (to all the meeting of His wishes). (Col. 1: 10).

THAT THOU MAYEST PROSPER IN ALL THAT THOU DOEST (v. 3). Here is the secret of true prosperity though it may not always be in material things (Gen. 39: 3; Ps. 1: 3).

SERVE THE LORD WITH A PERFECT HEART (1 Chron 28: 9). He was to serve God with an *undivided* heart, that is to say, with no divided loyalties. There was to be no compulsion in his service for God, he was to serve Him with a willing mind. God will have no conscripts in His army, all must be volunteers.

TAKE HEED NOW (1 Chron. 28: 10). Watch yourself because the Lord has chosen you for a great work. These words "Take heed," were often on the lips of our Lord (Luke 17: 3). We have an enemy who will do his utmost to deflect us from the path God has marked out for us.

THE LORD WILL BE WITH THEE, HE WILL NOT FAIL THEE . . . until thou hast finished all the work (1 Chron. 28: 20). This promise came true in Solomon's life (1 Kings 8: 56). Are you starting out in some new venture for God? Then claim these words for yourself and also (Phil. 1: 6).

SOLOMON'S CHOICE (1 Kings 3).—

HE CHOSE THE RIGHT THING. He might have asked for anything but he chose to ask for an understanding heart in order that he might judge God's people aright (v. 9). What would *you* have chosen if you had been asked the same question as Solomon? We are constantly being called upon to make a choice in one thing or another. May we make a wise and right choice as Solomon did.

HIS CHOICE PLEASED THE LORD because he did not ask for a long life, or for riches or for power over his enemies (v. 11). Instead he asked for that which would make him a help and a blessing to others.

GOD GRANTED HIM HIS DESIRE. Not only did he give him that for which he asked but He gave him much more (v. 13). God is like that. He gives us "exceeding abundantly *above* all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3: 20). God has promised that if we "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us" (Matt. 6: 33). If we honour God He will honour us (1 Sam. 2: 30).

MEMORY VERSE.—James 1: 5—"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

DAVID'S SONG AND LAST WORDS

2 Samuel 22-24

Golden Text: 2 Samuel 22:31

I. David's Song. C. 22.

1. His testimony; 1-4. Note the circumstances under which it came to be written. V. 1. Song is the spontaneous outburst of a soul under the sense of Divine deliverance. What was true of David physically is true of each believer spiritually. Notice his great conception of God as seen in the many titles he gives to Him, and the personal pronouns "I, me, my." Cp. Gal. 2:20; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Cor. 15:10.
2. His fearful condition. Vs. 5-7. How descriptive of the sinner. (1) Compassed by death. V. 5. The wages of sin; Romans 6:23; Heb. 9:27, etc. (2) Cords of hell. Bound by sin; Prov. 5:22. (3) In distress. V. 7. Cp. Psalm 107:5, 6, 13, 17, 19, 28.
3. His wonderful deliverance. Vs. 8-28. (1) Sought. V. 17; Luke 19:10. (2) Saved. V. 17; Titus 3:4-5. (3) Delivered. V. 18; Col. 1:13. (4) Placed. V. 20; Eph. 2:6.
4. His joyful testimony. Vs. 29-51. Study this carefully.
5. Its Messianic character; see Psalm 18:2, 49. Cp. Heb. 2:13; Romans 15:9; 1 Peter 1:11.

II. His Last Words; 23:1-5.

1. Divine inspiration. V. 2. Cp. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21.
2. David's aspiration. Vs. 3-5. The Messiah was all his desire. Is He ours? Cp. Phil. 1:20-21; Psalm 37:4.

III. The Mighty Men; 23:8-39.

1. The first three; vs. 8-17. (1) Adino; he knew how to defend. V. 8. Cp. Phil. 1:17. (2) Eleazer—he knew how to defy. Vs. 9, 10. Eph. 6:11. (3) Shammah—he knew how to guard. Vs. 11, 12. Cp. 2 Tim. 1:14. (4) Their loyalty and bravery illustrated. Vs. 13-17. Are we prepared to do, defy and defend for our Lord, Master and King? Cp. Acts 20:24. These men counted not their lives dear unto them that they might bring to David that which should satisfy his desire. Surely this should be the ambition of every "good soldier of Jesus Christ." He wants our appreciation, worship, loyal devotion and sacrifical service. Are we giving it to Him?
2. The second two. Vs. 18-23. These men all shared the rejection of David before they participated in his glory. David's "well done" was enough compensation. Cp. Matt. 25:23. Luke 24:26; 2 Tim. 2:11-13.
3. The rest. Vs. 24-39.

IV. The Numbering of the People. C. 24. Cp. 1 Chron 21.

1. The instigator. Satan; 1 Chron 21:1. The Adversary. Cp. Job 1, 2; Zach. 3:1, 2.
2. The error. Cp. Exod. 30:12-16. Again the word of God is neglected and God not given His place. Atonement was thus ignored.
3. The result. Vs. 10-25. (1) God's judgment and choice of chastisement. Vs. 11-13. (2) David's confession and decision. Vs. 10, 14. (3) The pestilence; Vs. 15-16. (4) The plague stayed. V. 16. (5) The Altar erected. Vs. 18-25. This threshing floor was afterwards the site of Solomon's temple. Cp. 1 Chron. 21:28-22:5.

122. THE SECRET OF TRUE BLESSEDNESS

Psalm 1

Golden Text: Psalm 1:1

I. The Blessednesses of the Righteous. Vs. 1-3.

1. His blessednesses described. "O, the blessednesses!" The word is in the plural for the Christians' blessings are multitudinous. Cp. Eph. 1:3. Note the "blessed man" in the Psalms. (1) Forgiven; Psalm 32:1. Cp. Acts 13:38; 1 John 1:7; Luke 5:20. (2) Satisfied; Psalm 65:4; 36:8; 107:9; John 6:67-69. (3) Disciplined; Psalm 94:12; Heb. 12:5. (4) Fearing; Psalm 128:1; Prov. 1:7; Job 28:28. (5) Obedient; Psalm 119:2; 1 Sam. 15:22; 1 Peter 1:14. (6) Abiding; Psalm 84:4; John 15:1-7; Luke 24:29. (7) Trusting; Psalm 34:8; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20.
2. His character unfolded; vs. 1, 2. (1) Negatively, v. 1. He is known by what he doesn't do. (a) He walks not in counsel of ungodly. Cp. The "walk" of the Christian; Eph. 1:12; Gal. 5:16; Romans 6:4; Romans 12:15; Eph. 5:2; 5:7; Col. 2:6; John 8:12; Col. 4:5; 1 John 5:16; 2 Cor. 6:16. Cp. Enoch; Gen. 5:24 or Peter; Matt. 26:58. God's question, Amos 3:3. (b) He stands not. No identification with the world. Cp. 1 John 2:15, 16. (c) He sits not. No fellowship with the ungodly; 2 Cor. 6:14-16; 2 Chron. 19:2; Titus 2:12. (2) Positively; V. 2. (a) Delights in the Word. Cp. Psalm 119:24. Finds it a joy. Cp. other delights: His protection, S. of S. 2:3; Obedience, Psalm 40:8; Provision, Isa. 55:2. (b) Meditates in it. Cp. Psalm 119:11; Phil. 4:8; Psalm 39:3. (c) Continues in it. The proof of discipleship is continuance; John 8:31; 15:9; Acts 2:42.
3. His testimony illustrated. V. 3. By a tree. Cp. John 15. By a vine or its branches. The true Christian is a tree. (1) Planted. Cp. Isa. 61:3; Psalm 92:13; Matt. 15:13. (2) Watered. Cp. Jer. 17:8; John 7:37-39; 4:14. (3) Fruitful. Cp. John 15:4, 5; Gal. 5:22; Phil. 1:11; Romans 6:22; Heb. 13:15; Col. 1:10; Romans 1:13; Phil. 4:17; Romans 7:4. (4) Evergreen. Cp. Palm tree; Psalm 92:12. Refreshing to the weary pilgrim; Isa. 50:4. (5) Prosperous. Here is true prosperity. Cp. Josh. 1:8; 3 John 2. What a beautiful picture is this of the Lord Jesus, the only One Who fully and completely fulfilled all this description; Heb. 7:26.

II. The Condemnation of the Ungodly. Vs. 4-6.

1. Their description. V. 4. "Ungodly," or without God—the true state of every unregenerate person. Cp. Eph. 2:11, 12.
2. Their illustration. "Chaff" driven by the wind having no form or use. Cp .Romans 8:8; Eph. 2:1, 2.
3. Their condemnation. V. 5. No standing before God. See 1 Sam. 6:20; Job 41:10; Nah. 1:6. Cp. Romans 8:1: 14:4; Gal. 5:1; Luke 21:36; Acts 4:10; Col. 4:12. etc.
4. Their end—perish. The two ways and the two ends. Cp. Matt. 7:13, 14; Deut. 30:15-20.

123. GOD'S THREE WORDS

Psalm 19

Golden Text: Psalm 19:7

God has revealed Himself in a three fold way to man.

I. His Eternal Power and Godhead in Creation. Vs. 1-6.

1. The glorious revelation—The Heavens. (1) Their creation manifest God's power; Psalm 33:6; 8:3; Romans 1:19, 20. (2) Its glory reveals God's wisdom; Psalm 19:1. (3) Its order unfolds His goodness; Jer. 10:12. (4) Its dissolving reveals God's righteousness; 2 Peter 3:10. (5) Its re-creation will reveal His glory; Rev. 21:1-4.
2. The universal proclamation. Vs. 2-4. (1) By day and by night—a perpetual display of His creative power. When the curtain of night is drawn a more wonderful revelation is unfolded in the multitude of the stars. (2) This proclamation is world wide embracing all the human race. Vs. 4.
3. The wonderful illustration. Vs. 4-6. The sun. (1) Its place. V. 4. (2) Its circuit. Vs. 4-6. (3) Its blessing, light, heat ,fruit. Cp. Christ. Cp. John 8:12, etc.

II. His Will, Way and Word in the Scriptures. Vs. 7-11.

1. Its seven fold description. (1) Perfect. V. 7. Cp. God's perfect (a) Word, Psalm 19:7, our authority. (b) Work, Deut. 32:4. our salvation. (c) Way, Psalm 18:30, our aim. (d) Will, Romans 12:2, our delight . (2) Sure. V. 7. Steadfast; Josh. 23:14; John 10:35. (3) Right. V. 8. Suitable for all needs and situations. (4) Pure. V. 8. Free from all error. Cp. Prov. 30:5; Psalm 12:6. (5) Clean. V. 5. opposed to all sin and unrighteousness of man. Cp. John 15:3. It reveals all iniquity. (6) True. V. 9. Cp. John 17:17. (7) Righteous. V. 9. Revealing the righteousness of God. Romans 1:17.
2. Its seven fold operation. Vs. 7-11 . (1) Converting. V. 8. "Turning." Cp. Matt. 18:3. It turns man from sin to holiness; from self to God; from hell to heaven. (2) Teaching. V. 7. Cp. 2 Tim. 3:15; Titus 2:12; Psalm 119:98. (3) Rejoicing. V .3. Psalm 119:62; 1 John 1:4; John 15:11. (4) Enlightening. V. 8; Psalm 119:105, 130; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6. (5) Enduring. V. 9. 1 Peter 1:23; Matt. 24:35 . (6) Warning. V. 6; Ezek. 3:18; 33:4; John 12:47, 48. (7) Rewarding. V. 11. With Life, John 5:24; Light, Psalm 119:130; Liberty, John 8:32.
3. Its value illustrated. V. 10.

III. Himself in His Beloved Son—The Living Word, "My Strength and Redeemer." V. 14. Vs. 12-14. Both creation and the word lead to Him, the Living Word; John 1:1-3. Note the 3 petitions that reveal the power of the living Word.

1. Cleansing. V. 12; 1 John 1:7.
2. Keeping. V. 13. Cp. John 10:27-30.
3 Delivering. V. 13; Heb. 7:25. Is He your Strength and your Redeemer?

124. THE SHEPHERD PSALM

Psalm 23

Golden Text: John 10:11

A selection of four of David's psalms follow which should make a fitting conclusion to the study of his life.

I. The Position It Occupies. Between Psalm 22 and Psalm 24. This is no chance arrangement; 2 Tim. 3:16.

1. Psalm 22 is the psalm of the Cross, Grace, Sword, Provision, Substitute, Good Shepherd, Crucifixion, Christ Yesterday.
2. Psalm 23 is the psalm of the Crook, Guidance, Staff, Protection, Shepherd, Great Shepherd, Consolation, Christ Today.
3. Psalm 24 is the psalm of the Crown, Glory, Sceptre, Prospect, Sovereign, Chief Shepherd, Coronation, Christ Forever.

II. The Person It Unfolds. No doubt the Lord Jesus Christ. His Name is revealed in the O. T. by several compound names all of which are seen in Psalm 23.

1. Jehova Rara. V. 1. "The Lord my Shepherd." (1) His necessity; Isa. 53:6; Psalm 119:176; Luke 15:4. (2) His work; John 10:10, 11, 15; Luke 19:10; 1 Peter 2:24, 25; John 10:27-30.
2. Jehova Jireh, "The Lord will provide." V. 1. "Not want;" Gen. 22:14. See what He has provided: Salvation, Word, Heaven. Cp. Matt. 6:33; Phil. 4:19, etc.
3. Jehovah Shalom. V. 2. "The Lord send peace;" Judges 6:24. (1) Peace needed; Romans 8:7, 8; Isa. 57:20, 21. (2) Purchased; Col. 1:20; Eph. 2:17. (3) Preached; Eph. 2:17. (4) Possessed; Romans 5:1; Phil. 4:9; John 14:27.
4. Jehovah Rapha. V. 3. "The Lord that healeth;" Exod. 15:26. (1) Our need; Isa. 1:5, 6; Matt. 9:13. (2) His supply; Psalm 41:4; Isa. 53:5; Jer. 3:22; Psalm 51; Hosea 6:4; 14:4.
5. Jehova Tsidkenu. V. 3. "The Lord our Righteousness;" Jer. 23:6. Cp. Isa. 64:6; Romans 3:10. This righteousness is imported from heaven; Romans 3:21. Imputed; Romans 4:24. Imparted; Romans 3:22. Manifested; Romans 8:4.
6. Jehova Shammah. V. 4. "The Lord is there." Ezek. 48:35. Cp. Psalm 139; Heb. 13:5.
7. Jehova Nissi. Vs. 5, 6. "The Lord our Banner;" Exod. 17:5. Cp. Truth; Psalm 60:4; Love; S. of S. 2:4; Victory; Exod. 17:5.

III. The Provision It Reveals; "I shall not want."

1. Rest; S. of S. 2:4-6.
2. Drink; Isa. 55:1, 2.
3. Forgiveness; v. 3; 1 John 1:9; 2:1.
4. Guidance; v. 3. Cp. John 10:4-5.
5. Companionship; v. 4; Heb. 13:5.
6. Comfort; v. 4; 2 Cor. 1:3-5.
7. Food; v. 5; Matt. 6:11.
8. Joy; Psalm 45:7; 1 John 1:4.
9. Anything; Psalm 84:11.

IV. The Prospect It Unveils; "The House of the Lord." Cp. John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 21:1-22:5.

125. THE PRAISE PSALM

Psalm 103

Golden Text: Psalm 92:1

I. Praise for His Benefits; vs. 1-5. The book of Psalms is pre-eminently a book of praise. The divine injunction; Psalm 100:4; Heb. 13: 15. The Divine purpose; Psalm 50:23. Verses 1 and 2 constitute the 2 middle verses of the Bible. Notice the benefits.

1. Forgiveness; vs. 3. Its source, God; Eph. 4: 32; Jer. 33:8; Luke 23:34; Jer. 31:34; Luke 5:21. (2) Its character. (a) Gracious; Eph. 1:7; Psalm 86:15. (b) Righteous; Romans 3:25, 26. (c) Abundant; Isa. 55:7; Psalm 103:3, 4. (d) Free; I John 2:12; Romans 4:7; Eph. 1:7. (e) Complete; Isa. 1:18; Heb. 10:14-17; Isa. 43:25. (3) Its means. Faith in the Son of God. His Person and work; Acts 13:38, etc., etc.
2. Healing; V. 3. (1) Of the soul; Jer. 17:14; Psa. 23:3; Luke 10:33, 34. (2) Of the body if it is His will; Phil. 2:27, etc.
3. Redemption; V. 4. (1) Its meaning—to buy back. (2) Its necessity sold under sin; Isa. 50: 1-3; Rom. 7:14; John 8:34; Rom. 6:16. (3) Its price, "the blood;" 1 Peter 1:18; Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6. (4) Its result; Eph. 1:7; Gal. 4:5.
4. Blessings; vs. 4. Cp. Eph. 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3-5.
5. Satisfaction; vs. 5; cp. Psalm 107:9, 36:8, 63:5; John 4:14.
6. Rejuvenation; v. 5. A new birth, a new creation, a new song and a new city—This is the possession of every believer. One has summed it up thus: 1. He saw me in the law court and forgave me; v. 3. 2. In the hospital and healed me. 3. In the slave market and redeemed me; v. 4. .4. In the palace and crowned me with 2 crowns; Vs. 4, 5. In the banqueting hall and satisfied me; v. 5.

II. Praise for His Attributes; vs. 6-17.

1. Righteousness; vs. 6, 17. (1) God's character. Cp. Psalm 7:9; 119:13; John 17:25. (2) God's demand; Lev. 19:2. (3) Man's failure; Romans 3:10. (4) God's provision; Romans 3:21-26.
2. Mercy; v. 8. (1) Its quality "tender;" vs. 4, 13, cp. Psalms 25:6; 119:156; 145:9. (2) Its measure; v. 8. "Plenteous" or great; cp. Eph. 2:4; Micah 7:18. (3) Duration, "everlasting;" v. 17; cp. Ezek. 33:11.
3. Grace. V. 8. (1) Its meaning, "The outflow of love to one utterly underserving of it. (2) Its manifestation—In Christ; John 1:14; 2 Cor. 8:9. (3) Its result—salvation and separation; Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 2:11, 12.

III. Praise for His Dealings; vs. 12-18.

1. In His forgiveness; v. 12. Note what God does with the sins of His people; Jer. 31:34; Psalms 32:1; 103:12; Isa. 38:17; 44:22; Micah 7:14; Jer. 33:8; 1:20.
2. In His forbearance; Vs. 13-18. Due to His knowledge of us; cp. What the Lord knows; Psalm 44:21; Luke 16:15; Acts 15:8; Psalm 1:6; Job 23:10; Nah. 1:7; 2 Tim. 2:19; 2 Peter 2:9; Matt. 6:8.

IV. Praise From All Creation; vs. 19-22. Cp. Rev. 5:12, 13; Psalm 150:1-6. "Heaven, earth and ocean in full harmony."

126. SOLOMON'S VISION

1 Kings 1:5—3:28

Golden Text: Job 28:28

I. Usrupation of Adonijah; 1:5-31.

1. His self exaltation; vs. 5-10; Prov. 16:18; 29:33; Jer. 49:16; Luke 18:14; 1 Peter 5:6. See 1 Chron. 22:9, 10. Cp. Isa. 45:9.
2. The intercession of Bathsheba; vs. 11-28.
3. David's reiterated promise; vs .28-31.

II. The Coronation of Solomon; 1:32-53.

1. The new king; vs. 32-40. Picture the imposing event as Solomon, riding the king's mule, is escorted to Gihon, anointed and crowned, etc.
2. The consternated enemy; Vs. 41-49.
3. The refuge of the altar; vs. 50-53 . The altar a place of (1) Sacrifice ;Exod. 20:24. (2) Refuge; cp. Exod. 21:14; 1 Kings 1:51; cp. Heb. 6:18. This was true except for certain offenders.

III. The Judgment Upon the Enemy; 2:1-46.

1. David's counsel and death; vs. 1-11. Note vs. 2-4. Good advice to a young man or woman on the threshold of life with all its possibilities before him.
2. Adonijah's further folly and death; vs. 12-25.
3. The judgment on Abiathar; vs. 26, 27. See the fulfillment of; 1 Sam. 2:30; cp. Isa. 41:22, 23; Matt. 5:18; Luke 21:22.
4. Joab's end; vs. 28-34; cp. Num. 35:33. His murder of Abner and Amasa had been particularly cruel; Cp. 2 Sam. 3:28, 29; Gal. 6:7-8; Gen. 9:6. This has never been revoked.
5. Shimei's foolishness and death; vs. 36-46. (1) The condition plain and simple; vs. 37, 38. (2) The cause; vs. 39-41. How foolish! Put his life in jeopardy for a little temporal loss; cp. the sinner; Mark 8:36, 42-46. (3) The consequences; v. 46. He died when he might have lived. The brook Kedron was "the dead line," Once he crossed that his doom was sealed. Cp. the dead line of the rejection of Christ, of the river of death, of the coming of the Lord.

IV. Solomon's Vision; 3:1-8.

1. His description. "He loved the Lord;" v. 3. Do you? 1 John 4:10; John 15:13; 1 Cor. 16:22; 1 Peter 1:8; Psalm 18:1; 1 John 4:19; 2 Cor. 5:14.
2. His vision; vs. 5-14. (1) The question; v. 5. Think of Who is speaking; Cp. Isa. 40:12-23. (2) The answer; vs. 6-9. A wise choice; cp. Prov. 2:1-6; 3:13-26. Have we made it? Cp. The wisdom of God; 1 Cor. 1:24; Col. 2:3; Matt. 6:33; Romans 8:32. Life's greatest choice—Christ. (3) God's promise: vs. 10-14; cp. Eph. 3:20; Phil. 4:19; 1 Cor. 3:18-23. "All things." (4) Solomon's joy; v. 15.
3. His wisdom: vs. 16-28. The greater than Solomon; Luke 11:31. Greater in
   (1) Origin—Christ was David's Lord; Matt. 22:42-45.
   (2) Dignity—Christ was the Temple; John 2: 18-21.
   (3) Wisdom—Christ was Wisdom; Col. 2:3.
   (4) Power—Christ is King of Kings; Rev. 19: 16.
   (5) Love—Christ is love incarnate; 1 John 4:8.
   (6) Glory—Christ's glory is unfa[illegible]ng; Matt. 6: 28, 29.
   (7) Wealth—Christ is Owner of all: Heb. 1:2.

127. TWO HOUSES FOR GOD

READ 1 Kings 5: 17, 18; Ch. 6: 7, 11-14, 38.

THEME: Living stones in the Temple.

TELL THE STORY.

Solomon's Temple was built 480 years after the Children of Israel left Egypt. It was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar 430 years later. When Israel returned from captivity under Ezra and Nehemiah, a second temple was built and this was enlarged and rebuilt in the time of our Lord. This temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 as foretold by our Lord.

THE TEMPLE.—

IT WAS AN EARTHLY HOUSE at Jerusalem for the worship of God (ch. 6: 12, 13). We Christians are now God's *spiritual* house in whom He dwells (1 Pet. 2: 5; 1 Cor. 6: 19; 1 Cor. 3: 9).

SACRIFICES WERE OFFERED DAILY in Solomon's temple. These were literal sacrifices; we are to offer *spiritual* sacrifices, which are:—

Obedience — for God says, "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15: 22).

Ourselves — and this includes everything else, our time, our money, our talents and all that we have. Present your bodies a *living* sacrifice (Rom. 12: 1).

The fruit of our lips, which is praise, giving thanks to His Name (Heb. 13: 15). As the Levites praised the Lord morning and evening in the temple, so God expects from us this sacrifice of praise, which is acceptable to God (1 Pet. 2: 5).

THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT AT THE KING'S COMMAND (1 Kings, v. 17). The people waited for the king's orders, but when the order was given there was an immediate response. Is this so with you? Is Christ's command always followed by your instant obedience? (John 2: 5).

SOLOMON GAVE ESPECIAL CARE TO THE FOUNDATIONS (v. 17). Much of foundation work is out of sight, but in spite of this Solomon expended much labour in beautifying the stones. *All* our work for God should be done thoroughly, especially that part which is not seen by men, but is seen by God.

MATERIALS USED IN THE BUILDING (1 Kings 5: 17).—

GREAT STONES. The Holy Spirit's temple is built of *living* stones, girls and boys, men and women — *great* because they have an eternal destiny; *great* because of what God has made of them.

COSTLY STONES. Solomon spared no time, labour or expense in securing these stones for the temple. So with the spiritual temple. It cost the Lord Jesus His life at Calvary in order to make us living stones in His temple.

HEWED STONES. They had to be hewn, chipped and chiselled in the quarry in order that they might be used in the foundation of the temple. We are in God's quarry. Our lives have to be chipped and squared not only that we might be worthy of a place in the glorious building, but also that we might fit in with others in the temple (Eph. 2: 21).

THE TOOLS. Hammers, axes and tools of iron were used in preparing the stones. God uses certain tools upon our lives — difficulties, troubles, sorrow, sickness and the disciplines of life. There are many corners to be chipped off and He will spare no trouble in fitting us to take our places in the spiritual temple. Let us remember that the preparatory work will soon be over.

IT WAS BUILT IN SILENCE (v. 7), though there was much hammering, quarrying and chiselling *before* the materials were brought to the site. The absolute silence with which the temple rose is an illustration of the building of the spiritual temple with living stones. Soul after soul, as so many added stones are being quietly placed upon the walls. The Holy Spirit's work in a life is a secret work (John 3: 8).

THE STONES CAME FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. So, today, the Holy Spirit is gathering out of every country, living stones for His great temple, people of every tribe and tongue and nation (Rev. 5: 9). Are you having a share in this great work? In the temple was a place for every stone, a special place into which it just fitted. In God's spiritual temple every believer has a place into which he can fit and no other, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2: 20).

MEMORY VERSE.—I Peter 2: 5—"Ye also, as lively (living) stones, are built up a spiritual house . . . to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

BUILDING AND DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

1 Kings 4:4-34; 5:1-12; 6:1-14; 8:1-66

Golden Text: Psalm 16:11

I. His Wonderful Wisdom; 4:20-34.

1. The happy state of Israel; vs. 20-25.
2. The variety of his knowledge; vs. 29-33. (1) Its source-God. (2) Its outlet. (a) In his proverbs. (b) In song. (c) Forestry. (d) Zoology. (e) Ornithology. (f) Ichthyology. God's wisdom is manifold or variegated. Eph. 3:10. Cp. Job 12:7-10.

II. The Preparation; 5:1-12; etc.

1. The message to Hiram; vs. 1-6.
2. The response; vs. 7-12.

III The Erection; 6:11-14.

1. God's promise; vs. 11-13. A conditional one. Obedience to His word, will and way commanded. Cp. "I will dwell" with Exod. 25:8, 22; Lev. 26:12. Cp. God's dwelling place now. 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:20.
2. The erection of the building. This is a beautiful type of the Church. Eph. 2:19-22. (1) The materials, stone and wood. See Isa. 51:1. (2) The Process. The material was (a) Discovered or found; cp. Luke 15:5; 19:10. (b) Taken or lifted from its place by nature; cp. Psalm 40:2; Col. 2:13. (c) Cut, shaped and polished. (d) All the building was done silently; 1 Kings 6:7; cp. 1 Cor. 12:13. (3) The purpose—a dwelling place for God. See Eph. 2:22.
3. The completion of the building; vs. 14; 7:51. It has been computed that the temple cost $87,202,271,340 to erect. Gold, and silver, 3400 million. Labor, 500 million. Stone, 1300 million. Vessels of silver and gold, 5,000 million, etc. Of how much more value is one redeemed by the precious blood! 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

IV. The Dedication; ch. 8.

1. The installation of the ark; vs. 1-11. (1) Sacrifice; v. 5. (2) Divine acceptance; vs. 10, 11. Cp Exod. 40:34. The glory of the Lord. Where is it now seen? 2 Cor. 4:6. "In the face of Jesus Christ." John 17:5; Isa. 2:1; Acts 7:55; Heb. 1:3. Cp. Our glory in Him and His in us; 2 Cor. 4:18; Col. 1:27.
2. The prayer of Solomon; vs. 12-66. (1) The preamble; vs. 12-21. A reminder of God's mercy in His dealings with Israel and David. (2) The prayer; 22-61. (a) Adoration for God's greatness, faithfulness, goodness and mercy; vs. 22-30. Note vs. 23, 27. (b) Supplication; vs. 31-53. Note the 7 petitions in the case of (aa) The trespasser; vs. 31, 32. (bb) Defeat by the enemy; vs. 33, 34. (cc) Drought; vs. 35, 36. (dd) Pestilence; vs. 37-40. (ee) The stranger; vs. 41-43. (ff) War; vs. 44, 45. (gg) Captivity; vs. 46-53. (c) Benediction; vs. 54-61.
3. The thanksgiving; vs. 62-66. Note v. 66. Cp. Psalm 16:11; Isa. 61:3; Neh. 8:10; Romans 14: 17; John 15:11; 16:24; etc. This is the longest prayer of the Bible, yet it only takes eight minutes to repeat. Public prayers should therefore be short and to the point.

128. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S VISIT TO SOLOMON

READ I Kings 10: 1-13.
THEME: Christ, a Greater than Solomon.
TELL THE STORY.

The Queen of Sheba came from a long distance, travelling from Africa which, in those days, was from "the uttermost parts of the earth," to learn from Solomon. She was really seeking God for she had heard of Solomon's fame "concerning the Name of the Lord" (v. 1). Solomon, in his wisdom and glory is a type of Christ, "a greater than Solomon" (Matt. 12: 42). In His glory, he is described in Isaiah 63: 1 and Rev. 1: 13-16.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.—

SHE HEARD OF THE FAME OF SOLOMON (v. 1), and this led her to leave her home and country in order to find him and see for herself his power and glory. How are people to know Christ if they have not heard, and how can they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10: 17). Someone must have told the Queen of Solomon's wisdom and glory.

WHEN SHE HEARD, SHE CAME (v. 1). It is true that at first she was dependent upon others to bring her reports of Solomon, but she was determined to see him and find out for herself. You have heard much about the Lord Jesus but have you ever come to Him? Do you know Him as Saviour?

SHE BROUGHT HER PROBLEMS TO SOLOMON for she came to prove him with hard questions. She told him all that was in her heart (v. 2). Perhaps these problems were in connection with the governing of her kingdom or about trade, war and peacetime activities, but we are sure that she brought also her problems about higher things, about God, His service and His commandments. Solomon was able to answer all her questions. Are there problems in your life, things you cannot understand? Tell them to the Lord Jesus, the greater than Solomon.

THE RESULT OF HER VISIT TO SOLOMON.—

SHE HUMBLED HERSELF BEFORE HIM. Perhaps before she came into contact with Solomon she thought herself a powerful and rich queen but once having seen him, there was no more spirit in her (vv. 4, 5). When we see the Lord in all His power and holiness we see ourselves in all our sinfulness and unworthiness (Isaiah 6: 5; Job. 42: 5, 6).

SHE TESTIFIED. She now acknowledged that it was a true report she had heard in her own land (v. 6), though she did not then believe what she had heard of his wisdom, his power and glory. Now she had first-hand knowledge of him and could speak with confidence. She even said, "The half was not told me" (v. 7). The writer of the first epistle of John frequently uses the words, "We know" (2: 3; 3: 14; 5: 13). Have *you* first-hand knowledge of these things, of Christ and His salvation?

SHE SAID, "HAPPY ARE THESE THY SERVANTS" (v. 8). There was no compulsion in their service, they counted it a joy and privilege to serve so great a king. So it is with the servants of Christ, the greater than Solomon. "Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord" (Ps. 144: 15).

SHE GAVE LIBERALLY TO THE KING (vv. 9, 10). She opened her treasures and poured them out lavishly. Is there anything *we* can bring and lay at Christ's feet?

"We'll bring Him hearts that love Him,
We'll bring Him thankful praise,
And young souls meekly striving
To walk in holy ways."

SHE RECEIVED FROM SOLOMON MORE THAN SHE HAD ASKED (v. 13) and she returned to her own country fully satisfied. "God is able to do above all we ask or think" (Eph. 4: 20). "He shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Ps. 37: 4). God is no man's debtor and He will give back to us far more than we can ever give to Him.

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 12: 42—"The queen of the south . . . came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

The Queen of Sheba.

I Kings 10.1-13.

The Queen of Sheba came to Solomon.
Jesus Christ is greater than Solomon. Luke 11.31.

1. **She heard about Solomon,** of his riches, his honour and his power, so she came 1200 miles to Jerusalem to find out for herself, like the Eunuch in Acts 8.27. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Rom. 10.17.

2. **She told Solomon everything that was in her heart** and tried him with hard questions. Nothing was too hard for him, v. 2, 3. Bring to the Lord Jesus all your doubts and the things you cannot understand. He will explain.

3. **He showed her his power and glory,** v. 5.

4. **She was changed after she had been to Solomon:**
   (a) **She humbled herself before him,** she knew now that she was nothing, v. 4, 5. When we see the Lord's holiness and power, it brings us low before him. Is. 6.5; Job 42.5, 6; Luke 5.8.
   (b) **The half of Solomon's glory and wisdom had not been told her,** but she came and saw for herself, v. 7. The half has not been told us of all God has prepared for those who love Him. I Cor. 2.9.
   (c) **She said, "happy are these thy servants,"** v. 8. We, too, are happy because we belong to the Lord. Ps. 144.15.

5. **She was fully satisfied,** Solomon gave her all she asked. God satisfies the longing soul. Ps. 107.9.

Verse to learn, Luke 11.31 (last part of verse).

VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

1 Kings 10:1-13

Golden Text: Matthew 12:42

A beautiful picture of the steps in the life of the Believer.

I. She Heard; v. 1. Note.

1. There was a report; v. 1. Cp. Isa. 53:1. God has spoken; Heb. 1:1, 2.
2. She heard this report; v. 1. Cp. Romans 10: 14-17; John 5:24; Matt. 13:17; 17:5; 11:15.
3. She believed the report. This is seen by her action. What is this report? John 3:16; Acts 13:38; John 10:9, 10; Romans 1:1-5; 16, 17. Have you heard and believed? Note "concerning . . . Jehovah;" v. 1.

II. She Came; v. 2. Have you? Matt. 11:28; John 6:37; 5:40; 7:37; Rev. 22:17; Isa. 1:18; Isa. 55:1, 3, etc. She proved her faith in the report. She believed to **come.** She came:

1. Herself. She didn't send a proxy. Salvation is a personal thing.
2. From a great distance. She was "far off;" Eph. 2:13.
3. At considerable risk, for she stood to lose her kingdom had there been a revolution during her absence. Was it worth the risk? Did she ever have any regrets?
4. To Solomon. Not to one of his "ministers;" cp. John 1:12; 14:6; 10:9; Acts 4:12; Matt. 11:28.

III. She Communed; vs. 2, 3. Note what she brought.

1. Hard questions. Cp. Man's questions to God all of which God answers. Cp. Job 14:4, 10, 14; 25:4; John 3:9, etc. And God's questions which man does not answer. Mark 8:36; Hosea 9:5; Heb. 2:3; Jer. 13:21 .
2. Her heart; v. 2. She kept back nothing. Cp. Jer. 29:13; Romans 10:9, 10; etc.
3. The result—all her difficulties solved; v. 3.

IV. She Saw His Treasures; vs. 4, 5.

1. His wisdom. Cp. Matt. 12:42; 1 Cor. 1:24; Col. 2:3; Luke 4:22; Matt. 13:54; Proverbs 8.
2. His house. Heb. 3:6; Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:20-22.
3. His provision. Cp. 1 Cor. 3:21; Romans 8:32; Phil. 4:19.
4. Sitting of servants. Cp. Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1.
5. Standing of his ministers. Romans 5:2; 14:4; 1 Cor. 15:1; 1 Peter 5:12; Col. 4:12.
6. Their apparel. Cp. Isa. 61:10; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Romans 3:22.
7. The way of ascent. Cp. Phil .3:10; Col. 3:1; Phil. 3:20, 21.

V. She Testified; Vs. 6-9. "The half not told."

1. As to the truth of the report; v. 6.
2. As to his wisdom.
3. As to his fame. Cp. Matt. 3:17; 17:5. Cp. Romans 10:9, 10; Mark 7:37; John 7:46; 9:25; Luke 8:39; 2 Cor. 9:15. This queen shall be a star witness at the Great White Throne. Matt. 12:42.

VI. She Gave Her Treasures; v. 10. What the believer should give.

1. His heart. Prov. 23:26.
2. Thanks Psalm 30:4; Heb. 13:15.
3 Honour. Psalm 29:2.
4. Prayer. Acts 6:4.
5. Body. Romans 12:1
6. Substance. 2 Cor. 9:7, 8; 8:5, 7.

VII. Solomon Gave To Her; v. 13. Note what—all her desire. Cp. Psalm 37:4; Romans 8:32; 1 Tim. 6:17. Behold a greater than Solomon is here! Isa. 63:1; Rev. 1:12-18.

129. Solomon's Prayer.

II Chronicles 6.12-42.

This is the longest prayer in the Old Testament. It was a prayer for others.

1. **This temple** prepared for God and filled with His glory is a picture of the believer, filled with the Holy Spirit.

2. **How Solomon prayed.** He was reverent, he kneeled down. v. 13. He asked that God's eyes might be on His temple day and night to hear prayer, v. 20. Let us remember as we come into God's Presence, that He is holy. Ps. 89.7.

3. **For whom he prayed:**
   (a) For those who were sinned against, v. 22, 23. We can leave to God those who sin against us. Rom. 12.19.
   (b) For those who let the enemy win them because of sin, and he asked that they might come back to God for forgiveness and victory, v. 24, 25.
   (c) For those who were dry that God would send rain again, v. 26. Let us pray for those without blessing.
   (d) For strangers that they might learn that God would answer **their** prayers also if they turned to Him, v. 32, 33.
   (e) For those who were made prisoners by their enemies, v. 36-39.
   (f) For victory for those who fight by the way God sent them, v. 34, 35. We must fight in God's way with His armour. I Tim. 6.12 Eph. 6.13.

4. **God heard and answered Solomon's prayer**—the fire came down from heaven, 2 Chron. 7.1; I John 3.21, 22.

Verse to learn, I Timothy 2.1.

130. Solomon's fall into sin.

I Kings 11.1, 2, 4, 6-13.

Solomon started well but he did not go on with God, he lost his first love for God. Rev. 2.4.

1. **He let riches and things of this world take first place in his life.** Let us put God first in our lives, before money, gardens, pigs and everything of this world. "In the beginning God." Gen. 1.1 (God first). Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Matt. 6.33.

2. **He disobeyed God, he married many heathen wives,** v. 1, 2. God says, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Amos 3.3. God tells us not to be joined with unbelievers. II Cor. 6.14.

3. **Solomon had a sad old age:**
   How different from Paul the aged (Philemon 9) who kept on with God right to the end. II Tim. 4.7.
   (a) His wives turned his heart away from God, v. 4. But God wants us to bring forth fruit in old age. Ps. 92.14. The path of the just shall shine more and more. Prov. 4.18.
   (b) He made idols for his heathen wives, and broke God's commandments. God warned him about this but he did not listen, v. 10.

4. **God had to punish Solomon.** v. 11. Solomon's line would now only be king over part of the Jews. and God let Solomon's enemies trouble him, v. 25. He had to reap what he sowed. Gal. 6.7.

Verse to learn. II Corinthians 6.14.

131. STUDIES IN THE PROVERBS

Proverbs 1—3:26

Golden Text: Proverbs 3:5, 6

William Arnot has well described the book of Proverbs as "Laws of heaven for life on earth."

I. Wisdom Defined; 1:1-9.

1. The wise man; v. 5. (1) Hears. Cp. Prov. 8: 34; Matt 7:24; John 8:47; Rev. 22:17; Romans 10:17; Matt. 13:9; John 12:47. (2) Learns. Cp. Deut. 31:12, 13; Matt. 11:29. (3) Attains—make a success of life.
2. The fool. V. 7. Despises. Cp. 1 Cor. 14:38; Eph. 4:18; Romans 10:3. The penalty of ignorance is deeper ignorance.
3. What wisdom is; v. 7. The fear of the Lord. Cp. Prov. 8:3; 9:10; 14:26, 27; Mal. 3:16; Neh. 5:9; 2 Cor. 7:1; Psalm 25:12; 34:9; 31:19; 103:13; 145:19; 112:1; etc.
4. The injunction. Vs. 8, 9.

II. Wisdom's Warning; vs. 10-19. The evils of bad company. Prov. 13:20; 28:7; 1 Cor. 15:33; Psalm 119:63.

1. The proposal; vs. 10, 11.
2. The plot; vs. 11-14. "Easy money."
3. The plea; v. 15; 2 Cor. 6:14-17.
4. The peril; vs. 16-19.

III Wisdom's Cry; vs. 20-33.

1. Its publicity; vs. 20, 21. There is no excuse for ignorance.
2. To whom addressed. "Simple, scorners, fools." Does this describe you? Cp. Prov. 22:3; 9:12; 1:7.
3. The promise; v. 23. To the repentant. Cp. Acts 3:19; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30, 31.
4. Judgment pronounced; vs. 24-33. Cp. John 12:46, 47; Luke 13:24-28.

IV. Wisdom's Injunction; 2:1-9.

1. Applying the heart; v. 2. Cp. Psalm 90:2; Prov. 22:17; 23:12.
2. Asking for it; v. 3; Isa. 1:5.
3. Seeking for it; v. 4. Cp. Jer. 29:13 .
4. Finding it; v. 9. Cp. Matt. 7:7 .

V. Wisdom's Precepts and Promises; 2:10-3:12.

1. Further warning; vs. 10-22. Note the six steps; vs. 12, 13a, 13b, 14a, 14b, 16.
2. Concerning the word of God; vs. 3:1-4. Note the blessings of keeping it.
3. A motto for life; vs. 5-8. Note "with all thine heart." Cp. Deut. 4:29; 10:12; 13:3; 30:2; 30:10; 1 Kings 2:4; 14:8; Psalm 87:12.
4. Concerning giving; vs. 9, 10. Cp. 2 Cor. 8, 9.
5. Concerning chastisement; vs. 11, 12 . Cp. Heb. 12:5-11.

VI. Wisdom's Value; vs. 3:13-26. Note the illustrations used to emphasize this. Remember, Christ is the Wisdom of God. Prov. 8; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30. Therefore seek Him. Matt. 6:33.

132. THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

1 Kings 11-14

Golden Text: Proverbs 9:12

Compare in these Kingdom studies the parallel account in Chronicles.

I. Solomon's Latter Days; 11:1-43. The tragedy of the Backslider.

1. Unequal yokes; vs. 1-3. Rank disobedience to the expressed will of God; v. 2. Exod. 34:16; Deut. 7:3, 4; 2 Cor. 6:14, 15.
2. Idolatry; vs. 4-8. One sin leads to others. Bad leads to worse. The backslider in heart is filled with his own ways. Prov. 14:14. Study a Bible dictionary for a description of Ashtoreth and Molech. Cp. the folly of idolatry. Psalm 135:15-18; Isa. 44:9-20. Cp. 1 Cor. 10:14; Col. 3:5; 1 John 5:21.
3. Judgment; vs. 9-13. (1) The perils of privilege; v. 9, "twice." Cp. Luke 12:47, 48; John 3:19. (2) Increased light brings increased responsibility. Note vs. 13, 34-36. The line of the Messiah preserved.
4. The adversaries; vs. 14-40. (1) Hadad; vs. 14-22. (2) Rezon; vs. 23-25. (3) Jeroboam; vs. 26-40. (a) The prophecy; vs. 26-39. (b) The consequence; v. 40.
5. Solomon's death; vs. 41-43. A reign that began so bright and ended so dark. His book, Ecclesiastes, describes his vain search for satisfaction "under the sun." Cp. 2 Tim. 4:7. Cp. The Greater than Solomon. John 17:4; etc.

II. The Division of the Kingdom; 12:1-25.

1. The petition; vs. 1-5.
2. The consultation; vs. 6-11. (1) The counsel of the wise and experienced; vs. 6, 7. (2) The counsel of youth and folly; vs. 8-11. How much better if he had taken counsel of God as his father had done. James 1:5; Prov. 2:3-5.
3. The folly; vs. 12-15. Prov. 15:1; 6:3; James 4:1-10.
4. The division; vs. 16-20.
5. The prohibition; vs. 21-25.

III. Jeroboam's Folly; vs. 26-33.

1. His unbelief; v. 26. Cp. 1 Kings 11:37, 38.
2. His folly; vs. 27-33. A new religion all of his own; v. 33. How like the new fangled cults of today, the product of man's sinful heart.
3. The warning; 13:1-33. (1) The prophecy; v. 2. Cp. 2 Kings 23:15, 16. (2) The judgment; vs. 4-9. (3) The disobedient prophet; vs. 10-34. A warning to the Christian worker today. 1 Cor. 9:27.
4. The judgment; 14:1-20. Note v. 15. The disguised sinner. Cp. Matt. 23:25-28.
5. The death of Rehoboam; vs. 21-31. (1) His evil reign; vs. 21-24. (2) His city spoiled; vs. 25-28. From gold to brass. The form without the power! Formalism. Cp. Rev. 3:17; 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

133. JEROBOAM'S FALSE ALTAR

READ I Kings 12: 26-33.

THEME: Choosing the easy way. TELL THE STORY.

After the death of Solomon the ten tribes revolted against Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and the kingdom was divided, Jeroboam reigning over ten tribes called Israel, and Rehoboam reigning over the remaining two tribes — Judah.

JEROBOAM.—

HIS REPUTATION. Again and again he is described as the man "who made Israel to sin" (16: 26; 21: 22; 22: 52; 2 Kings 3: 3). He not only sinned greatly himself but he influenced others to sin. We all have some influence over others (Rom. 14: 7), either for good or evil.

HIS TWO GODS WERE SELF AND PRIDE. In order that the people might not turn away from him and give their allegiance again to Rehoboam he made golden calves for them to worship. He was afraid that if they went up to Jerusalem to worship as God had commanded them, then all the tribes would be reunited, they would kill him and accept Rehoboam as their king. It mattered nothing to him that the whole nation became idolaters as long as he retained his own position.

HE TEMPTED ISRAEL TO TAKE THE EASY WAY IN SERVING GOD. "*It is too much for you* to go up to Jerusalem to worship," he said (v. 28). Bethel and Dan are much nearer, then why travel so far to Jerusalem? But Jerusalem was the centre of their faith and the place where God had commanded that they should worship at the special feasts.

"*Too much for you,*" says Satan. In effect he said these words to Our Lord when he pretended to sympathise with Him in His hunger (Matt. 4: 3). "Fall down and worship me," (Matt. 4: 9) he said. In other words, "it is too much for you to go to the Cross; choose the easy way . . . and I will give you the kingdom."

Too much for you meant the disciples in John 11: 8 when they talked with the Lord. Why choose the hard path and run into trouble?

Too much for you meant Peter when he said to the Lord Who had been speaking of going to the Cross, "be it far from Thee, Lord." But our Lord answered, "Get thee behind me Satan" (Matt. 16: 22, 23). When we are tempted to pity ourselves and think that the Christian way is too hard, let us realise this is a temptation from Satan.

Too much for you say people to us when we want to follow Christ devotedly and wholeheartedly, when we wish to separate ourselves from all that would hinder us in running the race set before us (Heb. 12: 1). Our Lord met this temptation, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem" by setting His face steadfastly to *go* to Jerusalem (Luke 9: 51). Shall we not tread the road the Master went?

JEROBOAM LED THE PEOPLE INTO IDOLATRY (v. 28). He held up before them the calves of gold in order to turn their hearts and minds away from the true God, though it was *He* and not the false gods who had brought them out of Egypt. Day by day the world is holding up before you all kinds of counter attractions to turn you from the Lord.

HE TRIED TO RETAIN THE OUTWARD FORM OF WORSHIP OF GOD. He made the altar, the sacrifice and the feast look as much

as possible like the true altar and feast in Judah, but it was idolatry. God would have nothing to do with this false altar, for the man of God cried against it (13: 1, 2). Those who would truly worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4: 23).

JEROBOAM REFUSED TO TURN FROM HIS EVIL WAY. God tried to induce him to repent and turn to Him; He sent a man of God to rebuke him. The altar was broken down, the ashes poured out and Jeroboam's hand was withered, yet he persisted in his evil course and finally God gave him up. God has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6: 3); "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone" (Hos. 4: 17); "God gave them up" (Rom. 1: 24, 26). That you hear God calling you to turn to Him shows that He has not yet given you up, but that His Spirit is striving with you. Then "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon him while he is near"(Isaiah 55:3).

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 9: 51—"He (Jesus) steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."

Jeroboam's false altar. I Kings 12.26-33.

When God spoke about Jeroboam he said about him, Jeroboam the man who made Israel to sin. I Kings 15.34. What does God say about us?

1. **Self and pride were his gods.** He made golden calves for the people to worship so that they would not turn away from himself to Rehoboam, 27-29. God says to us, "Keep yourselves from idols." I John 5.21.

2. **He taught his people to choose the easy way, to serve God.** He said, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem to worship," v. 28. Watch against those who try to make you choose the easy way. Those who would follow Christ must deny themselves and take up their cross. Matt. 16.24.

3. **Jeroboam said, "Behold your gods O Israel,"** v. 28. Men sometimes hold up in front of us things of this world to make us turn from the Lord.

4. **He wanted men to obey himself instead of God,** and so he chose for priests, men whose lives were not clean, 31. But God says, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." Is. 52.11.

5. **He made the altar, the sacrifices and the feast** look like the feast of the Lord in Judah, but God would have nothing to do with that altar, 13, 2. We must worship God in God's way and do His work in His way. Remember Lesson No. 232 about David bringing back the Ark.

134. The man of God who disobeyed.

I Kings 13.

1. **He was a true servant of God,** he came by the Word of the Lord, v. 1. Every message we give should come from God. I Kings 17.1; I Cor. 11.23.

2. **He was not afraid of the king.** He cried against the false altar he had made. v. 2. He was like John the Baptist and like the Apostles in Acts 4.19, 20.

3. **He had power** in God's work. Jeroboam's hand dried up and God broke that false altar, v. 4. He had power in prayer. He forgave the king who tried to kill him. He prayed for him and God healed him, v. 6.

4. **He did not work for God for reward;** he would not take anything from the king (v. 6-9) like Elijah in II Kings 5.16. He had victory in this temptation because he said a strong "No." but he yielded in the next one.

5. **How he fell.** When he was tired and hungry the false prophet tempted him. Satan did this to the Lord. Matt. 4.2, 3. The man of God said, "No," but his "No" was weak, he said, "**I may not** go" (God will not let me), v. 16. The false prophet knew the "No" of this man of God was weak, and he kept on till the man of God yielded.

6. **He did not finish his work,** God took him home before his time. I Cor. 11.30. May we be able to say like the Lord Jesus, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." John 17.4.

Warning: Let us watch against those who would tempt us to leave the path God has marked out for us.

Verse to learn, Psalm 119.35.

135. ASA'S REIGN

1 Kings 15-16; 2 Chronicles 13-16

Golden Text: 2 Chronicles 16:9a

I. The Reign of Abijam; vs. 1-8. Cp. 2 Chron. 13:1-22, called here "Abijah."

1. The battle with Jeroboam. 2 Chron. 13.
2. The sad characteristic. 1 Kings 15:3. An imperfect heart with God. The heart is the motivating part of man, and only as God reigns within can man be truly blessed. Note the heart. (1) Its description by nature; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21. (2) Appealed to by God; Prov. 3:5; Jer. 29:13. (3) Believing God's word; Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37. (4) Occupied by Christ; Eph. 3:17. (5) Enjoying communion with Him; Rev. 3:20.

II The Reign of Asa; 1 Kings 15:9-24. Cp. 2 Chron. 14:1—16-14.

1. The restoration. 1 Kings 15:9-15. (1) Idolatry put down; v. 12. (2) The queen mother dethroned; v. 13. (3) The house of the Lord restored; v. 15. Cp. 2 Cor. 7:9-11; Heb. 12:12, 13. 1 Cor. 11:31. There can be no real restoration until sin has been judged and put away. See 2 Cor. 6:14—7:1; Isa. 1:10-19.
2. The enemy defeated. 2 Chron. 14:9-15. Asa's prayer. His strong faith and its abundant answer. This is still the Divine order. After separation from all known sin, deliverance is promised from the enemy. See Romans 6: 13, 14.
3. The revival. 2 Chron. 15. (1) Its inspiration —God's message through Azariah; vs. 1-7. (a) Encouragement; v. 2, "God with you." Cp. 13:12; 32:8; Deut. 20:1; Matt. 28:18-20. (b) Precept. V. 2. "While ye be." See John 15:10; 1 John 2:24; 2 John 9-11. (c) Promise; v. 2. "He will be found." Cp. 1 Chron. 33:12, 13; Isa. 55:6, 7; 1 Chron. 28:9. (d) Plea; v. 7. Cp. Josh. 1:7-9; 1 Chron. 28:20; 2 Cor. 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:58; Col. 3:24; Gal. 6:9, 10. (2) Its manifestations; vs. 8-14. (a) Courage; v. 8. Cp. Psalm 27:1. (b) Cleansing; V. 8; 2 Cor. 7:1. (c) Communion; V. 8. "Altar." The plea of sacrifice and fellowship. Cp. Heb. 4:16; 10:19-22. (d) Consecration; V. 12; Romans 12:1, 2; Romans 6:13. (e) Its consumation; V. 15. Revival of rejoicing. Cp. Psalm 85:6.
4. The latter days. 2 Chron. 16:1-14. (1) His league with Syria; vs. 1-6. (2) The message from God; vs. 7-9. Note particularly v. 9. (3) The rage of Asa; v. 10. (4) His end; vs. 12-14. It is not enough for the believer to start well, but he must finish well also, if he is to be the testimony God wants him to be. See some other examples of those who did not finish well. Gal. 5:7; 3:3; 2 Tim. 4:10. See Paul's great desire; 1 Cor. 9:26, 27.

III. The Contemporaneous Kings of Israel. 1 Kings 15:25—16:34. A history of confusion, murder, usurpation and sin of every description. Refer briefly to these to give the historic setting.

1. Nadab; vs. 25, 26.
2. Baasha; vs. 27—16:6.
3. Elah; vs. 6-9.
4. Zimri; vs. 9-20.
5. Omri; vs. 16-28.
6. Ahab; vs. 28-34.

136. ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS

Read 1 Kings 17: 1-7.

Theme: God training Elijah.

Tell the story.

1. **And Elijah** (v. 1). Contrast these two words with the end of chapter 16, when, for the people of God, things looked their darkest. "Ahab (the king) did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him" (v. 30). His wicked, heathen wife, Jezebel, had done her utmost to stamp out the worship of Jehovah, the true God, and instead, to institute the worship of the sun god Baal, which was associated with every kind of sin and impurity. Idolatry was almost universally practised, and those who remained true to God worshipped Him in secret, in fear of their lives. The prophets of God were hunted down and killed. Of all the thousands in Israel, there were only 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

But God now steps in. Where there is a wicked Ahab, God has His Elijah ready; where there was Herod, He had John the Baptist; in the dark days of the reformation He had Luther; in the days of Mary Queen of Scots He had John Knox. Let us then not get disheartened by leaving **GOD** out of our calculations.

2. **Elijah was a man of prayer.** He prayed "earnestly" (James 5: 17). He prayed that it might not rain. This was a terrible prayer, for it meant drought and famine; but he did not pray in a spirit of anger or revenge; he longed to see his people turning to God, and if this great trial would bring them back to Him, then it would be well worth while. If we are to count for anything as people of prayer, then we must be righteous. "The . . . prayer of **a righteous** man availeth much" (James 5: 16). "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66: 18).

3. **The secret of his strength and courage.**

(a) **GOD was the source of his strength.** He did not depend on his own strength. His name means Jehovah is my God, or Jehovah is my strength. If we look to Jehovah as Elijah did, we shall be able to say with David, "The Lord is the **strength** of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps. 27: 1.) It was because of this that Elijah was able to face fearlessly the wicked King Ahab, and tell him the terrible news of the coming drought.

(b) **He practised the presence of God.** He always remembered that he stood in His presence. "The Lord God of Israel. . . before whom I stand" (v. 1), he was able to say to Ahab. He had learned to know God as "Jehovah Shammah," "the Lord is **there**"; that God was with him in all places and in all circumstances. God promised Jacob, "I am with thee. . . in all places whither thou goest. . . I will not leave thee" (Gen. 28: 15). We, too, may claim this promise. Let us believe that He is with us everywhere; let us learn to count on His presence even in the performance of the lowliest duties.

4. He was a man like us with the same temptations, the same old nature, the same difficulties; it was faith that made him what he

was. God used him, and He is willing to use us also. We sometimes look at others and think they are different from us, and that is the reason God uses them; we say they have a different temperament and disposition from us; they have had advantages which we have not had, and therefore it is of no use expecting God to use us as He does them. But for our encouragement God has said that Elijah "was a man subject to like passions as we are" (James 5: 17). We have the same God that he had; we have the same resources at our disposal that he had; then let us rely on **God** and **His** strength, not on what we are in ourselves.

5. **The Word of the Lord came to him** (v. 2). One of the most difficult things in the Christian life is guidance; how I may know what God wants me to do. It would be an easy thing for us to know if we could literally hear God's voice as the saints of old did, if we could ask Him a question and receive a direct answer as we do with an earthly friend. Yet God has promised to guide us, to let us know what He wishes us to do. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Ps. 32: 8). One thing is clear, the Word of the Lord will come to us only if we are prepared to do it. "If any man will do His will, he shall know" (John 7: 17).

(a) **The Word of the Lord comes to us through His written Word, the Bible.** He will never tell us to do anything contrary to the teaching of His Word. If a voice tells us to do something which is not in accordance with the teaching of the Bible, then we can be certain that the voice is not God's. When Satan tempted the Lord Jesus, He answered him each time with a verse from the Word of God, saying, "It is written" (Matt. 4: 4, 7, 10).

(b) **The Word of the Lord comes to us through circumstances**—by an open door or a shut door. But circumstances alone cannot be taken as an indication of God's will for us. Jonah was disobeying God in running away to Joppa instead of going to Nineveh, as God had plainly told him to do, yet he found a ship about to leave for Tarshish, he had the fare, and the captain was willing to give him a passage. The circumstances seemed to be right, but God had already revealed His will to him.

(c) **By an inward conviction when we pray** that this is the thing God wants us to do. When these three fit together, the Bible, circumstances, and this inward conviction, then we can be sure of God's will for us.

6. **Cherith was God's training place for Elijah** (v. 3).

(a) **Cherith means to separate.** Elijah had to go to the place of separation to be fitted for a great work. If we are to be used by God then we must separate ourselves from everything that would hinder Him from using us. Each of us knows what these things are. It was Abraham, the separated man, whom God blessed and used, not Lot who entered into the life of wicked Sodom (Gen. 13: 12, 13).

(b) **He had to HIDE himself there** (v. 3). How we love to bring ourselves to the fore, to occupy a prominent position, to be the centre of interest; but if we are to be used by God then we must HIDE ourselves. Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock and God covered him with his hand (Ex. 33: 22). Isaiah, prophesying of Christ, said, "He hath . . . made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath He hid me" (Is. 49: 2). What a blessed place to be hidden, in the quiver of God, at His side ready for Him to use.

(c) **He was fed there.** God promised to provide for him if he went THERE (v. 4), the place God had appointed for him. If we are in the will of God, in the place of His choosing, then He will supply our needs according to His promise (Phil. 4: 19). If Elijah had chosen to go anywhere else he could not expect God to provide for him.

(d) **God used the most unlikely means.** "I have commanded **the ravens to feed thee**" (v. 4)—ravens, to the Jews, were unclean birds (Lev. 11: 13, 15)—and in the ordinary way Elijah never would have expected God to use them to feed him. God sometimes uses messengers to us whom we would never choose, some humble servant of God to strengthen our faith and enrich our character, or people and things we do not like. If we could see **God's** hand behind the different circumstances, and the trying people with whom we come in contact, if we would understand that He is trying to teach us precious lessons through them, how different would be our attitude towards them. Just as the fire and hail, snow and vapour fulfil His Word (Ps. 148: 8), so He can cause the varied circumstancecs and people who come into our lives to bring about His own blessed purposes for us. Let us learn, "In **everything** to give thanks," even for the ravens whom God may send to us.

Memory Verse:—Isaiah 49: 2.—"He hath . . . made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me."

137. ELIJAH FED BY THE WIDOW

Read 1 Kings 17: 7-24.

Theme: God's refining fire.

Tell the story.

1. **God wanted Elijah to learn to trust Him only;** not to rely on His gifts, so He caused the brook Cherith to dry up. As long as the water was there Elijah may have almost unconsciously placed his trust in the water of the brook, instead of in God who had provided the water. How easy it is for us to think that we are trusting God, when actually we are putting our trust in His gifts. We may be relying on a person who has been a help to us in our Christian life, and all the time think we are depending on God only. We may be depending on some gift God has given us, and think we are looking to God himself. God, therefore, sometimes causes our brooks to dry up. He removes to another place the person in whom we have been leaning. He so alters our circumstances that things on which we depended disappear. It was not till the brook dried up that God sent Elijah to Zarephath, and while it was drying up Elijah's faith must have been severely tested. When all provision seemed to have failed, God said, "Get thee to Zarephath. . . I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee" (v. 9).

2. **Elijah waited for God's command before moving on.** When we become anxious about anything, we are prone to run ahead of God; to make our own plans, and then ask God to bless them. The Children of Israel waited for the moving of the cloud before they broke camp. When the cloud journeyed, they journeyed; when the cloud stopped, they stopped (Num. 9: 19-21). "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" (Ps. 37: 7).

3. **God sent him to Zarephath, which means smelting furnace,** to be sustained by a widow belonging to a heathen people. It must have been humiliating for the prophet of God to be dependent on this widow, yet this was God's refining fire for Elijah to cleanse him of pride, self-reliance and independence. God had been dealing with Elijah at Cherith, teaching him the life of separation and dependence upon Him; now He teaches him further precious lessons. "For Thou, O God, hast proved us; Thou hast tried us as silver is tried" (Ps. 66: 10). "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver" (Mal. 3: 3). The fire does not destroy, it only purifies.

4. **Elijah's words to the widow** (vv. 13, 14).)

(a) **Fear not.** Things looked very black for the widow, for she and her son were at the point of starvation, yet it was in her extremity that the prophet said to her, "Fear not." When we are passing through the waters of trouble and the fire of testing, God's comforting and reassuring words come to us. "Fear not. . . when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee. . . when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned" (Is. 43: 1, 2).

(b) "**Me . . . first** and **after** for thee and thy son" (v. 13). As God was first at the Creation—"In the beginning God" (Gen. 1: 1), so He must come first in our lives. "That in all things He (Christ) might have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1: 18). "Seek ye **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6: 33).

5. **Need supplied.** God's promises are sure and certain. "Thus saith the Lord. . . the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall

the cruse of oil fail" (v. 14). But God does not always work in the same way. At Cherith He used ravens; at Zarephath He used a poor widow, but, in both instances, they were commanded of God (vv. 4, 9). He was behind the provision. Let us see God's hand in the supplying of our daily needs, even when it comes through the most ordinary channels.

6. **Elijah's life in the home.**

(a) **He was seen to be a man of God** (v. 18). The widow saw him at close quarters; she watched his life in the home and could still address him as "thou man of God." Many people shine as Christians **outside** the home, in the church, or among their friends, yet in the home how different they are. They think it does not matter what they say or do before their own folk, but this is just the place where we should shine for God. David said, "I will walk **within my house** with a perfect heart" (Ps. 101: 2). Oh, to be known in our own homes as people of God. It is there that we need to exercise patience, gentleness and unselfishness because the home is the place where we most need patience and where the greatest demands are made upon us. Because Elijah lived the life of a man of God there, the widow was able to say, "The Word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth" (v. 24).

(b) **He was content with what was provided**—the simple food and conditions. Some would have called it a hand-to-mouth existence, but if that were so then it was from God's hand to his mouth. Paul had learned a blessed lesson when he was able to say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4: 11). "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6: 8). "Be content with such things as ye have" (Heb. 13: 5).

(c) **He returned a soft answer.** In her trouble and sorrow the distracted mother spoke harshly to the man whom God had used to save her and her son from starvation (v. 18). Elijah might have angrily told her of her ingratitude, instead of which he gently replied, "Give me thy son" (v 19), reminding us of our Lord "who, when He was reviled, reviled not again" (1 Pet. 2: 23). If our Christianity does not enable us to live a life of victory in the home then we know nothing of the victorious life. "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15: 1).

7. **Elijah's prayer.**

(a) **It was not for himself but for another.** Too often we pray only for our own needs, both temporal and spiritual, but the Lord wants us to be intercessors. "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all . . . prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2: 1).

(b) **It was earnest and definite.** He cried unto the Lord and prayed that the child might live. Let us be definite in prayer, making known our requests unto God.

(c) **It was effectual.** The Lord heard the voice of Elijah and the child lived (v. 22). God was able to hear and answer Elijah's prayer because his life was right with God. "The effectual fervent prayer of a **righteous** man availeth much" (James 5: 16). David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66: 18). God has promised to answer prayer, but we must fulfil the conditions.

Memory Verse.—Psalm 101: 2.—"I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."

ELIJAH'S PROPHECY AND SUPPLY

1 Kings 17:1-24

Golden Text: Jeremiah 33:3

I. The Setting; 1 Kings 16:29-34.

1. Ahab's evil reign; vs. 29-33. (1) His infamous wife; v. 31. (2) His idolatrous practices; vs. 31-33.
2. The rebuilding of Jericho; v. 34. Cp. Josh. 6:26. Fulfilled prophecy is one of the hallmarks of its inspiration. Cp. Isa. 45:21; 41: 22, 23; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

II. The Prophecy; 17:1. Elijah suddenly appears. We know nothing of his parentage and upbringing, but God undoubtedly prepared him for the work in the quietness of his own home. Cp. John the Baptist; Luke 3:1, 2. "The word of God came unto John." See also Christ's 30 silent years in Nazareth; Luke 2: 50, 51.

1. Its authority—God. James 5:16-18. The mighty power of prayer.
2. Its content; v. 1. No dew or rain. Cp. Deut. 11:13-18. Apply spiritually the results of sin. (1) A closed heaven—no communion. (2) A parched and thirsty land—no joy. (3) A fruitless country—no blessing.

III. The Provision; vs. 2-16.

1. The ravens; vs. 2-7. This provision was (1) Divinely appointed; v. 2. Cp. Dan. 4:25; Psalm 148:7-10. Created by Him, controlled by Him. See Matt. 17:27. (2) Unexpected. "Ravens." The least likely means. The ravens were unclean birds, yet God used them to supply the needs of His servant. Cp. Acts 28:2; Matt. 7:25-34. (3) Regular "morning and eve." Cp. Phil. 4:19. Jehova Jireh—The Lord will provide.
2. The widow; vs. 8-16. Cp. 1 Cor. 1:26-28. (1) Her description; v. 1. "A widow." A most unlikely source of supply. (2) Her condition, typical of the sinner; vs. 10-12. (a) Poor. Cp. Luke 7:42; Eph. 2:12. (b) Starving. Cp. Eccles. 1:2; Psalm 107:5, 9; Matt. 5:6; Luke 1:53. Cp. Soul hunger. (c) Hopeless. "Die." Romans 6:23; Heb. 9:27. (3) The solicitation; vs. 11-13. "First." God must come first. Cp. Matt. 6:33; 2 Cor. 8:5. (4) The explanation; v. 14. The Divine promise. Num. 23:19. (5) The realization; vs. 15, 16. The unfailing supply. Note some things that "fail not." (a) His Presence and Power. Deut. 31:6. (b) Provision. 1 Kings 17:14. (c) His Promises. Josh. 21:45; Luke 16:17. (d) Faithfulness. Psalm 89:33. Cp. 2 Tim. 2:13. (e) His Son. Isa. 42:4. (f) Compassions; Lam. 3:22. (g) Future glory. Luke 12:33.

IV. The Widow's Son Raised; vs. 17-24.

1. Desolation—death the enemy; v. 17. Cp. Romans 5:12; 6:23. Death has well been called "The grim reaper," for he has gathered a fearful harvest of old and young.
2. Distress; v. 18. How often in the moment of distress the soul fails to see the hand of God.
3. Supplication; v. 20. Here is "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man." Cp. Matt. 7:7; Jer. 33:3; John 14:12-14; Eph. 3:20.
4. Restoration; vs. 21-23. The gift of life bestowed. Cp. The new birth through faith in Christ. John 3:3, 14-16; Eph. 1:13.
5. Her testimony; v. 24. "Now I know." Cp. 1 John 5:13; 2 Tim. 1:12.

138. OBADIAH

Read 1 Kings 18: 1-18.

Theme: A contrast.

Tell the story.

1. **Obadiah feared the Lord** (v. 3). Notice the expression, "Feared the Lord." The fear of the Lord spoken of in Scripture is not a slavish fear, but a holy fear which springs from reverence, a fear based on love, a fear to grieve the One who has done so much for us. God is our loving Father, but we need to remember that He is also the mighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the One before Whom the angels veil their faces. "God is greatly to be **feared** in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in **reverence** of all them that are about Him" (Ps. 89: 7). "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with **reverence** and **godly fear**" (Heb. 12: 28). "Holy and reverend is His Name" (Ps. 111: 9). Let us so fear Him that we will not lightly use His name in speech, in prayer, or in the singing of choruses and hymns.

2. **Obadiah feared the Lord from his youth** (v. 12). It is a blessed thing to come to know the Lord while we are young. Samuel came to Him as a child, and continued to serve Him to old age; David loved God from a youth; Josiah served Him from a child. To come to God in early life saves from a misspent and wasted life, and from countless regrets. It is a grand thing to surrender one's life to God while there is the whole of life before one in which to serve Him. It helps us to form right and helpful friendships and associations which will mean much to us as we travel through life; it will help us to form good habits (and there will not be bad ones to undo) which will become almost second nature.

We do not know who led Obadiah to God in those times, when practically the whole nation was given up to idolatry. Perhaps he had godly parents, for his name means "the servant of Jehovah," and it probably cost them something to give him this name when so many had turned away from God.

3. **He fed one hundred prophets of God,** hiding them in a cave, and probably risking his own life in order to do so (v. 13). He was obviously a timid man, yet in a measure he overcame his fear in order to help these servants of God. Although he had to do it secretly, it must have been generally known to the people of God, for Obadiah said to Elijah, "Was it not told my lord. . . how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave and fed them with bread and water?" (v. 13.) All these things commended Obadiah, but now we shall contrast him with Elijah, the fearless man of God, and see where he failed.

4. **He occupied a position which forced him to keep silent about his allegiance to God.** We read of Joseph at Pharaoh's court, of Daniel at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, of the saints in the wicked Caesar's household, but they did not hide their faith and their witness. God has need of His witnesses everywhere. He sometimes places them in positions where they are surrounded with godless-

ness, but never to hide their light under a bushel. Obadiah knew what was right, and secretly tried to do it, but he was afraid to rebuke the sin that went on round him, and so come out boldly on God's side. He may often have had to quieten his conscience, to make compromises, and to sacrifice principle. Had he witnessed faithfully for God, is it likely that Ahab would have allowed him to remain in the position of governor or steward of his house? Perhaps he made a mistake in ever taking the position he did. How important it is to be in the place God has chosen for us, to ask Him what **He** would have us do, what position He would have us take up. It cannot be right to be in a position where we are forced to hide our faith or to do things contrary to our Christian principles. If we do, we shall soon find that we are drifting away from God and joining the ranks of the backsliders. Sometimes we are told that we must make worldly friends, joining in their amusements in order to help them up to our level, but in practice this always works the other way, for they drag us down to theirs. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6: 17).

5. **He was always afraid.** His must have been a life of constant fear, fear that it might be found out that he belonged to God; fear that what he was doing for God's prophets might be discovered; fear of the wicked King Ahab, and in fear of his life. Three times he spoke to Elijah about his being killed (vv. 9, 12, 14). "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29: 25). What a contrast Elijah was to him. Because Elijah was conscious always of standing in the Presence of God, he had little regard for what Ahab might do to him. He feared God so greatly that he had no fear of the king. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1: 7). Elijah was like Paul, who said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1: 16). I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him" (2 Tim. 1: 12). Obadiah was like the secret believers of John 12: 42, 43. "Among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue."

6. **He was tolerated, but Elijah was hated, by Ahab.** Obadiah had never incurred the anger of the king because he had never rebuked his sin. It was when John the Baptist told Herod of his immoral life that he cast him into prison, and later beheaded him (Mark 6: 17, 18, 27). It was Elijah's life that the king sought. It was to Elijah he said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" (v. 17.) He blamed Elijah for the results of his sin and that of the nation.

Later he said of another of God's prophets, who would not speak smooth things but told him the truth, "I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil" (1 Kings 22: 8).

Go with the world, do what the world does, and it will probably tell you that you are a "jolly good sort," that you have not too much religion, you are not "pi". But you will never do anything to help them to Christ, your influence in that direction will be nil. Christ said, "If ye were of the world, the would would love his own; but because ye are not of the world. . . therefore the world hateth you" (John 15: 19).

Memory Verse.—Proverbs 29: 25.—"The fear of man bringeth a snare."

139. ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL

Read 1 Kings 18: 19-41.
Theme: Making a great decision.
Tell the story.

On Mount Carmel there were three kinds of persons, the devoted servant of God, Elijah; the servants of the evil one, the false prophets; the waverers, the great multitude who could not come to a decision. There are these three kinds of persons to-day.

1. **Making a decision.**

(a) **Making a decision is a necessity.** "How long halt ye between **two opinions**"? (v. 21) said Elijah to the waverers, meaning "how long will you take to make up your minds whom you are really going to follow?" They could not serve both God and Baal, which apparently they wished to do. God will be all or nothing. "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6: 24). **"Choose. . .** whom ye will serve," said Joshua to the children of Israel (Josh. 24: 15). We, too, have to make a decision, either to accept Christ or reject Him. "Barabbas or Jesus," said Pilate to the crowd. They said "Barabbas." "What will you do then with Jesus?" he asked again; and they answered "Let Him be crucified" (Matt. 27: 21, 22).

(b) **It is a PERSONAL decision.** "How long halt **ye**? If the Lord be God, follow Him" (v. 21). "Choose **you** whom ye will serve," said Joshua (Josh 24: 15). And so with us, it must be a **personal** decision for or against Christ. No one else can make it for us. By an act of **your** will you make the great decision. The rich young ruler faced up to this great decision. For him it was a great refusal, and he went away sorrowful.

(c) **It should be an IMMEDIATE decision. "HOW LONG halt ye,"** Joshua said. "Choose you **this day** whom ye will serve?" The Holy Spirit says, **"Now** is the accepted time. . . **now** is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2). Some have been halting for a long time, thinking perhaps by and by they will make the great decision. They do not intend to reject Christ altogether, they just procrastinate. This is dangerous, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27: 1). The longer we put off making a decision to serve and follow Christ, the less likely we are to do it; for the older people grow the more difficult it becomes. Satan does his utmost to prevent them from coming to Him. God says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6: 3). He is wonderfully patient "not willing than any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9), but if people go on refusing to heed His call to them to come to Him, then judgment must fall, as it did in the days of the Great Flood (Gen. 6).

(d) **Their response to Elijah's appeal to make a decision.** "The people answered him not a word" (v. 21). They were sitting on the fence, waiting to see how things would go, and if it would be to their worldly advantage to do as Elijah urged. They knew they **ought** to do it; they had no adequate reason for not doing it; but they just didn't.

2. **Elijah AND God.** Elijah said, "I only remain a prophet of the Lord," and the false prophets were 850 (vv. 19, 22). One man against 850! But Elijah was not alone; it was Elijah AND God, and "One man with God is always in the majority." The secret of Elijah's courage in standing alone among so many was, that he was able to say, as David did, "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear; what can man do unto me?" (Ps. 118: 6). His life was right with

God therefore, "the righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. 28: 1). Do you feel that you stand alone for God and everything and everyone is against you? Learn to count on God's Presence and help and "if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8: 31).

3. **The false prophets.**

(a) **Their prayer was vain repetition,** "O Baal, hear us," they continued to cry from morning till noon (v. 26). They thought they would be heard for their much speaking. Our Lord warns us against this very thing when He said, "But when **ye** pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking" (Matt. 6: 7). Real prayer is not saying over and over again certain set phrases. Prayer that counts comes from the heart.

(b) **Their fervour.** "They leaped upon the altar. . . they cried aloud and cut themselves. . . with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them" (vv. 26, 28). There was plenty of motion, plenty of religion, **but no fire.** We may be very active in God's service, we may have plenty of religion, doing things for "the church" instead of for the Christ of the Church, and yet have no real fire, no power whatever in our lives.

4. **The altar repaired.** Before God could hear and answer prayer and send the fire to show His power, things had to be put right. Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down (vv. 30-32). He obeyed the commandment of the Lord in doing this. "If thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone" (Ex. 20: 25). If we expect God to do His part we must do ours. And things must also be done in God's way. Elijah arranged the altar according to God's directions (vv. 30-32).

5. **Elijah's short prayer.** He prayed for three things (vv. 36,37).

(a) **For God's power and glory.** "Let it be known. . . that **Thou** art God in Israel. He longed that the people should know that **He** was the true God, and He asked Him to show His power.

(b) **For humility.** He prayed that the people might know that he himself was only God's servant. He knew that the power was not his; he was only the instrument God used.

(c) **For repentance.** That the hearts of the people might be turned back again to God. He knew that there would be no lasting work done in their hearts and lives unless they were turned "from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26: 18).

Then the fire of the Lord fell—the people worshipped God (vv. 38, 39). Oh to see God's power descending like fire and people turning to God in answer to **our** prayers.

6. **Sin must be judged and put away.** Not one of the false prophets must escape, Elijah said (v. 40). Before God could send the abundance of rain the false prophets, who were God's rivals in the hearts of the people, must be got rid of. If we allow sin to remain in our lives it is of no use to ask God to pour out His blessing.

7. **Elijah's prayer for rain. It was reverent** (v. 42). He did not enter God's Presence lightly, he cast himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees (v. 42).

It was persistent. He kept on even when there was no sign of the answer. He said to his servant, "Go again seven times" (v. 43).

He asked in faith. He **expected** the answer, sending his servant to look for the clouds which should indicate that the much longed for rain was on its way. "O Lord. . . will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and **will look up**" (Ps. 5: 3).

It was abundantly answered. "There was a great rain" (v. 45).

Memory Verse.—Joshua 24: 15.—"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

ELIJAH AT CARMEL

1 Kings 18

Golden Text: 1 Kings 18:21

I. The Commission; V. 1. The three years of drought about to be broken. God's purpose in His judgments upon the earth. Isa. 26:9. He is still "The Governor amongst the nations" Psalm 22:28.

II. The Meeting With Obadiah; vs. 2-16. Contrast Obadiah's fear of the King and his secret discipleship with Elijah's fearlessness and bold avowal. Cp. John 12:42, 43; 2 Tim. 1:12; Romans 1:16; 2 Tim. 1:7.

III. The Meeting With Ahab; vs. 17-20.

1. The question; v. 17. How often men blame God for the trouble they bring on themselves. What Ahab needed was a looking glass to locate the seat of the trouble! See Isa. 57:20, 21. Psalm 107: 17.
2. The answer; v. 18. Bold and uncompromising. Cp. 2 Sam. 12:17; Isa. 58:1; Ezek. 33:1-6.
3. The command; vs. 19, 20.

IV The Test of the Living and True God; vs. 21-40.

1. The question; v. 21. To a backsliding, vacillating and procrastinating people. The folly of indecision. God demands an immediate decision, either one way or the other. See Matt. 6:24. Press home this truth.
2. The Test; v. 22. One with God, against 450 without God. (1) The proposal; vs. 23, 24. "The God that answereth" must be the living and true God. (2) The vain cry; vs. 25-29. (a) Their prayer; v. 26, "hear us." (b) Their fervour; v. 26. "Leaped," plenty of motion and religious antics, but no fire! Cp. modern false cults with their claims, and ornate ritual, but no regenerations! (c) Elijah's mockery; v. 27. Cp. Psalm 135:15-18. (d) Their utter failure; vs. 28, 29. (3) The altar of the Lord re-erected; v. 30. Access to God restored. His word obeyed and God given His pre-eminent place. Cp. Jer. 6:16. Sin acknowledged and sacrifice provided, showing that the only way into God's favor was by means of a Divinely appointed and Divinely accepted sacrifice. (4) The test altar erected. The unity of Israel reaffirmed; vs. 31-36. No possibility of "chance" allowed. God must have all the glory. (5) Elijah's prayer; 36, 37. Its reverence, simplicity, faith and singleness of eye to God's honor. (6) The miracle; v. 38. Compare the great mystery and miracle of Calvary, when the fire of God's wrath fell, in all its fury, upon the One Who willingly bore our sins in His Own Body on the tree." This is God's demonstration to all the world, of His love, mercy, holiness, justice and truth. Has it resulted in your conversion? (7) The result; v. 39. Conversion to God. (8) The judgment on the idolatrous priests; v. 40. Cp. Deut. 13:5; 18:20.

V. The Showers of Blessing; vs. 41-46.

1. The dynamic of prayer; vs. 41, 42. James 5: 17, 18.; 1:6, 7; Mark 11:22-24.
2. The abundance of rain; vs. 43-46. From a small beginning about the size of a "man's hand" to a mighty torrent. Cp. Ezek. 34:26.

140. ELIJAH UNDER THE JUNIPER TREE

Read 1 Kings 19: 1-8.
Theme: Elijah's failure and God's tenderness.
Tell the story.

1. **Ahab and Jezebel were still unrepentant** in spite of the manifestation of God's great power on Mount Carmel (18: 38), and His great goodness in sending rain (18: 45). They hardened their hearts against God, refusing to listen to His call. "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. 29: 1). This became true of Jezebel, who met with a tragic end (2 Kings 9: 30, 33). "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10: 31).

2. **Elijah's weakness and failure.** After a great victory there sometimes follows a reaction. Elijah had been wonderful on Mount Carmel, standing alone for God who marvellously used him in praying down fire from heaven, and then rain. He had fearlessly faced Ahab, yet now we see him fleeing from a woman, the wicked Queen Jezebel. Compare him with Peter, who also was afraid of the talk of a woman, and denied his Lord. Contrast him with God's servant Nehemiah, who, when threatened, said, "Should such a man as I flee?" (Neh. 6: 11.)

3. **Why Elijah fled:**

(a) **Because he was a man of like passions with ourselves** (James 5: 17). He failed in the very point at which he was strongest, and this is where most people fail. He failed in courage. Abraham, the man of faith, failed in faith; Job, the most patient of men failed in patience; Moses, the meekest of men, spoke hasty and bitter words. Perhaps it is that we fail to watch the **strong** places in our character, and become self-confident. The very thing that Peter protested he could never do he did when he denied his Lord. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10: 12). Elijah was strong in **God's** strength, and when this was gone he was as weak at anyone else, a man of like passions with ourselves.

(b) **He looked away from God and thought only of Jezebel's power,** and so was afraid. "He went for his life" (v. 3). Too often we get our eyes off God and on to the difficult circumstances in which we find ourselves, or the difficult people with whom we have to associate. When we do this the difficulties become greatly magnified, and our Jezebels seem to us to be much more powerful. We need to keep our eyes ever toward the Lord so that He shall pluck our feet out of the net (Ps. 25: 15).

(c) **He was lonely.** He thought he stood quite alone for God, yet God had 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal. How it would have cheered and encouraged God's servant if at least some of the 7000 had come out boldly and taken their places on his side and on the side of God. You may be in a place where you think you are the only Christian, but there may be others who would be glad to know that you belong to Christ, and who would long to have fellowship with you.

4. **His Prayer** (v. 4). He prayed that he might die. What a contrast to his other prayers when his only desire was for God's glory.

(a) **It was a foolish prayer.** He prayed that he might die because he was afraid that he would die (v. 4). He was running away from Jezebel because she had threatened to kill him, yet he prayed that he might die! How inconsistent he was with his unbelieving fears. God, who had protected him against Ahab, could do so against Jeze-

bel. Had his faith been strong how different everything would have appeared.

(b) **It was a cowardly prayer.** If, as he thought, he was the only one of God's people left, then he was needed more than ever. Elisha had not yet been called of God to carry on Elijah's work. Elijah had as yet no successor. The reason he gave for wanting to die was the very one which should have made him want to live. Who has not, at some time or another, wanted to throw up everything because the going was hard? David once moaned, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away, and be at rest. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest" (Ps. 55: 6, 8). But he afterwards learned to make his refuge in the shadow of **God's** wings something far better than **dove's** wings with which to escape (Ps. 57: 1). There was something better for Elijah than dying in the wilderness, he was to go up to heaven in a whirlwind with the accompanying chariot of fire (2 Kings 2: 11). He would have missed this if God had answered his prayer from under the juniper tree. Not for the child of God is it to sit under the juniper tree, which since the days of Elijah has come to stand for a fit of great depression. How glad afterwards he must have been that this particular prayer of his was not answered. We, too, have reason to thank God for our unanswered prayers, which have been offered in ignorance and foolishness.

(c) **He prayed, "It is enough,** now, O Lord, take away my life" (v. 4). But it was not enough, his work was not yet finished. Not yet could he say with Paul, "I have finished my course" (2 Tim. 4: 7), or with Christ, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do" (John 17: 4). He said, "It is enough," but God had further blessings in store for him. We sometimes are tempted to say to God, "It is enough," the pain is enough, the sorrow is enough, the trial is enough, and we feel we can bear no more, but God will not put upon us more than we are able to bear.

5. **God's tenderness towards Elijah.** Let us note how God dealt with His weary, discouraged, depressed overwrought child. He was nervously exhausted, and the reason for his mental condition was largely physical. God who made him, knew his frame and remembered that he was dust (Ps. 103: 14). Therefore—

(a) **He allowed him to sleep.** We do not always make allowances for these bodies of ours, and a depression which we think comes entirely from spiritual causes, may largely be the result of something physical, of overwork and weariness. As sleep restores the tired body, so "He (God) restoreth my soul" (Ps. 23: 3). The Lord Jesus said to His weary disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart. . . . and rest a while (Mark 6: 31).

(b) **Then He fed him with food He Himself had prepared.** When we have been tired, depressed and discouraged, how often the Lord has given us food from His Word to strengthen and sustain us. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them," said the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 15: 16). "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11: 28). "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd" (Is. 40: 11).

(c) **He did everything to show that He still loved His dear servant.** "Having loved His own. . . He loved them unto the end" (John 13: 1). His is an **everlasting** love which nothing can alter (Jer. 31: 3). And so although Elijah failed God, God did not fail him. God's love to us does not depend upon our love to Him. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5: 8). When we had no love for Him, He loved us and that love never changes.

Memory Verse.—John 13: 1.—"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

141. ELIJAH AT MOUNT HOREB

Read 1 Kings 19: 9-18.

Theme: God seeking Elijah.

Tell the story.

1. **The Word of the Lord came to Elijah** (v. 9). It had come to him on previous occasions, telling him to go to Cherith (17: 3); then to go to Zarephath (17: 8, 9); it came to him again telling him to go and show himself to Ahab (18: 1). Each time he was in the will of God, and was quick to obey. Now, though he is **out** of the will of God, the Word of the Lord still comes to him, following him up, seeking to bring him back to the place where he would be in the will of God. There is no place where God's love and God's Word cannot reach us. How does it come to us when we have strayed from the path God has marked out for us? Perhaps in the reading of the portion of God's Word we have chosen for the day, perhaps through a message from God's Word given by one of His servants, or perhaps by a voice speaking to our inmost heart and conscience. After refreshing His weary and discouraged servant, God proceeds to deal with him.

2. **God's searching question,** "What doest thou **here,** Elijah? (v. 9). Elijah was certainly in the wrong place at this time. We read of others in God's Word who were found in wrong places; Peter by the enemies' fire (Luke 22: 55), and it was the Lord's look that brought him back (Luke 22: 61). Abraham in Egypt (Gen. 12: 10); Jonah in the ship going to Tarshish, when he should have been going to Nineveh (Jon. 1: 1-3). The Word of the Lord came to Jonah **the second time** (Jon. 3: 1). Let us thank God when His Word and command comes to us the second time. David was on the housetop when he should have been on the battlefield with his men (2 Sam. 11: 1, 2); Lot in Sodom (Gen. 14: 12). Do you ever hear God's voice saying to you, "What doest thou **here?**" These same words may have reached you when you were at some worldly place of amusement, or with some companion who is not a Christian; they may have come to you when you were following a path you had marked out for yourself, or when you have abandoned some work for God because the going was too difficult. The searching question gave Elijah an opportunity to confess his failure, but instead of doing this he defends himself, gives way to self-pity, and evades God's question. Have we not often been guilty of doing the same?

3. **God taught Elijah that He does not always speak in the same way,** not always in the strong wind, the earthquake, and the fire. More often He speaks to the hearts of people in a still small voice. What is the still small voice? It is the voice of God speaking by His Holy Spirit to our inmost soul, either in conversion, or in teaching, or in calling us to some special service. It may be in the quiet of our own room when we have been reading His word or praying to Him. He comes to some in an earthquake, as He did to the Philippian jailor (Acts 16: 26), but He came to Lydia quietly, just opening her heart to receive Him and His Word (Acts 16: 14).

4. **The effect of the still small voice** (v. 13).

(a) **Humiliation.** He wrapped his face in his mantle like the angels who veil their faces in the presence of God. Perhaps he felt his own unworthiness, perhaps he was ashamed of having doubted God's ability or willingness to deliver him from Jezebel, or he may have been ashamed for coming here without God's orders. It was when Isaiah saw the Lord that he said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Is. 6: 1, 5).

(b) **Obedience.** God had said to Elijah, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord" (v. 11). He did not go when he heard the great strong wind, or when he felt the earthquake or saw the fire. It was when he heard the still small voice that he stood in the entering in of the cave (v. 13). It was God's gentleness which subdued him.

5. **God recommissioned him.** Not always when people fail are they allowed to carry out God's original purpose for their lives, as was the case with Jonah when God spoke to him the second time, giving him the same commission. Peter was forgiven, restored and used in an even greater measure than before. God gave Elijah further work to do, to anoint Hazael to be King over Syria, to anoint Jehu to be King over Israel, and to anoint Elisha to be his own successor. Later the Word of the Lord came again to Elijah as of old. He was called back to service, and fearlessly delivered God's message of coming judgment to Ahab (ch. 21: 17-19), though Jezebel was still alive.

6. **God encouraged him** by telling him of the 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal (v. 18). These people were unknown to Elijah, but they were known to God. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. 2: 19). He knew by name each of these 7000 scattered throughout the country. They may not have been very brave in God's service in those difficult times, still they had remained true to Him. He knew exactly how many there were, and He did not disown them.

7. **Elijah again in the path of obedience.** "So he departed thence" (v. 19). His first work was to appoint Elisha as his own successor. We wonder how Elijah felt about this, for it meant that soon he was to lay down the work God had given him to do, and another was to take his place. But before God was to take His dear servant Elijah home to heaven, he and Elisha, who became a son to him, were to spend happy years together in the Lord's service.

Memory Verse.—1 Kings 19: 9.—"The Word of the Lord came to him, and He said unto him, what doest thou here, Elijah?"

142. GOD'S CALL TO ELISHA

Read 1 Kings 19: 19-21.

Theme: Obeying God's call.

Tell the story.

1. **Elisha and his parents remained true to God in difficult times.** They were among the 7000, perhaps widely scattered and unknown to each other, who had not bowed the knee to the idol Baal. We think of Enoch and Noah surrounded by godless people, of Joseph in Pharoah's house, of Moses at the heathen court, of Daniel in Babylon, and the little maid who was servant to Naaman's wife; all these remained true to God in spite of the idolatry and godlessness round them. He who kept them true to Himself, and free from the sins round them, is able to keep us also. We may live in a home where our people are not Christians, or we may have to work with godless companions, yet God's Word holds true for us in these circumstances, **He is "able** to keep you from falling" (Jude 24). We are "kept by the power of God through faith (1 Pet. 1: 5). Probably for years, God had been preparing Elisha for a great work.

2. **God needed a successor to Elijah,** and He chose this young man and called Him to this service. When Elijah put his mantle on Elisha he meant, "Follow me; take up my work," and Elisha knew just what this action meant. God needs young men and women to train for His service. Many of His workers are growing old, and they will soon be called up higher. Who are to fill the ranks? Are you preparing to fill a gap? You may still be at school, but your preparation can begin now. Many of God's missionary servants first heard the call when they were quite young.

3. **What constitutes a call.** There is no mantle to be thrown across our shoulders as in the case of Elisha. We do not literally hear a voice as God's servants of old did. How then may we know God's call and to what particular service? Some have said that the need constitutes the call. To a certain extent this is true, but the call must come to the individual. It must be a personal call. Every Christian is, of course, called to work for Christ. The problem is to know whether it is to be at home or abroad, and if abroad, to what particular field. There are conditions to knowing His will for our lives. We must be prepared to lay aside our own desires and ambitions and to pray, "Lord what wilt **Thou have me to do?"** (Acts 9: 6.) Prayer and waiting upon God is the first step. Pray, and if you are not called to leave home and loved ones the burden upon your heart will lift and you will be at peace. God reveals His will to us by circumstances, by His Word and by opening or closing doors. It is difficult to define a call to a soul, but when it does come you will know it unmistakably.

4. **The cost of the call.** What the call meant to Elisha.

(a) It involved leaving the home of his childhood with all its tender associations, it meant giving up his business, his farm and his wealth, with all the comforts it brought to him. It meant becoming a wanderer, with no settled home, often being hunted for his life.

All this entailed the sacrifice of much which he held dear. What will the call mean to us? If we are called to go out to heathen lands, it will involve sacrifice as it did to Elisha, leaving native land, home and loved ones for Christ's sake and the gospel's (Mark 10: 29). If we are not called to serve Him overseas, then we are called to serve Him at home, and all true service involves sacrifice—small self-denials in giving up comforts and pleasures, sacrificing something in order to serve Him.

(b) **He became a servant to Elijah.** For seven years he washed Elijah's hands so often that he became known as Elisha that poured water on the hands of Elijah (2 Kings 3: 11), in other words, Elisha the servant. Instead of being a master, waited on by servants, he himself became a servant waiting upon others. The disciples were not willing to do the menial work of a servant by washing one another's feet, yet the Lord of Glory did it. "Know ye what I have done to you," said our Lord. If He did it for His disciples we should be willing to do it for one another. May we not be like Diotrophes, who loved to have the pre-eminence (3 John 9). Alas that so many who profess to be followers of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, should desire and insist on having the chief places even in Christian work.

5. **Elisha's Divided Heart.** At first his mind was not fully made up (v. 20). Elijah could see below the surface and into Elisha's heart when the young man said, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and **then** I will follow thee," and so the old prophet replied, "Go back again; for what have I done to thee?" (v. 20.) Elijah would not force the young man into this work. Elisha must be fully persuaded in his own mind that this is God's call to him and he must be prepared to obey. God must have all or nothing. The men in Luke 9: 57-62 were divided in their loyalty, and Christ knew it when He said, " No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (v. 62). He must have an undivided heart, for He will not use half-hearted people in His service.

6. **The compensations.** Elisha received teaching from Elijah, the man of God; he enjoyed his fellowship; he became to him a son. There are compensations promised to those who give up all for Christ's sake and the Gospel's.

(a) **We are promised the hundredfold now in this time,** houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions and in the world to come eternal life (Mark 10: 30).

(b) **Commendation from our Lord.** "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25: 21). What great joy this will be to those of us who love Him.

(c) **A crown of righteousness.** "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (2 Tim. 4: 8), said the aged Paul as he drew near the end of his earthly course. He was able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith (2 Tim. 4: 7). God is no man's debtor, and He will more than make up to us for anything we may have given up for Him, any sacrifices we may have made for Him.

Memory Verse.—Matthew 16: 24.—**"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."**

ELIJAH'S FLIGHT AND REVELATION

1 Kings 19

Golden Text: Isaiah 40:31

I. Jezebel's Threat; 19:1, 2. Her fury at the death of the priests of Baal. In spite of the clear evidence of the folly and sin of Baal worship she persisted in her iniquity. Cp. The hypnotic power of error to blind and dull the reason. Cp. 2 Thess. 2:11, 12; Eph. 4: 18.

II. Elijah's Flight; vs. 3-8. The tragedy of reaction. How often a great depression of spirit follows a great victory. The physical is closely allied to the spiritual. An overtaxed body needs recuperation.

1. The flight; vs. 3, 4.
2. The request; v. 4. For death. Cp. Num. 11: 15 and Jonah 4. Here is a saint in the wrong place. Cp. others. Abram in Egypt. Gen. 12:10. Jonah in the whale. Jonah 2. The deceived prophet. 1 Kings 13:14. David on house top. 2 Sam. 11. Lot in Sodom. Gen. 14:12. Peter by the fire. Luke 22:55. The causes of Elijah's depression were (1) Physical weakness. He had had a thrilling experience, a strenuous time and a long journey that exhausted his nervous energy. (2) Abounding wickedness. Israel was apostate, vice was rampant. Elijah could not see it and be unmoved and he testified against it until it became an obsession to him and robbed him of his fellowship with God. (3) Lack of employment. Under the juniper tree and in the cave he got "rusty." He mistook isolation for separation. It is good to be active in His service.
3. The refreshment; vs. 5-7. Cp. Psalm 103:13 ,14. Cp. John 21:9.
4. The journey; v. 8. Cp. Eph. 3:16; 1 Peter 2: 1, 2; 1 John 2:14; Eph. 6:10.

III. God's Revelation; v. 9.

1. The query; v. 9. What doest thou here? Cp. Jonah 1:6.
2. The response; v. 10. Elijah interceeds against Israel. Elijah became the accuser of Israel instead of the intercessor. For this he was deposed and another chosen to take his place. Cp. Romans 11:2.
3. The revelation; vs. 11-13. The exhibition of God's greatness and power to His weak servant. Yet God was not in the spectacular, but the still, small voice. Cp. God's voice in creation. Gen. 1. Law. Deut. 4:33. Grace. Matt. 3:7. Judgment. Heb. 12:26-29.
4. The reiterated question; v. 13, and the answer.
5. The message; vs. 15-18. God can take care of His servant and also judge His people. (1) As to the anointing of his successor; v. 16. (2) The remnant of the faithful; v. 18. Cp. Romans 11:4, 5; Acts 18:10. These 7,000, however, had not been conspicuous by their open confession.

IV. The Call of Elisha; vs. 19:21.

1. The time of it; v. 19. While he was busily engaged. God doesn't call lazy people. Cp. Acts 13:2; 8:25, 26.
2. The nature of it; v. 19. The mantle. God calls in many ways. By His word, by the leading of His Spirit, by the counsel of Godly men, by the need that arises and by His providence.
3. The cost; v. 20. His business and family. Phil. 3:4-14.
4. The compensation. The "Well done." 2 Tim. 4:8; Matt. 25:21.

143. GOD OF THE HILLS AND OF THE VALLEYS

READ I Kings 20: 22-28.
THEME: God's power is unlimited.
TELL THE STORY.

THE FIGHT.—

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A FIGHT. "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6: 12), but we can only do this if we have first enlisted in Christ's army by receiving Him as Saviour, otherwise there is no fight. Our enemies are the world, the flesh and the devil.

THE WORLD is anything which is opposed to Christ and which draws us away from Him, therefore we are told, "Love not the world" (1 John 2: 15), "because the friendship of the world is enmity with God" (James 4: 14). It hates Christians because they do not belong to it and Christ has chosen them out of the world (John 15: 19).

THE FLESH — self, is the old nature we inherited from Adam. The flesh is at enmity with God (Rom. 8: 7) and always fights against the new nature (which we received when we were born again), striving for the mastery (Gal. 5: 17).

THE DEVIL — your adversary the devil (1 Pet. 5: 8). Our attitude toward him is to be one of resistance. We are to "put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6: 11).

VICTORY IN THE HILLS (v. 21).—

GOD GIVES VICTORY IN MOUNTAIN-TOP EXPERIENCES. The victory in the hills may be likened to times of special blessing — Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18) and the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17: 2). For us it may mean a great victory and fullness of blessing received perhaps at some Camp, Convention or some special meeting. We can thank God for victory won for us on the hills when we had mountain-top experiences.

THE VICTORY WAS FOLLOWED BY A WARNING (v. 22).—

"*Strengthen thyself.*" Our only means of strengthening ourselves is to "Be strong *in the Lord*" and in the power of *His* might, to put

on the "whole armour of God" (Eph. 6: 10, 11). The God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto His people (Ps. 68: 35). We have no strength apart from Him.

Mark and see. In other words, "Watch." It is not sufficient to pray we must "*watch* and pray" (Mark 13: 33). We must be on the look out for the approach of the enemy.

The enemy will return. The enemy Satan tempted our Lord immediately after the Holy Spirit descended upon Him at His baptism (Matt. 4: 1). Be prepared for a special attack from Satan after victory and blessing. You cannot rest on past victories, the enemy will return.

LIMITING GOD'S POWER TO THE HILLS ONLY.—

THE SYRIANS DID THIS (v. 23). Israel also limited the Holy One of Israel (Ps. 78: 41). Are you making the same mistake as the Syrians? Do you say in your heart, "If I were in different circumstances, or in another home in different surroundings, God could be victorious in my life, but not in my home, or school or office where I am the only Christian." If this is true of you then you are limiting God. God says, "I am the Lord . . . is there any thing too hard for me?" "There is nothing too hard for thee" (Jer. 32: 27, 17). He is not only the God of the hills but of the valleys also.

VICTORY IN THE HILLS IS TO FIT US FOR CONFLICT IN THE PLAINS (v. 23). For Israel the next fight came in the plain. The victory God had won for Elijah on Mount Carmel should have prepared him for the conflict with the wicked Jezebel in the plain (1 Kings ch. 18 and 19). The experience on the Mount of Transfiguration should have enabled the disciples to deliver the demoniac boy (Matt. 17: 14-16). We cannot always remain on the mountain-top but we can receive the same power and blessing in the plain.

ISRAEL WAS LIKE TWO LITTLE FLOCKS OF KIDS (v. 27). They were few and helpless and "the Syrians filled the country." But God was on the side of Israel. We may at times feel that we are weak and helpless because we are in the minority, but numbers are nothing with God (1 Sam. 14: 6; Rom. 8: 31).

GOD GAVE A GREAT VICTORY IN THE VALLEY (v 28). He can show His power on our behalf anywhere — in the valleys of temptation, sickness, difficulty or sorrow. Remember He is the God of the valleys as well as the God of the hills. He gave victory, not to glorify Israel, but to glorify Himself and to magnify His Name (v. 28). The Christian who lives a life of victory glorifies the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE.—1 Samuel 14: 6—"There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."

144. AHAB'S SIN

1 Kings 20-21

Golden Text: Romans 12:19

I. The War Against Syria; ch. 20.

1. The message to Ahab; vs. 1-12. (1) The demand; 1-3. (2) The reply; v. 4. What a pitable condition! Godlessness destroys the spirit of freedom. (3) The further demand; vs. 5, 6. Additional indignities. Here the enemy overreached himself. (4) The reply; vs. 7-9. (5) The fierce threat; vs. 10-12. Impious, egotisic, bombastic. Note the proverbial reply; v. 11. Cp. 1 Cor. 4:19, 20; 2 Peter 2:18; Jude 16.
2. The first victory; vs. 13-21. (1) The prophecy. vs. 13, 14. God was about to bare His arm against the gods of Syria. (2) The result; vs. 15-21.
3. The second victory; vs. 22-30. (1) The foolish argument; vs. 23-26. They were ignorant of the force against them. Cp. Acts 5:39; 23:9; Exod. 14:14; etc. (2) The two forces; v. 27. Cp. Romans 8:31. (3) The great victory; vs. 28-30. It was not due to Ahab's virtue but a vindication of God's honor.
4. Ahab's folly; vs. 31-43. (1) The ambassage; vs. 31-33. (2) The folly; v. 34. Entering into a covenant with God's enemy. Cp. Saul and Agag. 1 Sam. 15; 2 Cor. 6. (3) The result; vs. 35-43. The parable used to bring home his sin. Apply spiritually. Romans 6:11; Eph. 4:22.

II. The Coveted Vineyard; 21:1, 2.

1. The request; vs. 1, 2. He asked that which God's word refused. Cp. Lev. 25:23; Num. 36:7; Ezek. 46:18. Cp. Our inheritance. Eph. 1:11, 18; 1 Peter 1:4; Col. 1:12. Who can provide a better or give its value in gold? 1 Peter 1:18, 19. Compare the garden to the spiritual life of the believer. Gal. 5:22, 23. It is possible for the Christian to forfeit this fruit through worldliness, carelessness and neglect of the word of God and prayer.
2. The refusal; v. 3. Cp. Acts 4:19; 5:29.
3. The result; v. 4. The behaviour of a spoiled child.

III. The Fearful Plot; vs. 5-16.

1. Its source—Jezebel of infamous memory.
2. The scheme; vs. 8-11. Forgery, hypocrisy, bribery, perjury, murder. What a fearful list of sins to gratify a selfish lust. Does sin pay? Romans 6:23; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Mark 8:36; Romans 2:3; Rev. 20:10-15; Num. 32:23.
3. The success; vs. 12-16. Cp. Isa. 57:1, 2. It sometimes **appears** as though God does not care, and evil men are allowed to work their vile schemes unhindered; but God knows and cares and shall repay in His own good time and way. Romans 12:19.

IV. The Stern Denunciation; vs. 17-29.

1. The message; vs. 17-19. Cp. Gal. 6:7; Romans 12:19.
2. Ahab's query and reply; v. 20. Cp. Romans 7:11. Our condition by nature. Sold. Cp. Isa. 52:3. Therefore needing redemption. Gal. 4:4, 5; Mark 10:45; Romans 3:24; 1 Peter 1:18; etc. Note vs. 23, 24. Also God's commentary; vs. 25, 26.
3. **Ahab's humiliation and its result; vs. 27-29.**

145. JEHOSHAPHAT'S UNGODLY ALLIANCE

1 Kings 22, 2 Chronicles 18

Golden Text: 2 Corinthians 6:14

I. The Ungodly Alliance; 1 Kings 22:1-4. Cp. 2 Chron. 18.

1. The circumstances; 2 Chron 18:1. In the time of plenty. Cp. Prov. 30:8, 9; Rev. 3:17. The perils of prosperity; Matt. 6:21. Deut. 6:10-12; 8:10-17. The temptations of money to (1) Pride; 1 Tim. 6:17. (2) Worldly ease; Luke 16:19. (3)Neglect of God; Prov. 30:8. (4) Selfishness; Luke 12:15. (5) Trusting in riches; Mark 10:24.
2. The covenant; 2 Chron. 18:1, 3; 1 Kings 22:4. "I am as thou art." Cp. Ahab's character with Jehoshaphat; see 2 Chron. 17:1-6. The perils and folly of the unequal yoke and worldly alliance. Cp. 2 Chron. 19:2; Psalm 119:63; 1 John 2:15, 16; Eph. 5:11; Lev. 10:10; 2 Cor. 6:14-18. This is true matrimonially, commerically, socially and spiritually. Be separate! Notice v. 3. Here is possession without appropriation. Ramoth was theirs by right of God's gift and Joshua's power, but they had not appropriated their possession. Apply this spiritually. See Gen. 13: 14-18. Joshua 1:3. Have we possessed our possessions? Obad. 17.

II. The False Prophets; vs. 5, 6.

1. Their number; v. 5. They were the "majority."
2. Their message; v. 6. "Peace, peace." Cp. Jer. 8:11; Isa. 30:10. Note carefully 1 Tim. 4: 1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-9. Illustrate by modern false cults.

III. The True Messenger; vs. 7-28. Note the query, v. 7.

1. His irony; v. 15.
2. His fearless exposure; vs. 16-23. (1) By direct statement; v. 17. (2) By parable; vs. 19-23. The perils of false doctrine. Cp. 2 Thess. 2: 11, 12; 1 Cor. 14:38; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; 3:13.
3. His persecution. (1) By the false prophet; vs. 23, 24. (2) By the King; vs. 25-28. Cp. 2 Tim. 3:12; Matt. 5:11, 12; John 7:7; 15:18-21.

IV. The Ruse; vs. 29-33.

1. The disguise; v. 30. A Jehoshaphat in an Ahab's robe! Compare a Christian in worldly company, indulging in worldly amusements and joining worldly societies. No wonder the worldling mistakes him for one of its own! 1 Thess. 5:22; 1 John 2:15, 16.
2. The deliverance; v. 32. Cp. 2 Chron. 18:31. Note what Jehoshapat lost as a result of the alliance. (1) His testimony (mistaken for Ahab). (2) His time. (3) Almost lost his life. Apply spiritually. Note—He learned his lesson. Cp. v. 49.

V. Ahab's Death; vs. 34-40

1. The bow at the venture; v. 34. God can direct the arrow if we but draw the bow; Mark 16:15; 1 Cor. 3:6; Eccles. 11:1-6.
2. The prophecy fulfilled; vs. 37-39. Cp. Isa. 55: 11; Dan. 4:35.

146. ELIJAH'S ASCENSION TO HEAVEN

Read 2 Kings 2: 1-12.

Theme: Preparing for departure.

Tell the story.

We now come to Elijah's last day on earth. For seven years he and Elisha had been together, sharing dangers and hardships, as well as the joys of service. Now the time for parting has come.

1. **How Elijah prepared for his departure to heaven.**

(a) **He kept on with his work** (1). He visited Bethel and Jericho, the schools of the prophets where he had so often taught and encouraged the young men. Perhaps the best preparation for **our** departure is to go on faithfully doing the job God has put into our hands, whatever that job may be. When the time comes for God to take us up to heaven with what joy we shall meet our Lord if we have been as faithful and loyal to Him, and as busy and brave in His service, as Elijah was. The Apostle Paul was able to say at the close of his life, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4: 7). Let us then seek to please our Lord now in all things, and go on doing faithfully the small or great duties of life till we come to the end of our journey. We can prepare to meet our Lord by watching and doing (Luke 12: 37, 40, 43).

(2) He probably encouraged the students of these schools established by Samuel the prophet, and gave them his last message. He was now about to lay down his work for God, but he knew that God's work must go on, and he was concerned about the unfinished work he was to leave behind.

(3) **He sought to do something for his friend** while he still had the opportunity. His last thoughts before his translation were for Elisha, his dear friend and successor. "Ask what I shall do for thee," he said (v. 9). It was as though Elijah said, "You have been a faithful servant to me for seven years, nay, more than a servant, you have been a son. How can I reward you?" Soon he would not be able to do anything for his loved and trusted friend, and so he makes use of his last opportunity. If there is anything you can do for others do it **now** before it is too late. Too often we are so taken up with our own interests, business and pursuits that we do not think of how we might help others, and so we let the chance slip. Nicodemus might have done much for his Lord while He was alive, but it was not till He was dead that Nicodemus came with his hundred pounds weight of myrrh and aloes (John 19: 39). "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6: 10).

(b) **He was humble.** He did not talk about himself and the great thing God was going to do for him. It was a grand thing to go to heaven without dying, for only one other had had this privilege, that was Enoch. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5: 24). John the Baptist, too, did not talk about himself or resent it when his followers left him to go after Jesus. He said, "He (Christ) must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3: 30).

(c) **He was sure of God's leading and guidance.** Three times he said, "The Lord hath sent me" (vv. 2, 4, 6). How did he know what God wanted him to do and where He would have him go? In the same way that we may know God's continual guidance. There are conditions which we must fulfil.

(1) **We must not lean to our own understanding** (Prov. 3: 5). It is so easy to trust to our own wisdom thinking that we know better, and thus we often miss the way. We cannot see what lies ahead, sometimes the path is quite hidden from us. Then it is that we need God's wisdom and guidance so that we may know the path He would have us take.

(2) **Look to Him** the promise to us is, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3: 6). Do not depend upon others or run to this one and that one asking their advice, but claim the promise and believe that He will do it. "He **shall** direct thy paths."

(3) **Walk in the path of obedience.** Whenever God said to Elijah, "Arise and go," he went, therefore, on future occasions God could make known His will to him. Unless God sees on our part a willingness to do His will when He reveals it, then He is not prepared to guide us. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hos. 6: 3). "If any man will **do** His will, he shall **know**" (John 7: 17).

2. The manner of Elijah's going to heaven.

(a) **The Lord knew the time.** "My times are in thy hand" (Ps. 31: 15). He knows when our work is done. He alone knows whether we shall pass through the gates of death, or be still here when He comes, and be caught up to meet Him in the air. Whatever it be, if we are ready to meet our Lord, all will be well.

(b) **It was sudden, though expected.** We do not know how long beforehand Elijah knew that he was going to heaven, but he went suddenly. "As they still went on, and talked, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire. . . and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (v. 11). If we are alive when our Lord comes, our departure will be sudden; "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15: 52). We are to live therefore as those who may expect their Lord to come at any time.

(c) **It was triumphant.** There appeared a chariot of fire (v. 11). How different from the end which would have been his had God answered his prayer when, in a fit of great discouragement and depression, he had asked to die (1 Kings 19: 4). We should not be satisfied to have merely an **entrance** into heaven, but so to live that we may have an **abundant** entrance. "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you **abundantly** into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1: 11).

(d) **Elijah had nothing to fear.** He was going to be with his Lord whom he loved so well and had served so faithfully. The false prophet Balaam said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" (Num. 23: 10.) But if we are to **die** the death of the righteous then we must **live** as the righteous, Balaam had not done this. Elijah had. If we live to please our Lord, serving Him faithfully in whatever sphere He has placed us, then our departure will be a glad entrance into His presence.

Memory Verse.—Luke 12: 43.—"Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing."

ELIJAH'S TRANSLATION

2 Kings 1-2

Golden Text: John 5:28, 29

I. The Commission to Ahaziah; ch. 1.

1. Ahaziah's sickness and his sinful query; vs. 1, 2. He had many opportunities of seeing the wisdom and power of God displayed yet turned from Him to demons. Cp. 1 Cor. 10:12; 1 Tim. 4:1; Deut. 32:17. Cp. the modern clairvoyant, spiritist, astrologer, palmist, etc., to which thousands are going.
2. God's message through Elijah; vs. 3-8. The penalty of rejection of God.
3. Ahaziah's messengers; vs. 9-14. God's intervention on His servant's behalf. Fire from heaven. One with God always spells victory. Cp. Isa. 43:2, 3; Psalm 91:7; Ezek. 2:6; 3:8, 9; Psalm 27:1.
4. Elijah's reiterated message; vs. 15-18. The result. Cp. Num. 23:19, etc.

II. The Journey to Jordan; 2:1-10.

1. Note the various places visited and the event associated with each. There is much of spiritual profit in this journey, and it would be well if each believer would make this pilgrimage every so often. (1) Gilgal. The place of self judgment and memorial; Josh. 4:5. (2) Bethel, the place of communion and restoration; (Gen. 12. (3) Jericho, the place of obedience and victory; Josh. 3. (4) Jordan, the place of death to self and the old life; Josh. 3. Cp. Romans 6.

2 The testing of Elisha for the new position; vs. 2, 4, 6. God tests the reality of the faith, love and obedience of His people. Cp. Gen. 22; Job 1:8-12; 1 Peter 1:7, etc.

3. The question and answer; vs. 8, 9. (1) The miracle; v. 8. (2) The question; v. 9. What would we have asked for? Riches? Fame? Power? (3) The reply; v. 9. Cp. Deut. 21:17. He did not ask for twice as much of the Spirit but a duplicate portion that he might be Elijah's "double" i. e., that he might walk like him ,talk like him and live like him. Cp. 1 Cor. 11:1. Followers="imitators." God's purpose in the predestination of His people is their conformity to His Son. Romans 8:29. God wants us to be like Him. Note Elijah's answer. Elisha's likeness to him was dependent on the measure of his occupation with him. "If ye see me." So with the believer. 2 Cor. 3:18.

III. The Translation; vs. 11, 12.

1. The Heavenly Chariot; v. 11. Cp. The great translation day; 1 Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thess. 4: 13-18. Are you ready for it? John 3:3; 1 John 3:1, 2; John 14:1-3, etc.
2. The cry; v. 12. The invisible power of God. Cp. 2 Kings 6:17. Cp. Eph. 1:19.

IV. The Test: vs. 13-25.

1. God's power remains; vs. 13, 14. God buries His workers but carries on His work.
2. The vain search; vs. 15-18.
3. The healed waters; vs. 19-22.
4. The judgment on the scorners; vs. 23-25. "Young lads;" R. V. Cp. Exod. 16:8; Acts 5: 4. Illust. Luke 8:53, 54.

147. ELISHA EQUIPPED FOR SERVICE

Read 2 Kings 2: 1-18.

Theme: Receiving and using God's power.

Tell the story.

1. Elisha's Testing.

His love and loyalty were tried. Three times Elijah said to Elisha, "Tarry ye here," at Gilgal (v. 2), at Bethel (v. 4), and at Jordan (v. 6). It was eight miles from Gilgal to Bethel, the second part of the journey being a rough and toilsome path. Elijah said "Tarry," but surely he meant "Come," and said "Tarry" only to test the young man's love and loyalty. Elisha apparently saw, underneath these words, the older man's longing for sympathy and companionship. Therefore he replied with the words, "As the Lord liveth. . . I will not leave thee." And so he went. "A friend loveth at all times" (Prov. 17: 17), and Elisha was no fairweather friend as the years had proved.

2. **Elisha's Companionship.**

"They two went on" (v. 6). This was their last walk together. What did they talk about, we wonder? Perhaps their hearts were too full for words, but they had each other's companionship. How much true friendship can mean to two who are lovers of the Lord and who have the same aims and ideals. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel" (Prov. 27: 9). Therefore, choose the right kind of friend, one who will help you on your journey heavenward. David was able to say, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of all them that keep Thy precepts" (Ps. 119: 63).

3. **Elisha's Desire.**

He might have asked for riches, position, or fame, but he wanted **spiritual** blessing. He asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. He asks for the firstborn's share, the double portion, the special inheritance which came to the eldest son of a Jewish father. In other words, he was asking for **his master's spirit** and **his master's work.** He knew that without the Spirit he could not possibly do the work, but with it he could go forth to do the most difficult tasks. What was Elijah's spirit? A spirit of loyalty and devotion to God and to duty, a spirit that was willing to suffer hardship for God, a spirit of faithfulness in rebuking sin, a spirit of courage in danger. We have been called to work for our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. When He commissioned His disciples, He said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me"; and to witness for Him just wherever He has placed us, is our commission also. To do this effectually we must have the power of the Holy Spirit. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1: 8). Let **us** "Covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Cor. 12: 31).

It was a hard thing for which Elisha asked (v. 10). But if he were capable of spiritual vision, that is, if he were to see the chariots and horses when Elijah should be taken, then he would

receive the double portion (v. 10). Spiritual things are only spiritually discerned; the natural man cannot understand them. Elisha's own servant, later, had not the spiritual vision to see the chariots and horsemen (6: 17).

4. Elisha's Consecration.

Elisha fulfilled the conditions for receiving power.

(a) **He held on and would not be turned aside.** Three times he said, "As the Lord liveth. . . I will not leave thee" (vv. 2, 4, 6). God sometimes tests us to see if we are truly thirsty for the blessing for which we ask. "When the poor and needy seek water. . . and their tongue faileth for thirst, I will open rivers. . . and fountains" (Isaiah 41: 17, 18). "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5: 6).

(b) He went to **Gilgal,** the place of separation; to **Bethel,** the place of communion; to **Jericho,** the place of victory (Josh. 6); and to **Jordan,** which typifies death. To us, Jordan represents the death to self, being willing for the flesh, the old nature, self, to be in the place of death, so that there is no room for self-glorying. Jordan for us is the place where we deny self, give up our own will and take up the cross daily (Luke 9: 23).

(c) **His faith was tested.** Jordan must be crossed. He must claim God's power to make a path through the waters. He may not have felt any different, or that he had been given the power, but he believed the promise of Elijah. So he took up the mantle and smote the waters. Believing that God's power would work the miracle, he cried, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" (v. 14). And God worked for him. Never again would Elisha have to ask this question. He had now seen God at work, he knew that the God of Elijah was **his** God, that the same power that Elijah had was available for him. Do we ever ask this question? The answer is, God is close beside us just where we are; in the home, at school, in the office, or workshop- or as we walk along the road. He is a very **present** help (Ps. 46: 1). God honoured his faith and made a path through the waters.

5. Elisha's Grief.

He and Elijah had shared so much during the past seven years and had become deeply attached to each other. Is it any wonder that when Elijah had gone, not even his lifeless body left behind, that Elisha should show his grief by rending his mantle? God never rebukes us for mourning the loss of a loved one. Even the Lord Jesus Himself wept at the grave of Lazarus, His friend (John 11: 35). But we sorrow not as others who have no hope (1 Thess. 4: 13). Elisha had before him the joy of reunion with his beloved "Father." We, too, have the hope of reunion, for those who "sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. . . then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4: 14, 17, 18).

6. Elisha's resemblance to his master.

The sons of the prophets said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha (v. 15). The people took knowledge of Peter and John that they had been with Jesus (Acts 4: 13). Can people see in us any resemblance to the Lord Jesus? We have His Holy Spirit and should reflect our Master.

Memory Verse,—Matthew 5: 6—"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

148. HEALING THE SPRING

Read 2 Kings 2: 19-22.

Theme: Barrenness or fruitfulness?

Tell the story.

Jericho stood on a broad plain crossed by an abundant river. It was famous because of its palm trees, and was named, even as early as the days of Moses, the City of Palm Trees (Deut. 34: 3), It was utterly destroyed at God's command by Joshua when he led the Israelites into the Promised Land. For five hundred years Jericho had lain desolate, for Joshua had pronounced a curse on the man who should rebuild it (Josh. 6: 26). Only a few years before the incident related in this lesson it was rebuilt, and the man who dared to defy God, saw God's Word come true in his own family, for he lost both his eldest and his youngest sons (1 Kings 16: 34). The situation of the city was pleasant, but it had one serious drawback, the water was bitter and, consequently, the ground was barren. This meant that the townsfolk had to tramp many miles to the River Jordan in order to get water. In this simple story lies a parable.

1. **The spring with bitter water.**

(a) **It lived only for itself,** it was of no use to anyone. This is a picture of the lives of some people who go through this world of sorrow, need, sickness and suffering, living their own life, taken up entirely with their own interests, regardless of any one else. They do not see that they have any responsibility towards others. In the time of our Lord, when the disciples saw the hungry multitude they said to Him, "Send the multitude away," but He replied, "Give ye them to eat (Matt. 14: 15, 16). What miserable lives are those that seek to live for themselves only. Not in this way is happiness to be found.

(b) **The spring was not only useless but positively harmful.** Nothing could grow where the water ran—the ground was barren. We all have an influence, often an unconscious one. We either help or hinder others; we are a blessing to them or a curse. What we do or say, and even what we **are** affects others. Sometimes we hear another say, "It does not matter what I do, it has nothing to do with anyone else, it is entirely my own business, but that is not true. "None of us liveth to himself" (Rom. 14: 7). In spite of ourselves our words and actions have some effect upon the lives of others. Some people are a positive hindrance wherever they go. They bring sorrow and dissension into the home, they are a bad influence in class, they hinder God's work and block His power. Their influence is exerted, not on the side of God and holiness, but on the side of evil.

2. **The People of the City.**

(a) **They were not content to allow the state of things to go on.** No wonder they were dissatisfied and concerned about the condition of things. They were dissatisfied but not hopeless. They felt there must be a way out. Why should they go on living as they did when there was one who could bring about a change. Paul had this Divine

discontent with his spiritual life when he cried, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7: 23). If we truly desire a way out of our life of failure and defeat, we shall surely find it. So the first step which led to a change was dissatisfaction with the existing state of things.

(b) **They went to the only one who had power to change things** and that was Elisha. They may have tried to obtain help from others; we do not know. If they did their efforts had been in vain. Now they appealed to the only one who **could** help. Have you longed for the barren land of your life to become fruitful? Perhaps you have tried to bring about a change in your own power and strength, and you have experienced only failure and defeat. Go to the only One who can give victory, who can change your barren land into fertile country. Paul found the answer to his cry, "Who shall deliver me?" for he said, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7: 28).

"I've tried in vain a thousand ways,
My fears to quell, my hopes to raise,
But what I need the Bible says,
Is ever only JESUS."

(c) **They acknowledged their need.** They made no excuses for their barren land, nor did they try to make out that it was not so bad. They confessed, "The water is naught and the ground barren" (v. 19). Perhaps we have been making excuses to God for our lack of fruitfulness and our inability to help others. We may put it down to our temperament, our character or our circumstances, but God can meet our need as Elisha did the need of the people of Jericho. We need to humble ourselves and confess all to Him. It was when Isaiah said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Is. 6: 5, 7), that his iniquity was taken away and his sin purged.

3. **Elisha.**

(a) **He was willing to help at once.** Did the Lord Jesus ever turn a deaf ear to those who came to Him in all their sin and need? How often we read in the Gospels of His immediate response to those who came to Him for healing. He sometimes tested their faith, as He did that of the Syrophoenician woman when at first He answered her not a word; but He did for her what she asked. He is not only willing, but longing to help all who are conscious of their need and who come to Him.

(b) **He used a NEW cruse.** We need a **new** thing done in our lives, not a patching up of the things that are wrong. At conversion we become **new** creatures in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5: 17); we are called by a **new** name (Rev. 2: 17). God has promised to do a **new** thing for us. "Behold, I will do a **new** thing. . . I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert" (Is. 43: 19). When He does this new thing for us, that is, fills us with His Spirit, the barren places become fruitful and we manifest the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22, 23).

(c) **He put salt in the spring, and the salt entirely changed the character of the waters of the spring. The grace of God, of which salt is an emblem, can entirely change a frivolous, empty, useless life to one that will be a blessing to all around. "Ye are the salt of the earth" said Christ (Matt. 5: 13). Salt prevents corruption and this is what the Christian is meant to do in the world. What would**

this earth be like if every Christian were to be removed?

(d) **He put the salt in the waters right at the fountain head,** where the spring of waters came out of the rock. The Lord would teach us that if our **life** is to be different our heart must be changed. If I am to live a changed life, it must be because the fountain head, my heart, has first been changed by the grace of God. A mere outward change will accomplish nothing. "Create in me a clean **heart,** O God; and renew a right spirit **within** me" (Ps. 51: 10), prayed David after he had fallen into sin.

4. **The result.**

No more death or barren land (v. 21). The stream no longer lived for itself, on the contrary, there was fruitfulness wherever it went. The lives of Christians who are filled with the Spirit and thus live the life of victory are like this stream. They carry joy, comfort and refreshment wherever they go. All whose lives they touch they make happy. They bring cheer and comfort to the discouraged and the sad, companionship to the lonely and hope to those who have given up in despair.

Which life is yours? Your life may be "pleasant" as Jericho was when Elisha visited it, yet without any definite purpose. It may even be like the stream in its barren days, not only useless but a hindrance. Or is it like the stream after it was changed, bringing fruitfulness and blessing wherever it went? May God be able to say of **your** life, "I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land" (v. 21).

Memory Verse.—Is. 43: 19.—"Behold I will do a **new** thing; now it shall spring forth. . . I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert."

149. ELISHA IN A MILITARY CAMP

Read 2 Kings 3: 1-20.
Theme: Empty Ditches.
Tell the story.

We have seen Elisha, the man of peace, following the plough, we have seen him with Elijah in the caves in the desert and the lonely valleys hiding from the wicked Queen Jezebel, now we shall see him among the soldiers. King Ahab is dead, but wicked Jezebel is still alive. Ahab left two sons, Ahaziah, who met with a fatal accident (ch. 1: 2, 17), and Jehoram, who was now on the throne.

1. **Jehoram.**

(a) **He made a pretence of turning to God.** When his brother died so tragically Jehoram was shaken and startled. He was afraid to go as far in sin as his father and mother had done, so he put away the image of Baal which his father had made. He may have compared himself with his parents, and thought that he was not so bad after all. Paul said of some, "Comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Cor. 10: 12). "Nevertheless Jehoram continued in sin (v. 3). Although he forsook one form of sin he retained others. He still went to Bethel and bowed before the golden calf, thus showing that he had not really repented. Repentance is a change of mind leading to action. "Let the wicked **forsake** his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him" (Is. 55: 7). There is no saving faith without repentance. There are many to-day like Jehoram. A death in the family startles them, and for a time they appear to reform. They leave off glaring sins, they no longer appear indifferent to God and to His claims, for they attend services; but there has been no repentance, they still worship the golden calf SELF. They have never yielded their lives and wills to God, saying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9: 6.)

(b) **He blamed God for that which was his own fault.** "Alas! that **the Lord** hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hands of Moab" (v. 10). How easy it is to blame God for that which we bring upon ourselves. People who are out of the will of God usually do blame Him when things go wrong. Jehoram **blamed** the Lord, Jehosophat **inquired** of him (v. 11). God had not made this alliance of the three kings. It may have been a right thing to fight against the Moabites at this time, but Jehoram went about it in the wrong way. He made the heathen King of Edom (v. 9) his ally, and asked the advice of King Jehosophat instead of asking God (v. 8).

(c) **He did not want God he only wanted water.** When people are in difficulties many of them go to God not because they want Him; they only desire His help, and when delivered from their trouble they forget all about Him. It was because the King wanted water that he was willing to humble himself and go down to Elisha.

2. **Jehosophat.**

(a) **His Mistake.** He should not have allied himself with the idolater, Jehoram, and the heathen king of Edom. He went so far as to say to Jehoram, "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses" (v. 7). Perhaps it was self-interest which caused him to accede to Jehoram's request. He himself had old scores to wipe off with Moab. But what business had he, a man of God, to make such an alliance, the result of which almost ended in tragedy for all concerned. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbe-

lievers" (2 Cor. 6: 14). Be careful of your friendships. Make friends of only those who help you nearer to God, not those who draw you away rom Him.

(b) **He inquired of God.** He knew where to turn in time of trouble. Jehoram blamed God, Jehosophat enquired of Him, through the prophet Elisha. This was the right attitude, and though Jehosophat should not have made an alliance with these two kings, yet when in his distress he turned to God, He heard and answered him. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee" (Ps. 50: 15).

(c) **For Jehosophat's sake Jehoram was helped by God.** The prophet made it quite clear that the coming help was not to be given for Jehoram's sake, but solely because of the presence of Jehosophat. How often unbelievers have been protectced and helped because of the presence of God's children. God would not destroy Sodom till Lot had come out of it, and if there had been ten righteous in the city God would have spared it for their sakes (Gen. 18: 32). "The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake" (Gen. 39: 5). Laban was blessed for Jacob's sake (Gen. 30: 27). The lives of all on board ship were saved because of the presence of God's servant, Paul (Acts 27: 23, 24). Christ said, "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5: 13). Salt does not make a bad thing good, but it keeps it from corruption. God will not destroy the world until His own children are taken out of it. God stays his hand because of them.

3. **Elisha.**

(a) **It was known that the Lord was with him** (v. 12). What a reputation to have! He would not prophesy smooth things even to please kings; he would deliver the message of the Lord.

(b) **He fearlessly rebuked Jehoram the idolater** who was still upholding the idolatry at Bethel, the worship of the golden calves. What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father and to the prophets of thy mother," he said (v. 13). There are people like Jehoram to-day. They cry to God when in danger and trouble, and promptly forget Him when the danger is past. Jehoram knew that his idols could do nothing for him now.

4. **The Ditches.**

(a) **To carry on the fight, Soldiers must have water** (v. 9). We are soldiers of Christ. We must have the living water not only for ourselves, but such a supply that it may flow out to others. We need the **rivers** of living water (John 7: 38), the fulness of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5: 18).

(b) **God was willing to give it but they must make room for it.** They must dig the ditches. If the soldiers had not worked with their spades, the water would not have come. We must do our part by digging out the rubbish from our lives. If we do not open our hearts to receive the blessing we shall never be filled.

(c) **They saw no rain or wind** (v. 17). It was not in the rushing mighty wind, nor in the earthquake that the Lord came to Elijah. He spoke to him with a still small voice (1 Kings 19. 11, 12). In the same way the Holy Spirit works. We may not **feel** His coming in fulness into our hearts, but if we fulfil the conditions He will surely come.

Memory Verse.—Jeremiah 29: 13.—"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

150. THE WIDOW'S NEED SUPPLIED

Read 2 Kings 4: 1-7.

Theme: Empty vessels filled.

Tell the story.

1. **Trouble came to this godly widow.** Her husband, who had just died, was a man who feared God and had been in full-time service for Him. Perhaps he had been ill a long time and expenses connected with his illness may have been the cause of her getting into debt. At all events, she was not only bereft of her husband, but her creditors had come to take her two sons to be slaves, so that she seemed about to lose them also. This was really against the Levitical law, which says, "And if thy brother that dwelleth with thee be waxen poor, and sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant" (Lev. 25: 39). These creditors, however, had no regard for God's law, or pity for the sorrowful and needy widow. Being a follower of God did not exempt the woman from trouble, bereavement and poverty. Christ does not promise His own an easy time. He sent His disciples into the storm (Matt. 14: 22, 24). He allowed sickness and death to come to the home of His friends, Martha, Mary and Lazarus, whom He specially loved (John 11). "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," He said (John 16: 33).

2. **She knew to whom to turn in her trouble.** She did not appeal to those in authority, or to her neighbours, she went to Elisha, the man of God. We who are God's children have a Refuge to whom we can flee. "God is our refuge and strength, a **very present** help in trouble" (Ps. 46: 1). There is no problem He cannot solve, no difficulty out of which He cannot find a way.

3. **She simply told the prophet of her sorrow and her problem.** She did not suggest to him what he might do, or even ask him to do certain things for her. We have no Elisha to whom we can go, but in Jesus Christ we have a greater than he. Just as Hezekiah simply spread out before the Lord the threatening letter of the King of Assyria (Is. 37: 14), and was helped and delivered, so we are invited to lay our needs before God. "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1 Peter 5: 7). "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee" (Ps. 55: 22).

4. **The question she was asked.** "What shall I do for thee?" "What hast thou in the house?" (v. 2.) She was honest in her answer when she said, "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil" (v. 2). If she had money or anything she could have sold, Elisha, we are sure, would have expected her to pay her debts with them, for God's Word says, "Owe no man anything" (Rom. 13: 8). But the little pot of oil was all she had. She did not think it was worth anything, and scarcely worth mentioning, but it was that pot of oil (such as is found in every Eastern home), that Elisha used.

What have we in **our** house (our lives)? Thank God if we can say we have a pot of oil. In Scripture oil is a type of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit, for "If any man have not the

Spirit of Christ, He is none of His" (Rom. 8: 9). But many of God's children are like the widow, who had only one pot of oil. They are not **filled** with the Spirit's power (Eph. 5: 18).

5. What she had to do.

(a) **Bring EMPTY vessels.** Had she brought vessels that were already filled with something else, Elisha could not have filled them with the precious oil which was to bring her deliverance from bondage, and freedom from want and fear. If we are to be **filled** with the Spirit we must first be emptied of pride, self-will, and all the things which hinder the Holy Spirit working in the fulness of His power in our lives.

(b) **Shut the door.** This was something between her and God. She had to shut out everything else while **He** worked the miracle. If we find that we have little or no blessing, that we are living poverty-stricken, defeated, Christian lives which are lacking in power, let us shut the door, get alone with God and allow Him to fill us to overflowing.

6. The supply of oil did not fail till there were no more vessels. So long as the vessels lasted there was more than sufficient to fill them. God's blessings for us are only limited because we do not make room for them. Let us swing our heart's door widely open. God says to us, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Ps. 81: 10). Christ said that out of those who believe on Him should flow **rivers** of living water (John 7: 38).

7. Results of the filling of the vessels.

(a) **She went straight to the prophet and awaited further directions.** She would not depend upon her own wisdom or commonsense. She did not ask advice from others, "she came and told the man of God" (v. 7). When God has filled us with His blessing and power we still need to depend entirely upon Him for wisdom, guidance and direction. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths (Prov. 3: 5, 6).

(b) **She had first to pay her debt.** This was her first responsibility. God's Word says, "Owe no man anything" (Rom. 13: 8). The Christian above all others should avoid going into debt, or pay it as soon as possible. It was no sin to owe when she had nothing, but once it was in her power to pay the debt she would have been dishonest of she had not done so.

(c) **She had sufficient for her daily needs.** No longer was she living in great poverty she now had resources upon which she could draw. And we have great spiritual power upon which we can draw. We have the Holy Spirit in all His fulness if we will make room for Him and fulfil the conditions. Not only had she sufficient for her own needs, but for that of her family also. So it will be with us. God will use us in blessing to others. Think of what blessing it meant to countless people because Paul, Stephen, and Peter were filled with the Spirit of God.

Memory Verse.—Ephesians 3: 19.—"That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

151. THE WOMAN OF SHUNEM

Read 2 Kings 4: 8-17.
Theme: Showing hospitality.
Tell the story.

1. **The woman of Shunem and her husband remained true to God in wicked times.** Jehoram, the king who worshipped Baal, reigned over the land, the notorious and wicked Jezebel was still the Queen-mother, and it was probably difficult for those who would live for God. Elijah had complained to God that he only remained of those who worshipped Him, but the Lord told him that He had in Israel 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal. This woman and her husband were among that 7000.

You may be living in a home, or having to associate, with those who are not merely indifferent to God and His claims upon them, but are definitely opposed to Him. At times you may be tempted to think that the way is too hard, or that it is of no use trying to keep on. We need to remember that "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. 2: 19). "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. 16: 9). (See Lesson 19, Point 1.)

2. **She was hospitable and used her home for God.** She gave hospitality to God's prophet for he was among those who for His Name's sake went forth (3 John 7). When she first invited the prophet to her home, he was apparently reluctant to accept the invitation (v. 8), perhaps because she was a great woman, the wife of the chief man of the village, and he himself was poor. However, he finally accepted her hospitality, and it became the recognised thing, that whenever he passed through the village of Shunem, he should have meals in her home. The benefit was not all on Elisha's side. We can imagine how much this contact with the prophet of God meant to the couple, and how they would talk together of the things of God,while Elisha gave them further teaching. But the day was all too short, and in the evening Elisha and Gehazi would have to go on.

3. **She went further and built a room specially for the prophet.** How often the writer has occupied, in different homes, "the prophet's chamber," as it is often called, a room set apart for the use of missionaries travelling round doing deputation work. Such rooms seem to acquire a special atmosphere. Eastern houses usually have nothing but a bed in the sleeping room, but the lady of Shunem wished the chamber on the wall to serve also as a little study for him, so she provided a table, a stool and a candlestick. Are we like the lady of Shunem? Do we love to show kindness to the people of God? It may not be within our power to provide "a prophet's chamber," but are there no other ways in which we might help? Think it over, and you will find that you can. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers" (Heb. 13: 2). "Let us do good unto all men, **especially** unto them who are of the household of faith" (those who belong to the Lord, His dear children) (Gal. 6: 10). If our Lord were upon earth how

gladly we would minister to His earthly needs, counting it a privilege. Then remember that when we minister to His people, we do it unto Him (Matt. 25: 40).

4. **She recognised Elisha as a holy man of God.** She could say this of him after she and her husband had had close contact with him in their own home. His conduct in the home agreed with his teaching as a prophet. Do our relatives and friends who see us as we are in the home, or at school or business recognise us as people of God, or is our light hidden under a bushel (Matt. 5: 15).

5. **Elisha's gratitude.** He was greatly touched by all her care for him. He noted the extras she had provided for him, the table, the stool, and the candlestick, in addition to the bed and the meals. His first thought was, "What can I do for her?" He **felt** grateful, he **expressed** his gratitude and he wished to **show** it. "Thou hast been careful for us with all this care," he said. How this expression of gratitude must have warmed the heart of the lady of Shunem.

Do you remember to express your gratitude to your parents, and to others who do so much for you. Is there not a tendency with many of us to keep our words of praise and appreciation to ourselves and simply assume that those to whom they should be told "know what we think anyway"? Who knows how many hearts may be longing for just a word of praise and appreciation. Then tell them to-day. "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" said our Lord of the lepers whom He had healed (Luke 17: 17).

But Elisha went further. He wished to **prove** his gratitude, and said, "Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king (Jehoram), or to the captain of the host?" (v. 13). It is not sufficient to **express** our gratitude, we should do something to **prove** it.

6. **The Shunamite was a "great woman"** (v. 8), **but she was also humble.** She did not seek great things for herself (Jer. 45: 5), she had no desire for fame or to move in society, or to be introduced at court. She was content to serve God in her own home and live amongst her own people. The Apostle Paul said, "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6: 8). "Be content with such things as ye have" (Heb. 13: 5).

7. **Her reward.** It was Gehazi, Elisha's servant, who spoke of the one great lack in that home. There was no heir, it was a childless home. Money, rank, a beautiful home, and a kind husband, all these the woman of Shunem had, but there was no child. This was a special trial to Jewish parents who were looking for the Messiah, and hoped that He should be descended from them. Her reward was to be a son. When she ministered to the prophet and his servant she had no thought of reward, we are sure. But "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. 6: 10). Even the cup of water given in His Name will not lose its reward (Matt. 10: 42).

Memory Verse.—Hebrews 13: 2—"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers."

152.
THE RAISING OF THE SHUNAMITE'S SON

Read 2 Kings 4: 18-37.

Theme: Sorrow in the home.

Tell the story.

1. **In her sorrow the Shunamite went straight to the man of God.** He was her first thought because she had faith in his power to help. After laying the lifeless body on the bed in the prophet's chamber, she set out to seek the prophet's help. She felt he could do something, her son might even be given back to her. At any rate, she instinctively thought of Elisha. To whom do we turn in our sorrow? Do our thoughts fly instinctively to the Lord Jesus? After John the Baptist had been beheaded his disciples- "took up the body, and buried it, **and went and told Jesus**" (Matt. 14: 12). No one can comfort as He can. Just as a child when in trouble, difficulty, or pain instinctively runs to its mother, so should we, in our sorrow, trials and bereavement, turn to Him, "the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 1: 3, 4).

2. **She trusted God's love.** What sublime faith in God's love and purposes she had when she could say to her husband even when the boy was lying dead, "It shall be well" (v. 23), and to the prophet, "It is well" (v. 26). She had learned to

> "Trust Him when He gives His gifts,
> Trust Him when He takes away."

She believed with the Apostle Paul that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8: 28). If we believe that nothing (it does not matter through whom) can touch our lives apart from the permissive will of God, we, too, shall be able to say in all circumstances, "It is well." Can you say, "It is well with my soul, it is well with my life."

3. **No excuses kept her away from the place of worship.** She was apparently in the habit of going to worship at Carmel, twelve miles distant, on the Sabbath, and at full moon (v. 23). If we are able to attend the place of worship let no trivial excuses keep us away. Let us not think that listening comfortably at home to a radio service is an easy substitute. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but . . . so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" Heb. 10: 25).

4. **Elisha was quick to see that she was in deep trouble.** To lay hold of the knees or feet has always been a sign in the East of great earnestness in making a request. Elisha's servant, Gehazi, was about to push her roughly away. He was not living in close touch with God as Elisha was, and, therefore, he hadn't Elisha's sympathetic, understanding heart. The nearer we live to God the more spiritual perception we shall have. This will enable us to know when others are passing through times of sorrow, and we shall be able to sympathise with them. "Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1 Thess. 5: 14). Elisha himself had known the com-

fort of God, and he was "able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith he himself had been comforted" (2 Cor. 1: 4).

5. **How Elisha brought life to the dead.**

(a) **He spent time alone with God (v. 33).** "He shut the door. . and prayed unto the Lord" (v. 33). He not only held the staff, the symbol of power, he had the power—power in prayer. This, perhaps, is the highest form of service, and the most costly. Preachers, teachers, workers for God are all needed, but prayers are needed most. We can exercise this ministry of prayer anywhere, in the home, as we go about our work, anywhere and everywhere. Elisha himself could not raise the dead as the Lord Jesus Christ did, for He had life in Himself. He is **the** life (John 14: 6). He is the resurrection and the life (John 11: 25). He had no need of staff, no walking to and fro, no lying on the body. His word was sufficient, when He cried, "Lazarus, come forth." But Elisha had to cry to God for **His** power to descend. We have no power of our own. All we can do is to cry to God for His power to be manifested. "The. . . prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5: 16).

(b) **He came close to the child.** If we would have God use us to bring life to those who are spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins, we must get close to them, taking time and trouble in order to do it. Speaking of the captives who lived by the River Chebar, Ezekiel said, "I sat where they sat. . . among them seven days." He meant that he not only literally sat where they sat, but he tried to put himself in their place.

(c) **He did not give up, he persevered till the answer came** (v. 35). How prone we are to give up working and praying for others to come to Christ in order that they might receive eternal life from Him, when the answer does not come at once. God's delays are not denials. He waits in order to test our faith, as He did when He allowed Lazarus to remain in the grave four days. He tested the faith of the disciples who were toiling on the lake when He delayed coming to them.

6. **The Shunamite's gratitude.** She fell at Elisha's feet and bowed herself to the ground before taking up her son (v. 37). We do not read that she said anything. Perhaps her heart was too full for words, but the prophet knew what she could not express. She had first come to his feet imploring him to help her. now she returned there to show her gratitude. Are we found often at the feet of our Lord returning thanks to Him for having brought life to our dead souls, for His many mercies and for answered prayer? In the Gospels we find many at the feet of Jesus imploring His help, begging for healing for themselves or for their loved ones, but how few returned to give thanks. May we be like the Levites of old, whose office it was "to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even" (1 Chron. 23: 30).

Memory Verse.—Romans 8: 28.—"All things work together for good to them that love God."

153.
POISONOUS FRUIT IN THE SAUCEPAN

Read 2 Kings 4: 38-44.

Theme: False Teaching.

Tell the story.

At the time of our lesson there was a dearth in the land. This implies that successive famines had swept through the country. God had warned His people long ago that if they turned aside from Him and worshipped other gods, He would send drought and famine (Deut. 11: 17), and again and again we read in Scripture that this happened. Those who were true to Him, also had to suffer with the guilty nation.

1. **Elisha's sympathy.** As he was teaching them, his heart went out to the hungry sons of the prophets. He was concerned not only for their spiritual needs, but for their physical wants. He did his best to satisfy them by telling his servant to prepare food for them. In this he reminds us of our Lord Jesus, who was moved with compassion when He saw the hungry multitudes whom He had been teaching all day. The disciples said, "Send the multitude away," but Jesus said, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat" (Matt. 14: 15, 16). Are we as thoughtful for the needs of others, and are we doing something to help? "If a brother or a sister be. . . destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? (James 2: 15, 16). One young man thought he would help, so he went out to the field to gather herbs, and gathered fruit from a poisonous vine (v. 39). This was added to the pot.

2. **The wild wine and poisonous fruit** corrupted the whole pot of food, making it not only useless to the hungry students, but positively deadly. This is a picture of false teaching, which corrupts the Word of God (2 Cor. 2: 17). "There shall be false teachers among you" (2 Pet. 2: 1).

3. **The young man was deceived by appearances.** The wild vine looked so much like the real thing that perhaps he might have been excused for his action. But was his ignorance excusable? He should have been able to recognise the poisonous plant. How is it that so many are led astray by false teaching, and attach themselves to one of the many false cults? **Ignorance** is the cause. They do not know the Word of God. They have not studied the Scriptures and searched them daily for themselves as the Bereans did, to see whether these things were as Paul and Silas taught (Acts 17: 11). In most false teaching there is an element of truth, and unless we know the Word of God it will be easy for us to be deceived, and think that error is truth. How important it is then to be grounded in the Word of God, to know the Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3: 15).

4. **The young man's ignorance did not save them from the consequences.** He nearly poisoned his companions, the prophet and himself. So it is with false teaching. A person may be thoroughly earnest, sincere and devoted, and yet do tremendous harm. If false

teaching causes another to place his faith in the wrong person, to rest upon a false foundation, then it is like giving him poisonous fruit to eat. There is only one way to be saved, and that is through Jesus Christ, by believing in Him (Acts 4: 12; John 3: 16).

5. **One man urgently warned the others before it was too late** (v. 40). There is so much false teaching being given to-day that we must be on our guard, and warn others of their danger. We should "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men. . . ungodly men. . . denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 3: 4). When discussing these things the Scripture should be the final authority. "What saith the Scripture?" (Gal. 4: 30). If we cannot say about our teaching "Thus saith the Lord," then we know that it does not agree with the Word of God and is false. Let us bring all religious teaching to the test of God's word. Let us warn others against wild gourds of error in the pot, against poisonous false doctrine mingled with the truth.

6. **How the soup was made wholesome.**

(a) **Elisha used the young men.** He told them to bring meal (v. 41). Just as Elisha worked through them, so God uses human instruments. He works through men. Moses had to stretch out his hand over the Red Sea to make a path through it. The servants had to fill the waterpots with water before the Lord Jesus would turn it into wine. The people had to roll away the stone from the grave of Lazarus before Lazarus could come forth. The disciples had to distribute the loaves and fishes to the multitude in order that they might be fed. God needs **us.** We must do our part and God will do His. He chooses to work that way.

(b) **Meal represents the Word of God.** Meal is that from which bread is made. The pure, unadulterated Word of God is food for hungry souls. There is no poison in that Word, no error, nothing that will harm the soul. Just as bread builds up the body, strengthening our physical life, so the Word of God builds up our souls, strengthening our spiritual life. "The word of His grace, which is able to build you up" (Acts 20: 32). Bring the Word of God to bear upon all false teaching.

7. **Give and it shall be given you.** Elisha had given all he had, the last food that was in the house (v. 38), and God used one of His servants to give to Elisha (v. 42). What we give to others for Christ's sake comes back to us and more. If we show kindness, give love, help others, we meet with the same in return. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure. . . and running over" (Luke 6: 38). "The liberal soul shall be made fat and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Prov. 11: 25). "He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (2 Cor. 9: 6).

Elisha's unselfish generosity. Elisha does not use this gift for himself, but feeds the hungry people and there was food over. Contrast Elisha's generosity with Gehazi's selfishness and covetousness (v. 43). How many were made glad that day because of Elisha's unselfishness.

Memory Verse.—Acts 17: 11.—"They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

154. NAAMAN THE GREAT GENERAL

Read 2 Kings 5: 1-19.

Theme: Cleansing in God's Way.

Tell the story.

1. The Little Maid.

(a) **She was God's instrument.** Though she was only a poor little slave girl, yet God chose her as an instrument to be used in Naaman's cleansing. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. . . things which are despised, hath God chosen" (1 Cor. 1: 27, 28). God has often used children and young people to win others for Christ. "A little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11: 6). It is not necessary to have great gifts or great knowledge in order to be used by God.

(b) **She was a faithful witness.** Although living in a heathen land, and therefore surrounded by heathen influences, probably cut off from the public worship of God, yet she never forgot God, and remained true to Him, like Joseph in Potiphar's house (Gen. 39: 1, 2), and Daniel and his companions in Babylon. Some of God's choicest flowers grow in the most unlikely surroundings. God can keep us true to Himself anywhere.

(c) **She used her opportunities.** She had this one chance of directing Naaman to God, and she seized it. Hers was only a small part, yet what far-reaching results her action had. Perhaps it was for this very purpose that God had allowed her to be taken captive to a strange land. She might have become embittered living in a strange land, separated from her people, but instead, she did Naaman and his wife a great kindness. One is inclined to think that she must have been very reliable in every way, otherwise they would not have attached so much importance to her words.

2. Naaman—before his cleansing.

(a) **His condition.** He had very many advantages, but he was a leper (v. 1). He was a great and courageous general, a favourite of the King of Syria, held in honour because of his victories, BUT—all these things were as nothing to him because he was a leper—this spoiled everything. **Leprosy,** in the Word of God, is a picture of sin. The spots were only the symptoms of the disease within. That God should use such a loathsome disease as a picture of sin, shows us what God thinks of sin. We may have great advantages, and natural characteristics which make us popular with others, but these things will avail us nothing if we have never been to Christ for cleansing from sin.

(b) **His mistakes.**

(i) **He went first to the wrong man for healing**—the King of Israel (v. 6). He had been told to go to Elisha. Elisha was a picture of Christ. He thought healing could be purchased with money (v. 5). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12). This salvation cannot be bought, it is "without money and without price" (Is. 55: 1).

(ii) **He wished to be healed in his own way.** He said, "I thought . . ." (v. 11). He felt it was humiliating to be healed in the way Elisha had directed. When we place ourselves in the hands of a doctor or surgeon, we lay aside our own ideas as to what treatment we should receive, we leave it to him. And when we come to Christ for cleansing, we must be cleansed in **His** way. Naaman was a proud man, and at first was not willing to humble himself. Pride keeps many from accepting Christ because they are not willing to come to Him as sinners who need a Saviour, yet this is the only way.

(iii) **He was not ready to do the simple thing,** though he was prepared to do a great thing (v. 13). People are prepared to get cleansing by good works, by trying to do something towards their own salvation, but not to take the salvation God provides. We must come in **God's** way and be cleansed through the blood of Christ. Finally he yielded to the entreaties of his servants, washed in Jordan and was made clean.

3. **Naaman—after his cleansing.**

(a) **His witness.** He confessed his faith in the true God before all (v. 15). Notice that Naaman lost no time in doing this. He wanted all his company to know that he was now a believer in the one true God. The Christian is not only to believe with the heart unto righteousness, but to confess with the mouth unto salvation (Rom. 10: 10). One who has trusted Christ for salvation will never grow in the Christian life unless he confesses before others that he now belongs to Him. It is better to take this step at once. It will help to strengthen his faith, and give him the assurance of salvation. It enables others to know just where he stands, and will save him from making compromises and continuing in the things of the old life.

(b) **His expression of gratitude** (v. 15). This meant a journey of thirty miles. Have you ever thanked the Lord for all that He has done for you? And what has your thanks cost you? When the Lord Jesus cleansed the ten lepers He was grieved that only one returned to thank Him, and He said, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine" (Luke 17: 17). We should show forth our praise and gratitude, not only with our lips but in our lives.

(c) **His determination to worship the Lord only** (v. 17). He was finished with the gods he had formerly worshipped, and with the old ways. There is nothing like making a clean break in order to grow in the Christian life. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5: 17). The Thessalonians turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess. 1: 9). Turning from idols was the negative side, turning to God to serve Him was the positive side. We are "saved to serve."

Memory Verse.—2 Corinthians 5: 17—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

155. GEHAZI, ELISHA'S SERVANT

Read 2 Kings 5: 20-27; 4: 25-27.

Theme: The sins of covetousness and lying.

Tell the story.

1. **Gehazi.**

(a) **His powerlessness** (4: 31). He held Elisha's staff, the **symbol** of power, but he was powerless. Perhaps he thought there was some supernatural power in the staff itself, for even when Elisha accompanied the bereaved mother at her request, Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the dead child. There is no record of his praying for power—he seems to have relied upon the mere symbol, but there was no result; he had to confess, "The child is not awaked" (4: 31). When **Elisha** came into the house **he** shut the door and prayed to the Lord. **He** knew the source of power. We shall see later the cause of Gehazi's inability to help. It is possible to be linked up with many meetings, to attend church and Sunday school regularly, and even to be engaged in active Christian work, and yet to lack power for that service. The result will be "wood, hay, stubble" (1 Cor. 3: 12).

(b) **His lack of sympathy and understanding** (4: 27). The fact that he could not enter into the bereaved mother's sorrow suggests that he was out of touch with the Lord. His rough manner repelled the mother, and she probably knew that he could not help her. She was therefore not willing that he should accompany her, and refused to return without Elisha. Do others go unhelped and uncomforted because of our lack of sympathy and understanding? Are we often powerless to help others because we are out of touch with the Lord? How we all need "a heart at leisure from itself to soothe and sympathise." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6: 2).

(c) **His covetousness.** This was the cause of his downfall. Covetousness is to desire or eagerly long for something which belongs to another, or something which God has rightly withheld from us. The Lord Jesus said. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12: 15). Gehazi missed the best things of life—usefulness and power in God's service—because he coveted money, garments, olive yards. . . (2 Kings 5: 26).

(d) **His disapproval of Elisha's action** (v. 20). He thought his master foolish for not accepting Naaman's gifts. But Christ says the person who lives for himself, lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God is a fool, because he cannot take with him the things which he has provided (Luke 12: 20, 21). The things Gehazi coveted would perish, the treasure Elisha was laying up would last for eternity. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6: 20) How often the Christian is thought a fool for doing as Elisha did.

(e) **His great privileges.** He lived with God's prophet, saw his devoted life of powerful service, heard his teaching, and witnessed his miracles, yet they had no effect upon him, nor did they keep him from the sin of covetousness which led to lying and deceit. Perhaps

you have been brought up by Christian parents, and have been surrounded by the influences of a godly home. God will hold you responsible for these privileges. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14: 12), for all opportunities and privileges. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12: 48). Gehazzi, like Lot, is a warning to us.

2. **Elisha.**

(a) **His courage.** He would not sacrifice his principles by pandering to the great general's wishes and his pride. He knew that God was no respecter of persons, that all sinners, irrespective of standing or position, are alike in God's sight; therefore he would not change God's message or method of cleansing. Elisha was more concerned about pleasing God than he was about pandering to the wishes of this man of high position. It was said of Enoch, "He had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11: 5). A certain ticket collector was very unpopular because he insisted on every person showing his season ticket as he passed out of the local station, no matter how hurried they might be or what the weather. His chief occupied an office above. On one occasion, when the ticket collector was told of his own unpopularity because of what they termed his over-conscientiousness, pointing to the office above, he said, "All I care about is being popular with the man up there." May our attitude towards God be the same.

(b) **His humility.** He wanted to direct Naaman's thoughts away from the instrument who had helped him, to God, to make him realise that it was **God's** power, and not Elisha's, that had healed him; therefore he refused to accept Naaman's gifts (v. 16). He knew that he himself was only one instrument (as the little maid was another) whom God used in the healing of Naaman. The best expression of his gratitude would be to follow the true God, and this he did.

3. **His rebuke to Gehazi** (v. 26). When a soul has turned from darkness to light, was this a time to receive money, and garments and olive yards and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and men servants and maidservants? Gehazi seemed to have been little impressed, if at all, with the great miracle which had been wrought for Naaman, and by Naaman's turning to the true God. He was taken up with the desire for earthly possessions, and had no appreciation of spiritual values. Now is the day of service.

Memory Verse.—Luke 12: 15—"Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

156. ENLARGING THE COLLEGE

Read 2 Kings 6: 1-4.

Theme: Workers for God.

Tell the story.

The prophet Elisha is at Jericho, where there is a school of the prophets. He is on a tour of inspection. Here are the young men who were so slow to believe that Elijah had really gone up to heaven, and others had joined them.

1. **In training for God's service.** They had entered the college at Jericho in order to be prepared for God's work. We can thank God for the many Bible Training Colleges that are in existence today, where young people may be trained for God's service at home or abroad. The advantages of training in these colleges are many. Regular time can be given to the study of God's word under spiritual leaders. Here the students learn to yield to discipline which will help them later on when they go to the Mission Field. They learn to work and co-operate with others who may have had quite a different background and upbringing. They will probably receive training in practical work which is so essential when working amongst primitive peoples. But all this will be of no avail unless there is **spiritual** preparation, learning to know God and to depend upon Him, drawing food and strength from the devotional study of the Word in Quiet Time. We need to enter the school of the Lord Jesus as Paul, Peter, John and others did. We read of the spiritual training of the disciples. "He ordained twelve, **that they might be with Him,** and that He might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3: 14).

2. **The Cost.** For some of these young men it may have meant giving up the prospect of a great career, or wealth, or an assured position in life, to live a life of comparative poverty and hardship. If one is called to full-time service for God, then it is not a question of choosing one's career. God has already done that when He called us, and we have no option in the matter except that of obeying or refusing that call. Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16: 24). The supreme motive for service must be love for Christ, and then the cost will seem as nothing.

3. **The need for expansion.** "The place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us" (v. 1). Many fresh students had joined the college for, in spite of persecution, true religion was growing. Jezebel and her wicked son could not prevent a large number of the people from fearing and loving God, and recently so many students had become members of the Jericho college, that it had become over crowded. It is a good sign when that can be said of places where Christians meet. How splendid a thing it was when "The Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied. . . greatly" (Acts 6: 7). It is a grand thing when so many young folk are seeking to prepare themselves for full time service that buildings become inadequate.

4. How they did work.

(a) **They asked Elisha's advice** and were willing to take it. They did not think they already knew everything. They respected Elisha; they knew that he was older and wiser than they were, that he was a man of God and walked with God, and they would not set to work without his permission and direction. They humbly submitted their plans to him. Older and more experienced servants of God can be a great help to us if we are willing to profit by their experience and their knowledge of God and of His ways.

(b) **They were ALL willing to work. Every** man took a beam (v. 2). They were not all trained carpenters, but all had willing hearts and willing hands. They did not think this manual work was beneath their dignity, or say "I am being trained to teach and to preach, not to erect buildings!" Some have been given more talents than others. Some are fitted for prominent and leading positions, and others for lowlier tasks, but all are needed. Some of these young men may have understood the work better than others, but all had a part to play. God had set some in the Church to occupy leading positions, apostles, prophets, teachers, governments. . . but included in this list were "helps" (1 Cor. 12: 28). Thank God all have a place here. In the days of the apostles there were those who were needed to "serve tables," to see to the sharing out of food to the needy widows, in order to set the apostles free for prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6: 2, 4). God needs to-day those who, if they have no special gifts, are willing to serve tables, to be "helps." God has a place for **every** believer in His world-wide programme of bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Find our what **your** part is and do it.

(c) **The scrub had to be cleared before the building could be erected.** God calls some to pioneer work in the mission field, to do the spade work in preparation for the building of Christ's Church in that particular place. We think of pioneer missionaries who have prepared the way for others to follow. Not for them was the joy of seeing the completed building. In laying the foundations they may even have laid down their lives for Christ's sake and the Gospel's.

(d) **They must have Elisha with them.** "Go with thy servants," they said (v. 3). They were not willing to undertake the work without him. Our work will be useless unless our Lord go with us. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps. 127: 1). Moses said to God, "If Thy presence go not with me carry us not up hence" (Ex. 33: 15). We dare not go forth to undertake any work for God unless we are sure of God's presence. Let us pray daily in the words of the young men, "I pray Thee, go with Thy servants" (v. 3). We need Him so much. We need His strength, His grace, His wisdom. We need Him for our daily work. We need Him when we set out on some new undertaking; we need Him every step of the way.

And Elisha said, "I will go" (v. 3). As the Lord said to Moses, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (Ex. 33: 14), so the promise holds true for us.

Memory Verse.—Exodus 33: 14.—"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

157. THE LOST AXEHEAD

Read 2 Kings 6: 1-7.

Theme: Power lost and recovered.

Tell the story.

The Axehead represents God's power and blessing.

Elisha is a picture of Christ.

1. **The axehead lost.** It is true that once we have accepted Christ as our Saviour we can never be lost, for Christ said, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10: 28). and "He that heareth My Word and believeth on Him that sent Me, **hath** everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but **is** passed from death unto life" (John 5: 24). We can, however, lose our axehead—lose power and blessing—and become ineffective in His service. How easy it is to do this. Some act of disobedience, some sin unconfessed, something not put right in our lives, something between us and another, grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4: 30), and He can no longer use us. Many of God's children lose their axehead, and all are in danger of doing so.

2. **The axehead was lost while the young man was still at work.** He did not mislay it, it fell into the water while he was felling a beam (v. 5). It may be that while we are actually doing some work for God we lose our axehead. It may be through pride, forgetting that we have nothing that we have not received from God (1 Cor. 4: 7). "He it is that giveth thee power" (Deut. 8: 18). "God is my strength and power" (2 Sam. 22: 23). "Power belongeth unto **God**" (Ps. 62: 11). It may be we have lost it through becoming careless in taking our Quiet Time, ceasing to watch and pray. The axehead may have already become loose from the handle, and the young man did not notice it in time, and when he gave an extra hard blow it fell into the water.

3. **To work with the handle only is useless,** for it is not the handle that does the work, and the young man knew it. Our axe-handle may represent our position, our talents, our opportunities, and our influence but these are useless without the axehead which represents power and blessing. It is possible to go on working for God after we have lost our axehead. We may put much time and labour into this work, we may sacrifice much in order to do it, but if the power is gone our work will be ineffective. We may appear to others to be putting in good work, but in God's sight we are accomplishing nothing. "For the Lord shall judge His people. . . when He seeth that their power is gone" (Deut. 32: 36).

4. **How the axe was found.**

(a) **He cried to his master** (v. 5). He knew where help was to be found, and he cried to Elisha **at once.** Let us keep short accounts with God. When we find our power is gone let us go at once to God acknowledging that we have lost our axehead. The longer we go on without doing this the more difficult it will be to recover our only effective tool. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9).

(b) **The searching question, "Where fell it?"** (v. 6). The question comes too, from the lips of the Lord, "Where did you lose the power? Where was the leakage in your spiritual life?" When that question comes to us then we must examine ourselves. If we do this honestly, asking God to search us as David did when he cried, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me" (Ps. 139: 23, 24). Then He will show us where we lost the power.

(c) **He had to return to the place where he had lost it.** We must go right back to the place where we lost the power, confess it to God (and it may be necessary to confess it to others also). and put it right. This is humbling to our pride, which makes us want to stand well in the opinion of others, but confession is necessary if we are again to use a keen, sharp instrument.

The writer was helping as a personal worker at a certain Mission. When the appeal was made, a child of twelve, weeping bitterly went forward. When dealt with it was discovered that she was truly a child of God, having accepted Christ at a young people's house-party two years previously. She had gone on happily with the Lord, seeking to help her classmates. Then one day she cheated during an examination, and although no one knew it but herself, her usefulness was gone, her joy had departed. She said she had confessed the whole thing to God, but still could not get peace of heart. When faced up to the necessity of confessing to the teacher what she had done, she said she could not possibly do it, for she did not wish to lose the good opinion of the teacher. However, at last she felt this was the only thing to be done, and rose from her knees with a shining face. She had returned to the place where she lost her axehead.

(d) **He had to take the axehead again.** "Take it up to thee," said Elisha. "And he put out his hand, and took it" (v. 7). When we have confessed to the Lord that we have lost power and He has shown us how we may recover it, we have returned to the place where we lost it, then **we must take it by faith,** believing that when God says He forgives He actually does it, and not only forgives but cleanses us. We can then take our place with God's workers again as the young man did with the woodcutters. "Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, according to your faith be it unto you (Matt. 9: 28, 29).

5. **The axe was borrowed.** It had only been lent to him. "Alas, master! for it was borrowed," he cried (v. 5). He was concerned about the axe because it did not belong to him, and he was accountable for it to the owner. Let us be concerned and careful of the goods and property of others. There is a tendency to care little for the possessions of others. "If a man borrow. . . and it be hurt. . . he shall surely make it good" (Ex. 22: 14).

Taking this thought in its spiritual sense it has a message for us. Power is lent to us to use for God and we must render an account to Him. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God (Rom. 14: 12). Let a man so account of us as. . . stewards")1 Cor. 4: 1). "As good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4: 10).

Memory Verse.—Romans 14: 12.—"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

158. GOD'S HOST OF ANGELS

Read 2 Kings 6: 8-23.

Theme: Opened Eyes.

Tell the story.

1. **Loyalty to his king brought Elisha into danger,** for the enemy sought his life (vv. 10, 13). Those who would be true to Christ are not promised an easy time or freedom from persecution. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16: 33). "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3: 12). But Elisha's enemies were powerless to hurt him. Nothing could really touch Elisha's life apart from God's permissive will. If we are in the will of God nothing can touch us except that which God allows. The Lord Jesus said, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19: 11), and it is so with us. In the great "Faith chapter," Hebrews 11, we read of some who were delivered and of others who were not delivered, yet nothing could have touched their lives if God had not permitted it.

2. **The servant's fear.** He saw the enemy and the danger, but could not see God's hosts, therefore he was afraid, and cried, "Alas, master! How shall we do?" (v. 15.) What is your Syrian host of whom you are afraid. Is it a great temptation that you feel you do not know how to withstand? Is it a companion or a friend urging you to do what you know is wrong and yet you feel you must yield to their persuasion? Is it the old sinful nature, the flesh, self, struggling for the mastery? It may be an army of difficulties, anxieties, cares and troubles that face you till you cry out, "Alas! how shall we do?"

But this young man did not need to do anything. He had to leave the doing to God. God's hosts were already there, only he could not see them. How true it is that the things of which we are most afraid never actually come to us.

3. **Elisha's reply** (v. 16).

(a) **Fear not.** These words, "Fear not," are spoken many times in Scripture by God to His children. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness (Is. 41: 10). "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Ps. 27: 1.) We may well ask ourselves the question, "Whom shall I fear?" when the hosts of the Lord are round about us.

(b) **For they that be with us are more than they that be with them** (v. 16). Elisha himself was not afraid, for he had seen the vision of the chariots before (2 Kings 2: 11), and he knew that they were there now. The young man said, "How shall we do?" The prophet said in effect, "You do not need to do anything, God will do it all." Moses said to the Children of Israel, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord (Ex. 14: 13). "The angel of the Lord en-

campeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34: 7). "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8: 31.) "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed. . . for there be more with us than with him" (2 Chron. 32: 7).

4. **Elisha's prayer.** "Lord . . . open his eyes that he may see" (v. 17). Elisha prayed because God is the only One who can open our eyes and cause us to see. "**The Lord** openeth the eyes of the blind" (Ps. 146: 8). Paul prayed for the Ephesians that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened (Eph. 1: 18). The young man could see, yet he could not see. He could not see the spiritual hosts of God. We need to have our **spiritual** eyes opened. Too often we are so taken up with the difficulties and dangers round us that we cannot see God's hosts ready to deliver us.

(a) **We need our eyes opened to see sin** as Balaam did when the Lord opened his eyes to see his own perverse ways (Num. 22: 31, 32). The sinner is described in God's Word as being blind (2 Cor. 4: 4), and in darkness (1 John 2: 11).

(b) **We need our eyes opened to see the Way of Salvation,** to see Christ as the Living Water. The water was there all the time, but Hagar only saw it when **the Lord** opened her eyes (Gen. 21: 19).

(c) **We need our eyes opened to see wonderful things in God's Word.** We should pray daily, "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Ps. 119: 18). Our Lord had to open the eyes of their understanding before the disciples could understand the meaning of the Scriptures concerning Himself (Luke 24: 45). Only the Holy Spirit can open our eyes to see spiritual truths, and unless we look to Him the Bible will be a sealed book to us.

5. **The prayer answered.** "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw. . . the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (v. 17). They were there all the time, but it was only after the Lord had opened his eyes that he could see them. There are those round us whose eyes are blind to their own sin, to the beauty of the Saviour, and to all spiritual truth. Let us pray for them in faith as Elisha did for his servant.

6. **Elisha's enemies became his prisoners.** Those who had come out to capture him had themselves been taken prisoner. By God's power our enemies, whether Satan, the flesh within, or temptations without, can become our prisoners and thus have no power over us. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against. . . God, and **bringing into captivity** every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10: 5). "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. 6: 14).

7. **Elisha's forgiving spirit.** When the king's enemies were in his power he did not take his revenge. Not only did he refuse to allow them to be killed, but he asked that they might be fed and sent back to their master (v. 23). "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head (Rom. 12: 20).

Memory Verse.—2 Chronicles 32: 7.—"Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed. . . for there be more with us than with him."

159. A GREAT FAMINE IN SAMARIA

Read 2 Kings 6: 24-33; 7: 1, 2.

Theme: God's Chastening.

Tell the story.

1. **God's Chastening.** God sent a terrible famine to chasten His people and to bring them back to Himself, just as He sent a drought in the time of Elijah (1 Kings 17: 1). God had warned His people long before that if they turned aside from Him and worshipped other gods, that He would send drought and famine (Deut. 11: 17), and again we see this taking place. God chastens nations as well as individuals; they too, must reap what they sow. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3: 19). He rebukes first, and if they do not heed His call then He chastens. God allowed the city to be besieged till the people were starving. Why did the angels not come between the Samaritans and the Syrians, as they did before? Because the angel of the Lord encampeth round about **them that fear Him**, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34: 7). Jezebel did not fear Him, the nobles of Samaria did not fear Him, therefore this trouble had come upon them, and no protecting angel was placed between them and their foes. If we would have God's help and protection, we must fear and serve Him.

2. **Jehoram pretended to be repentant.** He was sorry only for the **fruit** of his sins, but there was no true repentance, no sorrow for sin itself. He wore next to his skin rough sackcloth as a sign of the deepest sorrow and mourning. He had sackcloth on his body, but none on his heart. He mourned the famine. but not the sin that caused the famine, his own sin, his mother's sin, and the sin of the nation. His was a counterfeit repentance, which the prophet Isaiah describes in the following words: "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it . . . to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call **this** a fast? Is not this the fast that I have chosen; to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens. . . **Then** shall thy light break forth as the morning" (Is. 58: 5, 6, 8). True repentance is that of the heart, which shows itself in the forsaking of sin. "Let the wicked **forsake** his way . . . and let him return unto the Lord" (Is. 55: 7).

3. **Jehoram shifted the blame on to Elisha** and threatened to kill him (v. 31), instead of saying, as the Children of Israel did years before, "We have sinned against Thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. . . And they put away the strange gods from among them and served the Lord" (Judges 10: 10, 16). But Jehoram did what so many others have done from the days of Adam and Eve, when Eve blamed the serpent and Adam blamed his wife for the sin which they had committed. The king tried to lay the blame on someone else. Many to-day blame their circumstances, their home, their upbringing, their companions, and even God Himself for their backsliding and their sin. But these excuses will not avail when every one must stand before God and give an account of himself to Him (Rom. 14: 12).

4. **Jehoram hardened his heart.** Trouble either softens or hardens people's hearts. Jehoram now wished, to add to the rest of his sins, the murder of God's prophet. God allows trouble and sorrow to come into our lives and homes, not to punish us or to injure us, but to draw us to Himself. "But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion. . . For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men" (Lam. 3: 32, 33). But if people still refuse to listen to Him, their hearts become harder; the trouble only drives them farther away from God. Jehoram at this time had no one on whom he could lean, no one to whom he could turn, for, instead of being able to lean on God, who is a very present help in trouble to those who turn to Him, he was angry with God and with His servant Elisha.

5. **The contrast between Elisha and the King.** Elisha sits quietly in his house assured that all is well (v. 32), while the king paces the walls, puts on sackcloth, rends his garments, fumes, rages, threatens and storms. Though Elisha is suffering with the rest of the people of Samaria, and his life is threatened by the king, he is at peace, for God is his refuge and strength (Ps. 46: 1). Peter, threatened with execution, was able to sleep calmly (Acts 12: 6, 7). Paul was able to say, when facing a violent death, "I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. 4: 6). Our Lord slept during the storm on the lake (Mark 4: 37, 38). "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Is. 26: 3, 4).

6. **Jehoram now shifts the blame on to God.** He says he is tired of waiting for Him (v. 33). But Jehoram had never really waited for God or looked to Him for help in their sore plight. If it had only been for Jehoram's sake, God never would have sent deliverance. It was on account of his faithful people, Elisha, the elders and others who were the salt of the earth, that God was prepared to end the famine. (See Lesson 23, Point 2c.)

7. **A great lord mocks at the promises of Elisha** (ch. 7: 2).

(a) **He scoffed in unbelief.** He probably thought this was Elisha's way of saving his life and thus gaining time. He thought it utterly impossible for God to give the plenty of bread which He had promised. "Blind unbelief is sure to err." How foolish is unbelief. Surely the same God who created the world and all things that grow, is able to supply one city with bread. Many to-day are like that man. They neither believe in God nor in His power (at least that is what they say). They do not believe in prayer, they sneer at God's children. Let us not be shaken in our confidence as we listen to these people, but let us believe that what God says will surely come to pass.

(b) **The good news came true.** Men's unbelief does not affect God's Word or prevent its coming true. God's Word never fails. "Grass withereth and the flower . . . falleth away; but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Pet. 1: 24, 25).

(c) **The bad news also came true.** The scoffer saw God's deliverance come, but he had no part in it. He did not eat of the food (v. 2), for the people trod upon him at the gate and he died (v. 20), as the Word of the Lord had predicted. The good news of the Gospel is that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"; the bad news is, "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3: 36).

Memory Verse.—Isaiah 26: 3.—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusteth in Thee."

160. A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS

Read 2 Kings 7: 3-20.

Theme: Telling the good news.

Tell the story.

1. **The condition of the lepers, is like that of sinners.**

(a) **It was desperate.** They were starving. "They found no city to dwell in, hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them" (Ps. 107: 4, 5). Yet all the time food was near at hand had they only known it. God had already sent deliverance, so there was no need for them to stay in that condition another minute.

(b) **They were in deep poverty** needing everything, like the sinner, "having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2: 12).

(c) **They were in pain, full of sores.** God said of the sinful people, "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores" (Is. 1: 6).

(d) **They were separated from the rest of the people.** Not allowed inside the city walls, they had to live outside the gates. God says of the sinner, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you" (Is. 59: 1, 2), Until our sin has been forgiven and put away we cannot approach God.

2. **THE LORD did a great thing for them. They** did not win the victory over the Syrians; they were quite incapable of doing so for they were at the point of death; they only discovered the great thing **God** had done. It is **God** who has made a way of salvation for us. He it is who has provided eternal life for as many as will receive it through His Son. "He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent me, **hath** everlasting life" (John 5: 24). "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord (Ps. 3: 8). The Lord hath made known **His** salvation" (Ps. 98: 2). It is a **great** salvation (Heb. 2: 3).

3. **They took for themselves what they found** (v 8). Of what use would the food have been if they had not eaten it, or the clothes if they had not worn them, or the other good things if they had not taken possession of them? God has made a way of salvation, but we must accept it, make it our own. God provided the coats of skins for Adam and Eve in order to cover their nakedness, but they had to put them on (Gen. 3: 21). God has provided the garments of salvation, our part is to accept them (Is. 61: 10). To as many as **received** Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God (John 1: 12). The lepers found great treasures. Are the treasures of pardon, peace, comfort and blessing yours?

4. **What they said** (v. 9).

(a) This is a day of good tidings. What wonderful news they had for the stricken people in the city, and how selfish it would have been for them had they kept the good news to themselves. **They** were fully satisfied with bread enough and to spare, but the people in the city were still without bread. The angels brought "good tidings of great joy to **all** people" this good news was of "a Saviour which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2: 10, 11).

(b) **"We do not well . . . we hold our peace."** The famished people in the city could not be delivered from their terrible plight until they heard the news of their deliverance, and it was in the power of the lepers to take this news to them. The lepers did not well by merely enjoying the good things themselves, and holding back the knowledge of it from those who so sorely needed it. We also do not well if we hold back from those who are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, whether at home or in heathen lands, the glorious news of the Gospel. God calls us to be witnesses, not to hold our peace. Paul said, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9: 16). When the demoniac of Gadara was healed our Lord said to him, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mark 5: 19). We all have some part to play in making known the good tidings of salvation.

(c) **"If we wait till the morning light some mischief will come upon us."** These words are also true for us, who have been entrusted with this good news of salvation. If we wait till the morning when the Lord Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, shall appear and we have done nothing about making the good news known we shall have to give account of ourselves to God. We shall suffer loss now in our Christian life, and lose reward by and by (1 Cor. 3: 15). Excuses which seem adequate to us now will be of no use then.

(d) **"Come that we may go and tell."** Their decision was made and they acted on it. "So they came." Have you made the decision that you will do something about making known the glorious news of salvation? All should have a share in this blessed work. If you cannot go to heathen lands you can do something at home. There must be those who will abide by the stuff at home, as well as those who go out to the battle (1 Sam. 30: 24); those who by prayer, giving, and work, will provide the sinews of war for those who have gone forth. There is a responsibility resting upon all who know and love the Saviour to send the Gospel to heathen lands.

"Can we whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high,
Can we to men benighted the lamp of life deny?
Salvation, O salvation, the joyful sound proclaim
Till each remotest nation has learned Messiah's Name."

5. **The change in the lepers had its effect upon the people,** and they were forced to believe their story. Instead of being starved, the lepers were well fed, instead of being clothed in rags thy had on good clothing, instead of being in misery and poverty they had riches and happiness. The people knew by the very appearance of the lepers that the story they brought must be true. If our message is to be effective we, too, must show in our faces and by our lives, that the Gospel is true, that it has done great things for us personally, then others will believe. It was when the people saw Lazarus who had been dead, alive and well that they believed on Jesus (John 11: 44, 45).

Memory Verse.—2 Kings 7: 9.—"This is a day of good tidings . . . now therefore come, that we may go and tell."

ELISHA'S EARLY MINISTRY

2 Kings 3-4

Golden Text: Psalm 50:15

I. The War With Moab; ch. 3.

1. The ungodly alliance; vs. 1-10. (1) The rebelling Mesha; vs. 4, 5. "The Moabite Stone," preserved in the British museum, authenticates this. (2) The proposal; vs. 6, 7. Again he falls into the same snare. (3) Their quandary; vs. 9, 10. Cp. Psalm 10:17-19. There was no consulting of God or His word or His prophet. The folly of worldly wisdom and human expediency.
2. The consultation with Elisha. Vs. 11-19. (1) The query; v. 11. Cp. Jer. 6:16. (2) The answer; vs. 13-19. (a) His rebuke; v. 13. (b) The regard; v. 14. (c) The revelation; vs. 15-19.
3. The victory; vs. 20-27.

II. The Widow's Supply; 4:1-7.

1. Her desperate strait; vs. 1. (1) Bereft of her husband. (2) In debt. (3) In danger of bondage. What a pitiable condition. How typical of a sinner without God, in debt to God, in bondage to sin and the law. Cp. Eph. 2:12; 4:18; Luke 7:41; John 8:32-35; Romans 6:17-20; Gal. 3:10, 11; Gal. 4:3-5: 5:1.
2. The marvellous remedy; vs. 2-7. (1) The sole possession; v. 2. (2) The plain direction; vs. 3, 4. Nothing ambiguous about it. Cp. the way of salvation. Cp. Isa. 35:8. (3) The wonderful result; vs. 5-7. (a) Obedience; v. 5. (b) Supply; v. 6. (c) Deliverance; v. 7. This is the Divine order in salvation. Note: The oil increased, not in the vessel, but by pouring out. Cp. Prov. 11:24, 25; Luke 6:38. Illust. John 6:10-12. "Measure thy life by loss and not by gain. Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth."

III. The Great Woman; vs. 8-37.

1. Hospitality; vs. 8-10. The origin of "the prophet's chamber." Hospitality. (1) Commanded; Romans 12:13; Titus 1:8; 1 Peter 4:9 (2) Commended: 3 John 5-7; Heb. 13:1, 2. (3) Rewarded; Heb. 6:10; Matt. 25:37-40.
2. Her humility; vs. 11-13.
3. The promise; vs. 14-17.
4. The tragedy; vs. 18-21. Death the great reaper.
5. The journey; vs. 22-25. Her urgency. He knew her need and the only remedy. Do you?
6. The interview; vs. 26-31. The prophet's staff that failed. The reason it failed was due to the character of the man who wielded it. He was a covetous man. See chap. 5. Note the mother's insistence; v. 30. She wanted the man of God, not a substitute. Not the staff, but the man!
7. The wondrous result: vs. 32-37. Note the procedure. Here is a lesson to the Christian worker: (1) Separation—alone; v. 33; Matt. 6:6. (2) Supplication; v. 33; Matt. 7:7, 8. (3) Application to the work; v. 34. (4) Regeneration; v. 35. Life manifests itself. (5) Restoration; vs. 36, 37.

IV. The Deadly Pottage; vs. 38-41.

V. The Marvellous Supply; vs. 42-44.

NAAMAN THE LEPER

2 Kings 5

Golden Text: 1 Corinthians 1:18

I. His Description; v. 1. Naaman had what many today imagine would give them complete satisfaction. What he had—

1. Position, "Captain." The commander-in-chief. At the top of the ladder of fame.
2. Power, "great man." Authority, popularity and great influence.
3. Character, "honorable," see margin. Cultured, refined, gracious, a gentleman.
4. Victory, "deliverance." He had ridden Syria of foreign dominance.
5. Bravery, "valour." Fearless in the fight.
6. The fearful "but"—"A leper." That spoiled it all. What his leprosy did: (1) Separated him. (2) Rendered unclean. (3) Incurable. (4) Death. Cp. leprosy with sin from which all suffer. Isa. 59:1, 2; 64:6; Psalm 14:2, 3, Jer. 17:9; 2:22; Romans 6:23. See Lesson 42.

II. His Opportunity; vs. 2, 3.

1. The little maid's capture. Picture it. Taken from home, friends, comfort, care and counsel.
2. Her purchaser; v. 2: Naaman's wife.
3 Her faith; v. 3. She had brought a simple, childlike faith in the true God with her. The God of redemption, deliverance, provision and protection. In the midst of idolatry she shone for the living God.

III. His Mistakes; vs. 4-11. Many sinners make the same ones.

1. He went to the wrong person; vs. 3-7. To unregenerate Jehoram instead of God's representative. Cp. Today the minister, church, creed and ordinances.
2. He went with wrong means; v. 5. Gold, silver and raiment. How like the sinner with his own righteousness, good works, resolutions, etc.; Eph. 2:8, 9.
3. With the wrong idea; v. 11. He wrote out his own prescription. "I thought." How many today look for "feelings," "voices" and "visions" instead of God's way, as revealed in His word.

IV. His Attitude; vs. 10-13.

1. The message, through the servant; v. 10. Simple and definite. Cp. The message of salvation; Acts 16:30, 31, etc.
2. The result; v. 11. Naaman lost his temper. It hurt his pride. God's way up is always down! Luke 18:14; 1 Cor. 1:27-29.
3. The reason; v. 13. Nothing unreasonable in God's way. Isa. 1:18, etc.

V. His Cure; v. 14.

1. He lost his pride. Good riddance to bad rubbish! Note: He went down.
2. He lost his leprosy. Picture the scene and his feelings as he realized the glorious truth of his cleansing.

VI. His Testimony; vs. 15-19. "I know." Cp. 1 John 5:13; John 9:25; Romans 1:16; 2 Tim. 1: 12. Do you know or hope?

VII. Gehazi's Perfidy; vs. 20-27. Covetousness. and its fearful consequence.

1. Covetousness; vs. 19-23.
2. Concealment; vs. 24, 25.
3. Cognizance; v. 26
4 Consequence; v. 27.

THE FOUR LEPERS

2 Kings 6-7

Golden Text: 1 Peter 1:3

I. The Floating Axe; 6:1-7.

1. Co-operation. Vs. 1-4.
2. Consternation; v. 5. "Borrowed."
3. Revelation; v. 6.
4. Restoration; v. 7. Here is a good illustration of the gospel. It was only when the stick (the Cross) was put into the pool that a superior power to gravitation was demonstrated. When the truth of the cross is heard and believed, the Spirit of God quickens the dead sinner into newness of life.

II. The Chariots of God; 15:8-23.

1. The plans frustrated; vs. 8-11.
2. The attempt to capture Elisha; vs. 12-23. (1) The information; v. 12. (2) The servant's fear; vs. 13-15. All he saw was the enemy and the danger. How true is this of us! (3) The reply; v. 16. Cp. Romans 8:31; 2 Chron. 32:7; Psalm 55:18; 1 John 4:4. (4) The prayer. "Opened eyes." See other instances in Scripture where God opened people's eyes. (a) To see oneself a sinner; Num. 22:31. (b) To see God's salvation; Gen. 21:19. (c) To see perfect security; 2 Kings 6:17. (d) To see the Savior; Luke 24:31. Have we had our eyes opened? (5) The result; v. 17. God's defense. Cp. Psalm 46:1; 27:1-3; Heb. 1:13, 14. (6) The deliverance; vs. 18-23.

III. The Fearful Famine; vs. 24-33.

1. The real cause. Sin unconfessed and unjudged.
2. The beseiged city; v. 24. What a graphic picture of Satan's attack on the city of Mansoul!
3. The bitter cry; vs. 26-30.
4. The terrible threat; vs. 31-33. Would he had judged himself!

IV. The Promise of Provision; 7:1, 2.

1. Its authority—the Lord, and all of grace.
2. Unbelief and its consequences; v. 2.

V. The Four Lepers; vs. 3-20.

A fine gospel subject.

1. Their condition—desperate. A picture of the sinner. (1) Besieged by enemy. (2) Starving for food. Psalm 107:4, 5. (3) Poverty. Eph. 2:12. (4) Pain—lepers. Isa. 1:6. (5) Separated; v. 3. Isa. 59:1, 2.
2. Their consultation; vs. 3-5. (1) They reflected; v. 3. Why sit here? Why sinners sit still: through ignorance, indifference, independence of God Note the effect of their reflection. (2) They resolved; v. 4. Cp. Prodigal son. Luke 15. (3) They rose; v. 5. Action.
3. Their revelation; vs. 5-8. (1) A defeated enemy; vs. 5-7. This is the message of Calvary. Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:13-15; Luke 11:21, 22. (2) An abundant supply; v. 8. Superabounding. From abject poverty to untold wealth! Cp. Eph. 1:3-13.
4. Their appropriation; v. 8. "Took." They made it their own. Things to take. Cp. Rev. 22:17; Eph. 6:13-18; Matt. 16:24; John 1:12; Isa. 27:5; etc. Are these riches yours?
5. Their proclamation; vs. 9-11. (1) Confession. V. 9. "Do not well." (2) Testimony. "Day of good tidings." Luke 4:22. "Gospel." (3) Decision. "Go and tell." Mark 16:15; Luke 8:39, etc.
   (2) Fulness—for all. (3) Its effect (a) on believer; v. 16. (b) On unbeliever; v. 20;
6. The Provision. Vs. 12-29. Source—God. John 3:36.

161.

THE PARABLE OF THE BOW AND ARROWS

Read 2 Kings 13: 14-21.

Theme: Little faith.

Tell the story.

1. **Elisha's Homegoing.** We now come to the close of Elisha's long and useful life. The aged prophet did not have the triumphant departure that Elijah had. No chariots of fire appeared, no whirlwind swept him into heaven. He passed through the experience which many of us may have to pass through, that of weakness at the end. But though this was so with him; just as Elijah had left a blessing behind him, the blessing he had given his servant Elisha, so Elisha, too, wanted to leave a blessing behind him. Elisha had so lived that even the careless King Joash, who had not taken much notice of the prophet's warnings and advice, was going to miss him tremendously when he was gone. May our lives be such that others are going to miss us when we are called away. May we, too, say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his" (Num. 23: 10).

2. **Joash.**

(a) **He used words without knowing anything of the experience.** Just as Elisha, as a young man, had cried to Elijah, "My father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof," so did Joash use the same words when he saw the dying prophet (v. 14). But he saw no vision or glory as Elisha had done; he had not lived a true life for God, and therefore, he could not share his experience. His words had no power, and meant nothing. Let us beware of using words beyond our experience, of copying the talk of others when we know little of what it all means spiritually.

(b) **Joash's hands were covered by the hands of Elisha** (v. 16). Elisha wished to teach the king that he could not overcome Syria in his own power. The **hand of the Lord** must do it for him. It was "the arrow of the Lord's deliverance" (v. 17). We, too, need to learn that without Christ we can do nothing (John 15: 5). It is **God** who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15: 57). "Power belongeth **unto God**" (Ps. 62: 11). "The arms of his (Joseph's) hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob" (Gen 49: 24). But though it was true that it was the arrow of **the Lord's deliverance,** yet He used human instruments. It was God who made a path through the Red Sea, but He used Moses' rod. When God delivered Israel in the time of the Judges he used the oxgoad of Shamgar, the jawbone in the hand of Samson, and Gideon's lamps and pitchers. When the Lord would feed the 5000 He used the five loaves and two fishes belonging to the lad.

(c) **What great things lay in Joash's hands,** for, humanly speaking, he could alter the destiny of his people. If he will smite the ground five or six times, Israel's enemy will be broken in pieces; if he will smite only three times he will get only a measure of victory, and Israel will have to suffer again and again from the hands of the enemy. Great things very often depend on us; our actions affect others.

(d) **Great results may come from little acts.** It seemed a small thing for Joash to shoot an arrow from an open window, and to drive the arrows into the ground beneath, yet upon the smiting of those arrows will depend the victory or defeat of Israel. Do not trifle with little things, particularly in obedience to God, for on these may hang the greatest consequences, victory or defeat in our lives, usefulness or otherwise in God's service.

3. **Elisha said, "Open the window."** The opening of the window represents prayer. Daniel opened his windows toward Jerusalem, knelt down, and prayed (Dan. 6: 10). God works for us, He is prepared to give victory, but we must open our windows toward heaven, we must **ask** for it. "Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be enquired of" (Ezek. 36: 37). "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14: 14).

4. **The slack-handed king.** He smote three times only and stopped (v. 18). Elisha said, that because Joash only smote three times, he would have victory only three times (v. 19). God wants us to go on, "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6: 10), believing that He will give victory all the time. "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matt. 9: 29). "If thou canst believe all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9: 23). As William Carey said, "Evpect great things **from** God; attempt great things **for** God." This is what Joash did not do. Perhaps he thought three times would be enough, and he was content with that. He was like those who have little faith. They are not looking to God to do great things for them. Do not be content with a measure of victory, to overcome certain faults and sins and to be defeated by others. Smite five or six times expecting victory **every** time.

5. **The righteous wrath of the man of God** (v. 19). This was not a personal anger . He thought of the loss to Israel, and of what they would suffer at the hands of the Syrians. He thought of the overwhelming victories they might have had if the king had done his part as he had been told, "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times," he said, "then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it; whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice" (v. 19).

6. **Elisha's bones.** A dead man touched Elisha's bones and the man lived (v. 21). Through this miracle God wanted to teach Israel two lessons.

(a) **That though Elisha was dead, God's power was the same.** God's servants may die but God carries on His work. "Thou remainest" (Heb. 1: 11). Let us not think God's work must collapse because He chooses to remove some of His servants whom He has greatly used. **God still lives.** The Holy Spirit is still in the world to carry on His blessed work. It was as though Elisha's bones said to them, "I, Elisha, am dead, but God lives. **He** is your refuge and strength. Look to **Him**, trust **Him**, and all will be well."

(b) **Work we do for God will go on after we die.** Speaking of righteous Abel. God's Word said, "He being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11: 4). And again, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. . . their works do follow them" (Rev. 14: 13). People live for God, they spend a holy life working for the Master, then they are called away. But their work is not ended; their influence goes on; it spreads and increases. People whom they have won for Christ, and others to whom they have been a blessing, go on with the work they themselves have laid down; they in their turn are helping others.

Memory Verse.—Genesis 49: 24.—**"The arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."**

162. JONAH

Jonah 1-4

Golden Text: Jonah 2:9

I. His Call and Commission; vs. 1, 2.

1. The call; v. 1. "The word of the Lord." Cp. 1 Kings 14:25 for the time in which he lived
2. The commission; v. 2. To the enemies of Israel with a view to their salvation. Jonah as a patriotic Jew, wished their destruction and not their salvation. Cp. Romans 1:18, etc.; Mark 16:15.

II. His Disobedience; v. 3.

1. His folly. An attempt to flee from God. Cp. Psalm 139:1-12.
2. His flight. "He paid the fare." Note what the fare to Tarshish really cost. It cost (1) Communion with God. (2) Valuable time that can never be regained. (3) Usefulness in the service of God. (4) Others much danger, trouble and loss; vs. 4-6. (5) Much physical, mental and spiritual suffering. (6) Reward for faithful and devoted service. Did it pay him to flee from his call, commission and duty? Jer. 2: 19; 1 Cor. 10:11.

III. The Fearful Consequences; vs. 4-2:10.

1. The Storm; vs. 4, 5.
2. The query; vs. 6-10. (1) Reproach; v. 6. A sleeping Christian is a menace to the sinner and a disgrace to the Lord. Cp. Eph. 5:14; Romans 13:11, 12; 1 Thess. 5:6-9. (2) Revelation; v. 7. (3) Request;v. 8. Note the four questions. Apply these spiritually. (a) Occupation? The will of God. The Father's business. Luke 2:49; 4:34. Cp. 1 Peter 4:2; Romans 12:1, 2; Eph. 6:6; Luke 19:13. (b) Comest thou? From darkness of sin, power of Satan, condemnation of the law. (c) Thy country? John 14:1-3; Phil. 3:21; Heb. 11:10, 13, 16; Col. 3:1; Eph. 2:6. (d) What People? Acts 11:26; Romans 1:7; Acts 20:7; 5:14; 1 Peter 2:9, etc. (4) Reply; v. 9.
3. The result; vs. 11-16. (1) Their request; v. 11. (2) The answer; v. 12. (3) Their prayer; v. 14. Idolatry forgotten. They saw evident tokens of the hand of the true and living God. (4) Jonah cast overboard; v. 15. (5) Its result; v. 16.
4. Jonah's fearful experience; vs. 17-2:10. (1) The prepared fish; v. 17. Note Christ referred to this as an historic fact. Matt. 12:39-41; 16:4; Luke 11:29, 30. (2) The prayer; 2:1-10. (a) Penitence; vs. 1-7. (b) Promise; v.9. Cp. 1 John 1:9. (c) Confidence. "Salvation is of the Lord." It is well worth such an experience to discover such a truth! (3) The result; v. 10.

IV. The Renewed Commission; 3:1-10.

1. The message; 3:1-4.
2. The effect; vs. 5-9. (1) Belief in the word; v. 5. Cp. 1 Thess. 2:13. (2) Humiliation; vs. 5-7. (3) Confession; vs. 8, 9. Cp. Luke 18:13, 14. Here is a true picture of repentance.
3. The result; v. 10. Forgiveness and deliverance. God's tender mercy. Cp. Hos. 11:9; Psalm 103:10-14; Eph. 2:4; Titus 3:4, 5. Compare others who believed God. Abram for righteousness; Gen. 15:6. Paul for rejoicing; Acts 27:24-25.

V. The Complaint; 4:1-11.

1. The prophet's reaction; vs. 1-3.
2. The parable in nature; vs. 4-10.
3. The moral; v. 11.

163. THE YOUNG KING JEHOASH

2 Kings 11-17; 2 Chronicles 24

Golden Text: 2 Peter 3:18

I. The Setting; 2 Kings 8-10. It will be necessary for the class to read these chapters during the week so as to familiarize itself with their contents. The teacher had best select one main subject, that of Jehoash, for the main lesson.

Briefly outline the history of Israel during this period.

1. The evil reign of Jehoram; 8:16-19.
2. The evil reign of Ahaziah; vs. 25-27. Note the reason. The unequal yoke again.
3. The anointing of Jehu over Israel; 9:1-10.
4. The death of Jezebel, Joram and Ahaziah; 9. 11-37.
5. The destruction of Baalism; ch. 10.

II. The Fearful Crime; 11:1.

Her fell design circumvented. God preserved the royal line through whom great David's greater Son was to come.

III. The Coronation; vs. 2-16.

1. The refuge; vs. 2, 3. The house of the Lord
2. The scheme; vs. 4-8.
3. The proclamation; vs. 9-12.
4. The death of Athaliah; vs. 13-16.

IV. The Covenant; vs. 17-21. See 2 Chron. 23:16-21.

1. The covenant made; v. 17. Romans 12:1, 2. Cp. 2 Chron. 23. To be the Lord's people. Cp Exod. 6:7. The "people of God" are (1) Purchased; 1 Peter 2:9. (2) Prepared; Luke 1:7. (3) Purified; Titus 2:14. (4) Peculiar; Deut. 14:2. (5) Provided; Deut. 32:9. (6) Protected; 2 Sam. 7:23. (7) Praising; Psalm 144:15.
2. The covenant proved; 2 Chron. 23:17. Cp Hosea 14:8; 2 Cor. 7:1.
3. The covenant enjoyed; 2 Chron. 23:18. Sacrifice, rejoicing, singing. Cp. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Psalm 119:54; Isa. 55:3. Are you amongst the "Lord's People?"

V. The Restoration of the House of the Lord 2 Chron. 24:1-14.

1. What it stood for. God's honour and dwelling place. The place of access, propitiation and blessing.
2. The voluntary contribution; vs. 7-14.
3. The happy result; v. 14. Communion, fellowship, prosperity.

VI. The Sad Backsliding; vs. 15-26.

How different from man's biographies that leave out all the faults and failings and magnify only the virtues!

1. The death of Jehoiada; vs. 15-18.
2. Sin and its effects; v. 18.
3. God's desire; v. 19. Cp. Ezek. 33:11. God is loath to enter into judgment with the sinner.
4. The martyrdom of Zechariah; vs. 20, 21. Cp Matt. 23:35.
5. The death of Jehoash; vs. 22-27. Another case of one who started so well and ended so sadly. See 1 Cor. 10:12; Heb. 2:1-3.

VII. The Death of Elisha; 2 Kings 13:14-20. Once more God speaks to Israel through His aged servant. Though Israel knew it not, their national end was near, but God spared Elisha the sight of its captivity.

VIII. The Captivity of Israel; 2 Kings 17:6-18. Some of its lessons.

1. Great privileges brings great responsibilities; Luke 12:48.
2. The rejected Scriptures results in a foolish and rejected nation; 2 Kings 17:13-15.
3. Those who observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy; Jonah 2:8.
4. Whatever a man (or nation) soweth, that shall he also reap; Gal. 6:7.
5. The wages of sin is death; Romans 6:23.

164. ISAIAH'S CALL AND COMMISSION

Isaiah 6

Golden Text: Isaiah 6:8

I. The Setting. See 2 Kings 15:1-7, 13; 2 Chron. 26:1-23. Called Azariah and Uzziah.

1. Uzziah's good beginning; 2 Chron. 26:1-15. His zeal, fame, power, genius and piety.
2. His rash action; vs. 16-18. Note when. "Till he was strong." Cp. 1 Sam. 15:17; Ezek. 28: 17; 1 Tim. 3:6; Prov. 16:18. 2 Cor. 12:9. John 15:5; Phil. 4:13.
3. His punishment; vs. 19-22.

II. The Vision; Isa. 6:1-4. Note: It was a vision of Christ he saw. Cp. John 12:38-41. Note the contrast between Uzziah and Deity. The passing with the permanent; pollution with purity, mortality with immortality and gloom with glory.

1. Christ in His exaltation, "high." Cp. John 17:5; 13:3; Heb. 1:1-3; John 1:1, 2.
2. In His holiness, "holy." Cp. Heb. 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21, etc.
3. The object of worship; vs. 2-4. Cp. Rev. 5:5-14.

III. The Confession; v. 5. This is always the result of a sight of the holiness of Deity. Cp. Job 40:4, 5; 42:5, 6; Daniel 10:7, 8; Luke 5: 1-8; Rev. 1:12-17. His holiness reveals by contrast our sin and uncleanness. Note Isaiah's 7 previous woes upon others; 3:9, 11; 5:8, 11, 20, 21, 22. The last "woe" is for himself as he realizes the holiness of God.

IV. The Cleansing; vs. 6, 7.

1. The basis of cleansing—the altar; Lev. 17:11. On the ground of sacrifice and substitution; 1 John 1-7. There can be no cleansing apart from the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ which He accomplished on the altar of Calvary's cross; Rom. 3:25.
2. The assurance—the word of God. Cp. Acts 13: 38; 1 John 5:13.
3. The means—the touch. Contact with that which God has accepted, i. e., faith in Christ's Person and His finished work. Cp. "Touched." (1) Person for cleansing; Matt. 8:3. (2) Eyes to see; Matt. 9:29. (4) Ears to hear; Mark 7:33. (4) Lips to tell; Isa. 6:7. (5) Hearts to follow. 1 Sam. 10:26. (6) Thigh for dependence upon God; Gen. 32:25. (7) Servant to strengthen; 1 Kings 19:7.

V. The Call and the Response; v. 8.

1. The need for the call—the condition of Israel. Cp. Isa. 1:2-15. Cp. The condition of world today. Romans 3:10-19.
2. The equipment for it. (1) The personal experience with God in cleansing from sin; Isa. 52:11. (2) A willingness to go. "Who will go?" God wants His people yielded to Him and their bodies presented to Him; Romans 12:1-4. Only thus are they fit to go for Him.
3. The response. Is it ours? Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 5:20; John 4:31-38; Acts 20:24.

VI. The Communion and Commission; vs. 9-12.

1. Its contents "Go and tell." Cp. Luke 8:39.
2. Its consequence—"deaf ears and blind eyes." Cp. "The Gospel for a witness." Matt. 24:14. The results must be left to God.

165. THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Isaiah 9:6, 7

Golden Text: Luke 2:11

I. His Incarnation. "Child . . . born." Study its prophecy. See first mention; Gen. 3:15. This is the germ of prophecy. Cp. Gen. 12:2, 3; 15:5; 17:19; 21:12; 49:10; Deut. 18:15, 18; 2 Sam. 7:12, 13; Isa. 7:14; Micah 5:2.

2. Study its history. (1) The Annunciation; Luke 1:26-38. (2) The Exultation; Luke 1:46-55. (3) The Realization; Luke 2:1-16.
3. Study its mystery. Cp. 1 Tim. 3:16. It staggers the mind with its immensity. The eternal God clothed with humanity! Cp. Phil. 2:5-8.
4. Study its necessity. Why was the incarnation essential? Cp. Heb. 2:11; Romans 5:19; Job 9:33; 1 Tim. 2:5. Between Deity and humanity there was a great gulf. Christ by His incarnation bridged it. As God, He laid His hands on the throne and fulfilled all its holy requirements; as Man, He places His hands upon humanity and meets its needs.

II. His Manifestation. "Unto us a Son is given." Note, not born. "The child born"—incarnation. "The Son given"—manifestation. He always and eternally was. He did not enter into existence at His birth, but merely a new form of existence—He is the eternal pre-existent One. Cp. John 1:1-4; Col. 1:16, 17. The "Jehovah" of the Old Testament is the "Jesus" of the New Testament; Heb. 9:26; 1 Peter 1:20. See also Isa. 6:5; and cp. John 12:41.

III. His Occupation. "The government shall be upon His shoulders." He is to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords; Rev. 17:14. Note: (1) The cross upon His shoulder—Substitution; John 19:17. (2) The sheep; Luke 15:5—Salvation. (3) The names of His people; Exodus 28:6-12. Cp. Heb. 7:25—Security. (4) Government; Isa. 9:6—Satisfaction. Is the government or control of your life upon His shoulders? Is He your Substitute, Saviour, Securer and Satisfier?

IV. His Designation. "Wonderful, Counsellor," etc.

1. Wonderful Counsellor. See His counsel. Cp. Luke 4:18-22; John 3:1-16; 4:1-24; Rev. 3:15-23, etc.
2. Mighty God. The omnipotent Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit. God the Son. All the attributes of Deity are His and displayed in the gospels. See His omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence and immutability.
3. Father of Eternity. He ante-dates all things. By Him all things consist. Cp. Prov. 8. He is the eternal, self-existent One, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last; the Alpha and Omega; Rev. 22:13; Col. 1:16-19.
4. Prince of Peace. (1) He came to bring it; Luke 2:10-14. (2) He died to secure it; Col. 1:20. (3) He rose to proclaim it; John 20:19, 21, 26. (4) He lives to impart it; Eph. 2:14; Romans 5:1. (5) He intercedes to maintain it; John 14:27. (6) He shall come again to spread it through all the earth; Rev. 11:15; 20:4; Isa. 11:6-10. (7) In the meanwhile Christians are to preach it, and enjoy it; Acts 10:36; Eph. 4:3.

166.

THE GOSPEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 52:12—53:12

Golden Text: Isaiah 53:11

I. His Annunciation; 52:13. "Behold my Servant." The Lord Jesus is the Servant of Jehovah. His perfect

1. Fitness and devotion; Heb. 10:7-9.
2. Service; John 6:38; 17:4; 4:34.
3. Love and obedience; John 8:29; 10:17; Heb. 12:2; John 15:9, 10; 17:24; Phil. 2:5-9.

II. His Incarnation; 1, 2.

1. The unbelief of the ungodly; v. 1. Cp. Matt. 13:54-58. Cp. 1 Tim. 3:16. The mystery and miracle of the incarnation of the Son of God.
2. The growth of the Lord Jesus; v. 2. Cp. Luke 2:40, 52. His perfect humanity and perfect Deity, perfectly expressed. He was both the Root and the Offspring of David! He was David's Son and David's Lord.

III. His Humiliation; v. 3.

1. Despised in the world He had made. Cp. John 1:10; 7:52.
2. Rejected. Note why. John 3:19; 15:22-25.
3. Sorrowful. Cp. Luke 19:41; John 11:35; Matt. 23:37-39; Heb. 2:18; 4:15. "In all the grief that fills the heart, the Man of sorrows had a part."

IV. His Propitiation; vs. 4-9. What wonderful verses are these! Note some of His titles.

1. The Bearer of Grief; v. 4.
2. The Divine Substitute; v. 5; 1 Cor. 15:3; Romans 5:6, etc.
3. The Burden Bearer; v. 6. Note the two "alls." Cp. John 1:29. The "all" of the sinner and the "all" of the Saviour. 1 John 2:2.
4. The Silent Sufferer; v. 7; John 19:9; Matt. 26:63, etc.
5. The Crucified Redeemer, v. 8. "Cut off" but note why.
6. The Sinless Saviour, v. 9. How wonderfully all this was fulfilled 700 years after!

V. His Resurrection; v. 10. God "well pleased" with

1. Christ's life; Matt. 3:16.
2. His obedience unto death; Isa. 53:10.
3. Christ on the throne; Col. 1:19.
4. Christ in the gospel; 1 Cor. 1:21.
5. Christ in the eternal state; Psalm 16:11. Are **you** pleased with Him? Cp. 1 Peter 1:8.

VI. His Satisfaction; v. 11. Cp. Heb. 12:2. "The joy before Him."

1. Of doing the Father's will; Psalm 40:8.
2. Of seeing justified sinners, saved by His grace and sounding His praises. Are you one? Romans 5:1; 3:24-26.
3. Of presenting His blood bought Church faultless before the Father; Jude 24, 25; Eph. 5:25-27, etc.

VII. His Glorification; v. 12. See Rev. 1:12-18; 5:5-14. "The Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel's Land." Phil. 2:9-11. What glorious satisfaction shall be His in that day, when all creation, above and below, shall join to hail Him as the pre-eminent One! Every believer, in that day, shall share in His glory. Romans 8:17, 18.

167. Asa put his trust in God.

1. **He started well:** II Chronicles 14,15.
   (a) He broke the images and altars and cut down the tabu grounds, 14.2. 3.
   (b) He commanded the people to seek the Lord. We must not only let go idols, we must build up God's altars, 14.4; not only turn from idols but serve the true God. I Thess. 1.9. Then God gave them rest, v. 7. There is a rest for the people of God. Heb. 4.9.

2. **He put his trust in God** when the great enemy came against him. He prayed, "Lord it is nothing to Thee to help with many or with them that have no power . . . for we rest on **Thee** and in **Thy Name** we go," v. 11.

3. **The prophet's warning** (15.2-7) came to Asa just after he had victory. This was to keep him from pride and from trusting his own strength, 15.2-7 I Cor. 10.12.

4. **God's promise.** Be ye strong . . . and let not your hands be weak for your work shall be rewarded. v. 7. Then Asa took courage and went on in God's way, v. 8.

5. **His life was a blessing to others** when they saw that the Lord was with him, v. 9. (a) They offered gifts to God, v. 11.
   (b) They promised to seek God with all their heart, v. 12.
   (c) They rejoiced and the Lord gave them rest from their enemies, v. 15.

6. **Asa put things straight in his own family.** He cut down the idol his mother had made and would not let her be queen, v. 16; see Judges 6.25-27; Matt. 10.37.

Verse to learn, Isaiah 26.4.

168. Asa's Backsliding. II Chronicles 16.

1. **Causes of his backsliding:**
   (a) He forgot the prophets' warning, if you forsake God He will forsake you. Ch. 15.1, 2.
   (b) He lost his trust in God and put his trust in man. When Baasha came to fight against him he sent for Benhadad to help him, v. 1, 2; Ps. 118.9.
   (c) He robbed God. He took treasures from the house of God to give presents to Benhadad. "Will a man rob God, yet ye have robbed me." Mal. 3.8.

2. **The prophet rebuked Asa** for leaning on the King of Syria and not putting his trust in God, v. 7. He reminded Asa of the victory God had given him before. He said, "God is strong for His people," v. 9.

3. **But Asa did not take the rebuke the right way.** Instead of taking a low place before God, he was angry with God's servant who brought him God's message, and he put him in prison. v. 10. Do you ever get cross with God's servants who tell out God's truth? Then he was unkind to his people, v. 10.

4. **God spoke to Asa again through sickness,** yet he did not turn to the Lord, but to the doctors, and he died, v. 12; I Cor. 11.30.

5. **Asa's life is a warning to us.** He began in the Spirit and he finished in the flesh. Gal. 3.3. **Verse to learn,** II Chron. 16.9 (first part of verse).

169. Jehosophat. II Chronicles 17,18.

Jehosophat started well like Asa.
"Ye did run well, who did hinder you?" Gal. 5.7.

JEHOSOPHAT IN BLESSING. Chapter 17.

1. **The Lord was with him** because he did not mix up with Balaam and he walked in God's ways, v. 3. 4.

2. **He was lifted up in the ways of the Lord,** v. 6. Ps. 37.4, not like Uzziah who when he was made strong, was lifted up in pride, ch. 26.16.

3. **He sent teachers into all the cities to teach the people God's Word** and the fear of the Lord fell on them, v. 9, 10. When we are in blessing we want to send the Word of God to other places.

JEHOSOPHAT BACKSLIDING. Chapter 18.

1. **He had riches and great honour,** v. 1. Paul warned the rich against pride, against trusting in their riches and told them to trust in God. I Tim. 6.17.

2. **He made Ahab, God's enemy, his friend,** v. 1. He said, "I am as thou art," v. 3. But "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" Amos. 3.3.

3. **He asked for a prophet of the Lord yet he did not obey his word,** v. 4. Jesus said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 6.46.

4. **The enemy came round Jehosophat but he cried unto the Lord** and the Lord helped him, v. 31; Isaiah 55.7. **Verse to learn,** Amos 3.3.

170. Micaiah the faithful prophet. I Kings 22.

1. **He was a holy man of God:**
   (a) His name means. "Who is like God?" Are we growing more like Christ each day? II Cor. 3.18.
   (b) He knew the mind of the Lord, v. 8. This is God's will for us, too. Col. 1.9.
   (c) He was a light shining in a dark place. II Pet. 1.19.

2. **He was faithful to God's Word,** when they tempted him to lie to please man, v. 13; Gal. 1.10. He said "What the Lord has said to me that will I speak," v. 14. Acts 20.27 Jer. 23.28.

3. **He suffered because he was a true man of God.** Ahab hated him, v. 8; they mocked him, v. 24; and put him in prison, v. 27. But though they bound him they could not tie up the Word of God. II Tim. 2.9.

4. **God's Word must come true:**
   (a) Though many do not believe it. The king said, "Keep him in prison till I come back in peace," v. 27; but they carried him back dead, v. 37.
   (b) God's Word must come true though the king tried to escape to stop it from coming true. He tried to escape, v. 30, 34, but he could not do it. Rev. 6.16.
   (c) God's Word came true because it was **God's** Word and not Micaiah's word, v. 14; Matt. 24.35.

This chapter is a warning to God's people not to be joined with unbelievers.

Verse to learn, Matthew 24.35.

171. Jehosophat the Overcomer.

HOW HE CAME BACK TO BLESSING. II Chronicles 19.

1. **God sent his prophet Jehu to rebuke him.** He said "Shouldest thou help the ungodly and hate them that love the Lord?" v. 2.
2. **Jehosophat took the rebuke the right way,** not as Asa did in Lesson 252. He truly repented and sought the Lord, v. 3. When he himself came back to God, he brought his people back, v. 4. Psalm 141.5.
3. **He warned the judges** not to judge for man but for God, not to respect persons or take presents from those they had to judge, v. 6, 7.
4. **He put priests and Levites to do the work of prefects.** He told them to do the work of the Lord faithfully, with their whole heart, v. 8, 9. He said, "do not be afraid of man and the Lord will be with you," v. 11.

JEHOSOPHAT TESTED (tried). Chapter 20.

1. **Why God tested him.** To see if he would look to God or man in the day of trouble, v. 1; I Pet. 1.7; Ps. 66.10.
2. **Jehosophat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord,** v. 3. He humbled himself and all the people fasted. All came together to ask help of the Lord, v. 3. 4.
3. **God answered prayer.** He sent the prophet to them with His message, v. 14.
4. **Once more the king joined himself to a wicked king,** v. 35. But God broke all their ships and blocked Jehosophat from going, v. 37. Let us thank God when He breaks our ships to keep us from going away from Him.

Verse to learn, I Pet. 1.7.

172. A Great Prayer Meeting.

II Chronicles 20.

1. **The Prayer Meeting:**
   (a) The king set **himself** to seek the Lord, v. 3, but Judah must come together for a big prayer meeting to bring down God's power. Acts 2.1, 2. Many sticks together make a big fire.
   (b) They were not lazy, they came a long way out of all the cities of Judah, v. 4.

2. **Jehosophat's prayer:**
   (a) He honoured God, he spoke of His power and might, v. 6.
   (b) He remembered what God had done before. This always helps faith, v. 7, 9. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. I Sam. 7.12.
   (c) **He remembered God's promises.** v. 9. Use God's promises when you pray.
   (d) He asked straight for the thing he wanted, 10.
   (e) He prayed humbly. He said, "we ourselves have no power we do not know what to do but our eyes are upon Thee," v. 12.
3. **God's answer through the prophet,** v. 15. 17.
   (a) Be not afraid of all this people.
   (b) The battle is not yours but God's.
   (c) Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.
   (d) The Lord will be with you.
4. **They praised the Lord before they saw the answer,** and God worked for them, v. 22. **Verse to learn,** II Chron. 20.17 (first half of verse).

173. Joash crowned King.

King Joash—picture of the Lord Jesus. II Chronicles 22:10-12; 23.
Athaliah—picture of the old nature—the flesh.
The temple—picture of our heart.

WHEN ATHALIAH WAS ON THE THRONE.

1. **The true king did not have his rightful place.** He was hidden in one small room of the temple, v. 11, 12. Has Christ only one small room of your heart? I Cor. 6.19.
2. **No one knew the true king was in the temple.** Can others see Christ in us or not? Col. 1.27.
3. **God's people worshipped many idols.** Today some of God's people worship self, money and other things.
4. **The house of the Lord was broken,** 24.4. Are you spoiling your body which is God's temple?
5. **The true king could not use his power.** He can only do this when he is on the throne because two kings cannot rule over a country at the same time. Who is king of your life, self, or Christ?
6. **The true king crowned,** 23.11.
   (a) **When the true king is crowned the false king must die,** v. 15. When we crown Christ king the flesh is crucified. Gal. 2.20. Paul said, "I die daily." I Cor. 15.31.
   (b) **Idols were broken down,** v. 17; I John 5.21; Hos. 14.8.
   (c) **Watchmen are kept at the doors** to keep out everything unclean, v. 19. Watch eyegate, eargate, and mouthgate.
   (d) **They rejoiced and had peace,** v. 21.

   Ye sought to make him king. **Now then do it.**
   II Sam. 3.17, 18. **Verse to learn,** II Chron. 23.19.

174. Uzziah fell through pride.

UZZIAH IN BLESSING. II Chronicles 26.

1. **He had a good friend,** Zechariah the priest. While he lived Uzziah sought the Lord, v. 5. Choose friends who will help you in your Christian life. Prov. 27.17.
2. **He did right in the sight of the Lord;** he sought God, v. 4. His heart was right as well as his outside life.
3. **Then God helped him** against the Philistines, v. 7. He gave him many fighting men to help him fight the enemy, v. 13. God can overcome every enemy for us. He dug many wells and had plenty of water for his cattle and his gardens. John 7.37.

HOW UZZIAH FELL.

1. **His heart was lifted up with pride** because men praised his name everywhere, v. 15, 16. God hates pride. Prov. 8.13. Pride goes before a fall. Prov. 16.18; I Tim. 3.6.
2. **God helped him till he thought he was strong,** v. 15. But God will only help us when we are humble. I Sam. 15.17. Be strong **in the Lord,** in the power of **His** might. Eph. 6.10.
3. **Then he lifted himself up yet more.** He took for himself the work that only priests should do, he offered incense. Num. 18.6, 7. The priests talked to him but he would not listen, v. 16-18.
4. **God punished him.** He ran out from the temple but it was too late, he was a leper till he died, v. 20, 21. God is against the proud. I Peter 5.5.

175. Need for Revival. II Chronicles 28,29.

1. **The Lord brought Judah low** because of their sins, v. 19. I Pet. 4.17.
2. **But Ahaz sacrificed to the gods of Syria** instead of turning to God. He said, "The gods of Syria help them; I will sacrifice to them that they may help me" v. 23. This spoiled Ahaz and all Israel, v. 23. Sometimes Christians trust the akalos to help them when they are in trouble, instead of turning to God.

THE FRUIT OF SIN.

1. **The holy vessels of God's house were no use,** they were cut in pieces. We are vessels for God to use. II Tim. 2.21. Is God able to use us in His service?
2. **The doors of the house of the Lord were shut up,** v. 24. Has sin shut the doors of our hearts so that we cannot come close to God? Is. 59.2.
3. **They put out the lights,** 29.7. Our light is our testimony before others. God needs our light to shine in this dark world. Phil. 2.15.
4. **They left off burning incense,** 29.7. Incense is a picture of prayer. Rev. 5.8; Ps. 141.2.
5. **The temple was full of dirt and rubbish,** v. 5. Is there dirt and rubbish in your life?
6. **They turned their backs on God** and His house, v. 6. As we think of the sins of Judah, let us remember what the prophet said to Israel. "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord,"? 28.10.

Verse to learn, Isaiah 59.2.

176. How the Revival came. II Chronicles 29.

1. **Hezekiah believed God could revive His people** even though they were far away from Him. According to your faith be it unto you. Matt. 9.29.
2. **The revival started with Hezekiah himself:**
   (a) His own heart was right with God, v. 2. 10. It is no use for us to pray for revival if our own heart is not right with God. I Pet. 4.17.
   (b) He came near to God (he opened the house of the Lord) and this made a way for others to come. v. 3.
3. **The Levites:**
   (a) They yielded themselves to God again, v. 15.
   (b) They cleansed the **inner** part of the temple, the part only God could see, v. 16.
   (c) They brought out all the dirt and rubbish and carried it to Kedron, the place where Baal's priests were killed by Elijah, v. 16. I Kings 19; II Cor. 7.1.
   (d) They cleansed all the vessels and brought back more vessels that had been used for other things. Is. 52.11; v. 18, 19.
4. **God had chosen the Levites:**
   (a) To stand before Him;
   (b) to serve Him;
   (c) and to burn incense, v. 10, 11.
   He has chosen us to do these things, too. Acts 22.14.
5. **When the burnt offering began**—(picture of yielding all to God) the song of the Lord began also, v. 27. 30. First yield all to God then joy and praise will follow. There were many burnt offerings after that, v. 35, 36.
6. **Some priests did not yield themselves,** so God had to choose Levites to take their places, v. 34 Rev. 3.11. God had first prepared the people for revival, then the thing was done **suddenly,** v. 36. **Verse to learn,** Habakkuk 3.2.

177. Letter sent to Hezekiah. II Kings 19.

1. **Hezekiah must yield himself to the enemy or to God,** because great trouble had come to Hezekiah and to his people because of the Assyrians. "His servants ye are to whom ye obey." Rom. 6.16.
2. **He humbled himself before God** and went into the house of the Lord, v. 1. Then he sent a message to Isaiah the prophet of God, v. 5; I Pet. 5.6.
3. **God encouraged Hezekiah.** He said, "Do not be afraid of **words,** v. 6. I will make your enemy fall," v. 7. We are often troubled about words but words cannot hurt us.
4. **Rab-shakeh's letter.** He tried to shake the King's faith in God. He wrote, "Do not trust in your God and let Him deceive you." Where are all the kings before? 10.
5. **Hezekiah's prayer:**
   (a) He did not answer the letter but he opened it out before the Lord, v. 14. "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him. Ps. 37.5.
   (b) He prayed for **God's** honour, that the people might see God's power, v. 19.
   (c) He did not say Assyria's power was small, but he knew God's power was stronger and he cried to God to save them out of the power of the Assyrians, v. 19.
6. **God's answer:**
   (a) I have heard your prayer, v. 20.
   (b) I have heard the enemy's talk, v. 27, 28.
   (c) I will put a hook in his nose and turn him back, v. 28.
   And so God gave victory to His people. I Cor. 15.57. **Verse to learn,** Psalm 37.5.

178. Hezekiah's sickness. II Kings 20:1-11.

1. **The time had come for Hezekiah** to die, v. 1. Ps. 31.15. It is appointed unto men once to die. Heb. 9.27.
2. **But Hezekiah was not willing for God's will,** he cried to God to let him live. In Ch. 19.15, he prayed for God's honour but now he only thinks of himself. v. 3.
3. **God answered his prayer.** He said, "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears, I will heal you," v. 5. and God put 15 years on to his life, v. 6.
4. **But this was not God's best will for Hezekiah.** Those 15 years were not years of blessing. God wanted to take him from great trouble. God's first way was better for Hezekiah. He knows what is best for us. Let us pray always, "Thy will be done." Sometimes God gives us something that is not His best will for us because we are not willing for His will. Ps. 106.15.
5. **What came to Hezekiah in those 15 years. One year after** he was healed he showed everything in his house to God's enemies and this tempted them afterwards to come and take everything from him, v. 13, 17. **Three years after** he was healed, his son Manasseh was born. He grew up very wicked, he worshipped idols and evil spirits and led God's people into sin. 21.1-7, 16. Let us pray always, "Not my will but thine be done."

   Verse to learn, Luke 22.42.

179. The Word of God found.

II Kings, chapter 22 and chapter 23.

King Josiah had a wicked father yet he followed God with his whole heart.

WHY JOSIAH WAS A GREAT AND GOOD MAN.

1. **He chose a good example.** He did not follow his father but he followed in **David's** ways—a man after God's own heart, v. 2. **The Lord Jesus** is our Example, let us walk in His ways. John 13.15.
2. **He began to follow God when he was young,** v. 1; II Chron. 34.3. It is a great thing to follow the Lord from the time we are young. Eccles 12.1, 2; II Tim. 3.15.
3. **He kept right on in the ways of the Lord** turning not to the right hand or to the left, v. 2; Prov. 4.25.
4. **How they found the Book of the Law.** They found it when they repaired the temple, v. 5, 8. If we are willing to do God's will He will show us more. John 7.17.

GOD'S BOOK READ AND OBEYED.

1. **When Josiah read it he wept and humbled himself,** v. 19, and gathered the people together to hear it, 23.1-2.
2. **Every idol was put away.** He burned Baal's vessels and put away Baal's priests, v. 4, 5. When we yield ourselves to God, every idol is put away. Hosea 14.8.
3. **They kept the Passover** to remember how God delivered them from Egypt, v. 21. We keep the Lord's Supper to remember the Lord's death for us on Calvary.
4. **He turned to the Lord** with **all** his heart, with **all** his soul and with **all** his might, v. 25; Luke 10. 27.

Verse to learn, II Kings 23.25 (first part of verse).

180. HEZEKIAH'S GOOD REIGN

2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chronicles 29:1-29

Golden Text: Psalm 40:4

I. The Good Beginning; 18:1-8.

1. The destruction of idols; vs. 1-4. Note how he dealt with the brazen serpent and what he called it.
2. His personal godliness; vs. 5, 6. (1) "He trusted in the Lord." Cp. Isa. 12:2, 3; Psalms 18:30; 34:22; 37:3-7. The secret of perpetual joy and peace. (2) He clave to the Lord—continuance. Cp. Acts 11:23. Abiding in Christ is the secret of communion and fruit. John 15:1-7.
3. The happy result; vs. 7, 8. Prosperity and victory. Cp. 1 Tim. 4:8; Josh. 1:8; 3 John 2.

II. The Threatening Enemy; 18:13—19:37.

1. The blasphemy of Rab-shakeh; vs. 18-25, 28-37. Wherever there is godliness there will be opposition. Cp. Eph. 6:11-18. Note his ridicule of God's power; v. 22 and blasphemy, v. 25.
2. The God honoring remedy; 19:1-7. Humility and prayer and its answer. Cp. Psalms 91:1-16; 46:1.
3. The second summons; vs. 8-13. As sacreligious as the first.
4. The prayer of Hezekiah; vs. 14-19. "He spread it before the Lord." Its reverence, directness and faith. The honor of Jehovah was uppermost. Matt. 6:6; Isa. 40:28-31.
5. God's answer through Isaiah; vs. 20-34. God the Governor amongst the nations. Psalm 22:28.
6. The great deliverance; vs. 35:37. Salvation is of the Lord. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly." 2 Peter 2:9.

III. Hezekiah's Sickness and Recovery; 20:1-19.

1. His sickness and the message; v. 1. Suppose this message came to us!
2. His prayer and its answer and sign; vs. 2-11. Note the means employed in his cure; v. 7. Faith does not eliminate the necessity for God-provided remedies.
3. His folly; vs. 12-19.

IV. The Revival Under Hezekiah. 2 Chron. 29: 1-27, or How the song began.

1. Ruin; vs. 1-9. What a picture of the Christian out of touch with God! (1) No access; 28:24; 29:7. Doors shut. (2) No light; v. 7. A shut Bible means a shut heaven; Psalm 119:105, 129. (3) No incense; v. 7. No prayer; Rev. 8:4. No worship. (4) No offerings; v. 7. No appreciation of the work of Christ. (5) No peace; 28: 22. (6) No joy; v. 8. "Wrath;" Isa. 57:20. No song, only a wail and dirge. (7) No blessing; vs. 4-6.
2. Revival; 29:3. (1) Began at door, v. 3. Back to the beginning. (2) Separation from evil; vs. 5, 15. (3) Judgment of evil; v. 16. (4) Restoration of God's order; vs. 18, 19. (5) The offerings; vs. 20-27. (6) The acceptance; vs. 27. Cp. Consumed by the fire. (7) The Song; v. 27. Cp. Psalm 40:1-3.
3. Result; vs. 28-31. (1) Worship; vs. 28, 29. (2) Presentation; v. 31. Cp. Romans 12:1, 2, etc.

181. MANASSEH AND JOSIAH

2 Kings 21-22; 2 Chronicles 33-34

Golden Text: 2 Peter 3:9

I. The Reign of Manasseh; 2 Kings 21; 2 Chron. 33. The biography of a soul.

1. Ruin. 2 Chron. 33. What a fearful category of the capability of the human heart! See Mark 7:21; Jer. 17:9. Idolatry; v. 3. Blasphemy; vs. 4, 5, 7. Witchcraft and spiritism; v. 6. Cp. Modern cults, etc.
2. Rejection; v. 10. Added to his sins was his rejection of God's word of rebuke. Does this describe you? Job 36:18; Ezek. 33:11; Isa. 55: 6, 7.
3. Result; v. 11. Punishment, bondage and slavery. Cp. Romans 1:18; 6:23; Psalm 107: 10-12, 17.
4. Repentance; v. 12. Seen in his humiliation and confession. Cp. Luke 13:3; Luke 15:7, 10. Acts 17:30, 31; 20:21; Job 33:27-29. Repentance is a change of mind. Manasseh changed his mind about God, himself and his sins. Matt. 23:12. Have you? But for the book of Chronicles we should not have known of Manasseh's repentance and restoration. The full story of the soul's biography is not always known to us.
5. Restoration; v. 13. God delights in mercy and in saving the sinner. Cp. Psalms 51:1-13; 32:5; Hosea 11:9; John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:3, 4; 2 Peter 3:9; Matt. 9:13; Luke 19:10. Note its effect on Manasseh. "He knew."
6. Restitution; vs. 14, 15. He redeemed the time. Cp. Eph. 5:16. His was the "godly repentance" of 2 Cor. 7:8-11.
7. Rejoicing; v. 16. Romans 5:1-5, 11; 15:13; Psalm 51:8; 32:7.

II. The Reign of Josiah; 2 Chron. 34.

1. His early piety; vs. 1-7. What an encouragement for workers amongst the young! Illust. Samuel, David, Daniel, Timothy, Jehoash, etc. Cp. Eccles. 12:1; Prov. 8:17; Matt. 18:3-10; 19:14. We are told that at eight years of age eighty per cent of a person's character is formed. Press home the importance and value of an early conversion. 2 Tim. 3:15.
2. The repairing of the House of the Lord; vs. 8-13. The restoration of communion with God. Josiah put first things first. Worship is the highest possible act the Christian can engage in. The Father is seeking for worshippers; John 4:23, 24.
3. The great discovery; vs. 14-22. (1) The sad condition—without the book of the law. Imagine this country without a Bible today! What would it mean? (2) The happy discovery. What a change! V. 14. (3) The wonderful result: vs. 19-22. (a) Enlightenment Cp. Psalm 119:130; John 12:46, 47; 15:22. (b) Conviction; vs. 19-21. It revealed their sin and need of cleansing. Cp. Heb. 4:12. Where should the word of God be found now? Psalm 119:11. Here is the best book in the world, in the best place in the world, for the best reason in the world!
4. The message; vs. 23-28. (1) Of judgment on the despisers; vs. 23-25. (2) Of mercy upon the humble and obedient; vs. 26-28.
5. The covenant; vs. 29-33. Has the message of God's word had this effect upon you?

182. THE SOLEMN PASSOVER

2 Kings 23:1-28; 2 Chronicles 35

Golden Text: Psalm 111:10

I. The Authority For It. 1 Kings 23:1, 2. The word of the Lord. This alone was sufficient for Josiah in spite of its non-observance for many years. The word of God is an all sufficient guide in all things and the final authority. It is

1. Light to shine; Psalm 119:105; Prov. 6:23.
2. Seed to grow; 1 Peter 1:23.
3. A mirror to reveal; James 1:23.
4. A sword to pierce and discern; Heb. 4:12.
5. Fire to burn and test; Jer. 23:29.
6. Hammer to break; Jer. 23:29.
7. Milk to develop; 1 Peter 2:1, 2.
8. Meat to strengthen; Heb. 5:14.
9. Honey for sweetness; Psalm 109:103.
10. Water to cleanse. Psalm 119:9; Eph. 5:26, etc.

II. The Preparation For It. 1 Kings 23:3-20. A right attitude of soul with God. V. 3. "Covenant." The mere observance without the right state of soul is hollow mockery. Cp. Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:8. The need of personal consecration. Romans 12:1, 2; 6:13; 2 Tim. 2: 19-21.

2. A separation from all known evil; vs. 4-20. 2 Cor. 6:14--7:1. (1) False worship removed; v. 4. "Idols." Cp. Modern idolatry. An idol is anything that displaces God. See Col. 3:5; 1 Sam. 15:23; 1 John 5:21. (2) False doctrines put away; vs. 5-14. Cp. Ritualism, materialism, agnosticism, higher criticism, and other false cults. (3) False teachers judged; vs. 16, 19, 20. Cp. Rev. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Tim. 4:1-7; 2 Tim. 4:3-5; 2 Peter 2.
3. God given His rightful place. 2 Chron. 35:3. The ark restored to the sanctuary. Cp. 1 Peter 3:15.
4. The order of God's word followed; v. 4.—Tradition is no guide. The "Thus saith the Lord" must be our authority.

III. The Significance of It. The Passover typical of God's way of salvation. Cp. Exod. 12.

1. Sin. The people's condition. (1) Slaves; Exod. 1:11. Cp. Luke 16:13; Romans 6:16. (2) Under judgment of God. Exod. 12:12; Romans 1:18; John 3:36, etc.
2. Salvation. (1) Revealed; Exod. 12:1-3; John 3:16. (2) Provided by God; v. 3. John 1:29.
3. Substitution. "Blood." Exod. 12:6, 7; Romans 3:24-26; 1 Peter 1:18.
4. Security; Exod. 12:13. The word of God. Cp. John 5:24; 1 John 5:15, etc.
5. Separation from Egypt. Ex. 12:37; John 17:14.

IV. The Celebration of It. 2 Chron. 35:7-19. Describe the recovery of the truths concerning the church, the Lord's Supper, baptism, the second coming, etc., from beneath the rubbish caused by tradition, ritualism and denominationalism through the years since these truths were first given.

1. A willing celebration; v. 8. It was not a matter of compulsion but of glad free will.
2. An obedient celebration; v. 12. It was determinded by what was written in God's word.
3. A reverent celebration; v. 13. There was no lightness or frivolity.
4. A joyous celebration; vs. 14-18. Obedience brings pleasure to God and joy to the believer.

183. JEREMIAH'S CALL AND MINISTRY

Jeremiah 1:1—2:19

Golden Text: Proverbs 29:25

I. The Historic Setting; 1:1-3. The decline of the nation of Judah due to its disobedience to the word of God and its sinful practices. Cp. 2 Chron. 36:14-16. Jeremiah has been well called "The prophet of the bleeding heart and the iron will."

II. The Divine Call; vs. 4, 5. Note its prenatal character. Cp. Gal. 1:15; Romans 8:29-31; Eph. 1:4; John 17:2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 24; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 11:33, 34. Here is the glorious truth of God's foreknowledge and predestination. Isa. 40:28; 46:10; Acts 15:18.

III. The Response; V. 6. A sense of his weakness, ignorance and inexperience. Cp. Other calls and other responses. Moses, Exod. 4:10; Isaiah, Isa. 6:5; Solomon, 1 Kings 3:7.

IV. The Divine Encouragement; vs. 7-19.

1. Divine Promise; v. 7. Think of Who is speaking! God's promises are His enablings. Eph. 3:20.
2. Divine protection; v. 8. "I am with Thee." Cp. Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:19, 20; Isa. 41:10; Deut. 31:6; 2 Tim. 4:16, 17; Psalm 23:4.
3. Divine enduement. V. 9. Here is verbal inspiration Cp. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21. Cp. 2 Sam. 23:2. "Thus saith the Lord. Emphasize this.
4. Divine plan; v. 10. Note the order. First to pull down ere setting up. Man needs to be brought **down.** Matt. 9:12, 13; Luke 19:10. There must be repentance, humiliation, self judgment and confession of sin before there can be a building up in the holy faith. The great need of many is to unlearn their false theories before they can take in God's truth.
5. The Divine illustration; vs. 11-16. All through this book symbols and pictures are used to convey the lesson.
6. The Divine commission; vs. 17-19. (1) To witness to the whole truth of the word of God. Cp. Acts 2:27. (2) To stand undaunted against the fiercest of opposition; v. 18. Jeremiah was not a self-made but a God-made witness. (3) The promise with it of triumph; v. 19. How good to know we are on the winning side! Romans 8:35-39.

V. The Message of God to the Backslidden People. C. 2:1-19.

1. Remembrance of the first love; vs. 1-3. Their kindness, love, opedience, holiness and devotedness. Cp. Rev. 2:4. Apply this to the young believer in the flush of his new found joy.
2. Reproach; vs. 5-8. Their forgetfulness of Him, of His deliverance, protection, guidance, provision and word. Is this true of us? 2 Peter 1:4-9.
3. Reason; vs. 9-13. The folly of departure from God, from glory to shame, from God to idols, from the fountain to broken cisterns!
4. Reproof; vs. 18, 19. Backsliding brings its own misery; sin its own punishment. How true is this today. Cp. Hosea 14:1-9; 1 John 1:9.

184. THE PERSECUTION OF JEREMIAH AND THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

Jeremiah 36-38

Golden Text: John 12:48

I. Divine Message; 36:1-10.

1. Its source; vs. 1, 2. "From the Lord." Cp. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21.
2. Its purpose; v. 3. Repentance; Ezek. 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4; Neh. 9:17; Isa. 55:6-8.
3. The commission to Baruch; vs. 4-7. "Go and tell." Baruch's sole responsibility was to read the word of God to the people and leave the results with Him. This is the Sunday School teachers and Gospel preachers job. Cp. 2 Tim. 4:2-5; Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16.
4. The result; vs. 8-10. Note v. 8. "The word of the Lord in the Lord's house." The best Book in the best place.

II. The Rejection; vs. 11-26.

1. The audience of the princes; vs. 11-19. Its effects and their question.
2. The king's fearful sin; vs. 20-26. He was the father of higher criticism. (1) His responsibility—he heard the words; vs. 20, 21. (2) His rejection; vs. 22, 23. He thought, as many since, that burning and rejecting the Word would nullify its truth. How foolish! Cp. Romans 3:3; John 12:47, 48; Rev. 22:18, 19. The critic's penknife does not nullify the truth of God's word, nor will it prevent God's judgment coming upon him. (3) His callousness; v. 24. Unbelief causes mental assasination. (4) His persecution; v. 26.

III. The Renewed Revelation; vs. 27-32. The Bible is God's indestructible Book. See how marvelously God has preserved it through the ages in spite of peril, fire, sword, and opposition of all kinds from pagan and religious bigots alike. See Isa. 40:6-8; 55:11; Psalm 119:89; Matt. 24:35; 1 Peter 1:25. Today there are more copies of God's word in circulation than ever before.

IV. The False Accusation; 37:1-21.

1. The setting. See 2 Kings 24:1-4; Jer. 37:1, 2. His penknife availed him naught!
2. The prophecy; vs. 3-10.
3. The false accusation; vs. 11-15.
4. The imprisonment; v. 16.
5. The query; v. 17. The fearlessness of Jeremiah. Cp. Jer. 1:8, 19, etc. Note the king's question: "Is there any word from the Lord?" Is it yours for guidance, salvation and deliverance?

V. The Persecution and Deliverance; 38:1-14.

1. The Divine advice; vs. 1-3. Escape from the doomed city. Cp. God's way now. Matt. 3:7; Job 36:18. This world is doomed. John 3:36; 2 Peter 3:10-12; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9. There is only one safe refuge. Flee to Christ.
2. The rejection of God's word and God's messenger; vs. 4-6. Cp. Luke 11:47-51; Matt. 23:37, 38; Acts 7:51-53; Matt. 5:10-12.
3. His deliverance; vs. 7-13. Note by whom.

VI. The Captivity of Judah; 2 Kings 25. Note 2 Kings 24:20. Cp. 2 Chron. 36:14-16. Step by step they had descended into the depths of rebellion, sin and apostasy until "there was no remedy," and the captivity became inevitable.

185. EZEKIEL'S CALL AND COMMISSION

Ezekial 1:1-14, 26-28; 2:1-3:19

Golden Text: Ecclesiastes 3:14

I. The Preparation For It. 1:1-14, 26-28. A vision of the glory of the Lord.

1. The captivity; vs. 1, 2. The result of Israel's and Judah's continual sin. See 2 Kings 17: 6-23; 24:20; Jer. 32:26-35. Sin still pays the same wages.
2. The vision; vs. 3-14, 26-28. (1) The creatures; vs. 4-14. The chariot has been likened to the four Gospels on which Christ rides forth as the Son of God incarnate. The four creatures illustrate the four-fold aspect of His Person and work. (a) Man—Luke's Gospel that reveals Him as the Son of Man—the perfect sinless Man. (b) Lion—Matthew's Gospel that shows Him as the King. (c) Ox—Mark's Gospel that points Him out as Jehovah's obedient Servant. (d) Eagle—John's Gospel that unfolds Him as Eternal Son of the Eternal God. (2) The Throne; v. 26. Cp. Rev. 4: 1, 2; 5:6; Isa. 6:1. The place of authority, exaltation and glory; John 17:24; Heb. 1:1-3. It is Christ's by right of His Person and His work. (3) The occupant; v. 26. "A Man." Heb. 2:14; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2:5; Rev. 1:10-18. "The Man in the Glory."
3. The Result; v. 28. Humiliation, reverence, and worship. Cp. The other visions of God and their effect upon man.

II. The Authority of It; 2:1. "He said." Cp. Matt. 28:18; John 10:18; Mark 1:27. This is all we need. Cp. John 5:24, 25, 28; 6:63; Romans 10:8-17; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 5:9-13.

III. The Power With It. V. 2. The Spirit of God. This is the Divine order. Hearing the word, believing the Person, receiving the Spirit. Cp. Eph. 1:13; John 3:5, 16:37-39; Zech. 4:6; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19, 20; Eph. 4:30, etc., etc.

IV. The Purpose of It. Vs. 3-5. That Ezekiel might be a messenger for God to a sinning people. Note v. 5. The responsibility of the messenger ceases when he has delivered his message. Ezek. 33:9. Cp. Mark 16:15; Luke 8: 39; Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 9:15, 16; 20:24; 1 Cor. 9:16; 2 Cor. 5:20, 21.

V. The Encouragement With It; 2:6-3:10.

1. The word to him; v. 6. "Be not afraid." Cp. Isa. 41:10, 13-15; 42:6; 43:1, 2; John 14:27; 20:19; Heb. 13:5, 6; 2 Tim. 4:16, 17.
2. The word in him; 3:1-3. This word needs to be taken in, fed on, meditated on and to become part of us. Cp. Jer. 15:16; John 6:53, 54, 63; 1 Peter 2:2; 1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12-14; Psalm 119:11.
3. The word through him; 3:4-10. Ezekiel became God's mouthpiece. What an honor and privilege! Note v. 10.

VI. The Message; 3:12-19.

1. The persons; v. 11. Backslidden Judah.
2. The power; vs. 12-14. God's commands are always accompanied by His all sufficient power and grace to execute them.
3. The message; v. 15. (1) The responsibility of the messenger; v. 18. Cp. Proverbs 24:11, 12; Ezek. 33:6, etc. (2) The responsibility of the hearer; v. 19. Cp. Ezek. 33:11; Isa. 55:6-8; Prov. 29:1; 1:24-31; Mark 16:16.

186. THE TESTING OF JOB

Job 1-2

Golden Text: Job 5:17

I. The Man; 1:1-5. Probably Job is the oldest book of the Bible.

1. His person; v. 1. (1) His historicity. Job was a real person. Cp. Ezekiel 14:14, 20; James 5:11. (2) His character. A model man. How few could measure up to this standard!
2. His possessions; vs. 2-4. He not only had character but wealth and influence.
3. His piety; v. 5. (1) He realized his responsibility as a father. Cp. Eph. 6:4; Gen. 18:19. (2) He approached God through sacrifice. Heb. 9:22. (3) He continued steadfast, "continually."

II. The Adversary; v. 6.

1. The angelic convocation; v. 6. "The principalities and powers in heavenly places;" Eph. 3:10; Col. 1:16, etc.
2. The heavenly attestation; v. 8. God delights in His people. 2 Chron. 16:9; Psalm 16:3; Prov. 11:20; 15:8.
3. The Satanic accusation; vs. 9-11. Briefly describe Satan's history. (1) His exalted position. Ezek. 28:12-15. He was the most glorious of God's created beings "full of wisdom," "perfect," "anointed cherub," etc. (2) His fearful sin; Ezek. 28:15-17; Isa. 14:12-14. "Pride." Cp. 1 Tim. 3:6. (3) His fall; Isa. 14:12, 15. (4) His present sphere, access to heavenlies and also to earth. Eph. 6:12; 2:2; Col. 2:15. (5) His work. (a) Tempting to sin. Gen. 3; Luke 4:2-13. (b) Blinding minds; 2 Cor. 4:4. (c) Making captives; Luke 11:21, 22; 2 Tim. 2:26. (d) Accusing the brethren; Rev. 12:10. (6) His defeat; Heb. 2:14, 15. By the Son of God at Calvary; 2:13-15. (7) His doom. Rev. 20:1-10. Note his accusation here and his challenge.

III. The First Test; vs. 12-22.

1. Its purpose. To test the reality of Job's faith, love and obedience. God allows His people to be tested. Cp. 1 Peter 1:6, 7.
2. Its manner; vs. 13-19. The loss of all his earthly possessions. Notice how Satan planned blow after blow to fall in increasing severity so as to crush him.
3. Its Result; vs. 20-22. (1) Grief; v. 20. (2) Reverence; v. 20. (3) Submission.

IV. The Second Test; 2:1-10.

1. Divine approbation; vs. 1-3.
2. Satan's further accusation; vs. 4-6. How true is v. 4 in many cases. This explains so called Christian Science with its "cures" and damnable doctrines.
3. Job's fearful affliction; vs. 7, 8. Painful, loathsome, humiliating.
4. His sublime resignation; vs. 9, 10. God's triumph through him.

V. The "Friends" Counsel; vs. 11-13. Touch briefly on their wrong conception of Job's suffering. Chapters 4-31. They all combine in asserting that this calamity has come because of Job's sins and ignore utterly the real reason. They represent worldly wisdom.

1. Eliphaz. He bases everything on experience. "I have seen." 4:8-16.
2. Bildad. He rests everything on tradition, on what the fathers say; 8:8.
3. Zophar. He builds all on legalism and reason. God bestows His favor according to merit. 11:6, 5, etc.

187. JOB'S RESTORATION

Job 32-42

Golden Text: Job 23:10

I. The Pitiful Cry. Read Job 9:29-33; 16:21. Job never learned the why of all his suffering. He never knew that he was the battleground of God and Satan.

1. Man's need of a Mediator is seen. (1) Man realizes he has sinned and thus offended God. Romans 3:10-19; Isa. 1:4-6; Jer. 44:4, etc. (2) He realizes a sense of guilt and distance from God. Isa. 59:1, 2, etc. (3) He realizes that sin demands punishment. Romans 6:23; 1:18; Ezek. 18:4, etc. (4) He realizes that God being Infinite, and himself a sinner, he needs someone to come between and reconcile.
2. The essentials of a mediator. (1) He must be the equal of both parties. So Christ is both God and Man. (2) He should understand the case perfectly. (3) He should desire to bring peace. (4) Both parties must accept him. (5) Both parties must leave all in his hands.
3. Christ the one Mediator. 1 Tim. 2:5. He has fulfilled all the conditions. (1) He came to provide mediation. Mark 10:45; Luke 19:10; John 10:9; 3:16, etc. (2) He died to effect it. Col. 1:20, 21; 2 Cor. 5:18-21. (3) He ever lives to maintain it. Heb. 7:25, etc.

II. The Mediator Provided; 32-37. Elihu comes in. Note the way of salvation revealed. Here is a most modern gospel message in this most ancient book.

1. Ruin; 33:19-22. What sin has wrought! Cp. Psalm 32:3, 4; Romans 3:10-19.
2. Repentance; vs. 27, 28. "I have sinned." Cp. Luke 18:13; 15:21; 2 Sam. 12:13.
3. Ransom; v. 24. Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.
4. Regeneration; v. 25. Cp. John 3:3, 5; 2 Cor. 5:17. "Return todays of youth."
5. Reconciliation; v. 26. Cp. Eph. 2:12-14; Col. 1:21; 2 Cor. 5:19. "Favorable."
6. Rejoicing; v. 26. Psalm 32:1; Romans 15:13; 5:1, 2. "See His face with joy."
7. Rest; vs. 27-31. Matt. 11:28, 29, etc.

III. The Revelation of Jehovah. Chap 38-41.

1. The unfolding of God's omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and immutability as seen in creation. celestial and terrestrial God approaches in a whirlwind and asks Job questions that reveal to him his utter ignorance, incompetence, frailty and sin. In other words, God allows Job to realize just what he is
2. Its effect upon Job. In the light of God's omnipotence and holiness Job sees himself as he really is and confesses his true condition. See Job 40:3-5; 42:5, 6. This is always the effect upon man. Cp. Dan. 10:8; Zech. 3:1-4; Rev. 1:17, etc. Is Job's confession yours?

IV. The Restoration of Job; 42:7-17.

1. God's word to Job's friends; vs. 7-9.
2. Job's intecession for them; v. 10.
3. Job's restoration; vs. 10-17. Satan has been defeated, Job has learned his lesson and God has been glorified.

188. THE YOUNG HEBREW CAPTIVES

Daniel 1

Golden Text: Psalm 37:5, 6

I. Their Condition; vs. 1-3.

1. The fall of Jerusalem; vs. 1, 2. The city of privilege that contained the temple where God's glory dwelt; that had the inspired word of God; that had heard the prophets of God. Privilege brings responsibility. They had failed to honour God, had neglected the word of God, and persecuted the messengers of God, hence the judgment of God had come upon them.
2. The captives in Babylon; vs. 2, 3. Cp. 2 Kings 20:17, 18; Isa. 39:7. (1) Desecration; v. 2. "The house of his God." (2) Desolation; v. 3. In a strange land, amongst strange people, with strange gods. Here is the true test of character, the ability to stand alone.

II. Their Description; vs. 3-7. A picture of the ideal Christian.

1. Physical, "well favored." V. 4. A healthy body is a great asset in life. Emphasize the value of keeping the body fit, and under the control of the spirit. See 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.
2. Mental, "wisdom." V. 4. A healthy mind must be cultivated by study. 2 Tim. 1:7; 2:15.
3. Social; v. 4. "Stand in king's palace." The true Christian should always be a gentleman, courteous refined and considerate.
4. Spiritual; v. 8. Above all, Daniel put God first in his life. Cp. Matt. 6:33; Proverbs 3:6; 1:7.

III. Their Resolution; v. 8.

1. The motive of it—God's honor. Doubtless this meat and wine had been offered to idols as was the custom in Babylon. Cp. 1 Cor. 8:1-13. Daniel thus refused to acknowledge any God save the true God, the God of redemption, deliverance, and preservation. 1 Sam. 2:30. "God first" was their motto.
2. The strength of it—purpose of heart; v. 8. Cp. Prov. 4:23. His heart was fixed on God. Cp. Acts 11:23; 2 Tim. 3:10; Psalm 17:3; 2 Cor. 9:7; Acts 19:21. Dare to have a purpose firm.
3. The cost of it—self denial. "Pulse"—a kind of porridge. While the others ate the king's meat and wine, they denied themselves. Cp. Titus 2:11, 12; Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; Phil 3:8; Acts 20:24.
4. The reward of it; vs. 10-16. God honored their bold stand for Him. He will be no man's Debtor. No one ever loses who puts God first. See Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Paul, etc., etc.

IV. Their Education; v. 17.

1. Its Source—God. What a Teacher! What a school! Compare the Christian's school. (1) The Teacher; John 16:7-15; 14:26. (2) The text book; 2 Tim. 2:15. (3) The course of lessons; Titus 2:12. (4) The purpose, to educate in His will, Romans 12:2, and be to His glory; Eph. 1:12; 1 Peter 2:9.
2. Its effect: v. 17. All needed wisdom. James 1: 5: Prov. 2:6-11.

V. Their Approbation; vs. 18-21.

1. The test; vs. 18, 19.
2. The triumph; vs. 20, 21.

189. THE INTERPRETED DREAM

Daniel 2

Golden Text: James 1:5

I. The Perturbed King. Vs. 1-9.

1. The cause; v. 1. The dream. God oft-times has a purpose in dreams. See Job 33:13-17. Illust. Gen. 20:3-6; 31:10; 31:24; 40:5; 41:12; 1 Kings 3:5, etc. To those that have the word of God, this is not necessary. Jer. 23:28.
2. The command; v. 2.
3. The condition; vs. 3-6. The dream to be described and interpreted. An impossible task for the best of human wisdom. The threat and the promise; vs. 5, 6.
4. The consternation; vs. 7-9. Well there might be! How can the finite interpret the infinite? 1 Cor. 2:14.

II. The Nonplussed Magicians; vs. 10-13. Their failure; v. 10. Here is the reasoning of human wisdom! How dark is everything without a Divine revelation! Read 1 Cor. 1:19-21.

2. Their fear. Condemnation was upon them and death their portion.
3. Their fall; v. 12. The path of earthly glory leads only to the grave.

III. The Trusting Servant; vs. 14-23.

1. Prayer; vs. 14-18. Daniel knew the living God and had His promise such as Psalms 37:4, 5; 50:15; Isa. 45:3; 50:10; etc. Note his fellowship in prayer, "Where two or three." Cp. Matt. 6:6; 18:19. 20; Phil. 4:6, 7.
2. Perception; v. 19. Nothing too hard for the Lord; Gen. 18:14; Jer. 33:3; James 1:5. The answer came by revelation. Cp. 1 Cor. 2:10-14.
3. Praise; vs. 19-23. He gave God all the glory and praise. How often we forget to praise God for His answers to our prayers! Cp. Psalm 50:23. Daniel worshipped Him for His greatness, goodness, wisdom, power and revelation. Have we?

IV. The Interpretation; vs. 24-45.

1. The Explanation; vs. 24-28. God given the place of pre-eminence and honored before the king by his testimony. "There is a God in heaven that revealeth." Show what God has revealed. (1) His Godhead in nature; Romans 1:18. (2) His righteousness in the law; Rom. 7:12. (3) His mind and will in His word; Heb. 1:1. (4) His love in Christ; John 1:18. (5) His grace in the Gospel; Titus 2:11. (6) His wrath in judgment; Isa. 28:16-22. (7) His glory in His Son; 2 Cor. 4:6.
2. The revelation; vs. 29-35. Draw a rough sketch of this image on blackboard or paper to give a general idea.
3. The interpretation; vs. 36-45. (1) The Head of Gold. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. (2) The Breast and Arms of silver—The Media and Persian Empire. (3) The Body of brass—The Grecian Empire. (4) The Legs of iron—The Roman Empire. Sketch briefly the history of these great nations and point out that prophecy is history written in advance. Cp. Isa. 41:22, 23.

V. The Result; vs. 46-49.

1. God honored and given the glory by Nebuchadnezzar; vs. 46, 47.
2. Daniel exalted; v. 48.
3. His friends honored; v. 49.

190. THE FIERY FURNACE

Daniel 3

Golden Text: Daniel 11:32 B

I. The Royal Decree; vs. 1-7.

1. The forgotten lesson; v. 1. Cp. Chap. 2:47. How soon Nebuchadnezzar forgot his lesson of the living and true God. Deut. 6:12; Psalms 9:17; 50:22; Deut. 4:9.
2. The sin of idolatry; vs. 2-7. Cp. Romans 1: 18-23; Psalm 115:1-8; Isa. 44:9-20; Exod. 20:4, 5. Idolatry is both foolish and sinful.
3. The source of idolatry: Satan. Cp. 1 Cor. 10: 19, 20; Deut. 32:17; Psalm 106:36, 37. The Devil is behind all idolatry and seeking for worship through it.

II. The Bold Refusal; vs. 8-12.

1. The reason. They knew God. They had proved Him to be the only, the true, the living and the all powerful One by experience. They had the knowledge of God. Have we? Cp. Prov. 1:7; 2:5; 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Cor. 1:24.
2. The result. A bold uncompromising stand for Him against all opposition. Cp. Dan. 11:32; 2 Tim. 1:12; Romans 1:16. The knowledge of God nerves the soul and encourages the spirit. Illust. the martyrs of the church through all ages.

III. The Fearful Threat; vs. 13-15.

1. The rage; v. 13. The wrath of man robs him of his reason, balance and justice. Which is best to fear—the wrath of men or the wrath of God? Job 36:18; Romans 1:18; Rev. 6:15-17.
2. The threat; v. 15. The fiery furnace that could only touch the body. Matt. 10:28.

IV. The Brave Avowal; vs. 16-18.

1. As to God's ability; vs. 16, 17. "Our God." Their's by (1) Knowledge. They knew Him; John 17:3. (2) Choice; "we serve." (3) Experience. As seen and proved in their lives.
2. As to their own responsibility' "But if not.'. Here is the crux of faith, "if not." At all costs they would stand for Him, even though He did not deliver them from this horrible death. See Heb. 11:35, "not accepting deliverance."

V. The Divine Deliverance; vs. 19-27.

1. The fiery furnace; vs. 19-23. Its effect upon the executioners.
2. The Divine Companion; vs. 24, 25. In the midst of the trial, He was there. Cp. Isa. 43:1, 2; Heb. 13:5; Psalm 23:4; 2 Tim. 4:16, 17; Isa. 41:10, 13; Prov. 18:24; Matt. 28:18-20.
3. The marvellous result; v. 27. A complete deliverance in their trial, not deliverance from their trial. Cp. Job. 23:10; 1 Peter 1:7; 1 Cor. 10:13.

VI. The Royal Proclamation; vs. 28-30. Cp. Deut. 32:31.

1. Nebuchadnezzar's testimony; vs. 28, 29. (1) As to their faithfulness and courage; v. 28. Matt. 5:16; 1 Peter 2:11, 12. (2) As to God's supreme authority and power; v. 29. Cp. 2 Thess. 1:12.
2. Their triumph; v. 30. If God is put first He will look after our earthly interests. Cp. Matt. 6:33.

191. THE HUMILIATION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Daniel 4

Golden Text: Proverbs 16:18

I. The Preface; vs. 1-3. This reveals the purpose for this recital of his experiences. What a grand testimony to the wisdom, might, goodness and power of the eternal God, and this from a heathen king!

II. The Dream; vs. 4-18. Again God speaks to him in this way for a good purpose. See Job 33:14-17. Note especially Job 33:17. Note the various ways in which God communicates His will to man. (1) By direct speech as Adam, Gen. 3; Abram, Gen. 12:1; Noah, 6:13; Moses, Exod. 3:4, etc. (2) By vision as Ezekiel, Ezek. 1; Isaiah, Isa. 6, etc. (3) By His servant's speech; Heb. 1:1. (4) By His Son; Heb. 1:2; John 5:36; 6:29; 7:16; 17:8, 14. (5) Dreams, as Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 2; Dan. 4; Joseph, Gen. 37; Joseph, Matt. 2:13, etc. (6) By the written word, 2 Tim. 3:15; 2 Peter 1:21, etc. The God of creation is the God of revelation. The God Who breathed into man has breathed into the Scriptures making them living and powerful; Heb. 4:12. Note again the failure of mere human wisdom.

III. The Interpretation; vs. 19-27.

1. The Interpreter. (1) A spiritual man. V. 8. To which Nebuchadnezzar testifies. (2) A faithful servant of God. Vs. 19-26. It might easily have cost him his life to thus speak to this autocrat before whom all trembled. He who greatly fears God, fears no man. See Dan. 3:17, 18; Prov. 29:25; Ezek. 2:6; Acts 20:24-27; Ezek. 33:1-6; Prov. 24:11, 12; 1 Cor. 9:16.
2. The plain spoken warning; v. 27. (1) To hear wisdom—would he had taken it to heart! Cp. Prov. 1:5; 1 Cor. 14:38. (2) To turn from sin. Cp. Isa. 55:6, 7; Acts 20:21. (3) To turn to God; v. 25. Cp. 1 Thess. 1:9. (4) To do righteousness; v. 27. Here is a message to a king of long ago that needs to be reemphasized today. Acts 17:31.

IV. The Humiliation; vs. 28-33.

1. His boastful pride; vs. 28-30. His fearful error. He left God out! Cp. Luke 12:16-29; Psalm 10:4. The great tragedy of a Godless life. He was "ungodly."
2. His solemn message; vs. 31, 32. Cp. Prov. 16:18.
3. His sad condition; v. 33. His glory gone, his pride abased, his humiliation complete. This is always the Divine order. Cp. Luke 18:14. The way "up" is "down." James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:6.

V. The Revelation; vs. 34, 35. The lesson has been learned.

1. He learns his blessings come from God; v. 34. "Lifted up." Cp. James. 1:17; Acts 14:15.
2. He learns that God is the Ruler over all; vs. 34, 35.
3. He learns his right place—that of humble dependence upon God for wisdom to rule in His fear and favour; v. 37.

VI. The Restoration; vs. 36, 37. His testimony. Happy is the man whom God chastises and who learns the lesson! Heb. 12:11.

192. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

Daniel 5

Golden Text: Matthew 12:36

I. The Sinful Orgy; vs. 1-4. Another one of the night scenes of Scripture all of which will repay close study. At this feast there is a trinity of evil.

1. Intemperance. Sin against self; v. 1. The folly of it is seen (1) By Scriptural injunction; Prov. 23:29-32; Isa. 5:11, 22; Prov. 20:1. (2) By scientific investigation by doctors, etc. (3) By human experience. How true is Prov. 23:21. This can be seen anywhere and any time.
2. Immorality. Sin against fellowman; v. 2. What a fearful scene of unmentionable vice.
3. Infidelity—Sin against God; vs. 3, 4. (1) His desecration; v. 3. That which had been sanctiled for God's service used in service of sin. (2) His blasphemy; v. 4. Deliberate gross insult to the living God! This is what sin really is—an insult to the majesty and holiness of God. Jer. 44:4; Isa. 59:1, 2; Habak 1:12.

II. The Divine Revelation; vs. 5-9.

1. Its means; v. 5. The fingers of a man's hand. Four times in Scripture God is said to write. (1)To reveal His holy requirements; Exod. 31:18; 20:1-17. (2) To unfold His righteous judgments; Dan. 5:5. (3) To declare His wondrous grace; John 8:6. (4) To manifest His saving grace and regenerating power in the believer; 2 Cor. 3:2, 3.
2. Its effect; v. 6. The proud blaspheming braggart has gone and a trembling coward takes his place! Cp. Matt. 22:12; Rev. 6:15-17; Matt. 12:36, 37; John 12:46, 47. Here is a picture of man in the presence of the God against Whom he has sinned. Romans 14:12.
3. The appeal; vs. 7-9. Cp. 1 Cor. 2:14.

III. The Interpreter; vs. 10-24.

1. His reputation; vs. 10-12. What a character to have after all those years in a heathen court! Is it ours? Cp. Paul's, 1 Tim. 1:19; 1 Thess. 2:10; Peter and John, Acts 4:13. Cp. 2 Cor. 3:2.
2. The request; vs. 13-16. Would that he had been advised by Daniel before!
3. The refusal; v. 17. To have received this would have been to put a price on the word of God—an abomination to God. Matt. 10:8; Isa. 55:1, 2; 3 John 7; 1 Cor. 9:18.
4. The rebuke; vs. 18-24. (1) The example he had ignored. V. 18:21. (2) The pride of heart he had shown. V. 22. Knowledge brings responsibility. "Light rejected bringeth night." (3) The blasphemy he had perpetrated; v. 23. What a fearful indictment!

IV. The Interpretation; vs. 25-28.

1. The weighing; v. 27. The heavenly Analyist. God sees all, hears all, knows all! See Rev. 20:11-13.
2. The wanting; v. 27. This is God's commentary on man. Man has been weighed under innocence, conscience, human government, law and grace and is still "wanting." Romans 3:10-19.
3. The woe; v. 28.

V. The Fulfillment; vs. 30, 31. **Judgment swift and sure. Shall this be your portion or shall the day of judgment find you "complete in Christ?" Col. 2:9, 10; John 5:24; Romans 8:1.**

193. DANIEL AND THE DEN OF LIONS

Daniel 6

Golden Text: Daniel 12:3

I. His Position; vs. 1-3.

1. His promotion; vs. 1, 2. Cp. Prov. 18:16.
2. The reason; v. 3. What a character after all the years in Babylon! In the midst of idolatry, voluptuousness and sin of every description; Prov. 4:18; Isa. 27:3; Jude 24.

II. His Peril; vs. 4-9.

1. The cause—Envy; v. 4. Prov. 14:30; 27:4; Matt. 27:18.
2. Their testimony; vs. 4, 5. (1) As to his ability, intellectual and administrative power. (2) As to his integrity. Even in the merciless light of public office, no flaw was found in him. (3) As to his fidelity—he ploughed a straight furrow and gave unswerving devotion to his task. (4) As to his devotion. Unhindered by affairs of state he did not conceal his worship of the true God; v. 5.
3. Their plot; vs. 6-9.

III. His Piety; vs. 10, 11.

1. The circumstances of it. "When Daniel knew." He knew what it would cost to take a bold stand. Cp. Luke 14:25-33; Matt. 10:32-39.
2. The character of it—Bold, uncompromising, deliberate. Daniel was no "secret disciple." Cp. John 12:42, 43.
3. The confession of it. A public declaration of his faith in God. Cp. Romans 10:9, 10; Mark 8:38. "Dare to be a Daniel."

IV. His Persecution; vs. 11-17.

1. The accusation; vs. 11-13.
2. The intercession; vs. 14, 15. The helplessness of the king, bound by his own red tape and the laws he had given.
3. The execution; v. 16. Note the king's testimony to Daniel's integrity and assurance of his safety. Deut. 32:31.

V. His Preservation; vs. 18-23.

1. The king's concern; vs. 18-20.
2. The Lord's care; v. 22. The Creator can govern His creation. He is the God of the impossible. Cp. 2 Peter 2:9; 1 Peter 5:7; Zech. 2:8; Romans 8:28; Matt. 6:25-34; Psalm 91:2-11.
3. The servant's confession; v. 22.

VI. The Punishment; v. 24. Hoist with their own petard! What poetic justice! Prov. 28:10; 26:27; 5:22; Gal. 6:7.

VII. The Proclamation; vs. 25-28. Thus was God glorified through Daniel. Note the description Darius gives of "the God of Daniel."

1. Living; v. 26. Not like the dead idols. Cp. Josh. 3:10; Heb. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:9; 1 Tim. 4:10.
2. Immutable. "Steadfast." Cp. Mal. 3:16.
3. Everlasting, "ever." Deut. 33:27; Isa. 40:28.
4. Delivering; v. 27. Cp. 1 Tim. 2:3, 4; Titus 2:11; Ezek. 33:11.
5. Omnipotent and working; v. 27. Cp. Mark 10:27, etc.

194. ESTHER

Esther 1-10

Golden Text: Psalm 22:28

The book of Esther is the unfolding of God's providence in history. Psalm 22:28; Romans 13: 1-7. A study of history will reveal an unseen power controlling, raising up one nation and putting down another. Though God's name is not mentioned in Esther yet He is seen actively working on behalf of His people, the Jews; overruling the wickedness of man and bringing His own purposes to pass. The teacher would do well to study the story throughly, and then tell it to the class. It never fails to fascinate and the moral will need no application if well told.

I. The Deposing of Queen Vashti; ch. 1-2:4.

1. The voluptuous feast; vs. 1-9. Ahasuerus is the Xerxes of history. Look up a good history book on his life. This feast was given in order to make his lords forget the severe defeat he had suffered in battle.
2. The command; vs. 10, 11.
3. The refusal; v. 12. Whether Vashti did right or wrong in refusing has been the subject of much controversy.
4. The result; vs. 13-2:4.

II. The New Queen. Ch. 2:5-23.

1. Her origin; vs. 5-7. All attempts to exterminate or assimilate the Jew have been in vain. Gen. 12:2-3.
2. The choice; vs. 8-17.
3. The feast; vs. 18-20.
4. The discovered plot; vs. 21-23.

III. The Fateful Decree; 3:1-4:3.

1. Its instigator; 3:1-6. Haman has not been the last to attempt the impossible task of annihilating the Jews as a nation. Cp. The anti-Semetic pogroms of history.
2. The cruel edict; vs. 7-15.
3. Its result; 4:1-3.

IV. The Commission to Esther; 4:4-5:8.

1. Her grief; v. 4.
2. Her message; vs. 5-9.
3. Her commission; vs. 10-14. Note especially last clause of v. 14. Here is the key to the Book.
4. Her request; vs. 15-17.
5. Her audience with the king; 5:1-4.
6. The banquet; vs. 5:5-8.

V. The Promotion of Mordecai. 5:9-6:14.

1. Haman's hatred; 5:9-13.
2. His scheme; v. 14.
3. The king's command; 6:1-3.
4. The king's question; 6:4-9 What shall be done to the one whom God delights to honor? Eph. 1:3.
5. The promotion of Mordecai; 6:10-14.

VI. The Judgment on Haman; 7:1-10.

1. The accusation; vs. 1-6.
2. The judgment; vs. 7-10. Here is poetic justice indeed—to be hung on his own gallows! Cp. Prov. 28:10.

VII. The Deliverance of the Jews; 8-10.

1. **Esther's request; 8:1-6.**
2. **The new charter; 8:7-14.**
3. **The resultant joy; 8:15-17.**
4. **The deliverance; 9:1-19.**
5. **The proclamation of Mordecai; 9:20-32.**
6. **The might of Mordecai; 10:1-3.**

195. THE RETURN UNDER EZRA

Ezra 7-10

Golden Text: 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18

I. The Historic Setting. Ch. 1-6.

1. The fulfilled word. 1:1-6. Over 200 years before, Cyrus' name had been given and his purpose revealed! (1) As to the Period; Jer. 25:12; 29:10. 70 years. (2) As to the Person; Isa. 44:28; 45:1. (3) As to the Purpose; Isa. 44:28; 45:1, 13. Cp. God's appeal to fulfilled prophecy; Isa. 41:21-23.
2. The return under Zerubbabel; 2:61-3:13. Note the order and apply spiritually. Cp. the order in Heb. 10:12-22. (1) Restoration of the priesthood; 2:61-63. The truth of mediation; Heb. 4:14, 15. (2) Restoration of the altar; 3:1-5. The truth of substitution; 2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 53:5, 6. (3) Restoration of the temple; 3:6-13. The truth of worship; Heb. 13:15; John 4:23, 24.
3. The opposition; 4:1. (1) Their false offer; 4:1-4. Note the answer; v. 4. Cp. Eph. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14. God's word does not contemplate a mixed "church membership," composed of saved and lost as is seen in Christendom today. (2) Their false accusation and its result; vs. 5-24. (3) The revival; 5:1-2 under Haggai and Zechariah. Cp. Haggai 1:1-11. Read these verses carefully. Verse 4 is quite appropriate in many quarters where the place of meeting is in disgraceful condition while the saints live in luxurious homes. (4) The letter and its answer; 5:3-6:12. (5) The completion of the temple and the resultant joy; 6:13-22.

II. The New Expedition; 7:1-8:36.

1. The leader—Ezra. He was (1) A ready scribe; v. 6. (2) A Scripture student; v. 6. (3) A prepared servant; v. 10. (4) An obedient disciple; v. 10. "Do it." (5) A determined teacher; v. 10. "Teach."
2. The charter; 7:11-26.
3. The journey; 7:8, 9; 8:21-36. (1) The time, "New Year's Day." 7:9. Cp. others; Gen. 1:5; 8:13; Ezra 10:12, 17; 2 Chron. 29:5, 7, 17; Exod. 40:2, 17; Ezek. 29:17. (2) The prayer; 8:21-23. Note v. 22. It is one thing to say that we believe; another thing to demonstrate it to others. (3) The safe arrival; 8:24-36.

III. The God Honoring Revival; 9:1-10:17. Cp. the need of revival today.

1. The imperitive need; 9:1, 2. The unequal yoke, conformity to the world and unjudged sin.
2. The concerned minority; v. 4. Cp. Isa. 66:1, 2; Mal. 3:16.
3. The humiliation and confession; vs. 5-15. Note how he identifies himself with Israel. 1 John 1:9. Cp. Dan. 9:3-6.
4. The revival. C. 10. (1) The desire of the people ;10:1-5. The covenant with the Lord. (2) The proclamation; vs. 6-8. (3) The exhortation; vs. 9-12. Note the plain speaking. (4) The separation; vs. 13-17. This is God's order for revival today.

196. NEHEMIAH AND HIS WORK

Nehemiah 1-6, 8

Golden Text: 2 Timothy 2:15

I. The Historic Setting; 1:1-11.

1. The report of the land; vs. 1-3.
2. The effect upon Nehemiah; vs. 4-11. (1) Sorrow of heart; v. 4. What Jerusalem stood for. (a) The place where God had put His name; 1 Kings 14:21; Deut. 12:5, 21, etc. (b) The capital of the land God had given them. (c) The centre of the worship of the true God—the temple. (2) Confession from the heart; vs. 5-10. (3) Purpose of heart; v. 11. To do God's will in His strength.

II. The Royal Favor; 2:1-9.

1. Nehemiah's occupation; 1:11. A position of great trust, for poisoning was a common way of disposing of kings.
2. The king's query; 2:1-4. Note the swift uplook of faith; v. 4. Nehemiah had the habit of prayer. "A good habit to cultivate!" Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17, 23; Luke 18:1; 11:9, 10.
3. Nehemiah's request; vs. 5-8. And its answer.

III. The Midnight Reconnoitre; 2:11-18. Like a good leader he wanted to know the worst so that he could plan the best.

IV. The Restoration of the Wall; 2:19-6:19.

1. The opposition. The Devil, through his servants, will supply plenty of this! Cp. Eph. 6:10-18. Note the various kinds of opposition he had. (1) Grief; 2:10. (2) Laughter; 2:19. (3) Scorn; 2:19. (4) Ridicule; 4:3. (5) Wrath; 4:1. (6) Conspiration; 4:8. (7) Conflict; 4:18. (8) Subtility; 6:1, 10.
2. The organization. Nehemiah was an ideal leader. There was (1) Proper division of labor—"Every man over against his house." Here is the truth of individual responsibility. (2) Cooperation. There was harmony and unity of purpose. It was one work. (3) Concentration. They could all be rallied to one point at a given signal; 4:11-20, etc. (4) Absolute dependence upon God combined with hard work; 4:8, 9. They prayed, watched and worked. Here is faith which works by love; Gal. 5:6.
3. The completion; 6:15-19.

V. The Great Convocation; 8:1-18.

1. The purpose of it; v. 1. To instruct in the word of the Lord. A good Scriptural precedent for a Bible convention.
2. The manner of it; vs. 2-8. (1) There was a good method. (a) An understanding people; v. 3. (b) An opened book; v. 5. God's word honored. (c) An elevated platform so that all could see and hear; v. 4. (2) There was good matter—the word of God; v. 8. (3) There was good ministry; v. 8. It was (a) distinct, (b) well expounded, (c) understood. Would that all conferences were like it!
3. The result of it; vs. 9-18. (1) Conviction; v. 9. (2) Comfort; vs. 10-12. Note especially v. 10. (3) Compliance; vs. 13-17. (4) Continuance; v. 18.

197. Beginning of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

HELPS IN TELLING THE STORY.

(a) The Jews forsook God, broke His commandments and worshipped idols.

(b) God sent Isaiah, Jeremiah and other prophets to warn them and call them back to God. God did this because He loved His people and was sorry for them. II Chron. 36.15; Jer. 3.22.

(c) But Israel would not listen to God and God had to punish them to teach them. He sent Nebuchadnezzar to win the battle against them, to spoil their country and to take them to Babylon. II Chron. 36.15-21; Rev. 3.19.

(d) Before Nebuchadnezzar came to take the Jews prisoner Jeremiah prophesied that they would be captive in Babylon for 70 years. Jer. 25.11.

(e) The Jews came back to their own land. Ezra 1.1-7. 150 years before Nebuchadnezzar came to take the Jews to Babylon, Isaiah prophesied the name of the King who would let them return to their own country. This was Cyrus, King of Persia. God's Word always comes true. Is. 44.28; Is. 45.1-4.

(f) Daniel the captive worked with King Cyrus at Babylon. He read this prophecy about those 70 years. He confessed his people's sins and he prayed to God to set them free. Dan. 9.2, 3.
Pray for Kings and Governments. I Tim. 2.2; God holds them in his hands. Dan. 2.21.

God stirs up Cyrus and the people.

Ezra 1.1-11.

1. **Only God can stir up men's hearts.** The Lord stirred up Cyrus to send the Jews back to Jerusalem to build the house of the Lord, v. 1, 2. He stirred up the others, the priests and the Levites, to do this work. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." John 6.63.

2. **Those who were stirred up:**

   (a) Obeyed the Word of God, and helped others to obey it, too. Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only. James 1.22.

   (b) They were willing to go anywhere for God's work. Are we willing to go anywhere to preach the Gospel? Mark 16.20.

3. **Those who stayed at home helped those who went out to do God's work.** They strengthened their hands, v. 6, I Sam. 23.16. We can strengthen God's workers by prayer. They helped them willingly with offerings and many precious things, v. 6. What are you doing to help those who are giving all their time to God's work? I Cor. 9.

4. Cyrus gave back all the vessels that belonged to God's house. They had been used for other things and for idols, now they were to be used for God again. Let us use for God everything we have.

Verse to learn, Ezra 1.3.

198. Joshua made clean for God's work.

Zechariah 3.1-7.

When the Jews went back to Jerusalem there was no priest fit to offer sacrifices and work in God's temple. God showed Zechariah the prophet a vision, to show the people that they were not fit for God's work. We are priests and we must be clean. Rev. 1.6; Is. 52.11.

1. **Satan resisted Joshua the priest** when he stood before the angel of the Lord, v. 1. Satan spoke to God against His servant Job, Job 1.6, 9; Rev. 12.10.

2. **But the Lord rebuked Satan.** He said, Is not this a fire stick pulled out of the fire? God remembered the sacrifices for Joshua's sin.

3. **Joshua had very dirty garments.** v. 3. In the holy Presence of God Joshua saw his sin as Isaiah and Job did. Is. 6.1-5 Job 42.5-6.

4. **How Joshua was cleansed:**

   (a) God said, "Take away the filthy garments from him," v. 4. This means the garments of selfrighteousness and sin. Is. 64.6.

   (b) Forgiveness of sin. God said, "I have made your sin to pass from you." Ps. 103.12; Rev. 1.5, 6.

   (c) God gave him new clean garments—picture of being clothed with Christ's righteousness. Is. 61.10; Rev. 3.18.

   (d) God put a fair mitre (Priest's cap) on his head. v. 5. The priest had this on when he prayed for the people. When we are clean then we can pray in power for others. "Lifting up **holy** hands." I Tim. 2.8.

5. **When we are cleansed, we must walk in God's ways,** v. 7. Psalm 24.3, 5.

Verse to learn, Psalm 24.3, 5.

199. Starting to build the Temple.

Ezra 2.62, 68-70; chapter 3.

1. **There were many who were true to God when others were backsliding.** God wrote down the names of those who were willing to return to Jerusalem (ch. 2). God has a book of remembrance, Mal. 3.16. He will not forget our work and labour of love. Heb. 6.10.

2. **Those who praised God—the singers—went, too,** v. 41, 70. In Babylon they never sang (Ps. 137), but when they came back to Jerusalem they praised God and encouraged the people, ch. 3.10, 11; Eph. 5.19.

3. **Some priests had no papers to show they belonged to line of the priests.** v. 62. We should **know** we are children of God, that we have life, John 20.31. These priests could not eat of the holy things or teach the people. Lev. 10.9-11; Mal. 2.5-7.

4. **The people gave offerings willingly,** v. 68; II Cor. 9.7. They gave after their ability, v. 69, this means they gave according to what they had. I Cor. 16.2.

5. **The people gathered as one man,** v. 1. They worked together and started to build the temple, v. 8. Let us be **one** in God's work.

6. **They obeyed God and offered all the sacrifices** God had commanded them to offer before, v. 4, 5. They showed by this they had truly turned to God. Then they sang praises and shouted for joy, v. 11, 12 Ps. 126.2.

Verse to learn, Ephesians 2.21, 22.

200. Enemies to God's work.

Ezra, chapters 4 and 5.

1. **How enemies tried to hinder the work:**
   (a) They tried to make God's people mix up with them, Ezra 4.2, but if the Jews let the heathen help in God's work they would spoil it. II Chron. 19.2; II Cor. 6.17. God's people said, "You have nothing to do with us to build a house for God," v. 3.
   (b) Then the enemies made trouble for them and tried to make them weak, v. 4.
   (c) The enemies told lies against them so the king stopped the Jews from building the temple, Ezra 4.24; I Cor. 16.9.

2. **Then God's people became downhearted and cold** because they were afraid of their enemies. But God sent His prophets, Haggai and Zechariah to encourage them again. Haggai 1.1-11.

3. **But the people said, "The time is not come that the Lord's house should be built."** Then God said, "Is it a time to build your own houses and let go God's work?" You work hard for money and put it into a bag with holes." Hagg. 1.1, 2. 6.

4. **They obeyed God and feared Him and He gave them this promise.** "Be strong and work for I am with you." Hagg. 2.4. Then they went on with the work.

5. **Let us remember:**
   (a) The hearts of men are in God's hands, even the hearts of His enemies.
   (b) God's eye is on His people. Ezra 5.5.
   (c) God's work may be hindered for a time, but it must go on till it is finished, Ezra 6.14.

   Verse to learn, Hagg. 2.4.

201. Ezra called for God's work.

Ezra 7; Nehemiah 8.3, 8 .

God works through men. He worked through Ezra.

1. **What kind of a man Ezra was:**
   (a) His heart was filled with God's Word, v. 6. Ps. 119.11.
   (b) He prepared his heart to **seek** the law of the Lord and to **do** it, v. 10, John 13.17.
   (c) He prepared his heart to teach God's Word, v. 10, 25, for he knew he was a messenger of the Lord. Mal. 2.7.
   (d) He was strong and had power because the hand of the Lord was upon him, v. 28.

2. **God opened his way**—He made the king willing to let him go and help the Jews at Jerusalem, and He made the king kind to him and help him with many gifts. v. 27. If God has called us to a special work He will open our way before us. Rev. 3.8. Because Ezra prepared his heart, God supplied his needs, v. 21, 22; Phil. 4.19.

3. **How Ezra taught the Word of God:**
   (a) He did not teach his **own** words. but God's Word, v. 10.
   (b) He obeyed in his own life what he taught others.
   (c) He kept on and did not give up. Neh. 8.3.
   (d) He spoke loudly so all could hear. Neh. 8.8.
   (e) He explained God's Word so that all could understand. Neh. 8.8.; I Cor. 14.9.

   Verse to learn, Psalm 119.11.

202. Ezra leading his people.

Ezra 8.15, 21-33.

They all waited at the River Ahava to make ready for the journey.

1. **How they prepared themselves:**

   (a) They humbled themselves before God, they wanted to get right with Him, v. 21.

   (b) They asked God to show them the right way to go, 21. Let us hold on to God's promises to guide us. Ps. 32.8, 9 Prov. 3.5, 6.

2. **Ezra looked to God alone to protect them on their journey,** v. 22. He had told the king this and so he would not ask for a band of soldiers to go with them. He wanted to honour God before the heathen. Let us be careful we are not leaning on man when we say we are looking to God.

3. **God was with them and delivered them from enemies on the road.** They had all looked to God and God had answered their prayer, v. 23. Blessed are all they that put their trust in God. Ps. 2.12.

4. **Offerings given by God's people for His work are holy,** v. 28; we must take care of them. Ezra was a faithful steward. He counted the offering money when the people gave it and again when they offered it in the temple, v. 29. This was not because he thought the priests were not straight but because he did not want any talk and trouble about it afterwards. Paul did this, too. II Cor. 8.21.

Verse to learn, Psalm 2.12 (last part of verse).

203. Ezra's confession.

Ezra, chapter 9 and chapter 10.

The people now began to mix up with the heathen.
They married heathen wives and they became backsliders.

1. **What Ezra did:**

   (a) He wept over the sins of his people. Christ did this, Luke 19.41, and so did Paul. Acts 20.31.

   (b) He humbled himself, he fell on his knees and prayed to God, v. 5.6.

2. **How he prayed:**

   (a) He did not think he was better than his people; he joined himself with them and said, **our** iniquities; **our** trespasses (sins), v. 6. If one member suffers all suffer. I Cor. 12.26.

   (b) He did not make excuses for their sins before God. he confessed everything, v. 6, 7.

   (c) He remembered all God's mercy to them before, how He had delivered them and revived them, v. 9. This strengthens faith.

3. **But sin must be put away.** It is not enough to confess sin, they must show they truly repent by **putting it away,** v. 11-14. God says, those who confess and **forsake** their sins shall have mercy. Prov. 28.13. Ezra said, "Should we join with the wicked in their sins?" v. 14. James 4.4; I John 2.15.

4. **Ezra was not satisfied when only some repented,** v. 2, he kept on till they all separated from the heathen and came back to the Lord, v. 10-12; ch. 10.

Verse to learn, Proverbs 28.13.

204. Nehemiah in Babylon.

Nehemiah 1.

1. **Nehemiah never forgot God's work at Jerusalem** though he had to stay in a heathen country.
   (a) He heard bad news, that the wall was broken down. Wall is a picture of separation; they were mixing up with the heathen, v. 3.
   (b) He heard that God's people were in reproach, this means that their lives were not straight and the heathen talked against God and against them, v. 3.

2. **What Nehemiah did when he heard this news.** He wept, he fasted (did not eat). he prayed. v. 4.

3. **How Nehemiah prayed:**
   (a) All the time, day and night. v. 6.
   (b) When he confessed the people's sins he joined himself with them he said, "We have sinned," v. 6. I Cor. 12.26.
   (c) He got others to join him in prayer, v. 11. It is not enough to pray by yourself, come to the prayer meetings.
   (d) He remembered God's promises in His Word that if they turned to Him, He would forgive them. v. 9, and he had faith to believe that God would answer.
   (e) He called himself God's servant. There are three kinds of servants; those who serve from fear only, those who work for wages only; and those who serve for love. Nehemiah served for love. Ex. 21.5.

4. **Then he prayed to God to make a way for him** to speak to the king and God answered his prayer, v. 11. ch. 2.4.

Verse to learn, Nehemiah 1.11 (first half of verse).

205. Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 2.

1. **When God answered Nehemiah's prayer and opened the way for him to speak to the king he was afraid,** v. 2. Ps. 56.3. But he asked God for wisdom and God used his words, v. 4.

2. **He said to the king, "send me . . . that I may build,"** v. 5. He not only prayed for his people but he gave himself to God for God to use him, v. 5. Are you willing not only to pray but to say, "here am I; **send me.**" Is. 6.8.

3. **He asked for great things for God's work** and he received a great answer from the king because God's hand was with him. v. 7, 8. Ps. 81.10.

4. **He waited on God** for three days before he started the work, v. 11. Ezra also did this. Ez. 8.32; Phil. 4.6.

5. **He did not forsake that work when he found it hard;** the city was burned, the wall broken down and there was much rubbish, but God had called him, and God was with him, v. 18.

6. **He did not make the way easy,** he told the people about all the trouble, but he also told them how God had sent him and how He had answered prayer, v. 17. 18. Then their hands were strong to help in the work, 18, and they said, "Let us build." v. 18.

Verse to learn. Isaiah 6.8.

206. Helpers in the work.

Nehemiah 3.

1. **There was work for everyone.** The high priest, men who worked in gold, carpenters, the rulers and women, all had a share in the work, v. 1, 8, 12. Mark 11.34. The Lord has need of you. Luke 19.31.

2. **This work was precious to God** though they were only clearing away rubbish and doing carpentry. Our Lord did humble work for God for 30 years at Nazareth.

3. **God knows each one and knows about our work.** He wrote down their names in this chapter. God will not forget our work and labour of love. Heb. 6.10. But God also wrote down about some high men who were too proud or too lazy to help with the work, v. 5. We, too, must give account to God. Rom. 14.12.

4. **How the people worked:**
   (a) **They all worked together.** Every man joined his work to another man's work, "next unto him," v. 2-5, 16, "next unto them," "after them." Because they were one in heart they were one in doing God's work.
   (b) **Some mended the wall close to their own house,** v. 10, 23, 28, 29. All are not able to go far away to do God's work, but they can do some work for God in their own village where God has put them.
   (c) **Baruch worked earnestly,** this means, with all his might, v. 20. Eccles. 9.10; Col. 3.23.
   (d) **Meshullam mended near his own chamber,** v. 30. He had no house, only a room, yet he was faithful in that small work, and God wrote it down for an example to us.

Verse to learn, Hebrews 6.10.

207. Building the wall.

Nehemiah 4.

1. **Enemies tried to block God's work,** v. 7, 8 Eph. 6.12.
   (a) They mocked them because the Jews were not many, v. 2.
   (b) Because they said the Jews were too weak to do it.
   (c) They mocked at the part of the wall that was finished and said it would break down, v. 3. But God's work went on, v. 6. Then the enemy came against them to stop the work, v. 8.

2. **What Nehemiah did in this great trouble.** Eph. 6.18.
   (a) First he took it to God in prayer like Hezekiah did. II Kings 19.14, and like Jehosophat did, II Chron. 20.12.
   (b) Then he set a watch, v. 9, 22; Watching and praying must go together. Matt. 26.41; Mark 13.33; I Pet. 4.7.

3. **Downhearted workers:**
   (a) Are no use, they discourage others. Ten times they said the enemy is too strong, 12.
   (b) They said, "we are not strong, we are tired," v. 10. But God says, "Be not weary in well doing." Gal. 6.9.
   (c) They said, "there is too much rubbish we are not able to build the wall," v. 10. But God is able. II Cor. 9.8.

4. **Nehemiah said,** "Be not afraid of them; remember the Lord our God shall fight for us, v. 14, 20. Rom. 8.31.

5. **The faithful workers:**
   (a) They had a mind to work, v. 6.
   (b) They had their sword at their side, v. 18; Eph. 6.17.
   (c) The trumpet called them to help each other, v. 19. We are joined together in God's work.
   (d) They had clean bodies and clean clothes, v. 23. Heb. 10.22.

Verse to learn, Romans 8.31.

208. Enemies set traps.

Nehemiah 6.

1. **Enemies now tried another way to stop God's work.** They tried to make friends with Nehemiah. This is how Satan comes as an angel of light. II Cor. 11.3, 4, 14.

2. **Some of the enemies' traps:**
   (a) They tried to get hold of Nehemiah the leader of God's work. But he said, "I am doing a great work, I cannot leave it," v. 3. Satan will try and get hold of leaders in God's work. Pray for them.
   (b) The enemies kept on—they tried four times, v. 4, but Nehemiah sent the same answer. Satan will not let go easily, he will keep on tempting God's people.
   (c) Then they told lies against him. But Nehemiah said, This is not true and he prayed to God for strength, v. 8, 9.
   (d) Enemies worked through a false brother who tried to make Nehemiah disobey God through fear, v. 10. He wanted to betray Nehemiah to his enemies as Judas betrayed the Lord. Ps. 55.12-14. But Nehemiah knew God had not sent this man, so he said, "No," and let God deal with his enemies, v. 14; II Tim.. 4.14.

3. **God showed His power.** Though all these enemies tried many times to stop the work, yet it was finished, v. 15.

4. Enemies and heathen were ashamed and had to confess this was God's work and not man's, v. 16.

Verse to learn, II Corinthians 11.14.

209. God's Word read and explained.

Nehemiah 8.

1. **Ezra's prayer:**
   (a) He started his prayer by blessing the Lord, the **great** God, v. 6. All our prayer should begin with worship as our Lord taught His disciples. Luke 11.1-4.
   (b) The people were reverent, they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord, v. 6. Ps. 89.7.
   (c) They said Amen because they heard the prayer and so were able to join in it, v. 6.

2. **The Word of God:**
   (a) The people were hungry to hear it. We should be hungry for it, too. I Pet. 2.2.
   (b) They listened well from morning till mid-day, v. 3.
   (c) They honoured God's Word. They stood up when Ezra opened the book, v. 5. We, too, must honour the Word of God. Is. 42.21.

3. **How the Word of God was read:**
   (a) The Levites read it so that every one could hear it.
   (b) They explained it so that every one could understand it, v. 8. Let us ask God to teach us to know when to give milk to babes and strong meat to others. I Pet. 2.2 Heb. 5.14; I Cor. 14.9.

4. **What the Word of God did in their lives:**
   (a) It cut their hearts, v. 9. God's Word is sharper than any two edged sword. Eph. 6.17; Heb. 4.12.
   (b) It brought great joy to them, v. 10; Jer. 15.16, and they shared that joy with others, v. 10.
   (c) God's Word showed them what to do and they did it, v. 14-16; John 13.17; James 1.22.

Verse to learn, Jeremiah 15.16.

210. Getting right with God.

Nehemiah 9.

1. **They humbled themselves before God** when the light of God's Word showed them the dark places in their lives, v. 1. This is the way to blessing.

2. **They showed true repentance:**
   (a) They separated from the heathen, v. 2; II Cor. 6.17.
   (b) They confessed their sins. If we confess our sins and do not forsake them, we mock God. Those who confess **and forsake** their sins shall have mercy. Prov. 28.13.

3. **They read the Word of God and worshipped the Lord,** v. 3. Then the Levites said, "Stand up and bless the Lord your God for ever, v. 5. Only those with clean hearts can truly worship God. Ps. 24.3, 4.

4. **They obeyed the Word of God:**
   (a) They kept the Sabbath, God's holy day for the Jews, and they did not forsake the House of God, ch. 10.39. Heb. 10.25.
   (b) They gave God the first fruits of their gardens and of their flocks. 10.35; Mal. 3.10.
   (c) They gave gifts to God's work, 10.32-34.

5. **They blessed the Lord,** v. 5, 6.
   (a) Because He is the only God, high above all, v. 5, 6.
   (b) Because He delivered them and guided them, 9-12.
   (c) Because He supplied their needs, v. 15.
   (d) Because He is a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful and of great kindness, v. 17.

Verse to learn, Nehemiah 9.17 (last half of verse).

211. Nehemiah's second journey to Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 13.

Nehemiah went back to Babylon to keep his promise to the king. Neh. 2.6. When he came back to Jerusalem he found a backsliding people.

1. **Our blessings and victories of today are not enough for tomorrow.** We need new food and strength for each day. We get this as we abide in Christ. John 15.4, 5.

2. **What made them lose blessing:**
   (a) They mixed up with heathen. They married heathen wives, v. 23-27 II Cor. 6.14.
   Eliashib the priest made friends with Tobiah, v. 7, who was an enemy of God's work and God's people, 4.3. Eliashib let him live in a room in the temple, but Tobiah had no business to be there, 2.20.
   (b) They had left off giving the tenth to God.
   (c) They had market on the Sabbath, God's holy day for the Jews, v. 15, 16; Heb. 10.25.

3. **What Nehemiah did:** He grieved very much over these things. He cast out all Tobiah's things, he cleansed the room, v. 8, 9, and he brought back the vessels of the House of God, v. 9.

4. **The people followed Nehemiah back to God,** as they had followed Eliashib away from God. Are you leading people away from God or to Him? When they came back they gave again God's tenth, v. 12. Nehemiah chose faithful men to look after these offerings, v. 12, 13.

Verse to learn, II Corinthians 6.14.

212.

THE VISION OF ZECHARIAH AND PROPHECY OF MALACHI

Zechariah 3; Malachi 3-4

Golden Text: Malachi 3:16

With this lesson our studies in the Old Testament are concluded.

I. Zechariah. C. 3.

1. His work; vs. 1-3. Contemporaneous with Haggai in Jerusalem at the return of the exiles. See Ezra 5:1, 2. His message was one of revival, encouragement and restoration.
2. His vision of Joshua. C. 3. This is one of his many visions and a good illustration of the gospel. It reveals the need of man and God's way of salvation to meet his need. (1) His condition; 3:1-3. (a) In the presence of God; v. 1. What a solemn sight! Man in the presence of his Creator! Cp. Heb. 4:13; Psalm 139:1-8. This produces humility (Isa. 6). Reality—None will question His judgment (Rev. 20:10-15). Fear (Rev. 6:16). (b) Accused by Satan the adversary; Rev. 12:10. The fearful enemy of man; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:26, etc. (c) Defiled by sin; v. 3. "Filthy garments." Cp. Isa. 64:6; Job 9:30, 31; Psalm 14:2, 3. This is man's natural covering in spite of his pride, self righteousness, good works and religion. (d) Deserving of wrath, "plucked from burning." Heb. 9:27; Heb. 12:29; 10:31; Romans 6:23; Ezek. 18:4. (2) His cleansing; v. 4. (a) The source of it. "I have caused." Only God can forgive. Luke 5:21. (b) The basis of it. The sacrifice made and accepted; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Romans 3:24; Isa. 53:5, 6. (c) The condition of it. Faith; Romans 3:25, 26; 1 Cor. 6:11; Rev. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:18. (3) His clothing; v. 4. Cp. Luke 15:22; Romans 3:20-22; Isa. 61:10. (4) His crowning; v. 5. Cp. Psalm 103:4. All spiritual blessings; Eph. 1:3-14. (5) His call; v. 7. (a) As to his walk. "In My ways." Cp. Eph. 2:10; 4:1; 5:2; 5:15; Gal. 5:16; 2 Cor. 5:17; Romans 6:4; Col. 4:5, etc. (b) As to his work. "Charge;" v. 4. Cp. Mark 16:15; Acts 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:1-8. (c) As to his worship. "Keep My courts." Cp. Heb. 10:19-22; Psalm 100:4. (d) His comfort and hope. The Branch—Christ; v. 8; Isa. 4:2; Jer. 2:5. Cp. 1 Tim. 1:1; Heb. 6:18-20; 1 Thess. 4:14-18; 1 John 3:2, 3.

II. Malachi 3-4.

1. Purification; 3:1-6. Note the illust. used. V. 3. In the East the refiner of silver watches the crucible and removes the dross until he can see his reflection in the molten metal. Then he knows it is fit for use. Cp. 1 Peter 1:7; Job 23:10; John 15:1; 2 Cor. 7:1.
2. Exhortation; vs. 7-15. Cp. 2 Cor. 8:9; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2. Give all He asks and take all He promises.
3. Revelation; vs. 16, 17. Comfort for the remnant. Note v. 16. (1) A good condition, "feared Lord." (2) A good occupation, 'spake often one to another." Cp. Heb. 10:25. (3) A good result; v. 17.
4. Consummation; 4:1-3. (1) Christ will come as the "Morning Star" to translate and glorify the church; Rev. 22:16; 1 Thess. 4:13-18, etc. (2) As the "Sun of Righteousness," He comes to reign on earth; Psalm 2:6-8; Isa. 2:1-4, etc.

NEW TESTAMENT

213.

CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Luke 24:44-48; John 5:31-37

Golden Text: John 5:39

The Old Testament is devoted to the prophetic revelation of One Person—Christ; and the exposition of one theme—Redemption. Heb. 10:7; Luke 24:27; John 5:39.

The Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in many ways in the O. T., but chiefly by prophecy and type.

I. Prophesied. There are 333 distinct prophecies concerning Christ in the O. T., many of which have been fulfilled and others yet to be fulfilled.

1. As a Man. Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4. Note it is "the seed of the woman, not the man," i. e., the virgin birth.
2. Of Shem. Gen. 9:26. He was to be of the Shemetic or Semetic race.
3. The Nation. Abraham. Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18.
4. The Tribe—Judah. Gen. 49:10; cp. Rev. 5:5; Heb. 7:14.
5. The family—David. 2 Sam. 7:11; Jer. 23:5, 6, Isa. 11:1, 2; Matt. 1:6; 22:42-46.
6. The Town. Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:4-6.
7. The Person. Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 9:6.
8. The Day. Luke 2:11. Cp. Dan. 9:24-27. This coincides to the exact day when Christ made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. See Sir Robert Anderson's, "The Coming Prince."
9. Manner of birth. Isa. 7:14; 1 Tim. 3:16. He was to be virgin-born.
10. Manner of Life. Isa. 53:1-3.
11. Manner of Work. Isa. 42:1, 2; 6, 7; 61:1.
12. Rejection. Isa. 49:5-7; Isa. 53:5, 6.
13. Manner of death. Dan. 9:25; Isa. 53:8; Psalm 22:7.
14. Purpose of death. Psalm 22:22-27; Dan. 9: 24; Isa. 53:6.
15. Resurrection. Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27.
16. Ascension. Psalm 68:18; Eph. 4:8.
17. Coming Again. Zach. 14:4, etc. We can now appreciate the feelings of the disciples as Christ "expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

II. Typified. These types are pictures or illustrations given in the Old Testament of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ They can be divided into the three-fold classification of persons, incidents and things.

1. Persons. Such as (1) Adam, Romans 5:14-19; 1 Cor. 15:22. (2) Moses, Deut. 18:15, 18. (3) Aaron, Heb. 9:7-12. (4) Joshua, Heb. 4:8, 9. (5) David and Solomon, 2 Sam. 7:12-16. (6) Jonah, Matt. 12:40. (7) Melchisedec, Heb. 5: 10, etc.
2. Incidents. There are very many of these (1) The Passover, Exod. 12; cp. 2 Cor. 5:7. (2) The Brazen Serpent, Num. 21; cp. John 3:15. (3) The Manna, Exod. 16; cp. John 6:33-35. (4) Smitten Rock, Exod. 17; cp. 1 Cor. 10:4, 6.
3. Things. (1) The Offerings of Leviticus. Cp. Heb. 10:1-14. (2) The Tabernacle and its furniture; Exod. 25. Cp. Heb. 9:1-14.

214. THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

READ Luke 1: 5-14, 18-22, 57-66.

THEME: The sin of unbelief. TELL THE STORY.

CHARACTER OF ZACHARIAS.—

HE WAS RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD (v. 6). The righteous person in the Old Testament was so called because he was reckoned righteous by God (even though Christ had not yet died); his sin was forgiven (Psalm 32: 1), because he offered the required sacrifices in faith. These sacrifices were a picture of Christ's atoning death on Calvary. In the New Testament, the righteous person is one who is reckoned so by God because he has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, he has received Him as His Saviour (Rom. 10: 10; John 1: 12).

HE WAS BLAMELESS (v. 6), This does not mean that he was *faultless* (Eccles. 7: 20) for, "if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1: 8). One day those who belong to Christ are to be presented *faultless* before the presence of His glory (Jude 24). Paul prayed that the Thessalonians might be "preserved *blameless*" (1 Thess. 5: 23), and to the Philippians he wrote, "That ye may be *blameless* and harmless, the sons of God" (Phil. 2: 15). A certain child, because of her love for her mother, wished to do something to help her and, although she was much too young to sew well, she attempted to patch a garment for her. The stitches were too large, the patch was the wrong colour, the grey not matching the blue, and the whole thing looked a bungle. But the mother did not see the faults in it, she saw only the love which prompted the child to do it. The work was certainly not *faultless* but the child was *blameless*.

HE WALKED IN THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD (v. 6). Paul constantly used the word "walk" for various aspects of the Christian life. "*Walk* worthy of the vocation" (Eph. 4: 1); "*Walk* in love" (Eph. 5: 2). "Enoch walked with God" (Gen. 5: 24). Walking suggests progress and continuance.

THE ANGEL'S APPEARANCE TO ZACHARIAS.—

HE APPEARED TO HIM IN THE TEMPLE, the place of sacrifice and prayer. Incense represents prayer (Rev. 8: 3; Psalm 141: 2), perhaps the prayers of Christ which make our prayers acceptable to God and bring down blessing to His people (Heb. 7: 25).

ZACHARIAS WAS AFRAID (v. 12). Sometimes the Lord comes to us "in another form" (Mark 16: 12), for He comes in the garb of pain, of sorrow or trial and we are afraid, not knowing that He is bringing us some blessing. Then it is that He reassures us, as the angel did Zacharias, and with the words, "Fear not."

THE UNBELIEF OF ZACHARIAS.—

HE PRAYED BUT HE DID NOT LOOK FOR THE ANSWER (v. 13). Perhaps he had grown discouraged and weary of waiting and then gave up. How often we, too, pray for certain things and do not expect an answer; then we grow tired of waiting and give up. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18: 1). Let us pray expectantly and in faith.

GABRIEL SAID, "THY PRAYER IS HEARD" (v. 13). God hears prayer but answers in His own time and way. Sometimes the answer is "Yes," sometimes "No," and sometimes "Wait." But there are conditions to answered prayer. We must ask, "according to His will" (1 John 5: 14), we must not tolerate sin (Psalm 66: 18), and we must ask in faith (Mark 11: 22-24).

BUT ZACHARIAS DOUBTED AND ASKED FOR A SIGN (v. 18) when God's word should have been sufficient for Him. If you have a text of Scripture which meets your need, take it, believe it and act upon it. It is for *you.* The Lord Jesus rebuked Peter for his lack of faith (Matt. 14: 31). To Thomas He said, "Be not faithless but believing" (John 20: 27).

CONSEQUENCES OF UNBELIEF.—

UNBELIEF ROBBED ZACHARIAS OF JOY, CLOSED HIS LIPS AND HINDERED HIS TESTIMONY (v. 22). It was his wife Elizabeth who was able to testify to the blessing of faith and to talk of answered prayer, because *she* had not doubted God (v. 45). We cannot testify to others of God's faithfulness to us, of His promises and of answered prayer, if we have doubts in our hearts. Unbelief seals our lips.

UNBELIEF KEEPS US OUT OF THE PLACE OF VICTORY AND BLESSING, as it did the Children of Israel out of Canaan (Heb. 3: 19). If we think our circumstances are too hard or our temperament too difficult to enable God to give us the victory over them, then we limit God's power (Psalm 78: 41; Matt. 13: 58).

UNBELIEF BROUGHT CHASTISEMENT (v. 20). Zacharias was a priest. He had known God for a long time. He must have had many answers to prayer and experienced many deliverances. God therefore expected more from him than from one who had only just learned to know Him. As we go on with Him He expects us to have a greater faith. God chastens *in love* that we may learn the lessons He is seeking to teach us (Rev. 3: 19).

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 1: 45—"Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Luke 1:5-23, 56-80

Golden Text: Luke 1:77-78

I. His Godly Parentage. Vs. 5, 6. Stress the great value of a godly Christian home and the responsibility of Christian parents. Eph. 6:1-4; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15.

1. A good position, "Righteous before God." Cp. Romans 3:10, 21-26.
2. A good condition, "Blameless." Cp. Phil. 2:15.
3. A good attitude. Prayerful. V. 13. Cp. Phil. 4: 6, 7.

II The Angelic Message. Vs. 8-23.

1. The ministry of Angels. (1) Messengers; Gen. 19, etc. (2) Ministers; Heb. 1:14. (3) Protectors; Psalm 91:11. This subject is little known, taught and understood, and we are the losers thereby.
2. Prayer heard. Vs. 12, 13. Psalm 65:2; Prov. 15:29; Isa. 65:24.
3. A son promised. Vs. 13, 14. John was to be a Nazarite from his babyhood. Cp. Judges 13: 14 and Jer. 1:5.
4. His mission. Vs. 15-17. (1) The power for it; v. 15. The Holy Spirit. Cp. Zach. 4:6; Acts 1:8. (2) The purpose of it. Vs. 16, 17. To be the herald of the coming Saviour. Conviction. Cp. Matt. 3:1-8. (3) The result of it, "To make ready a people."—Conversion. Note some things "prepared." (a) Hearts; 1 Sam. 7:3. (b) People; Luke 1:17. (c) Supper; Matt. 22:4. (d) Blessings; 1 Cor. 2:9. (e) Service; 2 Tim. 2:21. (f) Supply; Psalm 23:5. (g) Home; John 14:2.
5. Unbelief and its consequence. V. 18:23.

III. The Divine Fulfillment. Vs. 57-80.

1. Zacharias' prophecy. Vs. 67-79.
   (1) Its power. V. 67. Cp. Acts 4:7, 8, etc. Acts 13:9-11; Eph. 5:18-20.
   (2) Its content. 68-79. (a) Worship to God for His faithfulness to His Own word. Vs. 68-75. (b) Ministry of John foreshadowed. Vs. 76-79. The Messenger. V. 76. The Message. Vs. 77, 78. Remission of sins and assurance of Salvation. (c) Ministry of Christ foretold. Vs. 78, 79. (aa) His Title. V. 78. "Dayspring." Num. 24:17; Mal. 4:2. (bb) His Origin. V. 78. "From on high." Cp. John 1:1-4; Heb. 1:1-4. (cc) His work. V. 79. 1. Light. Cp. John 8:12; 12:35, 36, 46. Light on man's sinfulness, God's love, Christ's Person, God's way of salvation, and the believer's blessedness. "Let there be light!" 2. Guidance. He guides powerfully (Exod. 15:13); skilfully (Psalm 78:72); continually (Isa. 58:11). John 10:3, 4, 27. 3. Peace. This peace has been made. Made. Col. 1:21. Proffered. Eph. 2:17. Possessed. Romans 5:1.
   (3) Its source—"Tender mercy." Cp. Titus 2:11; Eph. 2:4; Exodus 34:6, 7; Jer. 29:11.
2. John's growth. V. 80. Cp. The growth of the believer. See 2 Peter 3:18; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Thess. 4:9, 10; Acts 9:22; 2 Cor. 9:8-10; 1 Cor. 15:58.

MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matthew 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-18; John 1:19-29

Golden Text: John 1:29

I. His Preparation.

1. He was filled with the Spirit. Luke 1:15; Eph. 5:18; John 3:3-5; Romans 8:9. Apart from this filling there can be no effective service for God.
2. He steadily grew spiritually. Luke 1:80. 2 Peter 3:18.
3. He was separated from the world. Luke 1:80; I John 2:15-17; 2 Tim. 2:21.
4. He practiced self-denial. Matt. 3:4; Luke 14: 26, 27.

II. His Commission. Luke 3:1, 2.

Note how God first calls attention to the great and mighty, and then passes over them and chooses the lowly John as His messenger and ambassador. Cp. 1 Cor. 1:19-21, 26-29.

1. Its Source—God. One with God is always a majority.
2. Its Content—The word of God. 1 Peter 1:23-25.
3. Its effect—Obedience to God's word. V. 3.

III. His Character.

1. His Faith. Matt. 3:11. In the coming One. John 1:29.
2. Humility. Matt. 3:14; John 3:30. Cp. Luke 18:14.
3. Obedience. Luke 3:3. Cp. 1 Sam. 15:22; Luke 6:46.
4. Consecration. John 1:23. He was but a "voice" through whom God spake. 1 Cor. 3:5; Isa. 6:8; Romans 12:1, 2.
5. Devotion. John 1:36. His vision filled by Christ. Phil. 3:10.
6. Faithfulness. Mark 6:18 Cp. 2 Cor. 4:2; Luke 16:10.
7. Fearlessness. Matt. 3:7. He called sin by its right name and denounced the sinner to his face. See Isa. 58:1. Note (1) The testimony of Herod; Mark 6:20. (2) The testimony of Christ; Luke 7:28.

IV. His Message.

1. Repentance toward God. Luke 3:3-15. Cp. Acts 20:21. By repentance is meant a change of mind produced in the sinner that causes him to change his attitude towards God, sin, Christ, himself and salvation. (1) The authority for it—The word of God; vs. 3-6. Cp. 1 Thess. 2:13. (2) The reason for it—depravity of Israel; vs. 7-9. a. Their description, "Vipers." Cp. Romans 3:9-19. b. Their condition—Nationally proud; v. 8. But the axe, laid at the root, lays bare every subterfuge and exposes their true condition. Cp. Isa. 28:17. c. Their danger, "fire;" v. 9. Job 36:18, 2 Thess. 1:8, 9. d. Their questions; vs. 10-14. Cp. Acts 16:30, 31.
2. Faith toward Christ. John 1:29-36. Cp. Acts 20:21. (1) As Sin Bearer; John 1:29. Isa. 53: 5, 6; 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24. (2) As Example; John 1:35-37. 1 Peter 2:21, Heb. 12:1-3. (3) As Saviour; John 3:27-36.

215. THE LIFE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

READ Mark 1: 2-8; John 1: 6, 23, 27, 29; John 3: 27.

THEME: A man of God.

TELL THE STORY.

JOHN'S CHARACTER.—

HE WAS THE CHILD OF GODLY PARENTS (Luke 1: 6). What a privilege this was! If you are blessed with godly parents, thank God for them and do all you can to show your appreciation and gratitude. Do not accept them as a matter of course. It must have cost John much to leave his home and parents to live in the desert, and it must have cost them a great deal to part with their only son, but they had known all along that God had chosen him for a special work, and we cannot imagine their trying to hold him back.

HE WAS A MAN SENT FROM GOD (John 1: 6). Let us see to it that in any work we may take up for God, we are sent by Him to do it, that it is the work *He* has chosen for us, otherwise our work in God's sight will be a failure. Let God choose your profession, trade or career, for this will be your future life-work.

HE WAS A BURNING AND A SHINING LIGHT (John 5: 35). In order to shine the candle must burn, and in doing so is consumed. If we are to be a blessing to others we must be prepared to *give* ourselves, our time and our talents. We may not be able to throw a great light as John did, but we can shine just where we are. (Phil. 2: 15).

HE WAS SELF-CONTROLLED IN ALL THINGS, keeping under his body (1 Cor. 9: 25-27). He did not get soft thinking too much of earthly comforts; he wore simple clothing and ate simple food (Mark 1: 6). "If we are to strive for the mastery then we, too, must learn to keep such things as dress, food, pleasure, sport, etc., in their proper place.

JOHN'S HUMILITY.—

HE RECOGNIZED THAT HE WAS ONLY A VOICE (John 1: 23) drawing attention to the message and not to himself. Popularity was nothing to him.

HE THOUGHT HIMSELF UNWORTHY TO UNLOOSE CHRIST'S SHOE LATCHET (John 1: 27). The Rabbis said, "Every office which a servant will do for his master, a scholar should perform for his teacher except loosing his sandal thong." Yet this exceptionally menial office, John declares he was not worthy of performing for Christ.

HE OWNED THAT WHAT GIFTS HE HAD WERE ONLY GIVEN HIM BY GOD (John 3: 27). His part was to receive and use what God gave. This forbade alike pride and despondency. Paul taught the same lesson in 1 Cor. 4: 7. If we, too, realise this, it will save us from pride on the one hand if God has given us special gifts, and despondency on the other if we are only one talent people. Let us remember then that physical, mental and spiritual gifts are entrusted to us to use for God.

HE REFUSED TO BE ENVIOUS when men left him to follow Jesus (John 3: 26). John had been the popular preacher, the crowds hung on his words, then they left him; but John was able to say, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3: 30). Paul said, "That in all things He (Christ) might have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1: 18).

JOHN'S MESSAGE.—

HE PREACHED REPENTANCE (Mark 1: 15). Repentance is a preparation to receive Christ Who alone forgives sin (Mark 1: 3, 4) (For notes on repentance see Book 1, Lesson 13). There can be no saving faith without repentance, but repentance alone cannot save. John preached not only repentance, but faith. "*Repent* ye and *believe* the Gospel" (Mark 1: 15).

HE POINTED MEN TO THE SAVIOUR, THE LAMB OF GOD (John 1: 29). Many of those who listened to John's preaching were trusting in forms and ceremonies, and to them he said, "Behold the Lamb of God" (Mark 1: 15).

JESUS CHRIST.—

HE IS THE GREAT SIN-BEARER (Isaiah 53: 6; 1 Peter 2: 24); the One Who alone can take away sin.

HE IS A VERY GREAT SAVIOUR, because He is the Lamb of *God*, the Lamb of *God's* providing, God's own Son.

HE IS A COMPLETE SAVIOUR. He *takes away* sin. The Old Testament sacrifices *covered* sin till Christ came, when He took it away. He *blots out* our sins (Acts 3: 19). Many oriental merchants kept their accounts on small tablets of wax. On these tablets they indented marks which recorded the debts and, when these debts were paid they took the blunt end of the stylus and just flattened down the wax and the account entirely disappeared. He that repents and believes is, through the precious blood of Christ so entirely forgiven that there is no record left.

HE IS AN ALMIGHTY SAVIOUR, "the sin of *the world.*" If all men came to Him, all would be saved. None is too great a sinner.

He is a perpetual Saviour He "Taketh." He takes away daily the sin of the believer when it is confessed (1 John 1: 9).

MEMORY VERSE.—John 5: 35—"He was a burning and a shining light."

216. BIRTH OF THE LORD JESUS

READ Matthew 1: 18, 20-25; Luke 2, 7.

THEME: Good Tidings. TELL THE STORY from the above verses.

When Adam fell and became a sinner, God promised a Saviour (Gen. 3: 15). This promise was fulfilled when The Lord Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (Phil. 2: 7, 8).

HE LEFT HIS HOME IN GLORY.—We cannot imagine what it meant to Him, the One Who was in the bosom of the Father and was daily His delight, the One before Whom the angels veiled their faces, to leave His Father and His heavenly Home.

HE MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION or "emptied Himself." He did not empty Himself of His divine nature, but only of the outward manifestation of the Godhead, so that He looked just like a man. In His earthly appearance there was nothing to show to the ordinary onlooker that He was God, though He displayed His power.

HE WAS MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN, and so He knows all about us, our temptations, and the trials which beset us.

HE BECAME POOR FOR OUR SAKES (2 Cor. 8: 9). At His birth He was laid in a manger; all through His earthly life He wore peasant's clothing; He worked as a carpenter; fishermen were His first disciples. Sometimes He had not where to lay His head and, at the last, He was buried in a borrowed tomb. It was for our sakes He became poor, and it was all of grace. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

Many years ago the Prince of Wales heard of a big mining accident. Women were left widows, children were left fatherless, and there was great poverty. The Prince of Wales disguised himself and went as an ordinary citizen to see for himself if all he had heard were true. He went from home to home, he talked with the people, he slept in one of the houses and made himself one of them, helping them and sympathising with them. The newspapers were full of the incident and men thought how wonderful he was to do such a thing. But that was as nothing compared with what our Lord Jesus did. The Prince of Wales left his palace, but the Lord Jesus left His home and His Father in heaven. The Prince of Wales left his home for a few days to live with the people; the Lord Jesus lived for 33 years the life you and I live.

HIS NAME, JESUS, MEANS SAVIOUR and was given Him by His Father (Matt. 1: 21). Salvation has three aspects:—

HE CAME TO SAVE US FROM THE GUILT AND PENALTY (PUNISHMENT) OF SIN.—If we have received Him as our own Saviour then we *have* been saved because His death on the cross avails for us. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned" (John 3. 18). "He that . . . believeth . . . hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5: 24).

HE CAME TO SAVE US FROM THE POWER OF SIN (Habit, dominion of sin). "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. 6: 14). "He shall save *His people* from their sins" (Matt. 1: 21). Full salvation is not only being saved from the punishment of past sin, but from the power of *present sin*. If we trust Him to do it, He is able to keep us from falling (Jude 24).

HE CAME TO SAVE US FROM THE PRESENCE AND POSSIBILITY OF SIN.—This is future, for we still have the old nature within us. One day we are to be like the Lord Jesus — perfect (1 John 3: 2). Let us think about this great salvation and say "What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus, my Jesus."

HIS NAME, "EMMANUEL," MEANS GOD WITH US (Matt. 1: 23).

GOD WITH US.—He was truly man but He was also God. His birth was not His beginning. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God" (John 1: 1). This refers to Jesus Christ. "The glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17: 5). "I said, I am the Son of God" (John 10: 36). Jesus Christ Who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, was truly the Son of God, for He rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now sits at the right hand of God. Let us never forget that though He was truly man He was also the Son of God.

GOD WITH US.—This word "With" here means not merely "in company with" but "together with," "sharing with." He has shared our nature and therefore everything connected with it, except sin. He is *with us* in all life's journey. He was born a baby as we were, He was under the control of His parents as we are, He was tempted, hungry, thirsty and tired. There is no experience into which we have to enter where he has not been, and He is *with us* always. "Lo, I am with you alway" (Matt. 28: 20).

THERE WAS NO ROOM IN THE INN FOR THE SON OF GOD (Luke 2: 7). This is true also today, for there is no room for Him in the hearts of many men and women, boys and girls. Their hearts and lives are too crowded with other things and so He is left standing outside. Is this true of you? Or have you let the Saviour in?

"Have you any room for Jesus,
He Who bore your load of sin?
As He knocks and asks admission,
Sinner, will you let Him in?"
"Room for pleasure room for business,
But for Christ the crucified,
Not a place that He can enter,
In the heart for which He died."

Make room for Him now as your Saviour and Friend.

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 1: 21—"Thou shalt call His Name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins."

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Luke 1:26-35, 46-55 Matthew 1:18-25 Luke 2:1-17

Golden Text: Matthew 1:21

I. Predicted. All the prophecies of the O. T. were like so many sign posts that pointed to the Coming One Who should fulfill them all in Himself.

1. His Humanity. Gen. 3:15.
2. His Deity. Isa. 9:6, 7; Luke 2:35.
3. His Eternity. Micah 5:2; Prov. 8:23-30. From the infinite heights of eternal glory He came to the simplicity of a human body. He Who was rich became poor. 2 Cor. 8:9. John 1:1; 8:58, etc.

II. Announced. Luke 1:26-35.

1. The Salutation. Vs. 26-30. Gabriel. Cp. Luke 1:19. See also Dan. 8:16; 9:21.
2. The Annunciation. Vs. 31-35. (1) His Position. Vs. 32, 33. "He shall be great." Cp. Great (1) Savior, Titus 2:13. (2) Ransom, Job 36:18. (3) Mercy. 1 Chron. 21:13. (4) Salvation, Heb. 2:3. (5) Faithfulness, Lam. 2:23. (6) Goodness, Psalm 31:19. (7) Glory, Psalm 21:5. (2) His Person. V. 35. "The Son of God." Christ is the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father Who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself.
3. The Exaltation; vs. 46-55. John 3:16; 1:8; Romans 5:8. Some facts about Mary. (1) She was highly favored; Luke 1:28. (2) She knew she needed a Savior; Luke 1:47. (3) She needed a sin offering; Luke 2:22-24. (4) She needed to be taken care of; John 19:26. (5) She needed a home; John 19:27. (6) She needed prayer; Acts 1:14. (7) She needed and received the Holy Spirit; Acts 1:4; 2:1-4. (8) She left behind one striking injunction; John 2:5. There is no thought in the N. T. of exalting Mary to the place of worship. This is a pure invention of man.

III. The Purpose.

1. To unfold God's love. 1 John 3:16.
2. To save from sins. Matt. 1:21; Luke 19:10; Mark 10:45.
3. To destroy the works of the Devil. 1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14; Luke 11:21, 22.

IV. The Manner.

1. The taxation. Luke 2:1-4. Cp. Romans 13:1.
2. The crowded inn. Luke 2:7. No room for Him. Cp. Rev. 3:20; Phil. 2:21.
3. The lowly birth. Luke 2:7, 12. Cp. Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 2:9, 14.
4. The heavenly announcement. Luke 2:8-14. Cp. Matt. 11:25.
   (1) The fearing shepherds. Vs. 8, 9. Cp. Isa. 6:1-5, etc. (2) The angelic message. Vs. 8-14. (a) A message of comfort. "Fear not." (b) A message of joy. "Good tidings," lit., "gospel." (c) A message of salvation. "A Savior." (3) The heavenly chorus. Vs. 13, 14.
5. The obedient audience; vs. 15-17. (1) What they said; v. 15. (2) What they saw; v. 16. (3) What they did; v. 17.

217. THE WONDERFUL NAME

Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:21-52

Golden Text: Isaiah 9:6

I. The Name. Matt. 1:21; Luke 2:21.

What's in a name? Read Prov. 22:1; Eccles. 7:1; Prov. 10:7. The key that unlocks the wonders of His Name is "wonderful." In His Name there is wonderful

1. Dignity given to His Name by God. Matt. 1:21. Cp. Phil. 2:10, 11.
2. Power manifested in His Name. Acts 4:12; Matt. 28:18; Luke 5:24, etc.
3. Salvation through His Name. Matt. 1:21. (1) The need of it. Romans 3:10-19; Mark 7:21; Isa. 1:4, etc. (2) The fact of it. 1 Peter 2:24; John 3:15-18; Romans 5:7, 8, etc. (3) The offer of it. Acts 4:12; 10:43; 13:38; 16:31, etc. (4) The possession of it. 1 John 2:12; 5:13, etc.
4. Life obtained through faith in His Name. John 20:31; 5:24; 6:47; 3:16; 4:14; Col. 3:3, 4.
5. Glory associated with His Name. He had glory (1) At beginning of His life. Luke 2:9. (2) At Commencement of His ministry. Matt. 3:16, 17. (3) At middle of His ministry. Matt. 17:2-5. (4) At close. John 12:28. (5) At ascension. Acts 1:9, 11. (6) At second coming. Matt. 26:64. (7) For all eternity. Rev. 5:9; Phil. 2:10, 11.
6. Promises wrapped up in His Name. John 14:13; 16:23, 24; Phil. 4:6-8, 19.
7. Victory guaranteed through His Name. Luke 10:17; 1 Cor. 15:59; Rev. 5:5-14; S. of S. 1:3. Is His Name precious to you?

II. The Presentation. Luke 2:22-24.

1. The place—Jerusalem. The place where God had put His Name. Deut. 12:5; 1 Kings 14:21
2. The poverty—as seen in the offering. Cp. Lev. 12:8; Phil. 2:7; 2 Cor. 8:9; Matt. 8:20.

III. The Prophecy. Vs. 26-38.

1. Simeon's. Vs. 26-35. (1) Its Source. Vs. 25-27. The Holy Spirit. (2) Its content. Christ's Person and work. Vs. 28-32. What had Simeon in his arms? God's salvation. Have you this as your present possession? See Isa. 12:2. (3) Its Effect. V. 33. Note. Simeon puts the Gentiles first and Israel second—Evident proof of the Spirit's inspiration for no Jew would naturally do this.
2. Anna's; vs. 36-38. Note the godly remnant who "looked for redemption."

IV. The Progress; vs. 39-52.

1. His natural and physical growth; v. 40. Cp V. 52.
2. His spiritual growth; v. 52.
3. His sojourn in Jerusalem. Vs. 41-51. (1) The occasion. V. 42. (2) The missed Son. Vs. 44, 45. (3) The astonished doctors. V. 46. (4) The Divine testimony. V. 49. His first recorded utterance. See His last "Finished!" John 19:30. Cp. John 4:34; 5:17; 9:4; 17:4. See "The Father's business." (a) To reveal Him; John 1:14. (b) To do His will; Luke 22:42. (c) To proclaim His words; John 17:8. (d) To glorify His Name; John 12:28. (e) To unfold His love; John 16:27 (f) To accomplish His work; John 9:4. (g) To bring all His own to His house: John 14:2.

218. THE SHEPHERDS

READ Luke 2: 8-20.
THEME: Witnessing for Jesus.
TELL THE STORY.

GOOD TIDINGS (v. 10).

OF GREAT JOY.—But many young people seem to think they are miserable tidings; that if they accept the Lord Jesus as Saviour it will mean giving up this, that and the other; that it will be merely a doing without. But if He asks us to give up anything for His sake, He gives back far more in return. The Christian should be the happiest of all people, for he has received these good tidings *of great joy.* The Bible has much to say about joy and rejoicing. "With *joy* shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Is. 12: 3). It is Christ's own joy and it is lasting, it remains (John 15: 11) for no one can take it from us (John 16: 22). "Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable" (1 Pet. 1: 8).

THEY WERE TOLD FIRST TO THE SHEPHERDS.—"Behold I bring *you* good tidings." They were poor, obscure, unlearned and unknown; humble men toiling in the fields. It was while they were at their daily work that the glorious vision and the wonderful news came to them, and so for all time the daily round and the common task has become glorified.

THEY WERE FOR ALL PEOPLE, not for any particular class or race. Thousands and thousands of people in China, India, Africa, the islands of the sea and many other countries have never yet heard of the Saviour. What are you doing to see that they hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A SAVIOUR

HE CAME TO BE A SAVIOUR to save us from sin. (See Lesson 8, paragraphs under black head *His name, Jesus, means Saviour.*) God had come to earth before but not as a Saviour. He came to Sodom as an Avenger; He came to Sinai in an earthquake, lightning and fire to keep sinful Israel at a distance, but, laying aside His glory and majesty, He now comes in gentleness as a babe in Bethlehem — He comes now as Saviour.

HE CAME TO BE CHRIST, the anointed One. He was chosen, ordained and anointed of God; for in saving sinners He was doing the Father's will. Priests in the Old Testament were anointed, all His people are anointed but He is *The* Anointed (Is. 61: 1). He was anointed as Prophet, to preach the Gospel with power: as Priest, to offer a sacrifice, and as King to rule and reign. Is He Prophet, Priest and King to you?

HE CAME TO BE LORD.—His three titles, Lord Jesus Christ, are frequently linked together in the New Testament, as in Luke 2: 11 and in Acts 16: 31 "Believe on the *Lord* Jesus Christ and thou shalt

be saved." He died not only that He might save us from sin and punishment but "Christ . . . died . . . that He might be *Lord* (Master)" (Rom. 14: 9). His lordship involves entire submission to Him and unquestioning obedience, obeying Him in everything, recognising that all we have belongs to Him for we are "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6: 20). Our life, our time, talents, money, powers are His; even our recreation is to be enjoyed and used for His glory. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10: 31). Let us remember each day that He is not only our Saviour but our Lord. If we say we have received Him as Saviour but we are not acknowledging Him as Lord then it might be well for us to examine ourselves and see if we really do belong to Him (2 Cor. 13: 5). If we truly know Him we will, by God's power, keep His commandments (1 John 2: 3). Is he *your* Saviour and Lord?

THE SHEPHERDS.—

THEY HEARD ABOUT THE SAVIOUR.—"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10: 17). We could not have found the Saviour if we had not first heard about Him, if someone had not first told us. "How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10; 14, 15). Let us then encourage others to hear about Him and to read of Him in His Word.

THEY DID NOT DELAY, "they came with haste" (v. 16). "Do not put off receiving the Saviour till you are older — Come *now*" (Isaiah 1: 18). "*Now* is the accepted time . . . *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2). Come to Him now while your heart is soft and tender, and while you have life before you in which to serve Him. The shepherds searched for Him and they found Him, and so will all those who search for Him with all their heart (Jer. 29: 13).

WHEN THEY FOUND HIM THEY TOLD OTHERS (v. 17). This is also our privilege and responsibility. You will never grow in grace or make progress in the Christian life, nor will you have joy yourself until you have witnessed to others about your newly-found Saviour. You may find it difficult at first but it will become easier as you persevere. God's Word is clear on this point, we are to believe in our heart and confess with our mouth (Rom. 10: 9). This does not necessarily mean that you must speak in an open-air meeting or take part in some public meeting, but you can witness to one of your school companions or fellow-employees by telling him that you belong to Christ and what He means to you. Then you will be like the shepherds.

THEY RETURNED WITH JOY, PRAISING GOD (v. 20).—Here again we are reminded that finding the Saviour brings joy to our hearts and praise to our lips. They were praising God for the gift of the Saviour. We too should be praising God for such a wonderful Saviour.

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 2: 10, 11—"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

219. THE WISE MEN

READ Matthew 2: 1-12.

THEME: Giving treasures to God. TELL THE STORY.

SEARCHING FOR THE KING.—

GOD GUIDED THEM FIRST BY A STAR.—These men were religious, as many heathen are today, but they did not know the true God, nor did they know His Word, and so God guided them first by a star. We read about this class in Esther 1: 13 and in Daniel 2: 12. God often uses circumstances, sickness, death and other things to lead people to think about Him in the first place. It is most interesting to find out from people in heathen lands what kind of "star" God first used to make them dissatisfied with their own heathen worship.

THEN GOD GUIDED THEM BY HIS WORD.—They could not find Him without this, for it pointed them to the place where He was (ch. 2: 4-6). So it is with us today. His Word, called the Holy Scriptures, is "able to make thee wise unto salvation " (2 Tim. 3: 15). Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, but we find Him through His Word, revealed to us by His Holy Spirit. It is possible, however, to know the Word of God and about the Lord Jesus without really finding Him, just as the scribes and Pharisees knew the Word and pointed the wise men to the place where they would find Him, but they did not know Him themselves.

FINDING THE KING.—

When the wise men heard the Word they went quickly and found the King. They had journeyed a very long distance in their eagerness to find Him. They were very earnest in their search. We do not have to journey far to find the Lord Jesus (Rom. 10: 6-8), but we must be in earnest about it, and really desire with all our hearts to find Him and He will be found of us. John 1: 12 and John 14: 6 show us the way.

RESULTS OF FINDING THE KING.—

THEY REJOICED WITH EXCEEDING GREAT JOY (v. 10). Finding Jesus for our Saviour and King always brings great joy. The Christian boy or girl should be the happiest person in the world. This joy is not dependent upon anything we have of this world, but because we have *Him*. Nothing can rob us of this joy except sin.

THEY WORSHIPPED HIM (v. 11).—In worship we think of what God is in Himself, of His love, His mercy, His righteousness, His justice and His holiness. Worship differs from thanksgiving. We thank Him for what He *does* for us and for His gifts; we worship Him for what He *is*. Only when we find Him for our Saviour can we truly worship Him, God longs for our worship. "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father *seeketh* such to worship Him (John 4: 23). "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (1 Chron. 16: 29). Worship is even more important than service, necessary though the latter is.

THEY PRESENTED UNTO HIM GIFTS (v. 11). We may not possess precious things like gold, frankincense and myrrh to present to our Saviour, but there are other things we can present to Him, things He really wants from us.

WE MAY GIVE HIM OURSELVES AND OUR LOVE and this is what He wants most of all from us. "They . . . first gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Cor. 8:5). God does not want gifts from those who have not first given *themselves* to Him.

WE MAY GIVE HIM OUR SERVICE (Mark 13: 34). Love always expresses itself in service. It is a joy to think that we can do all to the glory of God. The little duties at home, our lessons, and everything connected with our daily life will be a real joy to Christ if done out of love to Him. Then there is always some special work we can do for Him — something to help others at home, doing something for the sick, bringing a little brightness into the lives of the lonely and the sad, or helping in missionary work. Where there is a real desire to do something for Christ, love will always find a way.

WE MAY GIVE HIM OUR MONEY (2 Cor. 9: 6, 7). You may have very little of this (and if you have nothing, God does not expect it of you), but out of your pocket money — even though you get only a little — give God His portion and He will bless you. Take out God's share first before you spend it all on yourself. In the Solomon Islands, where they have no money, many of them give part of their food, sometimes going without a whole meal in order to be able to give to God. Many of them when they dig their yams put aside God's portion — a tenth — for Him. Perhaps there are some little jobs you could do, and for which you might earn a little money, in order to be able to give something to God. Here, too, love will find a way.

THE RECEPTION OF THE KING.— He was received:—

WITH JOY BY THE WISE MEN (see *They rejoiced with exceeding great joy*).

WITH INDIFFERENCE BY THE PRIESTS AND SCRIBES. Many today are treating Jesus in just the same way. They do not oppose Him; they are merely indifferent, and do not think about His claim upon their lives. They do not say openly, as the men in the parable. "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19: 14), but by their neglect of Him they are saying it in their hearts. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1: 11).

WITH DREAD BY HIS OWN PEOPLE.—Some people think of God only with dread, as someone to be feared and not received and loved. But how can we help but love Him when we think of all He has done for us, laying down His life for us, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3: 18).

WITH HATRED BY HEROD AND OTHERS.—There are some today who even hate the Son of God. Our Lord had sadly to say, "Now hath they both seen and hated both Me and My Father. . . . They hated Me without a cause" (John 15: 24, 25). They had every reason for loving Him instead of hating Him.

In which class are you? Are you ignoring Him — treating Him with indifference? Do you dread Him? Will you not now receive Him joyfully, as the wise men did?

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 10: 8—"Freely ye have received, freely give."

THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

Matthew 2:1-23

Golden Text: Proverbs 8:17

I. The Persevering Seekers. Matt. 2:1.

1. Their description, "Wise men." Cp. Prov. 2:1-5; Jer. 29:13; Deut. 32:29; Prov. 9:12. Are you a wise person?
2. Their guide, "Star." Cp. Num. 24:17. The One Who created all things and Who "made the stars also" (Gen. 1:16), saw to it that a star marked His birthplace.
3. Their earnestness. "From East." They came from "afar off." Eph. 2:13; Isa. 59:1, 2. Cp. Jer. 29:13; Isa. 55:6; Prov. 2:3-5.

II. The Perplexed Inquirers. Matt. 2:2.

1. Their question: "Where is He?" Here is the first question in the New Testament. Cp. The first question asked by God in the O. T. Gen. 3:9, "Where art thou?" is dependent on "Where is He?" "Is Christ in you?" Col. 1:27; Rev. 3:20; Eph. 3:17. Only as Christ dwells within as Savior and Lord can there be real peace and prosperity.
2. Its result, "troubled." They who should have been overjoyed were troubled. Why? Because of unbelief, sin and formalism. Isa. 57:20, 21. The thought of Christ troubles the unsaved because of their rejection of Him.

III. The Prophesied Birthplace. Vs. 3-6. Cp. Micah 5:2.

1. The place—Bethlehem. "The place of bread." Cp. John 6:33-35.
2. The Person.
   (1) His Humanity. "Ruler in Israel." As David's Son this was His right. He was the rightful Heir to Israel's throne. (2) His Deity. "Everlasting." Cp. Rev. 22:13; Heb. 1:8; Zech. 13:7. "My Fellow."

IV. The Perfidious King. Vs. 7, 8, 13, 16-18.

1. His false reverence. Vs. 7, 8. Cp. Isa. 29:13; Luke 6:46; Matt. 7:21.
2. His foul intention. V. 13. Cp. John 3:19, 20; Psalm 2:1, 2.
3. His fearful deed. s. 16-18. Herod was but one of a line of black hearted and black living sinners. See Matt. 14:1-10; Luke 23:7-11; Acts 12:1-3.

V. The Person Discovered. Vs. 9-12.

1. Their guide. Cp. the star to God's word which leads to God's Son. Psalm 119:105, 130; John 5:39; Luke 24:27, 44; Heb. 10:7.
2. Result. (1) Joy. V. 10. Jer. 15:16. (2) Worship. Cp. John 4:23, 24.

VI. The Precious Gifts. Vs. 11, 12.

1. Opened treasures. When Christ is seen, the treasures will be opened and laid at His feet. Have we presented Him with our heart's trust, devotion and service? Cp. Romans 6:13; 12:1 2 Cor. 8:5; Heb. 13:15.
2. Their departure. V. 12. Cp. Job 33:14-17.

VII. The Pilgrimage to Egypt. Vs. 14, 15. Cp. The pilgrimage from Egypt; Exod. 13:17-22. What a contrast! The One Who had led them out of Egypt by the cloud and fire now goes into Egypt as a little Babe!

220. THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS

READ Luke 2: 40-52.

THEME: Jesus the Boy — our Example. TELL THE STORY.

This is the only incident recorded of our Lord's boyhood, and it appears only in this Gospel.

THE CHILD JESUS — HIS HUMANITY.—

HIS PHYSICAL GROWTH. He grew in stature (vv. 40, 52). Growth is a sign of health. He was the perfect Child. Although He was the Son of God, He was also truly man (Phil 2: 7); He was made flesh (John 1: 14). We cannot imagine His doing anything that would have undermined His physical strength or defiled His body. Let us remember that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost and that we are not our own (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20). But let us not spend all our time in the development of our physical strength for we are made up of body, soul and spirit. The Lord Jesus was perfect in all three.

HIS MENTAL GROWTH. He increased in wisdom (v. 52). How? He first sought "the wisdom that is from above" (James 3: 17). "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111: 10). Be careful with what you fill your mind, of the things to which you listen, and the books you read. Grow in true wisdom.

HIS SPIRITUAL GROWTH. "He increased . . . in favour with God" (v. 52), and "the grace of God was upon Him" (v. 40). Even as a child He was well pleasing to His Heavenly Father, and was gracious in all His ways. His spiritual growth kept pace with His physical. We, too, are commanded to grow in grace (2 Peter 3: 18), but there can only be growth where there is life, and this life is in Christ Jesus.

HE INCREASED IN FAVOUR WITH MAN (v. 52), no doubt because of His thoughtfulness for others, His graciousness and His unselfish service and helpfulness. He Who later girded Himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet, must often have been found as a child unselfishly and cheerfully helping others. God's Word says, "Even a child is known by his doings" (Prov. 20: 11). Are we known to be followers of the Lord Jesus?

THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.—

HE LOVED THE HOUSE OF GOD from a child, and when he grew to be a man He was often to be found there (Mark 14: 49). He attended the synagogue regularly (Luke 4: 16). He loved the place where His Father was worshipped, where His praises were sung and His Word was taught.

HE LOVED GOD'S WORD. The Lord Jesus never forgot the verses He had memorised as a child, and was able to use them against Satan when he came to tempt Him. (Matt. 4). Form the habit of reading God's Word daily and memorising at least one verse.

HE WAS WILLING TO BE INSTRUCTED (v. 46). He spent His time in the temple listening to the teachers and, as He was eager to learn more, asking them questions. They, in their turn, were amazed at His understanding and answers. He was not doing, as some have said, instructing the doctors. On the contrary, He was respectfully learning from them and asking them questions. 1 Peter 5: 5 says, "Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder."

THE CHILD JESUS IN HIS HOME.—

David said, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart" (Psalm 101: 2). The home is, perhaps, the hardest place in which to walk with a perfect heart, and where people know us as we really are. We have no disguises there and frequently we leave our manners outside the door as we enter. We are, first of all, to "shew piety *at home*" (1 Tim. 5: 4).

HE OBEYED HIS PARENTS (v. 51), and He carried this out right through life. Even on the Cross He was deeply concerned for His mother, and commended her to the care of John, the beloved disciple (John 19: 26, 27). God's Word has much to say about obedience to parents. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is *right*" (Eph. 6: 1). Is a thing right? Then do it. In what measure are we to obey? "In all things" without reserve (Col. 3: 20). Not only their expressed commands but their wishes should be obeyed. Not only are we to obey our parents but to *honour* them . . . "that it may be well with thee" (Eph. 6: 2, 3).

HE WAS CONTENT TO SERVE GOD IN OBSCURITY. For thirty years He lived in a humble home at Nazareth, working as a carpenter (Mark 6: 3), thus glorifying for all time "the daily round and the common task." God may have a great work for you in the future and the best preparation is to learn to serve Him faithfully in the smaller sphere. Some may never get beyond service in the home, but we can be well-pleasing to God in this, as the Lord Jesus was.

THE CHILD JESUS CONSCIOUS OF HIS VOCATION (v. 49).—

"I MUST BE IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE" (v. 49, R.V.). These are the first recorded words of the Lord Jesus. In later years the words, "I must" were often upon His lips. Do we feel the Divine "must" in our lives as we should?

HE WAS CONSCIOUS OF HIS DIVINITY. Even as a Child He knew that He was the Son of God. He was human but He was also divine, "The Man Christ Jesus." Mary said, "thy father" (meaning Joseph) but His reply was, "My Father," meaning God (vv. 48, 49).

MEMORY VERSE.—Ephesians 6: 1, 2—"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother."

221. THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Matthew 3:11-17; John 1:19-34

Golden Text: Matthew 3:17

I. The Baptist's Annunciation.

1. His personal testimony as to his own (1) Person. John 1:19-23. What he was not and what he was. (2) Work. John 1:23; Matt. 3:10, 11.
2. His prophecy as to Christ's (1) Person. (a) The eternity of His being. John 1:15. Cp. Col. 1:17; Matt. 3:11. (b) His essential Deity. John 1:34. (2) Work. Matt. 3:11, 12; John 1:29. (a) As Lamb of God. John 1:29. (b) As Dispenser of Holy Spirit. Matt. 3:11. (c) As Judge of whole earth. Matt. 3:11. Note carefully five baptisms of Scripture. First, John's baptism. Matt. 3:11. "Unto repentance." Cp. Acts 19:1-4. By it the people acknowledged their need of salvation because of their sins. Cp. Luke 7:29, 30. Second, Christ's baptism of death. Luke 12:50; Matt. 20:22. The waves and billows of God's wrath rolled over Him. Cp. Psalms 88:7, 16; 22:15; 42:7, etc. Third, Baptism with the Spirit, the portion of every believer the moment he trusts in Christ. 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:13; 4:30. Fourth, Baptism with water for believers only by immersion. Mark 16:15, 16; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:41; 8:35-39; 16:30-34; 18:8; Romans 6:4; Col. 2:12. Fifth, Baptism with fire for the Christ rejector. Matt. 3:11, 12. Cp. Rev. 20:10-15. This is future. What a fearful baptism this shall be for every unbeliever!
3. His confession. Matt. 3:13, 14.

II. The Savior's Proclamation Matt. 3:15.

To fulfill all righteousness. He came to "magnify the law and make it honorable;" (Isa. 42:21) and to fulfill all its holy demands. Matt. 5:17, 18. He had no need of repentance, yet submitted to this rite and thus identified Himself with the believing remnant of Israel.

III. The Heavenly Attestation Matt. 3:16, 17.

1. The opened heaven. V. 16. Note the other occasions when heaven was opened. (1) Judgment. Gen. 7:1. (2) Provision. Psalm 78:23-25. (3) Communion. Ezek. 1:1. (4) Blessing. Mal. 3:10.
2. The descending Spirit. V. 16. Note and cp. Isa. 11:1-3; Luke 1:35; Mark 1:11; Luke 10:21; John 6:63; Heb. 9:14; 1 Peter 3:18.
3. The Divine testimony. V. 17. Here is a demonstration of the trinity of the Godhead; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Though the word, "trinity" does not occur in Scripture, the truth of it is found very many times. Note the trinity in (1) Creation; Gen. 1:1, 2, 26; John 1:1, 3. (2) Manifestation; Matt. 3:16, 17. (3) Revelation. (a) God; Isa. 46:9, 10. (b) The Son; John 14:29. (c) The Spirit; John 16:13. (4) Redemption; Heb. 9:14. (5) In cooperation of purpose; Heb. 9:9-15. Romans 15:16. (6) In relation between God and believer; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:8, 18. (7) In cooperation in the heart of the believer; Eph. 3:19, 17, 16.

222. THE TEMPTATION

READ Matthew 4: 1-11.

THEME: How to resist temptation.

TELL THE STORY.

In some respects our Lord's temptations were unique, yet there are aspects of these temptations which are similar to ours, and there are lessons to be drawn from our Lord's overcoming of these temptations which help us to overcome ours.

WHAT IS TEMPTATION.— It is not sin. The Lord Jesus was tempted, and He was sinless. Some people become very troubled when temptation comes to them, and they think that they have already sinned. This however is not so, it becomes sin when we yield to it.

AT WHAT TIME DID TEMPTATION COME TO THE LORD JESUS?—It was after the Holy Spirit had come upon Him in power at His baptism. If you belong to Christ and are determined to live for Him, then be prepared for an attack from Satan. He is not so much concerned about those who have not accepted Christ as their Saviour, or about those who are half-hearted in His service, for they cannot affect His kingdom in any way or interfere with his plans. But those who are out and out for Christ and are being faithful to Him, these are the people whom Satan will try to put out of action. Then do not be discouraged if Satan tempts you.

THE THREE TEMPTATIONS.—

THE FIRST, MAKE BREAD OF STONES.—This was a temptation to use His divine power to help Himself. This would have been to repudiate His manhood and so undo the Incarnation. It was a temptation to act independently of His Father, but He came to do His *Father's* will, not His own (John 6: 38). We also should resist all Satan's temptations to live for ourselves, to please ourselves, and to act contrary to God's will for us. If we try to do anything in our own strength we shall surely fall, because we are dependent upon God for everything.

THE SECOND WAS TO TRY TO GET THE LORD JESUS TO TAKE HIS OWN LIFE, AND THAT BEFORE THE TIME.—He tried to get Him to run into danger and then to claim God's promise to protect Him. Satan even used Scripture to back up his words. If temptation comes to us while we are in the path of duty then God will keep us, but if we run into temptation by deliberately going to places which we know God has forbidden, then we cannot look to Him to keep us. Choosing evil companions whom we know will lead us to

cheat, to steal, to tell lies and disobey is "tempting God" and we cannot then look to Him to keep us.

THE THIRD TEMPTATION WAS TO TRY TO GET THE LORD JESUS TO WORSHIP HIM, to take a short cut to the Kingdom by avoiding the Cross. As Christians we cannot escape the Cross. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16: 24). Sometimes we worship "SELF" instead of God, we give Self the first place, but Jesus said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *Him only* shalt thou serve" (v. 10).

THE PURPOSE OF TEMPTATION.—

THERE IS A BLESSING FOR THE ONE WHO ENDURES TEMPTATION (James 1: 12). There is a special crown for him by and by. A Solomon Islander once prayed, "Lord, lock up Satan so that he will never tempt me again." But this was a wrong prayer. God does not promise to keep temptation from us, but He does promise a blessing to those who *endure* temptation, those who do not go under.

TEMPTATION WILL MAKE YOU A STRONGER SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST, for it affords you an opportunity of winning a victory, and, "Each victory will help you some other to win." After the Lord Jesus was tempted, "He returned in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4: 14). The strong, reliable soldier is the one who has fought in former battles, and *won the victory*.

TEMPTATION WILL ENABLE YOU TO HELP OTHERS, for you can tell them when they are tempted that you have been through the same temptation and by God's grace and power, you have gained the victory.

HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION.—

TRUST THE POWER OF THE LORD JESUS TO DELIVER YOU. You are no match for Satan and, if you rely on your own strength for victory, you will surely suffer defeat. Christ was tempted in all points and He is able to deliver us (Heb. 2: 18). A little girl once said that when Satan came knocking at the door she sent the Lord Jesus to answer it.

PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD, the *shield* of faith, that is, trusting Christ to give you victory, and the *sword* of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6: 13, 16, 17) and *stand*. In the list of armour given in Ephesians 6 there is nothing for the back. This shows we are to resist Satan and stand, not run away (James 4: 7).

USE THE WORD OF GOD AS CHRIST DID and this is one of the many good reasons why we should learn to memorise the Word of God. It will then be in our minds and hearts, and we shall be able to use it against Satan.

MEMORY VERSE.—Hebrews 2: 18—"For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

THE TEMPTATION

Luke 4:1-13

Golden Text: Hebrews 4:15

I. The Tempter. The Devil—Satan.

1. His Personality—Not an influence or principle, but a real person possessing all the qualities of personality; i. e., knowledge, feeling and will. See John 8:44, and note the personal pronouns given to him by Christ.
2. His History: (1) Created; Ezek. 28:15. Lucifer owed his existence to God for he was a created being. (2) Position; Ezek. 28:14. Denoting intimacy with God Himself. (3) Fall; Ezek. 28:15-17; Isa. 14:12-14; 1 Tim. 3:6. (4) Present sphere—heavenlies; Eph. 6:12; Job 1:6. (5) Future doom—lake of fire; Rev. 20:10.
3. His Character: (1) Liar; John 8:44. (2) Deceiver; Rev. 12:9; 20:8, 10; 1 Tim. 2:14. (3) Murderer; John 8:44; Luke 12:4; 1 Peter 5:8. (4) Accuser; Rev. 12:10; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6. (5) Usurper; 2 Thess. 2:3, 4; 2 Cor. 4:4.
4. His Power. (1) He has great knowledge and a vast experience of 6,000 years of dealing with human nature. The wisest of natural men are no match for him. (2) Blinds; 2 Cor. 4:4. (3) Binds; Luke 13:16. (4) Enslaves; Luke 11:20-22; 2 Tim. 2:26.
5. His Limitations—He is neither omnipotent, or all powerful; omniscient, or all knowing; omnipresent, or all present; nor immutable or unchanging. These are the attributes of Deity alone. It is good to know this.

II. The Tempted

1. The Person: The Lord Jesus Christ—the Son of God. (1) In Him was no sin; 1 John 3:5. (2) He knew no sin; 2 Cor. 5:21. (3) He did no sin; 1 Peter 2:22. (4) He was without sin; Heb. 4:15.
2. The Circumstances: (1) Preparation, "Filled with the Spirit. (2) Isolation—he was alone. (3) Desolation—in a wilderness. (4) Privation—fasted forty days. The three last especially suitable to the Devil. Cp. The temptation of the first man in the Garden of Eden, under the most ideal of conditions, in a garden surrounded by that which pleased the eye and satisfied every right appetite.

III. The Temptation. V. 3:12.

1 Its Purpose: (1) Reveals Satan as irremediably evil. (2) Exposes his method of attack. (3) Proves beyond any shadow of doubt the absolute sinlessness of Christ. (4) Enables the Lord Jesus to sympathize with and succour those who are tempted. Hebrews 4:15 and 2:18.

2. Its Nature. Satan's appeal, as also in the first temptation; Gen. 8. (1) Lust of the flesh; vs. 3, 4. Cp. John 2:14-17. (2) Lust of the eyes; vs. 5-8; Gen. 3:6. (3) Pride of life; vs. 9-12; Gen. 3:6

IV The Triumph. Vs. 3-13.

1. The Means: The word of God, "It is written." Cp. 1 John 2:14; Eph. 6:10-18. The seven pieces of armour the believer must put on.
2. The Result. V. 13. Cp. John 14:30. A glorious victory for "the last Adam." What a contrast between Adam the first and Adam the last!

223. CALL OF THE DISCIPLES

READ Matthew 4: 18-22.

THEME: Called for service.

TELL THE STORY.

These men found the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, one year before, by the River Jordan (John 1: 35-37, 40-45). Now, by the Sea of Galilee, He called them for His service. We are saved to serve.

THE TIME OF THEIR CALL.—Jesus called them while they were doing their daily work. We do not think He would have chosen lazy men, and there is a verse which says, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16: 10). The Lord Jesus will only call us to work for Him if we are faithful in everyday duties, faithful in our school lessons and home work, and faithful in the little duties given us by mother in the home. God sometimes calls young people to prepare themselves for His service, to be ready to go out and do some special work for Him when they are older. One of the best ways of preparing oneself for this is by doing faithfully the small duties which lie to our hand.

THE DISCIPLES' RESPONSE when the Lord called them for service.

THEY MADE NO EXCUSES.—So often, when the Lord asks us to do some little service for Him, we make some excuse. Perhaps we say we feel unequal to it, or we are not fitted for it; let someone else do it. But if He asks us to do it, then He knows we *can* do it, and if He calls us He can fit us. Perhaps we say we are too busy. But there is always time for the things we are keen to do, and if we are keen on doing things for the Lord Jesus then we will make time for it.

THEY FOLLOWED HIM WHOLEHEARTEDLY.—They left their father and their nets, they left *all*. While we are quite young, God does not call us to leave our homes but He does call us to follow Him wholeheartedly, to put first things first, to put GOD first.

THEY FOLLOWED HIM IMMEDIATELY.—When God calls us to do something for Him, let us do it *immediately*. It does not become easier by putting it off; in fact, it becomes so hard that we never do it at all.

THE CALL TO BE FISHERS OF MEN.—Fishing is like winning souls for Christ.

ONLY CHRIST CAN MAKE US WINNERS OF SOULS.—He said. "*I* will make you fishers of men." Here are some ways in which you may help others to find Jesus: Give your own testimony, tell out that you belong to Him. Try to get others to come to meetings, to church or to Sunday School, where they will hear the Gospel. Try and get them to join the Scripture Union and read God's Word every day. "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Ps. 119: 130).

THE LORD HAS PROMISED TO MAKE US FISHERS OF MEN IF we follow Him. He never breaks His promises. Let us believe Him and trust Him to do it for us.

WE MUST USE BAIT.—You must have something to attract fish if you wish to catch them, and we must seek to attract others to Jesus. Let us think of some bait we can use:—

SOME BAIT.—

A CONSISTANT CHRISTIAN LIFE.—This is the most important of all, for what we *are* speaks more loudly than what we say. Many have come to the Lord Jesus because of the beautiful, consistent Christian life of someone whom they were watching. Our *lives* must speak for Jesus, and thus we can attract others to Him.

KIND WORDS.—Let us speak kindly always, and go out of our way to speak kindly to those whom we would seek to win for Jesus. We need to be tactful and courteous and approach them in the right way.

KIND DEEDS.—If the word you speak for Jesus is preceded by a kind action it will carry much more weight, and soften their hearts so that they are more ready to listen to what you have to say. Look for opportunities of showing little kindnesses; go out of your way to find them and you will learn that this paves the way for your message.

BEING A HAPPY CHRISTIAN YOURSELF.—This will show them that Jesus truly satisfies those who belong to Him and who seek to serve Him. A gloomy, discontented Christian will only turn others away from Him. Some people have an idea that to be a Christian you must have a long face and be generally miserable. Show them this is quite wrong, that the very opposite is the case.

THE COST OF BEING A DISCIPLE.—Following the Lord Jesus for service is not always easy, in fact it is never easy. He said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt. 16: 24). "The entrance fee is nothing, but the life subscription will cost you all that you have." If we love Him, however, we will not mind if the way is hard because we have the assurance that we are pleasing Him, and one day we shall hear Him say to us, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25: 21). A ticket collector was taking tickets at the exit to the railway station. Most of the people had season tickets and the collector knew many of them. They did not wish to go to the trouble of showing them each time, particularly when the weather was cold and wet. One day someone told him he was most unpopular. Pointing to the room above where the station master was sitting, he said, "My business is to please the one up there." This, too, is our business as followers of the Lord Jesus, to please the One up above.

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 4: 19—"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

THE CALLING OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

John 1:29-51

Golden Tert: John 1:12

I. The Faithful Herald. Vs. 19-29.

1. He had a message from the Lord; v. 23. Cp. Amos 3:8; Jer. 20:9.
2. He preached it; Matt. 3:7-12; Acts 20:20-24; 1 Cor. 2:1-4.
3. He exalted Christ as he presented his message; vs. 27, 29, 30. Cp. Isa. 52:13; Psalm 34: 1-3; Phil. 1:21. Here are the three essentials of true Christian service that glorifies God and brings blessing to the bearer.

II. The Saviour. Vs. 32-36.

1. Revealed; v. 29. Here is the answer to Isaac's question asked 1900 years before "Where is **the** Lamb? Cp. Gen. 22:7, 8; Exod. 12:1-13; 13:13; 1 Peter 1:18, 19.
2. Baptized; vs. 32, 33. Cp. Matt. 3:13-15.
3. Attested by the Father and the Spirit; v. 32. Cp. John 16:14; 15:26; 14:26; 1 Peter 1:11, 12.
4. Attested by John; v. 36. "As He walked." What a perfect walk was His! Cp. 1 I'eter 2:20-24. His walk reveals (1) A sinless conduct; v. 22. (2) A guileless mouth; v. 22b. (3) A surrendered will; v. 23. (4) A vicarious passion; v. 24. Cp. Phil. 2:5.
5. Inviting; v. 39. Compare "Come and rest" (Matt. 11:28); "Come and drink" (John 7:37); "Come and eat" (John 6:35); "Come and learn" (Matt. 11:29); "Come and live" (John 5:40). Note the effect of their acceptance of His invitation , "Came, saw and abode with Him."
6. Found; v. 45. The home of the soul—Christ; Psalm 18:1, 2. Cp. Found by Him; Luke 15:5. Found in Him; Phil. 3:9. Found of Him; 2 Peter 3:14.

III. The Disciples. Vs. 37-51. The business of a disciple:

1. To look; vs. 29, 36. Cp. Isa. 45:22; John 3:14-18. This is the first step in discipleship, for no one is a disciple until he has learned and accepted the great truth of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ.
2. To follow; v. 37. Cp. John 10:27; 1 Peter 2:20-23; Phil. 3:12-14; Heb. 12:1-4.
3. To hear; v. 40. Cp. John 5:24. Romans 10:17. Illust. Mary at the feet of Christ; Luke 10: 39.
4. To search for others; v. 41. Cp. 2 Cor. 5:20; Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:18-20. Andrew was a bringer. He brought to Christ (1) Peter; John 1:41. (2) A lad; John 6:8. (3) Certain Greeks; John 12:22. Are we like Andrew?
5. To enquire; v. 38. Cp. Acts 9:6; Matt. 7:7; Psalm 27:4; Ezek. 36:37.
6. To invite; v. 46. Cp. Luke 14:23; John 4:29; Rev. 22:17.

7 To live with Him; v. 39. John 14:23. (Ill. Luke 10:38-42); Rev. 3:20. Cp. 1 Chron. 4:23. Two words should describe the disciple: union and communion.

224. THE LORD JESUS AT A WEDDING

READ John 2: 1-11.

THEME: Brimful obedience. TELL THE STORY.

THE INVITATION.—

THE LORD JESUS WAS INVITED TO THE MARRIAGE FEAST (v. 2) and, by reason of His presence, it was a very joyful occasion. His presence added to the happiness. Let us share with Him our joys and pleasures as well as our troubles and sorrows. If we wish our festive gatherings to be marked by deep and abiding joy then we must secure Christ's presence. Let us see to it, however, that it is a gathering of which He would approve and to which we can invite Him.

THE NEED.—

HIS HELP WAS NEEDED AND SOUGHT (v. 3). When they had no wine how glad Mary was that He was present. She was accustomed to turning to Him for help. Furthermore, she was a woman of faith (Luke 1: 45). When we are in trouble or need the best thing to do is to go straight to Him for His help.

MARY TOLD HIM OF THE NEED IN A FEW WORDS (v. 3). We are not heard for our much speaking. We can cry to God just where we are at the time of our need. There are examples in the Bible of very short prayers — "Lord, save me"; "Lord, help me"; "Lord, help Thou mine unbelief." Let us call upon Him (Psalm 50: 15), and make known our requests (Phil. 4: 6, 7).

THE ADVICE.—

"WHATSOEVER HE SAITH UNTO YOU DO IT" (v. 5). This was Mary's advice to the servants, and what fruitful and victorious lives we should live if we made this our motto.

WHATSOEVER means, anything at all. Someone who was asked the secret of her victorious life replied, "I have never refused God anything." Paul was a "whatsoever" Christian. Are you? Or do you only obey the commands of Christ which please you?

HE SAITH, He, Jesus Christ. Get your orders from Him direct. Two captains cannot be in charge of a ship at one time, nor two kings reign over one country. Yet some try to obey two masters, self and Christ. Or perhaps they go to one and another asking, "Is it right to do this or that?" But listen to the voice of the Lord Jesus and, "Whatsoever *He* saith unto you, do it."

HE SAITH. "How does He speak today?" you ask. "How may I know His voice?" If you really are one of His sheep you will know and you will follow (John 10: 4). He speaks by His Word, by His Holy Spirit, by circumstances and by giving peace in our heart when we pray, if that particular thing is His will for us. When all these agree we can be sure of His will for us.

UNTO YOU. It is a *personal* command. God maps out the path of each one of us, and His command to you may not be the same as that to someone else.

DO IT, not merely talk about it or think about it, but *do it.* Abner said, "Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you; *now then do it*" (2 Sam. 3: 17, 18). If you put off obeying any command of Christ it is almost certain you will not obey it at all.

THE COMMAND.—

"FILL THE WATERPOTS WITH WATER" (v. 7). This seemed a foolish command for it was *wine* they needed and not water, but even though they could not understand, they obeyed. A child does not always see the reason for his parents' commands, nor can he expect to do so, but if trained in habits of obedience he will obey. Sometimes the command from the Lord Jesus may seem trivial, and we may be tempted to think that it does not matter whether we obey or not, but it does very much matter. God expects absolute obedience with no questionings on our part and no explanations on His.

THEIR OBEDIENCE.—

THEY FILLED THE WATERPOTS TO THE BRIM. Give Christ cheerful, wholehearted, willing, *brimful* obedience, not because we *must* but because we love Him.

THEY USED WHAT THEY HAD. If you have no golden vessels use earthen ones. If you cannot preach or teach, tell others what Christ has done for you and what He means to you. If you cannot do a great work be faithful in the small work God has given you. The Lord will use anything that is ready and close at hand.

THEY DREW OUT IN FAITH (v. 8). Filling the waterpots is not enough, for it is still water. The power of Christ is needed to change it into wine, for without Him we can do nothing (John 15: 5). Let us realise this in our service for Christ.

THE RESULT.—

THE BEST WINE COMES LAST (v. 10). The first wine — picture of earthly joy — fails, runs short, ceases to satisfy; but in the Christian life the best wine comes last. It is always better on before. "Thy love is better than wine" (Song of Solomon 1: 2).

MEMORY VERSE.—John 2: 5—"Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

THE FIRST MIRACLE

John 2:1-12

Golden Text: Isaiah 61:10

I. The Invited Savior. Vs. 1, 2. Have you invited Him unto your

1. Heart? Rev. 3:20; John 14:23; Eph. 3:17. There is a throne and a cross in every heart. Either self is on the throne and Christ on the cross; or self is on the cross and Christ on the throne.
2. Home? Luke 24:28-30; 19:9. See some of the instances in which Christ entered homes and what took place as a result of His indwelling.
3. Social life? John 2:1, 2; John 12:2. When He is the honored Guest and given His rightful place of preeminence, social life will be as God intends it should.
4. Business life? Mark 2:14, 15; Matt. 6:33; 1 Sam. 2:20. Is Christ the Senior Partner in all our business enterprises? If not, we may as well file our papers for Spiritual bankruptcy.
5. School life? Prov. 3:6; James 1:5.

II. The Disappointed Guests; v. 3. No wine. For meaning of wine see Psalm 104:15.

1. The world's pleasures do not last. Cp. Isa. 55:1, 2. Its pride, treasure, popularity, power and pleasure soon vanishes and leaves an aching void that nothing of earth can fill. This world's pleasures first thrill and then chill. Cp. Solomon; Eccles. 1:2; 2:11.
2. The Source of true and lasting joy was present—Christ; Matt. 18:20; Psalm 16:11. Joy is found only in God; Romans 5:11; 15:13; Phil. 3:1; 4:4.

III. The Good Advice. V. 5. Mary's sermon. Here is a good text for Roman Catholics: "Whatsoever He sayeth unto you, do it." What does He say about:

1. Man's state? Mark 7:21.
2. Man's need? John 3:3; Luke 13:3.
3. God's love? John 3:16.
4. His substitutionary sacrifice? John 3:14; Mark 10:45; John 10:11, 17, 18.
5. The way of salvation? John 10:9; 14:6.
6. The assurance of salvation? John 5:24; 10:27-30.
7. The sinner's doom? John 8:24; Mark 9:43-48.

IV. The Miracle. Vs. 6-9. Christ is still the great miracle worker, for He has "all power in heaven and earth." Matt. 28:18. He turns

1. Sorrow into joy. Cp. Mark 1:40-45; Luke 8:26-39; John 16:19, 20.
2. Darkness into light. Cp. John 8:12; John 9:25; 2 Cor. 4:3-6. Acts 26:18.
3. Death into life; Eph. 2:1-10; John 5:24, 25; 11:25, 26.
4. Sinners into saints; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Titus 3:3-5, etc.

V. The Result. Vs. 10:11.

1. Testimony. V. 10. The best kept to the last. How unlike the world's pleasures which soon begin to pall! The Christian's joy is an ever increasing one. See Prov. 4:18; Eph. 2:7.
2. Faith. V. 11. His glory revealed and the resultant effect: "His disciples believed on Him."

225. CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

READ John 2: 13-22.

THEME: God's Temple. TELL THE STORY.

God dwelt in the Tabernacle in the wilderness, then in the Temple at Jerusalem. The body of the Lord Jesus was God's Temple. This was never defiled.

GOD'S TEMPLE.—

EVERY TRUE BELIEVER IN CHRIST IS GOD'S TEMPLE (1 Cor. 3: 16). The moment we are born again, the Holy Spirit comes to live in our hearts and we become His temple.

THE TEMPLE SHOULD BE CLEAN, because it is a place where God dwells, a place for praise and worship, where the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving should be offered daily (Heb. 13: 15). It should not be used for other purposes of which the Owner would not approve, as was the case of the temple of our Lord's day.

CHRIST FOUND THE TEMPLE DEGRADED AND DESECRATED (v. 14). Does He find anything in our lives of which He disapproves — things which are not fitting? Does He find us putting His temple to ignoble uses, thus defiling it and grieving Him? It is possible for us to make His house a house of merchandise, by turning spiritual things into a means of personal profit like Simon in Acts 8: 19, or by seeking to gain honour to ourselves, as Balaam did (Numbers, ch. 23 and 24). There may be filthiness and rubbish in the temple as in the days of Hezekiah who ordered the people to carry the filthiness out of the Holy Place (2 Chron. 25: 5). "Holiness becometh Thine house O Lord" (Ps. 93: 5).

THE TEMPLE CLEANSED.—

CHRIST CAST OUT EVERYTHING THAT DEFILED THE TEMPLE (vv. 15, 16). Nothing was allowed to remain. Because Christ is holy He is unsparing with sin, but tender and loving with the repentant sinner. Let Him be Master and Lord of His temple (your heart) and He will cast out all that defiles it.

CHRIST REBUKED THOSE WHO DEFILED THE TEMPLE. He cannot tolerate or condone sin. He said, "Make not My Father's house an house of merchandise" (v. 16). Notice He did not say to them "*Your* Father" or "*Our* Father" as He did to the disciples. Those people were not really God's children. God is the Father only of those who have received Christ and are born again (John 1: 12).

IN THIS CASE THE CLEANSING WAS ONLY TEMPORARY, for later the temple had to be cleansed again (Matt. 21). In the first cleansing He told them they had made His Father's house "a house of merchandise"; on the second occasion he rebuked them even more sternly and said, "Ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. 21: 13).

HOW THE TEMPLE IS TO BE KEPT CLEAN.—

BY ALLOWING THE LORD TO HAVE FULL CONTROL. Perhaps we have some reserves, some rooms into which He is not allowed to enter because we ourselves still hold the keys, but He has purchased the whole house; we are not our own; we have been bought with a price and that price was His own precious blood (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20). Our *will* must be surrendered to Him if He is to have His way with us.

BY PUTTING PORTERS AT THE GATES that nothing unclean may enter in (2 Chron. 23: 19).

THE GATE OF OUR EYES — the things we see and read. We need to pray with David, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity" (Psalm 119: 37). Let us not allow our eyes to rest on anything that would defile our *mind.*

THE GATE OF OUR EARS. "Take heed what ye *hear*" (Mark 4: 24), said the Lord Jesus. Refuse to listen to the questionable story which would defile the temple or to criticism of others which not only hurts them, but hinders ourselves.

THE GATE OF OUR MOUTH. We need to pray daily, "Set a watch O Lord before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141: 3).

SOME HAD AN INTELLECTUAL FAITH ONLY.—

They were convinced because they saw Christ's miracles (v. 23), but we know it was not a saving faith because Christ did not commit Himself to them (v. 24). He knows all men, He knows what is in man (v. 24). He knows those who are merely professors and those who have a genuine, personal faith in Him as Saviour. Theirs was a mental assent which believed in His power because they *saw* it, but this did not affect their lives. We may believe the historical fact of Christ's death, we may even believe that as God's Son He died for sinners and yet not be saved.

SAVING FAITH receives Christ as Saviour (John 1: 12); shows it is genuine by accompanying works (James 2: 20); is known by its fruits (Matt. 7: 16); commits the life to Christ (2 Tim. 1: 12).

MEMORY VERSE.—2 Chron. 23: 19—"And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none which was unclean in anything should enter in."

226. NICODEMUS — THE NEW BIRTH

READ John 3: 1-16.

THEME: "Ye MUST be born again." TELL THE STORY.

NICODEMUS knew the Word of God and taught it. He was probably an upright man, yet the Lord Jesus told him he must be born again or he could not enter the kingdom of God. There are many today like Nicodemus who, because they go regularly to church, say their prayers, and try to be as good as they can, think they are ready to enter God's presence. But this lesson teaches us otherwise.

THE NECESSITY FOR THE NEW BIRTH.—"Ye *must* . . ." our Lord said.

BECAUSE WE ARE BORN OF THE FLESH (v. 6). This means that we have merely natural life, and this life cannot enter the Kingdom of God. A fish has one kind of life which enables it to live in the sea, but it cannot live on the land. A fish would need to have another kind of life to enable it to live on the ground. We have natural life which enables us to live on this earth, but it is not suitable for heaven. To enter heaven we need another kind of life — spiritual life, the life God has and which He is willing to impart to us; therefore we need to be *born again* — born of the Spirit.

BECAUSE WE ARE BORN SINNERS (Rom. 5: 12) and sin cannot enter heaven (Rev. 21: 27). The king would not allow a dirty, ragged beggar to enter his palace; his filthy clothing would have to be taken away, he himself would have to be cleaned and given suitable clothing before he could gain an entrance into the palace. The Word of God says, "There shall in no wise enter into it (heaven) anything that defileth" (Rev. 21: 27). So we need to be born again in order to be allowed to enter heaven.

THE MYSTERY OF THE NEW BIRTH.—

IT WAS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY NICODEMUS (v. 4). The New Birth is a work of the Holy Spirit — it is *invisible*. And so when any one is born again, we cannot see what goes on in his heart; he cannot see it himself for it is mysterious.

IT IS A SECRET WORK.—"Thou can'st not tell whence it cometh." (John 3: 8). We cannot tell how the Holy Spirit brings new life to a soul. The work goes on secretly and silently, unknown to anyone except to the person himself.

BUT WE CAN SEE THE EFFECTS OF IT.—The Holy Spirit is likened to the wind. We can see the effect of the wind, though we cannot see wind itself. We can see the leaves of the tree moving, the ships sailing on the sea, the windmill going round, therefore we know that the wind is as work. Just so, when anyone is born again, we can see the effects of it in their lives. There is a change which should be noticeable to all.

THE EVIDENCES OF THE NEW BIRTH — REPENTANCE AND FAITH.—How often the question is asked "How can *I* be born again?" That was the question Nicodemus asked (v. 4, 9). Our Lord did not answer that question directly. It is only the Holy Spirit's illumination, not mental learning, that enables the soul to understand these things (v. 10). But our Lord goes on to explain how He came

down from heaven to die on the Cross to save souls from death and to give them everlasting life. Then He stresses the importance of faith or believing, as it is called, in verses 15 and 16. But there is no true faith without repentance. So what we need to consider is the importance of repentance and faith (Acts 20: 21).

REPENTANCE IS A CHANGE OF MIND WHICH LEADS TO ACTION.—Isaiah 55: 7 defines repentance, "Let the wicked *forsake* his way . . . and let him return unto the Lord . . ." Repentance alone does not save us or give us this new life. But saving faith is always preceded by true repentance.

REPENTANCE IS A CHANGE OF MIND ABOUT SIN.—Before we repented we thought that sin was of no account, that it did not matter. But when we repent we see sin as *God* sees it. Just as it is hateful to Him, it becomes hateful to us.

IT IS A CHANGE OF MIND ABOUT MYSELF.—Before I repented I thought I was all right, and that because I tried to be good I would go to heaven. But when I repent, I see myself as a lost sinner in God's sight, and I find out I need a Saviour to save me from sin.

IT IS A CHANGE OF MIND ABOUT GOD.—I now see Him as the *Holy* God to Whom sin is an abomination. I see Him as a *righteous* God Who must punish sin. But I also see Him as a *loving* God who longs that I should come to Him and receive forgiveness and eternal life. But repentance only brings us to the place where we are ready to receive Christ. The next step is faith. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31).

FAITH — BELIEVE.—This is a word difficult to be understood by many. One says, "How can I believe?" "What does it mean to believe in Jesus?" There are two meanings for the word "believe":—

THE FIRST we find in James 2: 19, "The devils also believe, and tremble." This means they give a mental assent; they know that it is true but it does not change their lives. They believed that Jesus was the Son of God, but that kind of faith would not save them. There are many people today who believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He died on the Cross, but they are not born again.

THE SECOND meaning is to *receive*, to take Jesus for your own Saviour "As many as received Him, to them gave He the power (right) to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on His Name." (John 1: 12). Let us illustrate it thus:

A ship is wrecked and is rapidly sinking. The captain orders the passengers into the lifeboat. One man looks at the boat, believes it is seaworthy and that it can save him, but he remains on the wrecked vessel. He knows the captain has provided the boat and that it is all that the captain claims it to be, but he does not believe enough in the lifeboat to trust himself to it and he is lost.

The other man *believes* the lifeboat is seaworthy but, more than that, his belief causes him to *get into the lifeboat*, and so he is saved. That is the faith which saves. Trust yourself to the Lord Jesus, believe that He can and will save you. When we really repent and believe, we may be quite sure that we are born again.

MEMORY VERSE.—John 3: 3—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

THE GREAT NECESSITY

John 3:1-21

Golden Text: John 3:3

I. The Person Who Came. Vs. 1, 2.

1. His description; v. 1. "A man of the Pharisees." (1) Religious. Cp. Romans 10:2, 3; Matt. 23:15, 3, 25, 28. (2) Moral. Cp. Matt. 5:20; Phil. 3:6. (3) Sincere. Seen in the fact that he came. Cp. Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13.
2. His confession; v. 2. Christ as a teacher come from God.

II. His Need Declared. V. 3.

1. The Lord saw his true condition. Saw through the hollowness of his profession and self-righteousness into his heart. Jer. 17:9, 10; Mark 7:21; Romans 3:23. It was not a Teacher he needed, but a Savior.
2. The Lord stated his need. "Ye must be born again." He lacked "one thing needful." Mark 10:21.

III. His Questions; vs. 4, 9.

1. How can a man be born again? V. 4.
2. How can these things be? V. 9. God always answers man's questions, but man cannot answer God's.

IV. The Answer Given. V. 5:18.

1. **Why** must a man be born again? (1) "Flesh is flesh;" v. 6. Cp. Romans 8:4-8. No process of cultivation or evolution can change "the flesh" into "the Spirit." (Ill. by animate and inanimate creation.) Cp. also Matt. 7:16, 18; Jer. 13:23. (2) Man is by nature dead in sins; Gen. 2:17; Eph. 2:1, and therefore needs life from God; John 5:24; 1:4; 10:28; 10:10; 5:40; 1 Tim. 1:10. (3) Man is by nature a sinner, and as no sin can enter heaven, he must have a new nature fitting him for it; Psalm 51:5; Rev. 21:27; 2 Peter 1:4.
2. **How** can a man be born again? (1) By the word of God, "Water;" v. 5. Cp. Jer. 2:22; Psalm 119:9; Eph. 5:26; John 15:3; 1 Peter 1:23; Romans 10:8, 9. This cleanses of wrong thoughts of (a) Self, (b) God, and (c) God's way of salvation; Prov. 14:12. (2) By the Spirit of God Who applies this word, making it "living;" Heb. 4:12; John 7:38; 6:33; 2 Cor. 3:6. (a) He produces conviction; John 16:8; Acts 2:17, 37. (b) Leads to Christ; John 16:14. (c) Seals; Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 4:30. (3) By faith in the crucified Son of God; vs. 14-18. (a) The Illustration; v. 14. Numbers 21:4-9. (aa) Sin; Numbers 21:4, 5; Romans 3:10-23. (bb) Punishment; v. 6; Romans 6:23; Ezek. 18:4. (cc) Repentance; v. 7; Acts 17:30, 31; 20:21. (dd) Salvation revealed; v. 8. (ee) Condition; v. 8. Look. Cp. John 1:29; Isa. 45:22. (ff) Deliverance; v. 9. John 5:24; 3:16, etc. (3) The application; v. 15. The only condition. "believe." See also John 3:36; 5:24; 6:35, 47; 20:31. (4) The proclamation; vs. 16, 17. (5) The condemnation; vs. 18-21.
3. **When** can a man be born again? The moment he believes on Christ. Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 6:2.

"Soon as my all I ventured
On the atoning blood,
The Holy Spirit entered
And I was born of God!"

227.

RESULTS AND MARKS OF THE NEW BIRTH

READ The passages and verses below.

THEME: Assurance of salvation.

RESULTS OF THE NEW BIRTH.—

WE GET EVERLASTING LIFE.—This means divine life, the same kind of life that God has. When we receive Christ as Saviour, we receive, at the same time, eternal life, for "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5: 12). Place a note in a book. Hand it to a child and say, "He that hath the book hath the note, for the note is *inside* the book." Therefore if we have the Son we have life, for "This life is in His Son" (1 John. 5: 11). This life makes us desire the things God desires.

But it is also true, "He that hath *not* the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5: 12).

WE BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD (John 1: 12). We are born into the family of God, and nothing can alter that relationship. We may sometimes grieve Him, and communion with Him may be broken, but never the relationship. We are at the same time brought into a blessed relationship with the rest of God's children. We are one family.

WE RECEIVE FORGIVENESS OF SINS (Acts 13: 38, 39). The moment we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, our sins are put away. As we heard in a previous lesson, when God forgives, He separates the sin from the sinner. When *we* forgive we overlook the fault, but God can never overlook sin. He can only forgive because Christ bore our punishment on the Cross of Calvary. When God forgives, He removes the sin from the sinner. God gives many beautiful similes to bring home this truth to us. "As far as the east is from the west . . . so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103: 12). "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions" (Is. 44: 22). Our sins are blotted out as though they had never been. But someone may say, "What about the sins committed after we are born again?" The answer is, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us . . ." (1 John 1: 9). Confess to God immediately. Keep short accounts with Him.

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES TO LIVE IN OUR HEARTS and makes them his temple (1 Cor. 6: 19). Then how careful we should be not to defile the temple of the Holy Ghost. Remember that He wants to occupy the whole temple, every room in it.

HE WILL TEACH US TO KNOW CHRIST.—It is the Holy Spirit's work to glorify Christ in our lives and to guide us into all truth (John 16: 13, 14).

HE WILL GIVE US POWER — power to walk in the new way, to live for Him and to witness for Him. An engine may have all its parts

complete but unless it has fuel of some kind it is powerless. We need the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives to enable us to glorify Christ.

THE MARKS OF THE NEW BIRTH.—

God does not wish us to be in doubt about our salvation. "These things have I written . . . that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5: 13). If we are fearful and doubting then we have an up-and-down Christian experience. We are to rest on God's Word not on our feelings. We are to have confidence in the right Person — the Lord Jesus Christ. The blood makes us *safe*, the Word of God makes us *sure*. God in His Word, has given us marks by which we may test ourselves, to find out if we are truly born again or not.

THE ONE WHO BELIEVES IN CHRIST IS BORN OF GOD (1 John 5: 1). This means that he believes with his *heart*, not merely believes *about* Him, but believes *on* Him — receives Him. (See illustration of the lifeboat in Lesson 13.) "For with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. 10: 10). Read John 1: 12; 3:16.

THE ONE WHO IS BORN AGAIN LOVES JESUS (John 8: 42; 1 John 5: 2). This is perhaps the simplest test of all. We cannot love the Lord Jesus if we are not born again, for love is of God. We may not love Him as we should, and our love is sometimes cold and faint, but if we love Him at all then we *know* that we are born again.

HE KEEPS HIS COMMANDMENTS (1 John 2: 3, 5; 1 John 5: 2). Those who have eternal life can keep God's commandments, for the Holy Spirit is the power within them. We cannot keep them perfectly, but we want to keep them, we desire to please God and this shows that we are born again.

HE DOES NOT SIN (1 John 3: 9). This means he does not *continue* in sin. We may sin, but we grieve over it and come to Christ for cleansing. We are not like the pig who loves to wallow in the mire, but like the cat who may get dirty, but tries to get rid of the dirt as quickly as possible. "He cannot sin": this means that the new nature cannot sin.

HE DOETH RIGHTEOUSNESS (1 John 2: 29; 2 Cor. 5: 17). His life is different from formerly; he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. He has new desires, a new walk and all things are new.

HE LOVES GOD'S PEOPLE (1 John 3: 14). We recognise at once that we are related to all God's children and we love them and want to be with them.

HE RECEIVES THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT, that he is a child of God (Rom. 8: 16). This, in many cases, does not come till after we have confessed Christ. "For with the heart man believeth . . . and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

MEMORY VERSE.—2 Corinthians 5: 17—"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

228. THE TWO NATURES

READ The passages and verses below.

THEME: Victory over the flesh.

When we are born again and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we are full of joy; everything seems different, and we know that everything has become new. Perhaps we felt that we had done with sin for ever, but we soon found that this was not so. We became conscious of a conflict within our hearts, and we wondered what was happening to us. Perhaps we began to wonder if we were really born again after all. This doubt came because we did not understand about the two natures. When we are born again, we receive a new nature, but the old nature is still there, and this is the cause of the trouble. One fights against the other, each striving for the mastery, but there is One within us, the Holy Spirit, Who is ready to take up the fight on our behalf and give us the victory. Every Christian then has two natures:—

The old sinful nature inherited from Adam, called THE FLESH.

The new nature from God, called the SPIRIT.

THE OLD SINFUL NATURE — THE FLESH.—

IT NEVER CHANGES — it is always sinful. It cannot be improved. That is why those who make good resolutions, but are not born again, cannot keep them: they cannot make themselves better. Paul said, "I know that in . . . my flesh dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7: 18). He said this *after* he became a Christian. Because of its nature a pig will always love mud.

IT IS AT ENMITY WITH GOD AND CAN NEVER PLEASE HIM (Rom. 8: 7, 8), no matter how much he may try. No matter how gifted, moral or refined the unregenerate person may be, he cannot please God, for he is in the flesh. A person may be kind and unselfish, and give money to the poor, yet this cannot please God when it is done in the flesh: it is the old nature which is doing it, and the old nature is at enmity with God and always will be.

THE OLD NATURE CANNOT UNDERSTAND GOD (Rom. 3: 11), nor the Word of God, nor the things of God (1 Cor. 2: 14). These things are foolishness to the one who has only the old nature. Some people try to understand these things before they are born again, before they get the new nature — but this is impossible.

THE OLD NATURE ALWAYS FIGHTS AGAINST THE NEW NATURE (Gal. 5: 17; Rom. 7: 19). When we receive Christ as our Saviour, we get the new nature, but the old nature remains, and will be with us till we get to heaven. The old nature always pulls towards the devil, the new nature pulls towards God. The old nature wants one thing and the Spirit the other.

There once was a wicked, cruel, hard captain of a ship. He gave the crew a bad time. While they were still at sea another captain was appointed. He was altogether different, for he was kind and just. The old captain was still on board; he could not be got rid of till they reached port, and he did all he could to make things difficult. He was

chained, but he still had access to the crew, and tried to persuade them to reinstate him and disobey the new captain. This is an illustration of the old nature (the wicked captain) and the new nature (the new captain). This conflict went on till the ship reached port. The conflict goes on in our heart till we reach heaven when we shall lose the old nature. If, then, we say the old nature is done away with, and that we are sinless, we deceive ourselves (1 John 1: 8, 10).

THE NEW NATURE.—

IT COMES FROM GOD when we receive Christ as Saviour and are born again (John 3: 6). We cannot make it ourselves. It is the life of the Lord Jesus in us.

IT ALWAYS WANTS TO PLEASE GOD (Rom. 7: 22). It cannot sin (1 John 3: 9). When we sin, it is the old nature in us that sins. When we get the new nature, we have new desires. We are no longer at enmity with God, but we long to please Him. We hate the things we loved before, and love the things we once hated. A pig loves to wallow in the mud because it is its nature. A cat may get dirty, but it hates the dirt, and tries to get rid of it as quickly as possible by licking it off. The Christian may sin, but he hates it, and comes quickly to Christ for cleansing.

HOW TO GET VICTORY OVER THE OLD NATURE.—

YIELD TO GOD (Rom. 6:13). We may, according to our choice, walk after the flesh or after the Spirit. We may yield to the old nature or to Christ. Two girls are going on a journey on a train which is just moving off. One is on the train, the other on the platform. The guard comes along and pulls one way to pull the girl *away* from the train; her friend pulls from the train to pull her *on*. She yields to the one with whom she wishes to go, throws her weight on that side and gets on to the train. The flesh pulls one way and the Spirit the other. Let us yield to Him.

OBEY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ALL THINGS.—As we obey and trust Him to do it for us, He will overcome the flesh in us (Gal. 5: 16). It is His work, not ours (Rom. 8: 2).

NEVER FEED OR LISTEN TO THE OLD NATURE. RECKON IT AS DEAD. —It is still alive, but consider that it is dead as God does (Rom. 6: 11). To return to our illustration of the captain on the ship — the crew had to ignore him and starve him, so that he was powerless to do anything. Refuse to obey the flesh.

FEED THE NEW NATURE ON THE WORD OF GOD so that you may grow (1 Pet. 2: 2). First we take the milk of the Word, the easy parts, and as we grow we are able to take the "strong meat" of the Word of God (Heb. 5: 14).

MEMORY VERSE.—Romans 6: 11—"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

229. THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

READ John 4: 1-30, 39-42.
THEME: The water of Life.
TELL THE STORY.

In our Lord's dealings with the Samaritan woman we learn that no ignorance, however dense; no character, however bad; no circumstances however evil, can shut us out from the great love of God.

THE LORD JESUS — HIS HUMANITY.—

HE WAS WEARY (v. 6). He was often weary, thus showing He was man as well as God. He must have been very weary when he fell asleep in the boat (Matt. 8: 24) and when He had not where to lay His head (Luke 9: 58).

HE WAS HUNGRY (v. 31), and the disciples knew it. He was hungry when He fasted forty days and forty nights (Matt. 4: 2). It was for our sakes He endured fatigue and want (2 Cor. 8: 9).

THE LORD JESUS — THE PERSONAL WORKER.—

THOUGH WEARY HE TOOK MUCH TIME AND TROUBLE TO WIN THIS WOMAN. He went out of His way to contact her and, in dealing with her, forgot His physical hunger (v. 34). He "must needs go through Samaria" seems to suggest that He came specially in that direction in order to bring life to the Samaritan woman.

HE WAS TACTFUL AND COURTEOUS. He made an opening by speaking kindly to one with whom the Jews had no dealings and by asking her for a drink (v. 7). Then He passed quickly from the natural to the spiritual.

HE WAS PATIENT AND SYMPATHETIC. At first she appeared so dense that it seemed rather hopeless for Him to continue the conversation. She could only think of water for her physical needs (vv. 11, 12). In spite of her density, however, the Lord continued the conversation.

HE TRIED TO AWAKEN HER INTEREST as He spoke of "the gift of God" (v. 10) which is the Lord Jesus Himself (John 3: 16); eternal life, which is *in* Christ (1 John 5: 11, 12) and the Holy Spirit Who is given to all who are born again (John 7: 39).

HE SOUGHT TO BRING CONVICTION by reminding her of her sin (v. 16). Before He could reveal Himself to her as the Saviour, she must see herself as a sinner. There is no saving faith without repentance. But she tried to turn the conversation by starting a religious argument. The Lord, however, would not be diverted from His point. He could not reveal Himself to her as the Messiah and her Saviour until she saw

herself as a sinner and was prepared to acknowledge her sin and abandon it. He then revealed Himself to her as the Messiah and her Saviour (v. 26), for she later said, "Is not this the Christ?" (v. 29).

WATER FROM JACOB'S WELL.—

THIS REPRESENTS RICHES, PLEASURES, AND ALL THIS WORLD OFFERS but they all fail to give satisfaction (Eccles. 2) only leaving us more thirsty; they are broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jer. 2: 13). God has made us for Himself and the heart can never find true satisfaction apart from Him.

WELL OF LIVING WATER.—

TYPE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT in the believer (John 7: 37-39). He alone can satisfy the soul.

IT IS FOR ALL WHO WILL ACCEPT THE GIFT (Rev. 22: 17; Isaiah 55: 1). "If *any man* thirst, let him come unto me and drink" (John 7: 37).

BUT THE GIFT MUST BE APPROPRIATED. The water flowed from the smitten rock and was for *all* the Children of Israel, but each one had to drink.

IT IS THIRST REMOVING. Christ promised that "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (v. 14). But to have this experience we need to keep on drinking, that is, drawing our life daily from Christ. But alas, all Christians do not have this experience; they are not *fully* satisfied, because they often grieve the Holy Spirit.

THE SAVED WOMAN.—

SHE LEFT HER WATERPOT (v. 28). Probably because she wanted to hasten with the good news, and the waterpot on her head would have impeded her progress. Are we so eager to pass on the good news of the Gospel that we sometimes leave our waterpot behind?

SHE TESTIFIED TO OTHERS OF CHRIST (v. 29). She could not keep this wonderful news to herself, but was anxious to share it with others — she invited them also to come to Christ. She knew that if once these people came into personal touch with Christ everything in their lives would be put right.

HER TESTIMONY HELPED HER FRIENDS (v. 30), but they each had to find Christ for themselves. They were able to say, "We have heard Him ourselves, and *know* that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world (v. 42). Can *you* say that?

MEMORY VERSE.—Rev. 22: 17—"Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

John 4:1-38

Golden Text: John 4:14

I. The Weary Saviour. Vs. 4-6. Cp. Heb. 2:14, 16-18; Heb. 4:15. His perfect humanity. Illust. Luke 8:23; Mark 11:12; John 10:22. 23, etc., etc.

II. The Wayward Woman. V. 7. Luke 19:10; Mark 9:12, 13, etc.; Romans 3:23.

III. The Wonderful Subject—"Living Water. Vs. 7-26.

1. The Opportunity; vs. 4, 7. His purpose for taking the journey: (1) The Request; v. 7. He sought to make friends by asking a favor. (2) The Response; v. 9. He disappointed prevailing prejudice—no class or caste distinctions. Here is a wonderful illustration of soul-winning.
2. The Offer; vs. 10-15. "Living Water:" (1) The gift declared; v. 10. (a) What it is—eternal life; Romans 6:23. (b) Why a gift? Because bankrupt; Luke 7:41-43. (2) The gift described, "Living Water;" vs. 13, 14, as cp. with "this water" of v. 13. Cp. John 6:35; John 7:37. (a) Its Source—The Lord Jesus; v. 14. Cp. Rev. 22:17. (b) Its Inflow—Regeneration; John 3:3, 5; John 1:12; Eph. 1:13; John :16; 5:24, etc. (c) Its Upflow—Joy in Christ; v. 14. Cp. Phil. 3:8-10. (d) Its Outflow; John 7:37, 38. In testimony and service. (3) The gift desired; v. 15. Cp. Matt. 5:6; Prov. 2:1-5, etc.
3. The difficulty; vs. 16-18. (1) The command; v. 16. (2) The reply; v. 17. (3) The revelation of her sin; v. 18. A proof of His Omniscience. Her sin must be pointed out. Her need realized before the living water can be hers. Cp. Gal. 3:22; Romans 3:23, 24; Romans 11:32.
4. The objections; vs. 19-21. (1) As to religious belief—for Samaritan religion see 2 Kings 17:24-41. (2) As to place of worship. Mount Gerizem or Jerusalem?
5. The Answer; v. 21. Note: Christ here changes: (1) The place of worship; v. 21. (2) The time of worship "now is;" v. 23. (3) The **manner** of worship—heart, not hand —in spirit. (4) Relationship in worship—"Father."
6. The Revelation; v. 26. The final stage—He reveals Himself.

IV. The Witnessing Saint. Vs. 27-30.

1. Her Attitude—"left waterpot"—She had the well! Phil. 3:8.
2. Her Subject—"Come see a man." Cp. Acts 8:35, etc.
3. Her success. V. 30. She bought a city to Christ.

V. The Wondering Disciples. Vs. 31-39.

1. Their query; v. 31
2. His reply; vs. 32, 34. Luke 2:49; 4:18; John 9:4; 19:4; 19:20.
3. His call to service. Vs. 35-38. (1) The white fields: (a) Ploughed; (b) Sown; (c) Ripe. (2) The work described—reap. (3) The reward. V. 36. (4) The Command—"Go ye." Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19.

230. THE NOBLEMAN'S SON

John 4:43-54

Golden Text: John 5:24

I. The Sick Son. Vs. 43-47.

1. The place; v. 46. Cana the scene of His first miracle. His fame was spread abroad. Note v. 44. Cp. Matt. 13:57; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24. The power of Christ is limited by unbelief. Note the attitude of the Galilaeans; they "received Him." Cp. John 1:11, 12.
2. The patient; vs. 46, 47. (1) Sick. Cp. Isa. 1:4-6; Matt. 9:12. Sin in Scripture likened to a malady; Psalm 103:3. (2) Nigh to death; v. 47. Ezek. 18:4; Romans 6:23; John 3:36. (3) Son of a nobleman. Sickness, pain, sorrow and death are the portion of all, rich or poor, prince or peasant. What a contrast between the poor woman at the well and this nobleman. Yet both needed Him to meet their need. See 1 Cor. 1:26.

II. The Father's Request. V. 47.

1. He heard of Jesus; v. 47. Romans 10:13-17. Cp. Matt. 13:14-16.
2. He came to Him; v. 47. Cp. John 5:40; 1 Tim. 2:5; Matt. 11:28.
3. He besought Him; v. 47. Not demanded: (1) His attitude, humility. Cp. Mark 1:40; Psalm 51:16, 17; Isa. 57:15; James 4:10. (2) His request definite: (a) To heal; v. 47. (b) To come down; v. 49. Cp. Psalms 9:12; 50:15; James 1:6; Psalm 145:18; Isa. 55:6; John 3:33.

III. The Saviour's Reply. V. 48. This was in the nature of a test for his faith. Are we prepared to believe God's word, and accept it at its face value without any signs and wonders accompanying this belief? This is the day when the spectacular in religion is much sought for, and fleshly excitement is craved for. The distinction between faith and sight. Cp. Matt. 12:38-42; 16:1-4; John 2:18, 19; 6:30; 1 Cor. 1:22. Signs are not for faith. Faith sees the invisible. Heb. 11:1, 6, 10, 27.

IV. The Healing Word. V. 50. Behind His word was all the power of God. Cp. Psalm 107:20, 21; Romans 10:6-17. John 5:24; Isa. 45:19; Psalm 33:9. God's word is living and life-bestowing, and life sustaining. Heb. 4:12; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23.

V. The Result. Vs. 50-54

1. The man believed; vs. 50, 53; John 3:18; Acts 13:38; 1 John 4:16; Acts 27:25; Acts 16:31. When did the father know his son was healed? When he believed. Cp. 1 John 5:9-13.
2. The son was healed; vs. 51, 52. How? By the word of the Son of God. John 5:24; Isa. 53:6. Note the father's query as to when he "began to amend," and the answer "at seventh hour fever left him!" not "began to leave him." Salvation is instantaneous. John 6:47.
3. The whole house believed; v. 53. Cp. Acts 16:24, etc.

231. THE FIRST MINISTRY OF CHRIST

Luke 4:14-32

Golden Text: Luke 4:18

I. Its Circumstances. Vs. 14-20.

1. The Enduement; v. 14. Cp. V. 1, etc. Note the large place given to the Holy Spirit in the birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Christ. As Man He lived His life on earth under the absolute control of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Place—Nazareth; v. 16. Cp. Matt. 2:23; Luke 2:51; John 1:46. His home-town.
3. The Book; vs. 16, 17. Note: "As His custom was;" v. 16. He **stood up** where He was **brought up.** (1) The Book opened. A closed Bible means a closed heaven. (2) The Place found. See His intimacy with God's Word. (3) The word read—God thus honored and the Bible given its full authority.
4. The People—attentive; v. 20.

II. Its Character. Vs. 18-20.

1. Its source; v. 18. The Spirit of the Lord . . . anointed me. Cp. Isa. 61:1. The same Spirit Who had inspired Isaiah to write; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16.
2. Its gracious character: (1) Gospel preached to poor. Cp. 1 Cor. 1:26-29; Mark 12:37; 2 Cor. 8:9; Matt. 8:20. (2) Heal broken hearted. Cp. Luke 8:47, 41, 42, 56; 7:13, 14; John 11:33, 36, etc. (3) Deliverance to captives. Cp. Luke 4:33-37; Luke 8:35, 36; 13:11-17; John 8:32-34; Gal. 5:1. (4) Sight to blind; John 8:12; 9:1-7; Luke 18:35-43; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6. (5) Liberty to bruised. Cp. Luke 5:12, 13; 10:33-36; Isa. 53: 5, 6; Heb. 2:14, 15; Romans 8:21; Heb. 10:19. (6) The acceptable year—The year of grace. Note: (a) The acceptable year; Luke 4:19. The Jubilee year. See Lev. 25:8, 9. (b) The accepted sacrifice; Eph. 5:2; Acts 2:32, 33. (c) The acceptable time; 2 Cor. 6:2. (d) The accepted sinner; Eph. 1:6. (e) The acceptable saint; Romans 12:1. (7) The closed book. Cp. Isa. 61:2. The day of vengeance not yet—this will take place at close of acceptable year or this age of grace; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9; Rev. 6:12-17, etc. This age has been called: "The dispensation of the closed book." Note: (a) The shut Book and the open door; v. 20. Cp. John 10:9. (b) The shut door and the opened Book. Luke 13.24-28. Cp. Rev. 20:11-15.

III. Its Result; Vs. 20-32.

1. They wondered; vs. 20-22. For Christ revealed Himself as the One of Whom Isaiah spoke. But it was only their curiosity that was aroused. Cp. Acts 14:11, 19; Matt. 21:8-10; 27:20-22.
2. They despised; vs. 22-27. Cp. Acts 13:40, 41; Romans 2:4; 1 Thess. 4:8.
3. They rejected; vs. 28-30. Cp. Isa. 53:1-3. Note seven-fold rejection of Christ: (1) His own world; John 1:10. (2) Nation; John 1:11. (3) Country; Mark 6:4. (4) City; Luke 4:29. (5) Kindred; John 8:5. (6) Elders; Luke 9:22. (7) Disciple; Mark 14:71. Truly He was the "despised and rejected One." Isa. 53:3.

232. PETER'S HAUL OF FISH

READ Luke 5: 1-11.

THEME: If unsuccessful, try again. TELL THE STORY.

THE PEOPLE.—

THEY HUNGERED FOR THE WORD OF GOD (v. 1). Some crowds merely came for the sake of the loaves (John 6: 26), and others for healing, but this one came to hear the Word of God. Christ said, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (John 6: 27). Are you so hungry for the Word of God that you take the opportunity of attending classes, meetings and services in order to be taught.

THE LORD JESUS.—

HE WAS INTERESTED IN PETER'S DAILY OCCUPATION. He knows we have our daily work, our lessons and studies and many other duties, and He is deeply interested in these. Peter was just as well-pleasing to God when he was working at his fishing as he was when he was listening to the Lord preaching. Do not divide your life into two compartments, the secular and the spiritual. "Whatsoever ye do, do *all* to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10: 31). The Lord Jesus Himself pleased His father just as much when he was working as a carpenter as in His public ministry.

HE USED SIMON'S BOAT (v. 3). The Lord comes to each of us and asks us to let Him have our daily occupation, the school-desk, the office, the workshop or the kitchen as His preaching place. This is the pulpit He seeks.

HE TESTED SIMON'S FAITH when He said, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets" (v. 4). This showed our Lord's compassion for the unsuccessful fisherman. He knew that Simon had toiled all night and taken nothing, yet bids him try again. This was a test of faith to Peter for it all seemed so hopeless. Christ tested the faith of the servants (John 2: 8); of the crowd at the grave of Lazarus (John 11: 39) and of the man with the withered hand when He said, "Stretch forth thine hand" (Mark 3: 5).

SIMON PETER'S RESPONSE.—

"*AT THY WORD I WILL*" (v. 5). Peter had tried before and failed, but he did not give way to discouragement; his Lord's word was enough for him. This should be the rule for all Christians for the whole of their lives. Sometimes the thing commanded may seem hopeless, as in Peter's case; or difficult, as in Moses' case when he was told to make a path through the Red Sea; or impossible as when Abraham was told to offer up his son Isaac. But in each case, God's word was sufficient, "Nevertheless *at Thy Word*, I will."

"AT THY WORD" should apply to our everyday life — to school lessons, home duties and business life. Do you feel tempted to give up everything because you have failed in an examination, or in something you had hoped to attain? Try again, let down the net once more because the Master bids you.

"AT THY WORD" SHOULD APPLY TO SPIRITUAL THINGS. Perhaps you expected victory over some besetting sin and have experienced defeat, or you longed for a closer walk with God and you seem to have failed. Perhaps you have prayed and not seen the answer, or you looked for some promise from His Word to meet your need. Let down your net again because your Lord tells you to do so. This time, *trust His power*, and not *your own skill and strength.* It is Christ's presence that brings success, and success follows obedience (v. 6); (Deut. 11: 26, 27; Isaiah 1: 19).

PETER CALLED OTHERS TO HELP IN THE WORK (v. 7). May there not be a lesson for us here not to try and keep everything in our own hands in our service for Christ? Beckon to others that they may come and help. Philip began the work in Samaria and God greatly used him (Acts 8: 5, 6), but he did not resent it when Peter and John came to take over the work and he himself was sent by God to an obscure place to win one man for Christ (Acts 8: 26, 35).

HUMILITY AND A SENSE OF HIS OWN UNWORTHINESS FOLLOWED PETER'S SUCCESS (v. 8). He took no credit to himself for the great haul of fish, knowing that *the Lord's* power, and not his own skill was responsible. Success often causes us to be lifted up with pride. God, however, will not give His glory to another (Isaiah 42: 8), and the moment pride comes in we cease to be useful to Him.

PETER AND THE OTHERS FORSOOK ALL AND FOLLOWED HIM (v. 11). They forsook their fishing which was their means of livelihood in order to give full-time service to Christ. He does not call a great many to leave their secular calling, but if He does we should be prepared to do it. He does, however, call us to follow Him, and with the call comes the promise, "Thou shalt catch men" (v. 10).

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 5: 5—"Nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net."

THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES

Luke 5:1-11

Golden Text: 1 Peter 1:7

I. The Wonderful Teacher. V. 1. "None teacheth Lord like Thee." Psalm 25:4, 9, 12; Psalm 27:11. He will teach you

1. Your need of Him; Matt. 9:12. 13, etc.
2. His provision for you; Mark 10:45, etc.
3. The way of salvation; John 3:16; 5:24; 10:9, etc., etc.
4. The secret of true success; Matt. 11:29, 30; 6:33.

II. The Blessed Possession. V. 2, 3. He entered into Simon's ship. It was all Simon had, and was gladly given to Christ. Have we allowed Christ to take possession of

1. Our lives? Romans 12:1-3. 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.
2. Our business? Luke 5:27. Is He at the helm, guiding its affairs? If He's not Lord of all then He's not Lord at all. Cp. Romans 12:1, 2.

III. The Saviour's Commission. V. 4. "Launch out into the deep." Cp. Psalm 107:22-24. It is not the "shoreline" Christians, but those who launch out that "see the works of the Lord." Let us "launch out" into

1. The deeps of His thoughts; Psalms 92:5; 139: 17, 18.
2. The deeps of His wisdom; Job 11:6-8; Romans 11:33.
3. The deeps of His love; Eph. 3:18.
4. He has plumbed the depths; Psalms 42:7; 22:1; Phil. 2:8, etc.

IV. The Disciples' Confession. V. 5. They had toiled all night without Him and confessed their fruitlessness. Note: The indispensable things to true success.

1. Without faith there is no pleasing God; Heb. 11:16.
2. Without love there is no profit in anything; 1 Cor. 13:1-3.
3. Without the Word of God there is no light; Isa. 8:20.
4. Without holiness of life no fellowship with God; Heb. 12:14.
5. Without Christ as Lord of the life no fruitfulness; John 15:5.

V. The Launching Out of Faith. V. 5.

1. The object of faith, Himself. Cp. Heb. 12:2. He is faith's Author, Alpha, etc. Matt. 17:5; 3:17; Heb. 3:1.
2. The basis of faith. "At Thy word." Cp. Romans 10:17; John 5:24; 1 John 5:13; 2 Peter 1:16-21.
3. The trial of faith. See their circumstances. (1) In spite of previous failure. (2) In spite of the time, "day." (3) In spite of place, "near shore." Cp. 1 Peter 1:7; James 1:12; Job 23:10; Mal. 3:2, 3.
4. The reward of faith. V. 6. Cp. Heb. 11:33-40; Matt. 7:7; James 5:17-19; Heb. 11:6.
5. The partnership of faith. V. 7. Cp. 2 Cor. 5:14; 6:1; Phil. 1:27; 2 Cor. 1:11; Romans 16: 13; John 4:36.

VI. The Result. Vs. 8-11.

1. Unfeigned humiliation; v. 8. Cp. Isa. 6:3-5; Job 40:4; 42:5, 6; Dan. 10:4-8.
2. Complete consecration; v. 11. "Forsook all." Cp. Luke 14:27, 33, etc.

233. THE LEPER HEALED

Luke 5:12-15; Mark 1:40-45

Golden Text: Psalm 51:2, 3

I. His Deplorable Condition. "Full of leprosy;" Luke 5:12; Mark 1:40. Leprosy a type of sin.

1. It has a small beginning. Cp. Lev. 13:2, 24; Romans 5:12, 18, 19; Gen. 2:17; 3:7.
2. It spreads throughout the body. Cp. Lev. 13:7, 8. Cp Gen. 6:5, 12. "Sow a thought. reap a word. Sow a word, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny." Jer. 17:9; Isa. 53:6; James 1:15.
3. It renders the victim unclean; Lev. 13:45. Cp. Isa. 64:6; Job 15:16.
4. It separates the victim from his fellow man. Lev. 13:46. Cp. Isa. 59:1, 2; 2 Chron. 26:21; Lev. 22:2-4.
5. It levels all. There is "no difference" between lepers, be they princes or paupers. Cp. 2 Kings 15:5; 5:1; 7:3, 4. Cp. Romans 3: 22, 23; 9:32; Gal. 3:22.
6. It was incurable except by Divine interposition. Jer. 17:9 (marg.); 2 Kings 5:7; Prov. 20:9; Job 9:30, 31; Jer. 2:22; 13:23; Romans 8:3; 5:8. "Thou must save and Thou alone."
7. It results in death; James 1:15; Romans 6:23; Rev. 20:15.

II. His Confident Petition. Luke 5:12; Micah 1:40.

1. His attitude. (1) Humble. "On his face." Cp. Job 22:29; Psalms 10:17; 138:6; 149:4; Isa. 57:15; Matt. 18:4. (2) Beseeching. He was in earnest; Isa. 55:6. 7; Ezek. 33:11; Jer. 29:13.
2. His confidence. Not "if thou canst." Cp. Mark 9:22. But "if thou wilt;" Psalms 9:10; 36:7; Isa. 30:15.

III. His Marvelous Cure. Mark 1:41-45; Luke 5:13-15.

1. The Saviour's touch. The hand that had created all things and behind which was omnipotence, reached down and touched this filthy leper! (1) Its spring, "compassion"—love. See the many times in the N. T. where Christ is said to have had compassion. We would have looked and loathed. He looked and loved. Lam. 3:22; Isa. 63:9. Cp. 1 John 4:10; John 3:16; 15:13; Romans 5:8; 2 Cor. 5: 14. (2) Its object—a filthy leper. What grace! 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 3:25; 1 John 1:7; 2 Cor. 8:9.
2. The Saviour's word. (1) His willingness—"I will." Cp. Matt. 23:37. Ezek. 33:11; 1 Tim. 2:4. (2) His power—"Be thou clean." Cp. Luke 5:24; John 5:24; Romans 1:4; Acts 4:12; Romans 1:16.
3. The wondrous change—"Clean." Cp. 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Acts 13:38; Eph. 2:1-9. It was a complete cleansing that left him "clean every whit." The believer is justified through faith and viewed by God as though he had never sinned.
4. The God-honoring result; Luke 5:15; Romans 10:9, 10; Luke 8:39; Acts 1:8; Mark 8:38.

234. HEALING THE PALSIED MAN

READ Mark 2: 1-12.

THEME: Bringing others to Jesus.

TELL THE STORY.

THE SICK MAN.—

HE WAS HELPLESS AND POWERLESS.—He could do nothing for himself. He was incurable, unable to move hand or foot and had to be carried. This describes us before we knew Christ, "When we were without strength" (Rom. 5: 6). We could do nothing for ourselves. We could not save ourselves. People may try, as Adam and Eve did with the fig leaves, to cover their sin; they may try, like Cain, to bring their own work for salvation, but it is useless.

HIS SINS WERE FORGIVEN (v. 5). The Lord Jesus did this before He healed his body. The forgiveness of sins is of far greater importance than health and healing for the body. (For notes on forgiveness of sins turn to Lesson 14 and repeat this teaching.)

HIS HEALING WAS IMMEDIATE not gradual. He was entirely cured in an instant. Just as God said "Let there be light" (Gen. 1: 3), and darkness fled in an instant, so the Word of Christ brought healing instantaneously to this man. We are saved the moment we accept Christ as Saviour. We may not always *know* the exact moment we have taken Christ, but there is a definite moment of time when the soul passes from death unto life. The heart may gradually open to the Saviour. but there is a moment when He enters, and that moment we are saved. The important thing is for us to know, not *when* we were saved, but that we *are* saved, to be able to say, "We *know* that we have passed from death unto life" (1 John 3: 14).

HIS HEALING WAS COMPLETE, it was not a partial cure. He was not merely restored in a moment, but perfectly so. Those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are *perfectly* pardoned. It is not some of their sin that is put away but *all* of it. The devil may try to bring before us the sins of the past, but we can quote the Word of God to him, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8: 12).

HE GAVE EVIDENCE OF HIS HEALING by standing, taking up his bed and walking (v. 12). There was a vast difference in the man after the Lord had healed him and all could see the change. So it should be with all who have been saved by Christ. The change should be seen by those around us. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus. Someone has said, "The Lord Jesus told him to take up his bed and walk in order that he might make no provision for a relapse!" The command was, "Walk!" He no longer needed to be carried by others; he no longer needed the bed on which to rest.

HE WENT TO HIS HOUSE GLORIFYING GOD (Luke 5: 25). The first place in which he witnessed for Christ was in his own home.

Our Lord told the demoniac of Gadara, after he was healed, to go home and tell his friends what great things the Lord had done for him (Mark 5: 19). Perhaps the most difficult place of all to witness is in our own home, but the order to witness is first "in Jerusalem" (Acts 1: 8). This man was able to say like David, "The Lord hath done great things for us (for me) whereof we (I am) are glad" (Ps. 126: 3). He was so full of joy that he glorified God. When we are saved we give all the glory to God, for we know that by grace we have been saved and that not of our selves it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast (Eph. 2: 8, 9).

HIS FOUR FRIENDS.—

THEY HAD FAITH.—They believed Jesus had power to heal their friend and Jesus *saw* their faith (v. 5). The sick man was apparently a hopeless case, yet they believed he could be healed. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. May we have the same faith — the faith that believes that God can save even the most difficult and the most unlikely.

THEY DID THEIR PART.—They knew that only the Lord Jesus could heal him, yet it was their part to bring him into contact with Christ, and they took time and trouble to bring this about. We should take time and trouble to bring our companions into contact with the Gospel, to get them to attend some place where they will hear it, so that they, like this man, may be brought to the feet of Jesus.

THEY WERE NOT EASILY DISCOURAGED; THEY OVERCAME ALL OBSTACLES.—When they could not get him through the door, they went up to the roof. We, too, shall meet with difficulties when we are trying to bring others into contact with Christ. They may not be interested, they may refuse to come to a meeting to which we are inviting them, or they may not want to listen to us as we try to tell them of what Christ has done for us, but let us not be discouraged, let us keep on as these four men did.

JESUS SAW THEIR FAITH (v. 5). How can faith be seen? Only by works. These men would never have taken all that trouble with the sick man if they had not believed that the Lord was able and willing to heal him. The Word of God says that we show our faith by our works (James 2: 18). If we have a real, saving faith in Christ then our life and work will show it.

THE ONLOOKERS.—"They were amazed and glorified God saying they had never seen anything like this before" (v. 12). Is the miracle of conversion so evident in our lives that others are surprised and give glory to God? If not, why is it not so? There is nothing to make the unconverted pause and think like the miracle of a changed life.

MEMORY VERSE.—Mark 2: 5—"When Jesus saw their faith, He said: Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

THE PALSIED MAN

Luke 5:17-26

Golden Text: Luke 5:24

I. The Teacher. V. 17.

1. The teaching; v. 17. (1) Its source—Isa. 50:4; John 7:16, 28. (2) Its character—searching; John 15:22. Cp. Heb. 4:12. (3) Its effect—wonder of all; Luke 4:22; Mark 1:27; etc. Joy of believers; Luke 11:39; 13:17.
2. The audience—"The mighty." Cp. Matt. 23:3, 5, 13, 15, 27; 1 Cor. 1:19-29.
3. The power present; v. 17. But none of the Pharisees benefited by it; Romans 1:16. All the power of God is behind the gospel, but it is only unloosed on behalf of those who believe. The gospel is sufficient for all, but efficient only for those who believe.

II. The Palsied Man. V. 18. His condition like that of all unsaved.

1. Diseased by sin. Cp. Isa. 1:5, 6.
2. Helpless; Romans 7:14-20; 5:6; Eph. 2:1, etc.
3. At a distance. "Afar off." Eph. 2:13.

III. The Faithful Friends. Vs. 18-20.

1. Their desire—based on faith in Christ's ability; Heb. 11:6. (1) They knew the Savior. (2) They knew the man. They knew his need, whereabouts and wnat he needed more than anything else. (3) They cooperated with each other in bringing him to Jesus.
2. Their obstacle—The curious multitude. Cp. Prov. 29:25.
3. Their perseverance. "Love finds a way." Faith turns obstacles into pedestals.
4. Their reward—Commendation of Christ; v. 20. Note. It was their faith that He saw, the faith of both the bringers and the brought. Dan. 12:3.

IV. The Pardoning Saviour. Vs. 20-25.

1. The message of forgiveness; v. 20. What a message! Cp. Acts 10:43; 13:38; 1 John 2:12; Col. 2:13, 14; Psalms 103:3; 32:1.
2. The questioning Pharisees; vs. 21, 22. Their reasoning was right. If He was not God, then it was blasphemy to pronounce forgiveness.
3. The proof of His divine prerogative; vs. 23-25. (1) The question; v. 23. Which is easier? Forgiveness of sins was to cost Him His own life's blood. (Lev. 17:11). Creation is the work of His fingers. (Psalm 8:3). Redemption necessitates His stretched out arm. (Exod. 15:6). Heb. 9:22; Mark 10:45; Heb. 9:27; 1 John 1:7. (2) The proof of His power; v. 24. "But that **ye may know.**" Cp. Romans 1:4; Jude 24; Romans 16:25. (3) The effect; v. 25. (a) Sudden, "immediately." All N. T. conversions instantaneous. (b) Complete, "took up that which had carried him." The evident proof of the reality of conversion is that the believer controls that which previously controlled him. Romans 6:14, 22; Eph. 1:3-14. (c) God glorifying; 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Cor. 1:31; Psalm 50:23; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Peter 4:16.

V. The Amazed Populace. V. 26.

1. Their astonishment. V. 26. What were "the strange things" they had seen?
   (1) The Lord of Glory in human form.
   (2) A helpless paralytic healed.
   (3) A sinner forgiven.
   Is not this "Love so amazing, so Divine?"

235. THE CALL OF MATTHEW

READ Luke 5: 27-32.

THEME: Following Christ.

TELL THE STORY.

Matthew or Levi, was a publican or a collector of the Roman taxes. All publicans were hated and despised by the Jews, and particularly was this the case when their own countrymen occupied this position.

THE LORD JESUS.—

HE BEHELD MATTHEW (R.V. v. 27). He saw the needs of Matthew's heart and life. He Who, beholding the rich young ruler, loved him, yearned over this man also. He Who saw Zaccheus up the tree sees us and knows how much we need Him, and longs that we might come to Him.

HE CALLED MATTHEW (v. 27). There was not much in Matthew to attract anyone to him. He was probably, like all publicans, dishonest (Luke 3: 12, 13; Luke 19: 8), covetous, and hated by his own countrymen, who would look on him as a traitor to his country. Yet this was the man whom the Lord called and who afterwards became one of the apostles and the writer of the Gospel which bears his name. Christ has chosen some of the most unlikely material, and out of it has made great workers for His vineyard (1 Cor. 1: 27-29). Those who are forgiven much, love much (Luke 7: 42, 47).

HE SAID, "FOLLOW ME" (v. 27). Matthew had been following money most of his life; now he was called to follow a person, and that Person was Christ Himself.

WHAT FOLLOWING CHRIST INVOLVED.—

FORSAKING ALL FOR HIM (Luke 14: 33) and following Him wherever He might lead (Luke 9: 59, 60). Christ wants those who are prepared to say, as Ittai did to King David, "Surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be" (2 Sam. 15: 21).

DENYING SELF — saying no to self, the flesh, for we cannot follow Christ and live for self at the same time. And this must be done *daily* (Luke 9: 23).

TAKING UP THE CROSS, which means, bearing His reproach, being willing to suffer ridicule for His sake (Luke 9: 23).

SERVING HIM (John 12: 26). There can be no real following of Him apart from service. Paul gloried in the fact that he was the bond slave of Jesus Christ.

RESULTS OF FOLLOWING CHRIST.—

WE SHALL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS (John 8: 12). As the Children of Israel had the pillar of fire to guide them (Neh. 9: 12), so those who follow Christ have with them always the Light of life.

WE SHALL BE WHERE CHRIST IS and shall be honoured by the Father (John 12: 26).

WE SHALL HAVE THE HUNDREDFOLD in this life and reign with Him by and by (Matt. 19: 28, 29). He rewards us now as well as hereafter.

MATTHEW'S RESPONSE TO CHRIST'S CALL.—

HE MADE NO EXCUSES AND DID NOT DELAY (v. 28). He might have said that he must wait till he could get back some of his money first, or that he would like to straighten out some of his dishonest business transactions but the most important thing for him to do at the moment was to follow Christ.

HE LEFT ALL. No doubt this would mean great financial loss to him; poverty instead of riches and giving up an assured livelihood.

HE INVITED HIS BUSINESS FRIENDS TO A FEAST (v. 29). Some might say, should he not at once drop all his old associates, but he wanted to introduce them to his newly-found Saviour. This feast would afford him, too, the opportunity to confess Christ publicly. He had believed in his heart now he must confess with his mouth (Rom. 10: 10).

THE LORD'S ANSWER TO THE CRITICS.—

THOSE IN HEALTH DO NOT NEED A DOCTOR but those who are sick (v. 31). He came not to call the righteous (for there are none) (Rom. 3: 10). "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1: 8, 10). There is no salvation for those who think they are righteous.

HE CAME TO CALL SINNERS TO REPENTANCE (v. 32). The Gospel is for sinners only, and the Pharisees missed the way because they were not willing to acknowledge themselves as sinners needing a Saviour. We must come by the way of true repentance and this is a repentance unto life (Acts 11: 18). Repentance is a change of mind leading to action. "Let the wicked *forsake* his way . . . and let him return unto the Lord" (Isaiah 55: 7).

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 5: 31, 32—"They that are whole need not a physician: but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

236. AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

READ John 5: 1-16.

THEME: Christ's power to heal.

TELL THE STORY.

"Bethesda" means, "House of Mercy." In Christ people will find the true Bethesda for all their miseries and woes if they will only come to Him. (Matt. 11: 28.)

IMPOTENT FOLK.—
There are many today like the multitude of impotent folk.

THEY WERE BLIND (v. 3), typical of those whose understanding is darkened (Eph. 4: 18). They are blind to the riches of God's grace, blind to the truths of His Word and to the way of salvation. Just as some can see the beauties of nature and yet not see them, so folk can be blind spiritually.

THEY WERE HALT (v. 3), lame, unable to walk. This is a picture of those who are powerless to "walk in newness of life"; they have no power to walk in His ways. Walking speaks of our manner of life.

THEY HAD WITHERED LIMBS, picture of those who are unable to work for Christ. There is much so-called service for God which He does not recognise as such, for it is rendered by those who have never experienced Christ's healing touch.

THEY ALL WAITED FOR THE MOVING OF THE WATER (v. 3). Many today are waiting for something in order to get healing, strength and power. Some say they are waiting till they get older, because they think there is plenty of time to think about their soul's salvation. They do not intend actually to refuse Christ's offer; they are just waiting. But God says, "*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." They were waiting for something or looking to someone (to the angel) instead of looking to Christ. Some are waiting till they have a good time, they say, and then they will come to Christ. But there will then not be much left of their life to give to Him.

THEY ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE PLACE. expecting to get healing *there* only. Some feel they can get healing of soul only at some special mission or house party or when an appeal is made at a special meeting, but they can be saved just where they are at the present moment.

THE IMPOTENT MAN.—

HE WAS A DIFFICULT CASE — ILL 38 YEARS (v. 5), the worst one there. He was helpless and friendless "I have no man" (v. 7). He is a picture of the sinner who is "without strength," who can do nothing for himself. But even this man was not too difficult a case for the Lord to heal (Gen. 18: 14; Jer. 32: 17).

HE RELIED ON OTHER PEOPLE (v. 7). But the Lord Jesus is the only One Who can heal the soul and give power to stand and walk. The impotent man should have looked to the Lord Jesus Himself. People today sometimes rely on special speakers and think, that only through their ministry, they can be saved. But Christ is always at hand and we can turn to Him at any moment.

THE LORD JESUS.—

HE SAW THE SICK MAN, who was the most helpless of all the sick folk gathered at the pool. Because of his great need, the Lord singled him out, for not only had he been in that condition for a very long time, but he was also friendless (v. 7). And today, the Lord Jesus sees each of us in our great need.

HE KNEW ALL ABOUT HIM (v. 6), knew of his sin and need, yet He loved him and wanted to heal him. The Lord Jesus knows us just as we are, for His eyes are like a flame of fire (Rev. 1: 14), yet He loves us in spite of our sin (Rom. 5: 8). The man's need only drew out Christ's sympathy the more and He is the same, yesterday, and today, and for ever (Heb. 13: 8); He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4: 15).

HE ASKED HIM "WILT THOU BE MADE WHOLE?" (v. 6). This shows that the man could not make himself whole any more than the sinner can save himself (Eph. 2: 1, 8). It is true that though Christ alone can save, He will not save anyone against his own will. There must be an act of the will on the part of the sinner, a definite turning to Christ. It was a *personal* question, "Wilt *thou* be made whole?" Christ did not address the crowd, but this special case, who was free to accept or reject. So also the question concerning our soul's salvation cannot be answered by another.

HE GAVE THE SICK MAN A COMMAND (v. 8) and with the command He gave him power to rise, take up his bed and walk. In His Word there is power (Ps. 107: 20). The sick man did not then know who Christ was, but he had confidence in Him. There is power today in the Word of Christ to save us if we believe on Him (Rom. 1: 16; John 5: 24). He was given power to carry the bed which, up to

that time, had supported him. He can give us power to overcome the sins which have held us down.

CHRIST HEALED HIM IMMEDIATELY AND COMPLETELY (v. 9). He was made "every whit whole" (John 7: 23). We are saved the moment we accept Christ as Saviour. The healing was also *complete.* Christ's death upon the Cross was a *finished* work (John 19: 30).

THE EVIDENCES OF HEALING.—

THE MAN TOOK UP HIS BED AND WALKED (v. 9). The change was there for all to see. The change in those who have accepted Christ should be seen by all those round about them, for they "walk in newness of life." This man used the strength received from Christ, in obeying Him.

HE MET WITH OPPOSITION, because he had obeyed the Lord's command (v. 10). "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3: 12). When the Jews raised objections, his answer was, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk" (v. 11). "Our Lord told us to do so" is a sufficient answer to those who would try to hinder us from following Him.

HE WAS FOUND BY CHRIST IN THE PLACE OF WORSHIP (v. 14). Probably He went there to give thanks to God for his healing. When Christ has saved and blessed us we should be found regularly in the place of worship, and linked up with God's people (Psalm 66: 13-15; 116: 12, 14, 19). Our Lord Himself went regularly to the synagogue (Luke 4: 16).

HE CONFESSED CHRIST as soon as he knew who He was (v 15). It was not easy to speak to the enemies of the Lord Jesus of what He had done for him. Perhaps it is never easy to confess Christ before others, but we are not only to believe on Him in our heart, but confess him with our mouth (Rom. 10: 10). We shall never go on with the Lord and grow in grace until we do this.

CHRIST TOLD HIM TO SIN NO MORE (v. 14). Power over sin is the evidence of life and healing and, unless there is a change of life following the profession of faith there is no salvation at all (Matt. 1: 21). When we are truly saved we hate the sins we once loved, and are given power to forsake them.

MEMORY VERSE.—Romans 10: 10—"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

THE IMPOTENT MAN

John 5:1-16

Golden Text: Matthew 9:12

I. His State. Vs. 1-7. Truly a dark picture of every unsaved one.

1. Helpless, impotent; v. 1. Cp. Isa. 1:4-6. Psalm 14:2; Jer. 17:9; Ezek. 16:6. Man is helpless to: (1) Change himself; Job 14:4; Jer. 13:23. (2) Cleanse himself; Job 15:4; Jer. 2:22; Prov. 20:9. (3) Save himself; Job 40:9-14; Romans 5:6.
2. Friendless; v. 7. "I have no man." The loneliness of the sinner. There was plenty of company, but no companionship. He was alone in a crowd. Cp. Eccles. 4:9, 10; Mark 1:24; Luke 7:34; Prov. 18:24. Illust. Prodigal Son. Luke 15:14-17; Prov. 17:17.
3. Hopeless; v. 5. Waited 38 years for "something to happen." Are you waiting for something mysterious to happen to you, without any volition on your part? Hundreds of sinners are waiting for visions, feelings, voices, or the identical experience of some believer. Eph. 2:11, 12; Psalm 108:12; Jer. 3:23.

II. His Opportunity. Vs. 6, 7.

1. The Person—Jesus. His complete knowledge of the case; v. 6. Cp. Psalm 139:1-12; Heb. 4: 12, 13; John 2:24, 25; Luke 5:22; John 1:48-50; Jer. 17:10.
2. The question; v. 6. (1) "Wilt"—A question of willingness. Cp. John 5:40; 7:17; Heb. 3:7. 15; Rev. 22:17. God respects the will of man. (2) "Thou"—An individual question. Cp. Romans 10:9, 10; John 6:37; Matt. 27:22; 22:42. (3) "Be made"—Not helped or assisted. A question of the realization of his own impotence and confidence in Christ's power. Cp. Titus 3:3-5; Eph. 2:8, 9; Romans 5:6; John 3:3-7, etc. Salvation is wholly of grace and wholly of God. (4) "Whole"—Christ had no partial cures. Cp. Acts 4:10; Eph. 1:13, 14; 1 Cor. 1:30, 31; 1 John 1:7.

III. His Cure. Vs. 7-11. At the word of the Lord Jesus. Cp. Eccles. 8:4; Psalm 33:9; John 5: 25, 28, 29; Matt. 28:18.

1. Instantaneous; v. 9. Note how often this word "immediately" occurs in Christ's miracles. How unlike the so-called "cures" today. Cp. Mark 1:42; 2:11, 12; 5:27-29, etc., etc.; Acts 13:38; 10:43; Romans 10:9.
2. Complete; vs. 9, 11. The proof of his cure was the fact that he now carried that which had previously carried him. The effect of regeneration is that the believer is no longer under sin's control, but possesses a power that enables him to have dominion over it. Romans 6:13-18. Cp. Col. 2:13; 1 Cor. 6:11; Col. 2:9, 10; Eph. 1:6; 1 John 4:19, etc.

IV. The Effect. Vs. 12-16.

1. The exhortation; v. 14. Probably his physical condition had been brought about by a life of sinful indulgence. This must now give place to a right about face. Cp. Romans 6:1, 2. 9-14, 18-22.
2. The opposition; vs. 15, 16. Cp. Matt. 10:16-22, 37-39.

237. THE DEITY OF CHRIST

John 5:17-47

Golden Text: John 5:23

I. The Circumstances; John 5:1-9, 14-16. The healing of the impotent man on the Sabbath day had aroused the enmity of the Scribes and Pharisees.

II. The Claims. Vs. 17-30. There are those who have the effrontery to say that Christ never claimed to be the Son of God; but that this claim was made for Him by His over-zealous disciples. This chapter gives the lie to this Devil's invention. The Deity of Christ is the keystone in the arch of Christianity. If this goes, there is nothing left.

1. He claimed to be doing the work of God; v. 17. Note (1) From the fall to the incarnation, the Father worked. (2) From the incarnation to the cross, the Son worked. (3) From Pentecost till now the Holy Spirit works. Note what the Jews understood by this; v. 18. Cp. John 10:30; Phil. 2:6.
2. He claimed to be the Son of God; vs. 19, 20. (1) Loved by the Father. (2) The Confidant of the Father; v. 20. (3) Yet, in His humiliation, voluntarily dependent upon the Father; v. 19.
3. He claimed Divine prerogatives; vs. 21-30.
   (1) To quicken; v. 21. Only Deity can give life. See John 1:4. Cp. John 11:25; 6:44, 40.
   (2) To be the Judge of all men; vs. 22, 27. John 12:47, 48; Rev. 20:11.
   (3) Equal honor with the Father for He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit. V. 23.
   (4) To give life through His word; v. 24. Cp. John 3:16; 6:47, 48, 51.
   (5) To deliver from the judgment due to sin; v. 24. John 3:16, 18; Romans 8:1. etc.
   (6) To raise the dead; vs. 25, 28, 29.
   (7) To have life in Himself; v. 26. John 6:51; 10:17, 18.
4. He claimed a perfect life of obedience; v. 30. Cp. John 8:29, 46; 6:38, etc.

III. The Witnesses to This Claim. Vs. 31-39. Cp. Deut. 19:15; 2 Cor. 13:1.

1. John the Baptist; vs. 33-35. What he said; John 1:22-36.
2. His own works; v. 36. Cp. Luke 5:21-24; Matt. 11:2-6; John 4:50, etc., etc.
3. The Father; vs. 37, 38. Cp. Matt. 3:17; 17:5, etc
4. The word of God; v. 39. Cp. Heb. 10:7; Luke 24:44; Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14. etc., etc. He was the theme of the Scriptures. Note vs. 45-47.

IV. The Accusation. Vs. 40-47. What a fearful indictment. Is it true of you? Here the Accused becomes the Accuser.

1. They would not come unto Him; v. 40. Cp. John 7:17; Rev. 22:17. The will appealed to.
2. They had not the love of God in them; v. 42. The poverty of the sinner; no peace, life, etc.
3. They received Him not; v. 43. Cp. John 1:11, 12; 12:47, 48.
4. They sought not God's honor; v. 44. Cp. Isa. 55:6.
5. They believed not on God's Son; v. 47. The damning sin. Mark 16:16; John 3:18; 3:36, etc.

238. THE TWO RESURRECTIONS

John 5:21-29; 1 Thessalonicans 4:13-18; Revelation 20:11-15

Golden Text: Revelation 20:15

I. The Resurrection of the Saved. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; John 5:28, 29.

1. The persons described; 1 Thess. 4:14. (1) "Believers." Cp. 1 Cor. 15:50. (2) "Brethren." (3) Saved ones; John 5:24; Eph. 2:8, 9; 1 Cor. 15:2; 1 Cor. 1:18, etc.
2. The time of it; 1 Thess. 4:16; John 5:25. At the coming of Christ. The time of this coming is unknown; Matt. 24:44. "Moment." "Twinkling of eye."
3. The result of it. (1) All those who have died believing in Christ shall be resurrected. 1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52. Their bodies shall be reunited to their spirits which are already with Christ; 2 Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:23. (2) All the living in Christ shall be changed and caught up; 1 Thess. 4:17, 18; 1 Cor. 15:51-55. The great separation will take place. Cp. Matt. 24:36-42; Luke 13:24-27 .
4. The certainty of it is seen by a twofold line of proof. (1) "The word of the Lord;" 1 Thess. 4:15; Matt. 24:35. (2) The Resurrection of Christ Himself; 1 Cor. 15:12-23. He is both the Pattern and the Pledge of the believer's resurrection. The resurrection of the dead has already commenced in Christ, who is the "First fruits."

II. The Resurrection of the Unsaved. Revelation 20:11-15.

1. The persons described. (1) "The dead;" Rev. 20:12; i. e., those who died while dead in their sins; Eph. 2:1; Romans 6:23. (2) "Evildoers;" John 5:29; 3:18-20.
2. The time of it. 1000 years after the resurrection of the saved; Rev. 20:5, 6.
3. The result of it. (1) Judged according to works recorded in the books. Rev. 20:11-13. Cp. Matt. 12:36, 37; Romans 2:16; Jude 15. (2) The Judge is the Lord Jesus Christ Who now is the Savior. Acts 17:31; John 5:22; 2 Thess. 1:8. (3) The sentence; Rev. 20:14. Damnation; John 5:29.
4. The certainty of it; Luke 11:31, 32. Note the absolute certainty expressed in the words "**shall** rise." No one can avoid it however ingeniously he may attempt the task. Heb. 9:27; Acts 17:31. God's appointment that all must keep; Romans 14:12.

III. The Intermediate State.

1. Of the saved dead. (1) Conscious existence; Luke 16:25. (2) Conscious blessing—"comforted;" Phil. 1:23—"better." (3) Conscious companionship; Phil. 1:23. "With Christ."
2. Of the unsaved dead. (1) Conscious existence; Luke 16:23, 24. (2) Conscious torment; Luke 16:24. (3) Conscious isolation; Luke 16:26, 28. Someone has tersely said. "Hell is the truth seen too late."

239. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT I.

Matthew 5

Golden Text: Matthew 5:6

I. The Audience. Vs. 1, 2. Not the multitude but His own disciples, who had climbed.

II. The Secret of True Blessedness. Vs. 3-12. In this sermon we have an exposure of the heart of God's Son Who fulfilled it all in His life. Matt. 11:28-30. The word "blessed" has in it the thought: "to be congratulated."

1. The poor in spirit; v. 3. Cp. Psalm 51:17; Proverbs 16:18, 19; Isa. 57:15; 66:2.
2. The mourner; v. 4. Isa. 61:2, 3; 2 Cor. 1:3, 4; 6:10; 1 Thess. 4:13; Rev. 21:4.
3. The meek. Meekness is strength under control; Num. 12:3; Psalms 25:9; 149:4; Isa. 61:1; 1 Peter 3:4.
4. The hungry; v. 6. Jer. 29:13; John 6:35; Psalm 27:4; Acts 16:29-34; Psalm 107:9; Prov. 8:17.
5. The merciful v. 7. Psalm 41:1; Prov. 11:24, 25; 19:17; 21:13; Mark 11:25, 26; Matt. 18:21-35.
6. The pure in heart; v. 8. Prov. 30:12; Phil. 4:8; 1 Thess. 3:9; 5:22; 1 John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 Cor. 6:9-11. To see God implies communion with Him and only those whose hearts are pure shall enjoy this fellowship. S. of S. 2:14.
7. The peacemaker; v. 9. Col. 1:21; Romans 12:18; Isa. 26:3; Romans 14:19; Prov. 16:7; James 4:1-8; Eph. 4:3.
8. The persecuted; v. 10. John 15:20; 2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Cor. 12:10.
9. The reviled; v. 11. Matt. 27:39; 1 Cor. 4:12. Cp. 2 Cor. 4:17, 18.

III. The Believer Described. Vs. 13-16.

1. As Salt; v. 13. (1) Salt a preservative (Ill. Gen. 18:23-33); so are Christians. (2) Takes away tastelessness. Life tasteless apart from Christ—no hope without Him. (3) Antidote for corruption. When Christians are taken out of the world at coming of Christ, chaos will follow. 2 Thess. 2:3-12, etc. (4) Article of food—Christ the believer's nourishment. Christians the world's; Romans 10:14, 15. (5) Has consuming power, yet silent in action; Acts 2:38-41, etc. (6) Useless if savorless—not even for fertilizer.
2. As Light; vs. 14-16. Because (1) They have received light; 2 Cor. 4:6; John 8:12; 1:5; 1 Peter 2:9. (2) They are now to reflect light because of sin's darkness; Phil. 2:15, 16. (a) To warn; Col. 1:28; Ezek. 33:1-6. (b) To guide; Acts 26:18. (3) Hindrances to shining. (a) A bushel—business. Ill. 1 Tim. 6:9, 10; 2 Tim. 4:10. (b) A bed—laziness; Eph. 5:14; Romans 13:11, etc.

IV. Christ and the Law; vs. 17-48.

1. He came to fulfill it. He magnified and made honorable the law. Isa. 42:21. The law is good and spiritual. See Romans 7:12, 14; 8:3.
2. Its moral claims reiterated and reinterpreted; vs. 21-42. (1) As to murder; vs. 21-26. (2) As to adultery; vs. 27-32. (3) As to swearing; vs. 33-37. (4) As to vengeance; vs. 38-42.
3. Its fulfillment—love; vs. 38-45. Cp. Romans 13:10.

240. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT II.

Matthew 6

Golden Text: Matthew 6:33

Christ's Teaching on

I. Giving. Vs. 1-4. Remember this was said to the disciples. Cp. Prov. 15:8; 21:27; Ezra 4:2,3; 3 John 7, etc.

1. Ostentation condemned; vs. 1, 2; Luke 18:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:12.
2. Simplicity enjoined; vs. 3, 4. Cp. 2 Cor. 8:1-7, 9, 12; 9:6-8; Romans 12:8; Luke 21:1-4.

II. Praying. Vs. 5-15.

1. Publicity to be avoided; v. 5. Luke 18:10-12.
2. Secrecy enjoined; vs. 6-8. Note in v. 6: (1) A time for prayer, "when." Cp. Psalm 55:17. (2) A place for prayer, "closet." Cp. Daniel 6:10. (3) Privacy in prayer, "shut door;" Gen. 32:24-28; alone with God. (4) Exhortation in prayer; "pray unto Thy Father." (a) How? John 16:23, 4; John 14:13, 14; 15:7; Eph. 2:18; Heb. 4:15, 16. (b) Why? Isa. 40:29-31; James 5:17, 18; Ezek. 36:37; Phil. 4:6, 7, etc. (5) Reward in prayer, "shall reward;" Eph. 3:20, 21.
3. Vain repetition avoided; vs. 7, 8. Mere formal mumblings of set prayers, the counting of beads and the use of prayer wheels are here condemned.
4. An example given; vs. 9-15.

III. Fasting—or Self-Denial; vs. 16-18.

1. Outward show rebuked; v. 16. John 12:43.
2. Inward reality commended; v. 17, 18. Cp. 2 Tim. 2:3; Titus 2:11, 12; Mark 8:34; Heb. 12:1-3; Matt. 17:21.

IV. Riches. Vs. 19-24.

1. Temporal riches—danger of; v. 19. (1) Pride; 1 Tim. 6:17. (2) Worldly ease; Luke 16:19. (3) Neglect of God; Prov. 30:8. (4) Selfishness; Luke 12:17. (5) Covetousness; Luke 12:15. (6) Lying; Acts 5:3. (7) Trusting in riches; Mark 10:24. (8) Disregarding gospel; Matt. 13:22. (9) Losing it all; Matt. 6:19.
2. Eternal riches—blessings of; v. 20. (1) Security; Matt. 6:20; Mark 10:21. (2) Interest of 10,000 per cent; Matt. 18:29; 2 Cor. 3:13, 14; 4:17, 18; 9:8, 9.
3. The impossible task; v. 24. To serve God and Mammon (riches). Judas tried it and failed; Matt. 27:3-5. Ananias also; Acts 5:1-5, etc.

V. The Life of Faith. Vs. 25-34.

1. Illustrated; vs. 25-29. By (1) The birds; vs. 26, 27. Cp. Luke 12:6, 7; Phil. 4:19. (2) The flowers; vs. 28, 29. A lesson in botany.
2. Applied; vs. 25, 26, 30-34. This does not mean improvidence. God wants His people carefree, not careless. Cp. 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:4, 8, etc. There is freedom from worry in Christ; Phil. 4:6, etc.

241. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT III.

Matthew 7

Golden Text: Matthew 7:13

I. Hypocritical Judgment Condemned. Vs. 1-5. Cp. Romans 2:1-3, 17-24; Prov. 18:13. This is a good answer to those who hide behind the old worn-out excuse, "There are too many hypocrites." Too often the "mote" which we see in our brother's eye is but the reflection of the "plank" that is in our own! Note: It is criticizer who is criticised here. The right to the critic's chair must be bought by a consistent life.

II. Misapplied Truth Censored. V. 6. Do not apply truth for Christians to the unsaved. We should be "D. D's," i. e., "Distinguishers of things that differ." This does not mean that we should not preach the gospel to the unsaved. 2 Tim. 2:15; Phil. 1:9, 10 (margin). (Ill. Matt. 15:22-28.)

III. Prayer Further Encouraged. Vs. 7-12.

1. Its condition. V. 7. "Ask . . . seek . . . knock." Cp. James 4:2; John 14:13, 14; Jer. 29:13.
2. Its effect. V. 8. Answered. James 5:7-18; Isa. 65:24.
3. Illustration; vs. 9-11. The Father knows best what His children really need and will supply that need in His own good time. Phil. 4:19.
4. A great principle enunciated; v. 12. This has been called: "The golden rule." It summarizes the whole of the law and prophets. Only as this principle is exemplified in our lives shall we live at peace with our brethren. If we expect people to be kind, courteous and forgiving to us, we must be the same to them.

IV. A Study in Contrasts. Vs. 13-29.

1. Two Gates; v. 13. Wide—Straight. Cp. John 10:9; Acts 4:12; Prov. 1:20-31.
2. Two Ways; vs. 13, 14. Broad, narrow. Cp. John 14:6; Prov. 14:12; Isa. 53:6.
3. Two Classes; vs. 13, 14. Many, few. Cp. V. 22. Cp. Luke 13:23-27; 1 Peter 4:18; Phil. 2:21.
4. Two Destinations;vs. 13, 14. Life—Destruction; Rev. 21:1-6. 8; Rev. 20:15, etc.
5. Two Trees; v. 17. Corrupt—Good; Psalm 37: 35; Jude 12; Psalms 1:3; 92:12, 13.
6. Two Fruits; v. 17. Evil—Good; Mark 7:21; Romans 3:12-18; Gal. 5:22, 23; Romans 6:21, 22.
7. Two Ends; v. 19. Cut down—Left; Matt. 25: 41, 46, etc.
8. Two Professors; vs. 21-23. False—True. Ill. Matt. 25:1-12.
9. Two Houses; vs. 24, 26. Unsafe—Safe. Cp. Jer. 8:20; Eph. 2:8.
10. Two Builders; v. 24:6. Foolish—Wise; Disobedient, Obedient; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9; Romans 6:17.
11. Two foundations; vs. 24, 26, Sand—Rock. Cp. Romans 10:1-3; 1 Cor. 3:11.
12. Two Storms; vs. 25. 27. Testing—Judgment; 1 Peter 1:5-7; Isa. 28:17. 18; Rev. 6:14-17.
13. Two Results; vs. 25, 27. Fell—Stood; Rev. 20:11-15; John 5:24; Romans 8:1; Rev. 22:1-5.

242. THE TWO HOUSES

READ Luke 6: 46-49.

THEME: The danger of an assumed conversion.

TELL THE STORY.

A SEARCHING QUESTION.—

WHY CALL YE ME LORD . . . AND DO NOT THE THINGS WHICH I SAY? (Luke 6: 46). We can only truly call Him Lord if we have received Him first as our Saviour, and the *evidence* that we have done this is our *obedience* to Him (v. 46). We need to examine ourselves to see whether we be in the faith (2 Cor. 13: 5). To test ourselves then, let us look at the parable of the two builders.

There were two kinds of foundation — rock and sand.

There were two kinds of builders — wise and foolish.

THE TWO BUILDERS AND THE TWO HOUSES WERE SIMILAR.—

BOTH WERE DOING THE SAME THING, for both felt the necessity of building a house for a shelter from the rain, wind and floods. They not only felt the necessity of having a shelter, but they actually built the houses. Many realise today that they need a shelter from the coming storm and they begin to build.

WHEN THE HOUSES WERE COMPLETE NO ONE COULD SEE THE DIFFERENCE. Yet how different the builders were! One was wise, the other was foolish. How different the houses were! The wise man's work was honest work where men's eyes could not judge of it; the other did good work only above the ground and paid little attention to the *foundation.* There was nothing solid underneath. The main difference between the two houses was a matter of the foundation. "The Lord knoweth them that are His."

THE WISE MAN.—

HE COMES TO CHRIST (v. 47). We cannot build on the Rock unless we first come to Him, and have Him for our Foundation, that is, receive Him as Saviour. We cannot be Christians unless we first come to Him in repentance and faith.

HE HEARS THE WORD and takes heed to it (v. 47). How are we to hear today? We have God's Book and this should be our guide. In it is shewn clearly the way of salvation and the narrow way in which we are to tread.

HE OBEYS THE WORD (v. 47). Hearing and *doing* comprise building. This is true faith, a saving faith, for "Faith without works is

dead" (James 2: 20). It is not merely "saying" that God demands, but "doing" (Matt. 7: 21).

HE BUILDS ON THE ROCK (v. 24), and that Rock is Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 3: 11). The wise man spent a good deal of time on the underground work, seeing to the foundation. It was not a superficial work which, when tested by the storm, would collapse. *He dug deep* (v. 48). The carving and cutting of the rock must have taken much time compared with the work of the man who built on the sand, but his was a *deep* work. This is like bringing forth "fruit meet for repentance." The wise man's house cost him much to build, but it was worth the cost.

HIS HOUSE STOOD THE TEST OF THE STORM not because of his good works, but because he had built on the rock. When the storm came, there was no fear in his heart, because he knew the *foundation* was right. Not only did the house stand, but the wise man had perfect peace of heart.

THE FOOLISH MAN.—

HE BUILT HIS HOUSE ON THE SAND. He is an example of "hearing" without "doing." He represents people who hear the Word, but who have no saving faith. "They profess that they know God but in works they deny Him" (Titus 1: 16). They may believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He died on the cross for sinners, yet they have never truly come to Him and received Him as Saviour, and therefore they have not the power to obey Him and *do* His will. We cannot be on the Rock and still be living in sin.

HIS HOUSE COLLAPSED IN THE STORM (v. 49). Both the foolish man and the wise man were tested by the storm, which *beat* upon the house that was founded upon the rock, and *smote* the house which was built on the sand. Trials will come alike to professors and those who truly belong to Christ, testing them to see if they are true or false. Every house is sure to be tested sooner or later. In this life the winds of trouble and affliction may blow, and the flood of temptation or persecution sweep upon us. The house which has been built upon the sand will fall. Finally there will be the Great Judgment, and great will be the fall of that house. Build on the Rock before it is too late.

"Build on the Rock, the Rock that ever stands,
Oh build on the Rock, and not upon the sands;
You need not fear the storm or the earthquake shock,
You're safe for evermore if you build on the Rock."

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 7: 21—"Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall inherit the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

THE TWO BUILDERS

Matthew 7:24-29

Golden Text: 1 Corinthians 3:11

I. The Two Hearers. V. 24. Typical of the two classes today.

1. Wise—The believing hearer. Cp. 1 Thess. 2:13; Prov. 1:33; John 10:27; Romans 10:17; Gal. 3:15; John 5:24; Matt. 10:15; Prov. 1:20-23; Matt. 13:16.
2. Foolish—The unbelieving hearer; James 1:22-24; Heb. 4:2; Matt. 13:13-15; Acts 17:32. The hearing of the word of God brings the most solemn responsibility. Far better never to hear, than to hear and refuse to obey.

II. The Two Builders. Vs. 24-26.

1. Wise. (1) He believed in the rock. Cp. Psalms 18:2; 27:5; 1 Cor. 3:11; Isa. 28:16; Matt. 16:16-18; 1 Peter 2:6, 7. 2 Tim. 1:12. (2) He spared no trouble to get to it; John 3:3; Luke 13:3, 5. It meant digging deep; i. e., a deep-seated earnestness of purpose, due to the spirit's conviction of his sin and need. Heb. 10:39, etc.; John 16:8, 9. (3) He **built** when he found it; John 1:45-49; 1 Thess. 2:13; Acts 18:8. He rested not until he could say: "On Christ the solid Rock I stand."
2. Foolish. (1) He disregarded the rock. Cp. 1 Peter 2:8; John 3:19; 12:48; Isa. 53:3; Jer. 8:9; Hosea 4:6; Matt. 21:42; Luke 7:30. (2) He built too soon and on sand. Superficial work. (Illust. Matt. 13:20, 21). Cp. Matt. 23: 25-28; 1 Cor. 2:5; Gal. 4:20, 11. (3) He had no foundation. He was like thousands of mere empty professors today who claim to be Christians but have never come to an end of themselves and a beginning with Christ. Cp. 1 Peter 3:15; Jer. 8:11; Ezek. 33:30-32; Luke 16:15; Romans 1:18; 2 Tim. 3:5; 1 John 2: 4, 19; Psalm 52:7; 118:8; Prov. 3:5, 7; Prov. 16:25; 26:12; Jer. 48:7. 11.

III. The Two Results.

1. The Storm. Cp. Isa. 28:16, 17; Luke 13:25-27; Rev. 6:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:7-10. Picture this dreadful storm, that has been so long delayed because of God's mercy, as it will fall upon an unbelieving and unrepentant world.
2. The wise. Safe because on the Rock. The believer is (1) on the Rock for safety; Matt. 7:25. (2) Under the Rock for protection; Isa. 32:2. (3) In the Rock for security; Exod. 33:32. Cp. John 5:24; 10:27-29; Romans 8:1; 1 Thess. 1:10.
3. The foolish. Lost because on the sand. Show some of the "sinking sands" upon which many are building their hopes of eternal bliss. (1) Morality. (2) Religion. (3) Self-righteousness. (4) Men's opinions. (5) Good works, etc. Cp. Luke 17:28-30; 12:19, 20; Prov. 22:3; Matt. 21:44; 16:16; John 3:36; Rev. 20:15; Prov. 1:24-31.

243. HEALING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

READ Luke 7: 2-10.
THEME: Great faith.
TELL THE STORY.

THE CENTURION'S CHARACTER.—

HE WAS A KIND, AFFECTIONATE MASTER (v. 2). Though he himself was a Roman officer and the sick one a slave, he loved him and was deeply concerned about his condition. Servants have a duty towards their masters (Eph. 6: 5-8), but masters also have a duty towards their servants, knowing that they themselves have a Master in heaven (Eph. 6: 9).

HE HAD A ZEAL FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD. The Jews told our Lord that the centurion was "worthy" (deserving) because he loved their nation and had built them a synagogue (v. 5). From a human point of view he was worthy, but he did not have this estimate of himself, nor did he even mention to Jesus that he had built the synagogue. He came to Christ not on the ground of merit, for in God's sight he had none, but from a great sense of need.

HE WAS HUMBLE. He said to the Lord, "I am *not* worthy" (v. 6). He was not proud because he was a Roman officer, one of the conquering race, or of his popularity with the Jews, or of having built a synagogue; on the contrary he realised his own utter unworthiness. When we come to the Lord either for ourselves or on behalf of others, it is of no use to plead our own merits, as the Pharisee did (Luke 18: 11, 12) for we have none. A sense of our own unworthiness should drive us to Christ, for "Christ died for the ungodly."

HE ASKED THE ELDERS TO PLEAD WITH JESUS FOR HIM (v. 3). He was too conscious of his own unworthiness to come himself, so he asked others to plead for him. We can come into the presence of God with our requests because of Another Who is our Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous (1 John 2: 1). We bring our requests in *His* name, pleading *His* merits.

THE CENTURION'S GREAT FAITH.—

HE DID NOT LIMIT CHRIST'S POWER to His being present (v. 7). How different from the Children of Israel, who limited the Holy One of Israel! (Psalm 78: 41). Do we not often limit His power to work on our behalf under a special set of circumstances only, or limit

His power to certain places? The Syrians did this when they said of Israel, "Their gods are gods of the hills . . . but let us fight against them in the plain and surely we shall be stronger than they" (1 Kings 20: 23). Sometimes we limit the working of God's power to special meetings, camps or house parties, and fail to believe that He can work for us in the office, workshop or at school. Our God is a God of the valleys also.

HIS FAITH WAS CONTENT WITH CHRIST'S BARE WORD. "Say in a word and my servant shall be healed," he said (v. 7). He believed when he could not see. Thomas said he would not believe unless he could see for himself the print of the nails, and the Lord replied, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20: 29). "Be not faithless, but believing" (John 20: 27). We have many great and precious promises in the Word of God. Do we claim them for ourselves? Do we rest upon them as the centurion did? We have verses of assurance of salvation, promises of Christ's help, His Presence and His comfort.

HIS FAITH AMAZED THE LORD (v. 9). Such faith was unusual, particularly coming from a Gentile. The Jews, who had a knowledge of the miracle-working Jehovah of the Old Testament, had no faith in Christ or in His miracles. On another occasion Jesus marvelled not at the faith of the Jews, but at their unbelief (Mark 6: 6). At which has the Lord Jesus most occasion to marvel — at our *faith* or our *unbelief?*

HIS FAITH WAS COMMENDED BY THE LORD Who said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (v. 9). Faith is described in God's Word as "precious faith" (2 Pet. 1: 1); indeed "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11: 6). In heathen lands greater faith in Christ's power is displayed in the lives of those who have but recently come out of heathen darkness into the light of the Gospel, than in many of those who have known the Word of God all their lives.

HIS FAITH WAS EXERCISED ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER, and the servant was healed in that hour (v. 13). We may have loved ones who are needy, whose spiritual needs are as great, or even greater than the physical needs of the sick servant. They need the healing touch of the Saviour on their soul as the servant did to his body.

OUR RECEIVING IS VERY OFTEN ACCORDING TO OUR FAITH. "As thou hast believed, so be it done to thee" (Matt. 8: 13); though Christ in His grace answers requests in spite of little faith. We need to pray, "Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9: 24).

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 17: 5—"Lord, increase our faith."

THE CENTURIAN'S SERVANT

Matthew 8:5-13

Golden Text: Hebrews 11:6

I. The Centurion's Petition. Vs. 5, 6.

1. How presented. (1) Individually. Luther once said that the Gospel was a Gospel of personal pronouns. Salvation is the result of a personal sinner coming into contact with a personal Savior. People are not saved by proxy. Isa. 55:6; Jer. 29:12, 13. (2) Beseechingly —not demanding it as his "right." The sinner has no "right." If he had his just deserts he would be in hell. God does not save the sinner because it is the sinner's right, but "according to His mercy." Titus 3:5. Psalms 10:17; 102:17; 145:18.
2. Why presented—Unselfishly—for another. Romans 10:1; Jer. 45:5.

II. The Servant's Condition. V. 6. Typical of the sinner, for sickness is often used in the Bible as a picture of sin.

1. Sick. Cp. Isa. 1:5, 6; Gen. 6:5, 12; 8:21; Psalm 14:2. 3; Eccles. 9:3; Jer. 17:9.
2. Helpless. Cp. Romans 8:5-8; 3:9, 19; 5:6; Job 9:30, 31; Jer. 13:23.
3. Tormented. Cp. Isa. 57:20, 21; Psalm 32:3, 4.

III. The Saviour's Promise. V. 7.

1. Its promptness. God is far more willing to bless than we are to be blessed. Cp. Isa. 65: 24; Jer. 33:3.
2. Its certainty—"I will." Phil. 4:6, 7; Eph. 3:20; Romans 10:12.

IV. The Centurion's Faith. Vs. 8, 9.

1. Its Humility; v. 8. "Not worthy." He took the right place in the presence of the Son of God. Cp. Gen. 32:10. This has been the confession of all who have realized their true condition. Psalms 138:6; 149:4; Isa. 66:2; Luke 18:14.
2. Its Assurance; v. 8. Cp. Mark 11:24; Matt. 21: 22; James 1:6.
3. Its Authority; v. 9. "Speak the word only." Here is the secret of the believer's assurance, the spoken and written word of God. Not our feelings or some vision or some mysterious voice but the bare word of the Son of God. This is God-honoring faith. Cp. 1 John 5:9-13; Romans 10:6-10; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:4; John 5:24, etc.

V. The Result of Faith. Vs. 10-13.

1. Wonder; v. 10. Cp. Mark 6:6. Christ marvelled at both faith and unbelief. One the marvel of joy, the other of sorrow. Here He marvels at his faith. Faith honors and delights God. Heb. 11:6.
3. Rebuke; vs. 11, 12. His own people had rejected Him. Here was a Gentile, the forerunner of millions, who accepted Him to be what He was. See Rev 5:9; Luke 13:24-30.
4. Response; v. 13. "As thou hast **believed.** Cp. 2 Chron. 16:9; 20:20; Psalms 31:19; 34:8; Hab. 2:3, 4; Luke 1:45; 1 Peter 1:5; Romans 4:5; Acts 13:38, etc., etc.

244. THE WIDOW'S SON

Luke 7:11-17

Golden Text: John 3:16

I. The Sorrowful Woman. V. 12. A true picture of the sinner. She had:

1. A sad past—"Widow." Death, "the king of terrors," the sad consequence of sin, had already visited her home. Cp. The sinner's black past due to his own sins. Isa. 59:1,2; Jer. 5:25.
2. A bitter present—"Son dead." Cp. The sinner's fearful present; Eph. 2:1. 2; 4:18; Isa. 48:22.
3. A hopeless future—"Only son." What a commentary this is of all the world can give: a black past of sin; a bitter present—effect of sin; a fearful future—result of sin; Rev. 20: 10-15.

II. The Sympathizing Savior. Vs. 13, 14.

1. His compassion; v. 13. He knew all about her sorrows, sins and need, for omniscience can penetrate the secrets of every heart and life. How good to know that He not only knows, but loves and cares. Cp. Isa. 40:11; 42:3; 63:9; Matt. 9:36; John 11:5, 33-36.
2. His comfort; v. 13—"Weep not." Isa. 51:12; 66:13; John 14:18; Matt. 5:4; 2 Cor. 1:4. See the comfort of His (1) Cleansing; Matt. 9:22. (2) Spirit; Acts 9:31; (3) Care; Psalm 23:4. (4) Scriptures; Romans 15:4. (5) Promise; 1 Thess. 4:18.
3. His command; v. 14. (1) The touch. Here is the "Prince of life" (Acts 3:15) and the One "in Whom is life" (John 1:4), coming in contact with death. Before eternal life could be our portion He "through death destroyed him that had the power of death" (Heb. 2: 14). He entered Death's dread domain and emerged victorious with the keys upon His girdle. (Rev. 1:18). Cp. Mark 5:28-30. (2) The word of power—"Arise!" Cp. John 5:21-29; Matt. 28:18; Romans 1:4, 16; 1 Peter 1:23. The voice of the Creator Who, in the beginning, said, "Let there be light," now said. "Let there be life." Christ is both the Light and the Life. John 1:4.

III. The Raised Son. V. 15. Here is a picture of a soul's regeneration.

1. Dead to Christ; v. 12. Cp. Eph. 2:1, 2; Col. 2:13; Eph. 4:18.
2. Met by Christ; v. 14. Cp. John 17:3; 20:31; 1:4; 10:10.
3. Word from Christ; v. 14. Cp. John 5:24; Heb. 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23.
4. Life from Christ. Cp. John 10:28; Col. 3:3, 4; Phil. 1:21.
5. Speech for Christ; v. 15. Cp. Romans 10:9, 10; Luke 8:39; Mark 8:38.
6. Restoration in Christ; v. 15. United to loved ones. Cp. Luke 15:24, 32. What joy it brings to saved relations and friends when unsaved ones are brought into the circle of life.
7. Glory to Christ; v. 16. This is the purpose of every act of regeneration: that the born again one should live to the glory of Christ. 2 Thess. 1:12; 2 Cor. 5:15.

IV. The Amazed Populace. Vs. 16, 17.

1. They feared. Cp. Psalm 25:12; Prov. 19:23; Psalm 147:11; Matt. 4:2.
2. They glorified God. Psalm 40:1-3.

245. JOHN THE BAPTIST IMPRISONED

READ Mark 6: 14-29; Matthew 11: 2-6.

THEME: Suffering for Christ.

TELL THE STORY.

HEROD.—

HE RESPECTED AND FEARED JOHN because the preacher was just and holy (v. 20). Those who live a consistent Christian life, who practise what they preach, are feared and respected by those who leave God out of their lives. Herod admired goodness in another but had none himself. He feared John but did not fear John's Master, Jesus Christ.

HE HEARD JOHN GLADLY (v. 20), and perhaps spoke warmly of John's preaching to others, but he himself was not prepared to act upon it. Many today are like Herod — they apppreciate good messages from God's Word, can discuss the points, may speak warmly of it to others, but they do not obey it or apply it to their own lives.

HE DID MANY THINGS (v. 20). He not only listened but went so far as to *do* many things. He obviously tried to straighten out *some* things in his life, but he was not prepared to do the one thing, and that was to give up his pet sin and to *repent* and *believe* as John taught (Mark 1: 15). Numbers of people are stirred by God's message; they are prepared to give up this and that, they may even be willing to become a church member, yet they continue in those sins which hinder them from coming to Christ. They are not prepared to come as sinners to the Saviour to be saved from their sin. The word of God became too personal for Herod. He liked some parts of John's preaching, but when it touched on the special sin in Herod's life (he had taken the wife of another man), he put John in prison to silence him (vv. 17, 18).

HE MADE A RASH AND FOOLISH VOW, and for the wicked woman Herodias' sake, he murdered the man of God. Some vows should never have been made and are not meant to be kept. In a thoughtless moment a wrong vow may be made in the presence of godless companions. Do not be tempted to keep such a promise. Herod was sorry but it was not a "godly sorrow (which) worketh repentance" (2 Cor. 7: 10).

HIS END. We see from the above points there were promising things about Herod, but he stifled his conscience to such an extent that any good impulses he may have had left him. He no longer wished to listen to God's Word, and he afterwards joined with others in mocking the Saviour Who had come to save such as he. He was "almost persuaded" but was lost.

JOHN.—

HE WAS FEARLESS FOR THE RIGHT, like Peter and John who said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5: 29). Although John knew that Herod had power to put him in prison and even to put him to death, he fearlessly told him of his sin. He might have been a popular favourite of Herod's but he would not compromise. May we never wink at sin in order to save ourselves trouble or to avoid sneers and persecution. John dealt faithfully with Herod about his sin (Mark 6: 8), with the people, the publicans and the soldiers (Luke 3: 10-14). But if we are to stand out against sin, our own lives as Christians must be consistent.

HE SUFFERED FOR THE RIGHT. Through no fault of his own John was in prison. When we suffer wrongfully for conscience sake and bear it patiently, this is acceptable to God (1 Peter 2: 19, 20). But so often we take the opposite view and say, "If I have done anything wrong I am prepared to suffer for it, but not when it is not my fault."

HIS FAITH WAS TESTED, though his courage was unshaken. He was not a reed shaken with the wind (Matt. 11: 7). John could not understand why the Saviour Who had come to preach deliverance to the captives, did not deliver *him,* but allowed him to remain in the awful dungeon. Even when the Lord received John's message, "Art Thou He that should come or look we for another?" the Lord made no explanation. John had served his Lord so faithfully and apparently He did not care. There are times when we cannot understand why certain things are allowed, and why the Lord does not deliver us from difficulties and trials, when He seems to be silent to us. But if we cannot understand, we can trust and believe that "He hath done all things well."

HE WAS ENCOURAGED NOT TO BE OFFENDED IN CHRIST (Matt. 11: 6). This is our Lord's tender warning to those who are His children. How it must grieve Him when we are offended at His dealings with us, or do we know Him and love Him so well that we bring joy to His heart by trusting Him in the dark. Although the Lord made no attempt to free His dear servant, or make explanations to him, He did send him materials on which to feed his faith and on which it could grow, and told him that blessing would come to those who were not offended in Him.

HIS DISCIPLES COMFORTED IN SORROW. When John's disciples had buried the body of John, their beloved master, "they went and told Jesus" (Matt. 14: 12). What rest of heart would be ours if we brought our bereavements, discouragements and difficulties to the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 11: 6—"Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S QUESTION

Luke 7:17-35

Golden Text: Luke 7:22

I. The Reason for the Question. Vs. 17-19. Cp. Mark 6:17-20; Matt. 14:2. John had doubtless been in prison some time and by now was discouraged. Perhaps he was expecting a Divine deliverance from his prison, little realizing that he was to be a martyr for God.

II. The Question Analyzed. V. 20.

1. A question of doubt—"Art thou He?" Psalm 42:5; Isa. 40:27, 28; 49:14, 15.
2. A question of discouragement—"Or look we for another?" 1 Peter 1:6, 7. They brought their doubts to Jesus.

III. The Question Answered. Vs. 21-23.

1. By the works of Deity; vs. 21, 22 . (1) Blind see. Cp. John 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:6. (2) Lame walk. Eph. 2:2; 4:1; 2:10; 4:17; 5:2; 5:8; 5:15. (3) Lepers cleansed. 1 John 1:7; Isa. 1:18; 1 John 4:17; Eph. 1:6. (4) Deaf hear. Romans 10:17; John 5:24; Isa. 55:3. (5) Dead raised. John 11:25; 5:25; 5:24; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13.
2. By the words of Deity; vs. 22, 23. (1) The Gospel preached—Himself the theme; v. 22. John 14:6; 10:9, etc.. etc. (2) The blessing on the believer in Him; v. 23. Cp. John 20:29; Matt. 5:1-11. Here was a full answer to John the Baptist's doubts and his question, "Art Thou He?" Only the Son of God could do and say these things.

IV. The Questioner Described. Vs. 24-30.

1. A prophet; vs. 24-26. God's voice to the people. The last of a long and illustrious line of Old Testament prophets.
2. A messenger; v. 27. Cp. Isa. 40:3-8. His message; Matt. 3:1-13.
3. The greatest prophet; vs. 28-30.

V. The Denunciation. Vs. 29-35.

1. The publican's attitude; v. 29. What it meant to be baptized: (1) They owned their need; Matt. 3:10. (2) They confessed themselves worthy of death. Matt. 3:11; Romans 6:23, etc. (3) They repented. Matt. 3:2; Luke 13:2; Acts 17:30.
2. The Pharisees' rejection; v. 30. What awful words! (1) Their character—self-righteous. Luke 18:11, 12; Romans 10:1-3. (2) Their conduct—"rejected." Note where (margin). "Within themselves, i. e., their hearts which seethed with rebellion against Christ. Prov. 1:24-33.
3. The Lord's illustration; vs. 31-35. John the Baptist's preaching had failed to produce sorrow for their sins. Christ's preaching had failed to give them joy, for they believed neither! Note their testimony—"A friend of publicans and sinners." How blessedly true! He is: (1) The sinner's Friend; Matt. 11:19. (2) The faithful Friend; Prov. 18:24. (3) The substitutory Friend; Prov. 6:1. (4) The saving Friend; John 15:13. (5) The satisfying Friend; S. of S. 2:3, 4. (6) The reproving Friend; Prov. 27:6. (7) The unchanging Friend; Prov. 17:17.

246. THE WOMAN OF THE CITY

Luke 7:36-50

Golden Text: Titus 3:5

I. The Invitation. V. 36. The Lord Jesus no respecter of persons. He will not force His way into any heart or home like a burglar, but waits to receive an invitation. Have you invited Him? Rev. 3:20. Note the character of Simon. A Pharisee. He was self righteous, proud, self satisfied, religious, and contemptuous of all who were not in his class. Yet he needed Christ as much as this sinful woman. Luke 15:1, 2.

II. The Woman. Vs. 37, 38, 47-50.

1. Her State; v. 37. (1) "A sinner." Define a sinner. Cp. 1 John 5:17; 3:4; James 4:17; Romans 14:23; Prov. 24:9; Gen. 6:5; 8:21. (2) She knew her need. Do you? Romans 3:9-19; John 3:18, 36; Romans 6:23; John 8:21, 24; Matt. 12:36, 37; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:15; 21:8. (3) She came to the only One Who could meet her need—Jesus. Cp. Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 10:9; Luke 15:2.
2. Her Attitude; v. 28. (1) At His feet. At once the lowest and highest place in the universe! (a) The place of humility. Cp. Luke 5:8; 1 Sam. 25:23. 24; 2 Sam. 9:6; Mark 5:22; 10:17; Phil. 2:10, 11. (b) The place of blessing. Cp. Luke 8:35; 10:39; Matt. 15:30; John 11:32; Luke 8:41; 17:16; Matt. 28:9. (2) Contrition—"wept." Cp. Acts 17:30; Luke 13:1-5. She brought her "glory to His feet; Gal. 6:14. 1 Cor. 11:15. (3) Worship. "Kissed feet—anointed." To be occupied with Christ is true worship. Cp. Rev. 5:9, 10. Thus this woman refreshed Him, loved Him, and worshipped Him.
3. Her Blessing; vs. 47-50. (1) Its Source—Himself. Cp. Eph. 1:4. "In Him." There can be no blessing apart from Christ. She had come to Him and now, from Him, there flowed into her soul that true blessedness that only He can give to those who trust Him. (2) Its assurance—His Own word. "I say." Cp. Matt. 24:35; 1 John 5:9-13; John 5:24; Romans 10:17. (3) Its Medium—Faith. Cp. Eph. 2:8; John 3:16; Romans 5:1, etc. (4) Its content. (a) Forgiveness; v. 47. Cp. Luke 5:24; 1 John 2:12; Acts 13:38, etc. (b) Salvation—"saved." V. 50. Romans 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18; 15:2; 2 Tim. 1:9, etc.. (c) Peace; v. 50. Literally: "Go into peace." Romans 5:1; Col. 1:20; Phil. 4:6, 7, 9.

III. The Rebuke. Vs. 39-45.

1. Cause—self righteousness. Cp. Romans 3:22, 23; Isa. 64:6; Romans 10:3.
2. Manner—By a parable. This is the subject of a future lesson. Simon should have brought water, but God opened a fountain in the eyes of a sinner to wash His feet. Contrast these two people and put the question: "Which one represents you?"

247. THE TWO DEBTORS

Luke 7:29-43

Golden Text: Luke 7:47

I. The Circumstances. Vs. 29-39.

1. The attitude of the self-righteous; vs. 29, 30. Rejection—note the marginal reading. Cp. Psalm 78:32; Isa. 53:1; Matt. 21:32; Mark 6:6; John 6:6; 3:18-21; Acts 13:41.
2. Their inconsistency; vs. 31-34. Christ's preaching failed to give them joy and the Baptist's preaching had failed to bring sorrow, for they believed neither. Unbelief always finds an excuse. Jer. 8:9; Luke 22:67; John 3:12; 5:44-47; 1 Cor. 1:19-28.
3. Their accusation; v. 34. "A friend of publicans." Cp. Luke 15:2; Mark 15:31. See the marks of a true friend. Job 6:14; Prov. 17:17; 18:24; 27:6, 9; 18:24; John 15:13; 13:1. Happy is that one who has Christ as his best Friend!
4. The invitation and the incident; vs. 36-40. See the lesson on this, number 153.

II. The Illustration. Vs. 40, 41.

1. The Creditor—God. (1) Holy. Exod. 15:11; 1 Sam. 6:20; Job 15:15; Psalms 22:3; 111:9; Isa. 6:3. (2) Just. 2 Chron. 19:7; Neh. 9:33; Job 37:23; Psalms 62:12; 89:14; Eccles. 12:14; Zep. 3:5. (3) Sin hating. Hab. 1:13; Exod. 34:7; Psalms 7:9-11; 11:4, 5; 90:8, 11; Eccles. 3:15.
2. The debtors—Man as a sinner. (1) What man owes to God; Luke 10:27, 28. (a) A perfect life. (b) Perfect obedience. (c) Perfect love. (2) None has ever given it. Therefore, all are spiritual bankrupts. Cp. Mark 5:26, 27; Luke 15:14, 20; Gen. 47:18; Romans 3:10-19. (3) All alike are debtors, but all are not debtors alike. (a) 50 pence represents the moral living, respectable, good citizen, religiously inclined and brought up, yet still an unsaved sinner. Cp. Mark 10:17-20; James 1:10; Isa. 53:6. "Own way;" Romans 3:9, 10; 8:5-8. (b) 500 pence is the gross outward sinner like the woman; Luke 7:37; 18:13, etc. Yet there is "no difference" in fact of sin. The difference lies only in the degree of it; Romans 3:23. (c) Illustrate this still further and show that there is "no difference." (aa) In a prison, for all have been found guilty. (bb) In a hospital, for all are sick and need a doctor. (cc) In a cemetery, for all are equally dead. (dd) In a sinking ship, for all are equally in danger.
3. The Deliverance; v. 42. (1) The fact of it. "He forgave." Cp. Micah 7:18, 19; Isa. 44:22; Hosea 11:9. (2) The reason for it. "Nothing to pay." Both were bankrupts. (3) The character of it. (a) Freely. Cp. Rev. 21:17; Isa. 55:1-3, etc. (b) Frankly. Cp. Luke 7:47; Isa. 45:19, 22, etc. (c) Fully. Cp. Acts 13:38; 1 John 1:7, etc.
4. Result of it—"Love." Cp. 2 Cor. 5:14-20; John 4:19, etc.

248. THE SOWER

READ Matthew 13: 3-9, 18-23.

THEME: Four kinds of hearers.

TELL THE STORY.

THE SEED.—

IT IS THE WORD OF GOD (Luke 8: 11; 1 Peter 1: 23). It was all good for it had the germ of life in it. It would grow and produce fruit (Col. 1: 5, 6), but it needed the right soil in which to take root. Its success depended on the soil that received it.

THE SOWER.—

HE IS THE ONE WHO SOWS THE WORD OF GOD IN MEN'S HEARTS. The sower was the same in each case, yet what different results were obtained. We need to remember that not everyone who hears the Word is going to be saved. Even when the Lord Jesus was upon earth, there were many who did not receive Him. Not all who heard the preaching of the Apostle Paul were saved. At Athens, some mocked, others delayed a decision and some believed (Acts 17: 32, 34). In three instances in this parable the seed came to nothing, but it was worth while sowing it because of the fourth. God's Word will not return unto Him void (Isaiah 55: 11). The promise to all who earnestly sow the seed is, that they shall come with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them (Psalm 126: 6).

THE SOWER'S AIM: That they might believe and be saved (Luke 8: 12). That they might bring forth fruit unto holiness (Romans 6: 22).

THE SOIL — REPRESENTS FOUR KINDS OF HEARTS.—

THE WAYSIDE (v. 4), represents the indifferent who hear, but do not understand (v. 19). Their hearts have grown hard because they are too much occupied with worldly things and have no time for God. As we grow older, the heart becomes harder. Sin hardens the mind so that it cannot receive the Gospel.

"Room for pleasure, room for business, but for Christ the Crucified,
Not a place that He can enter, in the heart for which He died."

Even the Gospel may harden some. They have become so accustomed to hearing it, neglecting and rejecting it, that it leaves them harder than ever. The seed lies on the surface and the birds of the air snatch it away. Satan, the prince of the power of the air, knows there is life in the seed, and he snatches it away immediately (Mark 4: 15).

THE ROCK-STONY GROUND.—

THIS REPRESENTS SHALLOW HEARERS WHO MAKE A PROFESSION but are not really born again (Luke 8: 13).

THEY HEARD THE WORD (v. 20). They heard the Way of Salvation. They knew how to come to Christ. They were good hearers, they enjoyed hearing the Gospel preached. They liked to come to Sunday School, and to attend meetings. They could discuss the lesson or the message with others, and perhaps say it was good. But hearing is not sufficient. Hearing only will not change the life and produce fruit. "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1: 22).

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD (v. 20). They believed the Word of God is true. If they heard a message on the Lord's Coming or about death and judgment, they trembled. When they heard about the love of God, their emotions were stirred and they may even have wept as they listened. They then tried themselves to effect a change in their lives. But they received the Word with their mind only, or in their emotions, but not with *the heart*. "For with *the heart* man believeth unto righteousness" (Romans 10: 10).

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD IMMEDIATELY (v. 20). They did not give much thought to it. Perhaps they saw someone else accept Christ and so they, too, made a profession. But in their own case there was no repentance, consequently there was no saving faith. Better a slow, deep work than a quick, superficial one.

THEY RECEIVED IT WITH JOY (v. 20). Their joy might deceive themselves and others also, but there are different kinds of joy which do not come from God. The rich fool was happy for a time in his possessions. The prodigal son was happy for a season in his feasting and riotous living. This kind of joy is not the fruit of the Spirit, and it does not last.

THEY MADE RAPID PROGRESS (apparently); the seed "sprang up" (v. 5). They may have become active members in Christian organisations, or leaders in Christian work.

BUT THEY FAILED UNDER TESTING. Immediately they were offended. Straightway they stumble (v. 21 R.V.). The seed came up, the sun of trial, temptation and persecution came up also. They straightway received the seed, they straightway let it go. Testing shows who are Christ's. If the Word is well rooted trial only causes the root to go deeper.

THE REASON. There was only a little soil on top and rock underneath. There had never been any real repentance, no broken heart for sin. "Break up your fallow ground" (Jer. 4: 3). The Holy Spirit must use the hammer of the Word of God to break the rock in pieces (Jer. 23: 29), to change it into good ground. Saving faith is preceded by real repentance. There had never been real faith, but want of depth and no root. They say they believe in Christ but they have never received Him as Saviour. *They lacked moisture* (Luke 8: 6). They are not possessed by the Holy Spirit and, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8: 9). Strong roots cannot be pulled out by man or withered by the sun of persecution.

THORNY GROUND (vv. 7, 22).—

THIS REPRESENTS PROFESSING CHRISTIANS who may belong to Christ, but it is difficult to see the wheat because the thorns are so much in evidence. "Becomes unfruitful" seems to suggest that there was a promise of fruit, but it was very sickly and became unfruitful.

THORNS ARE THE CARES OF THIS WORLD (v. 22)—Anxiety about daily duties, or provision for daily needs. Some are so taken up with their temporal needs that they have little time for God and for His Word. Martha was in danger of having the good seed choked by the thorns of cares (Luke 10: 41). Thorns will rob us of our joy and peace.

THORNS ARE THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES (v. 22). Those who have not much of this world's goods can also grow thorns as well as those who are taken up with their riches. Those who *would be* rich, setting their heart upon riches, "fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts." Riches if rightly used on the other hand, can be a blessing to those who have them.

THORNS ARE THE PLEASURES OF THIS LIFE (v. 22). There is nothing against healthy, wholesome recreation, in fact it is necessary to health, but *living* for amusement is to grow thorns which will choke the good seed and the life becomes unfruitful.

THE GOOD GROUND.—

THIS REPRESENTS THE HONEST AND GOOD HEART, honest, sincere, with no hypocrisy and pretence, an earnest seeker after God (Luke 8: 15). The heart has become soft because it was ploughed by God. Fruit-bearing is not a *crisis* but a *process* and must be a lifelong habit. Notice the steps:—

HE HEARS AND UNDERSTANDS (v. 23), because he has thought much about the message and prayed about it. Only the Holy Spirit can illumine the Word for us.

HE ACCEPTS THE WORD (Mark 4: 20), and applies it to his own heart and life, learning all the time from its teaching.

HE HOLDS IT FAST (Luke 8: 15). Because it has fallen into soft, prepared ground, it is impossible for the birds to snatch it away.

HE HAS PATIENCE (v. 15). He is not always pulling up the seed to see how it is growing; he gives God time to work. The good ground has no stones, no weeds, and represents a clean, willing heart.

Number 1, 2, 3, 4. Which are you?

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 8: 18—"Take heed . . . how ye hear."

THE SOWER AND THE SEED

Matthew 13:1-23

Golden Text: 1 Peter 1:23

I. The Sower—The Lord Jesus—The best Sower in the world. Luke 19:10; John 4:34; 6:38; Mark 10:45; John 6:62.

1. The eager multitude; Matt. 13:2. It was during the days of His popularity, when vast audiences followed Him everywhere He went. The time was coming when they should all forsake Him. His audience composed of all classes, Pharisees, Publicans, sick, halt, lame, blind. All the various kinds of "grounds" were represented in His audience.
2. The improvised pulpit, "a boat."
3. The matchless Teacher; John 7:46. He taught in many ways (1) By parables; (2) Miracles; (3) Example; (4) Illustration; (5) Plain statement, etc.

II. The Seed—The word of God—God's word is the best seed in the world.

1. Living. Cp. Heb. 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23; Isa. 55:10, 11; Jer. 22:29; Isa. 40:8.
2. Regenerating. 1 Peter 1:23; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:2; John 5:39; 20:31; Romans 10:17; James 1:21.
3. Assuring; 1 John 5:13; 1:4; 2 Peter 1:19; Acts 17:11.
4. Sustaining. 1 Peter 2:2, 3; Col. 3:16; John 17:17; Psalms 119:9, 11, 104; 17:4; John 15:3; Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 1 John 2:14.

III. The Soil—The hearer of the word. The effect of the seed was determined by the nature of the soil into which it fell and the soil is the heart. There were four classes of hearers:

1. Wayside. The careless hearer; vs. 4, 19. (1) Cause—Satan. 2 Cor. 4:2; 1 Cor. 1:18; John 8:39-45. (2) Result—indifference. (3) Illust.—Judas. Cp. Acts 17:32; Heb. 4:2, etc. Notice particularly that the seed that did not come to fruition fell upon soil that had not been plowed up. The plow speak of conviction of sin, produced by the Spirit of God as He cuts the heart, reveals the hidden sins and prepares it for the reception of God's word. John 16:8-11; Acts 2:37; 7:54.
2. Stony. The impressible hearer; vs. 20, 21. (1) Cause—Feelings aroused, sentiment stirred. (2) Result, good resolutions, intentions, reformation made, but not regenerated. (3) Illustration—Felix; Acts 24:25. Agrippa; Acts 26:28.
3. Thorny—The cumbered hearer; vs. 7, 22. (1) Cause—secret cherished sin, riches, pleasures, pet sins, business. The conscience not reached. (2) The result—Choked; no fruit. (3) Illustration—Rich young man; Mark 10.
4. Good—The regenerated hearer. (1) Cause—The ground ploughed; conviction of the Spirit of God. John 16:8, 9; Acts 2:37. Honest heart, heard, kept. (2) Result—Fruit in varying degrees. John 15:16; Romans 1:13; 6:22; Heb. 13:15; Phil. 4:17. (3) Illustration; 1 Thessalonians 1:3-10; 2:13. The proof of reality is fruit.

249. THE TARES AND THE WHEAT

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Golden Text: Matthew 13:30

I. The Two Sowers.

1. The Son of Man; vs. 24, 37. (1) He came to sow the word. John 1:17, 18; 3:16; 4:34; 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:10; Mark 10:45, etc.. etc. (2) He died to make salvation possible. John 12:24; 3:14; 2 Cor. 5:21, etc. (3) He lives to make effectual the salvation He provided. Heb. 7: 25; Romans 4:24, 25; 8:34-39.
2. The Devil; vs. 25, 39. The enemy. The Devil is the great counterfeiter. He seeks to imitate Christ and, by this means, delude people into hearing his gospel, believing his religion and serving him, and all the while imagining they are serving God! Is Christ a Sower? So also is the Devil. Does Christ sow seed? So also does the Devil. (Gal. 1:8). Does Christ have "ministers," or servants? So does the Devil. (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Does Christ work miracles? So does the Devil. (2 Thess. 2:9). Does Christ have a church? So does the Devil. (Rev. 2:9). Behind modernism with its bloodless gospel, and every false cult and religion is the Devil with his host of wicked spirits seeking to delude and enslave unwary souls. Eph. 6:11-13. (1) He lives to sow evil. Cp. John 8:44. Hence all the false cults of today. (2) He seeks to spoil the good. Eph. 6:11, 12; 2 Cor. 11:13-15.

II. The Two Crops. Vs. 25-30.

1. Saved—the children of the Kingdom. The crop presupposes: (1) Ploughing—conviction. Isa. 28:24; Hosea 10:12; Psalm 38:2-6; Lam. 1:20; Acts 2:37. etc. (2) The sowing—Conversion. 1 Thess. 2:13; John 5:24; James 1:21, etc. (3) The crop—fruit to the glory of God. Romans 6:14-22; John 15:16; Heb. 13:15. The proof of real salvation is fruit.
2. Unsaved—the children of the evil one. Cp. John 8:44; 1 John 5:19; Luke 16:13. Note the tares are very similar in appearance to the wheat but no fruit. Note, also, the field is the **world**, not the church. Distinguish between Christianity and Christendom. In Christendom both saved and unsaved grow together—but this should not be so in the assembly or church. See 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

III. The Two Harvests. Vs. 30, 38-40.

1. With Christ at His coming. Forever with the Lord in that glorious place He is even now preparing for His own. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-57; John 14:1-3.
2. With the Devil in the lake of fire; v. 30. Cp. Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10-15; 21:8, 27.

What Shall the Harvest Be?

250. THE HIDDEN TREASURE AND THE PEARL

Matthew 13:44-46

Golden Text: 1 Peter 2:9

THE TREASURE

I. The Field—The World.

1. The field created—a paradise. Gen. 1:26-31; 2:8-17; Jer. 10:12. All fair and beautiful.
2. The field ruined by sin. What sin has wrought: (1) The world has been ruined by Satan who, as the tempter, caused man to fall and sin to enter the world. Romans 5:12. (2) The world is now described as "lying in the arms of the wicked one." 1 John 5:19. (3) The world is now "guilty before God." Romans 3:19. (4) The whole world now groans in pain waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. Romans 8:19-23.
3. The field loved; John 3:16, 17; 1 John 4:9; John 6:33.

II. The Treasure. Cp. Exod. 19:5; Psalm 135:4; 1 Peter 2:9. This can apply to both Israel and the Church. Applied to the church, which is composed of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, we find the treasure was:

1. Foreknown; Romans 8:29; Psalm 139:1; 1 Peter 1:2.
2. Predestinated; Romans 8:29; Eph. 1:5. 11.
3. Called; Romans 8:30; 1:6; 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:15.
4. Justified; Romans 8:30; 3:24-26.
5. Glorified; Romans 8:30. For God calls things which are not, as though they were. Romans 4:17. The church, then, is God's eternal purpose. Eph. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:9.

III. The Finder—Christ.

1. He came for this purpose. He is the great Searcher. Luke 19:10; 15:5.
2. He died for this purpose. Romans 14:9. See Ezek. 34:11-16. Note the "I wills."

IV. The Joy of the Finder. Christ's joy was twofold. Psalm 40:6-8; John 4:34.

1. The joy of doing the Father's will. Heb. 12: 2, 3; Psalm 40:6, 8; John 4:34.
2. The joy of having His blood bought bride. Luke 15:6, 9, 24, etc.

V. The Price Paid—"All that he hath." Cp. Phil. 2:5-8; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14, 20; 1 Cor. 6:20.

VI. The Possession. Cp. S. of S. 2:16; John 17: 6, 10, 24.

THE PEARL

1. The Pearl—An illustration of the Church. Note it is not Christ Who is "the pearl of great price" but the Church which He redeemed by His blood. The pearl is like the church.

1. In its unity—one pearl. The Church is "one body." 1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12. 13; Eph. 4:4-16.
2. In its formation—by accretion. A vital union —an organism. Acts 2:41, 47; 5:14; 11:24; Eph. 2:21; Col. 2:19.
3. In its completion; Eph. 5:25-27.

III. The Price. 1 Peter 2:9 (Marg.). Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18; 1 Cor. 3:21-23.

IV. The Purpose. Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Cor. 6:20. To reflect His glory.

251. CHRIST STILLING THE STORM

READ Mark 4: 35-41.

THEME Trusting the Lord in trouble.

TELL THE STORY.

The day had been a great one. Our Lord had shown in a remarkable way his healing and teaching powers. Large crowds had been attracted; they had been taught precious parables and many had been wonderfully healed. But the day did not come to a close without a storm. When our Lord and His disciples set out in the boat to cross the lake, the weather was fair, and the sea calm and peaceful. Suddenly the storm broke, the little vessel almost filled with water and was ready to sink. This represents the circumstances of our life which is like the sea, sometimes calm and sometimes stormy, sometimes with things running smoothly and at other times there are difficulties and trials.

THE SHIP IN THE STORM. THE PURPOSE OF TRIAL.— *TO TEST US.*—The Lord allows trials to come into our lives to test us, to see if we will trust Him. He has not promised that we, as Christians, shall always have an easy time. On the contrary He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer" (John 16: 33). He knew the storm would come, yet He said to the disciples, "Let us pass over unto the other side" (v. 35). Notice that He said "Let US" . . . He does not send us into the storm alone, He goes with us. What confidence this should give us.

FOR CHRIST'S HONOUR AND GLORY. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth . . . might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1: 7). Trials and testings afford us an opportunity to "glorify . . . the Lord in the fires" (Is. 24: 15) — in the fires of temptation, sorrow, suffering and bereavement. But how often instead of glorifying Him we fret, grumble and complain under the testings.

TO SHOW CHRIST'S POWER.—Just as He showed His power in stilling the storm, so He can quiet all the storms in our lives, and give us His perfect peace. Whether that storm reaches us at home, at school or in any other place, remember He is with us. God has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand (Is. 40: 12) "He maketh the storm a calm" (Ps. 107: 29). The stormy wind fulfils His Word and effects His purpose (Ps. 148: 8).

OTHER LITTLE SHIPS.— "There were also . . . other little ships" (v. 36). We do not travel alone, there are always other little ships going with us, watching us to see what we are doing and, perhaps following our example. "None of us liveth to himself" (Rom. 14: 7). Our influence has its effect upon others, upon those in the home, or

at school, or upon our companions. Let us remember these other little ships.

THE SHIP'S PASSENGER — THE LORD JESUS.—

HE WAS MAN as well as God.—Here we see Him asleep on a pillow (v. 38). He was very tired, and so when we are weary we can be comforted in the thought that our Lord was weary too.

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4: 15). "He knoweth our frame" (Ps. 103: 14). By sleeping in the midst of the storm He was teaching His disciples that we are safe in our Father's hands whatever may come. Peter was able to sleep in prison the night before he was expecting to die, knowing that He was in God's hand (Acts 12: 6). May we, too, have the same trust in God's love and care.

THE DISCIPLES DOUBTED HIS LOVE AND CARE.—"Carest Thou not" (v. 38), they said. Sometimes we, too, doubt His loving care for us. It may be when we are in pain, or when we see a loved one in great suffering and, in spite of our prayers, they are not healed. Then we are tempted, like the disciples, to doubt His love. Let us not grieve our Lord by doing this.

HE CALMED THE TROUBLED SEA when He said, "Peace, be still" (v. 39). He can calm our hearts in the midst of the storm of sorow and trouble. It does not matter how the storm may be raging on top of the sea, yet underneath, if one can go down far enough, it is perfectly calm. We, too, may know the peace of God deep down in our hearts, even though the trials and sorrows and difficulties may still be there. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth" (John 14: 27), said the Lord Jesus to His disciples.

HE REBUKED THE DISCIPLES FOR THEIR FEAR AND LACK OF FAITH (v. 49).—How often we, too, are fearful — fearful not only of trouble that has already come to us, but fearful of what *may* come. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" (Ps. 56: 3) is a good verse, but there is a better, "I *will* trust, and *not be afraid*" (Is. 12: 2). There is no need to fear when the Lord Himself is with us in the storm. How we must hurt our Lord by our lack of faith and trust in Him and in His love. They had seen His miracles, they had known His love and care. Is it any wonder then, that He said to them, "How is it that ye have no faith?"

THE SAFETY OF THE SHIP.—The ship could not be lost because the Lord Jesus was on board. No real harm could come to them when He was there. Let us remember, that whatever may come, Jesus Himself is with us and all is well. He says, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you" (John 14: 27).

MEMORY VERSE—Mark 4: 40—"Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?"

THE STILLING OF THE STORM

Matthew 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25

Golden Text: Isaiah 26:3

I. The Stormy Sea. Matt. 8:23, 24. Typical of the sea of life. The storms of adversity, trial, temptation and difficulty, etc. Note they followed Christ into the ship; v. 23. The presence of Christ with them did not give them immunity from the storm. They learned, in the storm, things they could never have learned otherwise. Christ did not speak of going to the bottom, but to "the other side;" Luke 8:22. The end of the journey was foreseen and their safe arrival guaranteed by His word.

II. The Sleeping Master. V. 24.

1. His perfect humanity. He was perfect Man as well as very God. Both found perfect expression in Him. Cp. John 4:6; Mark 11:12; John 10:22; 19:28; Heb. 2:17, etc.
2. His absolute trust. He knew the end from the beginning, so there was no need to worry or be fearful. John 14:27; Psalm 16:5-8; Isa. 26:3, 4.
3. His apparent neglect for their safety. His purpose, as is the purpose of all trial. was to test the reality of their faith, love and obedience. Isa. 50:10; Matt. 6:25, 26; 1 Peter 1:7; Isa. 49:15.

III. The Servant's Distress. V. 25.

1. Their reproach; Mark 4:38. Cp. 1 Peter 5:7; John 10:27-29; Isa. 43:1; 42:6; Deut. 33:3; Matt. 6:26, etc.; Jude 24.
2. Their cry. Their prayer was very brief and very much to the point. Matt. 8:25. Cp. Psalms 107:21-30; 32:6; 91:15; Joel 2:32.

IV. The Savior's Rebuke. V. 26.

1. The cause—"Little faith"—Unbelief. Isa. 7:9; John 20:27; Heb. 3:12; James 1:6. How could the ship sink with the Creator aboard? Illust. The safety of Noah in the ark was guaranteed by the presence of God within it. Gen. 7:1; 8:16.
2. The result—"Fearful." When faith fails courage soon follows, and fear fills the soul. Isa. 48:18; Judges 3:7; 1 Sam. 12:9; Psalm 106: 21, 24, 25, etc.

V. The Stilled Storm. V. 26. Cp. Mark 4:39.

1. The Rebuker. The Son of God; Matt. 4:39. His mighty power revealed. John 5:36; 10:38.
2. The result—"A great calm." (1) The storm of God's wrath against sin exhausted upon the Divine Substitute at Calvary, Who purchased our peace by His precious blood. Psalms 69:1, 2; 22:1; 47:2; 88:7; 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:21; Romans 5:1. (2) The storms of the Christian life stilled through trust. Phil. 4:6, 7; Isa. 26:3; 1 Peter 5:7. etc. "Peace, perfect peace, the future all unknown; Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.

VI. The Startled Disciples. V. 27. "What manner of Man?" He was both God and Man. 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:19. etc.

252. THE DEMONIAC HEALED

Luke 8:26-40

Golden Text: Luke 8:39

I. His Condition. Vs. 26-30. Here is a graphic illustration of the unsaved.

1. Naked; v. 27. Clothes speak of righteousness. The unsaved have: (1) No righteousness before God. Romans 3:10-14; Isa. 64:6. (2) No life from God; Eph. 2:1. (3) No hope in God; Eph. 2:12.
2. Unclean. Sin not only strips man of his righteousness before God but pollutes him also. Mark 5:2. Cp. Psalm 14:2, 3; Isa. 59: 1, 2, 12.
3. Uncontrollable; v. 29. Man cannot control himself though he may proudly recite: "I am the master of my fate! I am the captain of my soul." Cp. Romans 7:9-15, 21.
4. Under power of another—demons—Satan; v. 30. Cp. Eph. 2:2, 3; 2 Cor. 4:3, 4; Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18.
5. Homeless; v. 27. Dwelt in place of death and corruption. Fit picture of this world. Eph. 4:18, 1 Cor. 6:9-11.
6. Wounded. Sin is spiritual suicide. Man wounds himself each time he sins. Cp. Mark 5:5. Cp. Prov. 8:36; Hosea 13:9; Isa. 1:5, 6.
7. In agony. Cp. Mark 5:5. "Always." Cp. Isa. 57:20, 21.
8. Dangerous; Matt. 8:28. The sinner is a spiritual menace.

II. His Deliverance. Vs. 28-36.

1. The first move made by Deity. Christ crossed the sea to find him; see Luke 8:22-25. Cp. Heb. 12:2; John 3:16, etc.; 1 John 4:10. Note Christ passed through a storm ere He could reach and save him. Surely this is a picture of Calvary and the storm of God's wrath He endured.
2. The demons cast out. No cure while they controlled. Some demons that will have to go ere Christ saves: Pride, fear of man, prejudice, procrastination, etc.
3. He recognized Jesus as Son of God; v. 28. Cp. 1 John 4:15; 5:1; John 20:31.
4. He came as he was with the chains still hanging on his wrists. Mark 5:6. "Just as I am."
5. The word of power; vs. 30-32. Cp. Mark 5:8; Matt. 28:19; Mark 10:27.
6. The effect; v. 35. (1) Peace—at the feet of Jesus; Romans 5:1. (2) Clothed; v. 35. Cp. Isa. 61:10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Romans 3:22; 1 Cor. 1: 30, 31. (3) Right mind. Cp. Eph. 4:23; Phil. 2:5; Col. 3:10. (4) Under control of Christ—at His feet. Phil. 2:13; 4:13; Romans 12:1, 2; 6:13, 19.

III. His Service. Vs. 38-40.

1. He desired to follow; v. 38.
2. His commission; v. 39. (1) The sphere—home. Cp. 1 Tim. 5:4. (2) The theme—what the Lord had done. Cp. Psalms 40:13; 66:16; Romans 10: 9, 10.

253. JAIRUS' DAUGHTER RAISED FROM THE DEAD

READ Mark 5: 22-24, 35-43.

THEME: Christ's power over death. TELL THE STORY.

JAIRUS IN ANXIETY AND SORROW.—

TROUBLE BROUGHT THIS RULER TO CHRIST (vv. 22, 23). Perhaps when all was well with him and his family, he either gave no thought to the claims of Christ or may even have been opposed to Him. But when his little daughter lay dying, in his extremity he came to the Lord Jesus. It often takes sickness, anxiety or sorrow and even bereavement, to bring people to Christ.

HE WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT HIS CHILD. This was because of her physical condition. Are we as concerned about the spiritual need of those whom we love?

HE CAME HUMBLY, falling at the feet of Jesus, making no demands because he realised that he had no claim upon Jesus except that of his great need. How different from the proud Pharisee in Luke 18: 11, 12.

HE PRAYED EARNESTLY. "He besought Him greatly" (v. 23), to come and lay His hands on his little daughter. Our approach to God must be in a humble spirit, realising our own unworthiness and casting ourselves on His mercy.

JAIRUS' FAITH.—

HE BELIEVED IN THE POWER OF THE LORD TO HEAL (v. 23). Though his faith was not as strong as the centurion's (lesson 12) who said, "Say *in a word*, and my servant shall be healed" (Luke 7: 7), yet the Lord saw that his faith was real. He did not despise it, He knew it would grow.

HIS FAITH WAS TESTED. The thronging of the people, the healing of the sick woman and the conversation with her must have delayed the progress of Jesus when every moment was precious to Jairus, yet he held on through delay and difficulty. Christ's delays are often tests of faith, as when he delayed coming to Mary and Martha when Lazarus was ill, and to the disciples in the storm.

HIS FAITH WAS STRENGTHENED AND ENCOURAGED BY CHRIST. No doubt Jairus' faith began to fail when those from his home came and told him that his daughter was dead and not to trouble the Master any further. But the Lord Jesus, not heeding their words, turned quickly to Jairus to buoy up his sinking faith, saying, "Be not afraid, only believe" (v. 36). How tender and thoughtful He was for the sorrowing father, who perhaps, was beginning to think that it was now too late.

LET US TRUST AND NOT BE AFRAID (Isaiah 12: 2). We go to God in comparatively small trials because we think He can help us. But there are times when we say, "It is no use troubling God further; even *He* cannot help us in this sorrow; we must bear it as best we can." But Jesus knows the way out and, even though He does not give back the loved one, he says, "FEAR NOT, ONLY BELIEVE" that all is well.

DEATH.—

MAN HAS NO POWER OVER DEATH. With all the wonderful, modern discoveries of science, no one has, or ever will discover, how to abolish death till Christ destroys this last enemy.

DEATH FOR THE CHRISTIAN IS CALLED SLEEP, but it is not unconsciousness. Of Stephen's death it was said, "He fell asleep (Acts 7: 60); of others, "They which are fallen asleep in Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 18); "them which sleep in Jesus" (1 Thess. 4: 14). So there is no more terror in death for those who belong to Christ than in falling asleep. The Apostle Paul said, "O death, where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15: 55). Christians need not be afraid of death, knowing that they will awaken to find themselves with the Lord Jesus Whom they know and love.

CHRIST CAME TO GIVE LIFE TO THE SPIRITUALLY DEAD. We read of His raising only three people from the dead — the widow's son, Lazarus and Jairus' daughter. But He came to do a greater work — to give life to those who are dead in sins (Eph. 2: 1). "The dead (in sins) shall hear His voice and live" (John 5: 25). Only Christ, by the Holy Spirit can give life (John 10: 10). In the future, dead bodies are to be raised, and, "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15: 26; Rev. 21: 4). Even children can hear the voice which calls them from spiritual death.

THOSE WHO RECEIVE LIFE FROM THE DEAD NEED FOOD (v. 43). Jesus not only gives life; He sustains it. This new life needs to be nourished by the Word of God. "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2: 2). Older Christians have the responsibility of feeding those who receive new life, otherwise how are they to be built up in the faith? (John 21: 15; 1 Peter 5: 2).

MEMORY VERSE.—John 11: 25—"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

Luke 8:41, 42, 49-56

Golden Text: John 5:25

We will consider four classes of individuals described in this lesson.

I. The Father. Vs. 41, 42.

1. His position. A ruler of the synagogue. Cp. John 3:1. As such he was religious and highly esteemed in the community.
2. His condition—sorrowful; Matt. 5:4.
3. His attitude—at His feet—Humility. Cp. Matt. 18:4; Prov. 3:24; James 4:6; Psalm 138:6; Isa. 66:2; Luke 14:11; James 4:10, etc.
4. His petition: (a) To come to the house; v. 41. Cp. Rev. 3:20; Luke 24:29; Matt. 7:7. (b) To raise his daughter. Read Matt. 9:18.
5. His obstacle; v. 42. The throng of people composed mostly of the curious. Cp. Luke 19:3; 1 Peter 1:7.

II. The Saviour. Vs. 49, 50.

1. Sympathizing; v. 50. He was the Man of sorrows. Isa. 53:3. Cp. Heb. 4:15; Isa. 42:2, 3; 50:4; 61:1, 3; 63:9.
2. Encouraging; v. 50. Fear not—only believe. Cp. Psalm 37:3-7; Isa. 43:1; 41:13, 14; Mark 9:23; Heb. 11:6.
3. Accepting the invitation to come to the house. V. 51. Cp. Acts 16:14-15.

III. The Girl. V. 40.

1. Loved. Cp. John 3:16; 1 John 4:10, etc.; Mark 10:21.
2. Young; vs. 54. 42; Eccles. 12:1. At the threshold of life. The bright prospects, etc.
3. Beautiful. Illustration; a good moral life, etc. Illus. Mark 10:19, 20, etc.
4. But dead. Cp. Eph. 2:1. She lacked life. Cp. 1 John 5:12; John 3:36; 10:10; 17:3; 20:31.

IV. The Mockers. Vs. 53-55.

1. The source of it—unbelief. Psalm 106:24, 25; Mark 7:21.
2. Its expression. — They laughed to scorn the Lord of glory! What fearful sin was this! Psalm 1:5. They despised Him. Romans 2:4, 5; Prov. 14:9; 9:12.
3. The effect of it. They were put out. See Matt. 25:30; 22:13; Rev. 21:8, 27; Prov. 1:24-31.

V. The Miracle. Vs. 54-56.

1. The touch of His hand; v. 54. Cp. Luke 8:44; Mark 1:41; Heb. 7:25.
2. The life-giving word; v. 54. "Arise." Cp. John 5:25, 26; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 5:9-13; John 5:24.
3. The directions for her strength and growth; v. 55. "Eat." Cp. I Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; 2 Thess. 1:3.

254. THE TOUCH OF FAITH

Mark 5:25-34

Golden Text: Mark 5:34

I. Her Condition. Vs. 25, 26.

1. Defiled; v. 25. Lev. 15:19, 20. Cp. Psalm 14:2. 3; Ezek. 16:5, 6; Prov. 20:9; Job 9:30, 31; Isa. 64:6; Jer. 16:18.
2. Outcast; v. 25. Cp. Lev. 15:19, 20; Isa. 59:2; Hab. 1:13; Eph. 2:13; Amos 5:12.
3. Suffering; v. 26. Cp. Gen. 3:17; Gal. 6:7; Num. 32:23; Romans 6:23; Ezek. 18:4; Prov. 5:22, etc.
4. Penniless; v. 26. Notice some others who, when they had spent all, came to their senses and to God. Ill. Luke 7:41, 42. Spiritual bankruptcy; Matt. 5:26, 27; Luke 15:14-20; Gen. 47:18; Romans 3:22, 23; Romans 5:6.
5. Hopeless; v. 26. Call attention to the "many physicians" of today such as modernism, Christian Science, Unity, Sacerdotalism, etc., etc., Each of these physicians has his own "sure cure" remedy for the disease of sin, but not one of them can heal. Cp. Eph. 2:12; Romans 8:5-8.

II. Her Faith. Vs. 27, 28.

1. Faith's basis; v. 27. Doubtless she had heard of the healing of the demoniac which had occured just previously; Mark 5:15, 20. Cp. Romans 10:17; Isa. 45:19, 22; Acts 13:38. "Be it known;" Mark 16:15, 16, etc.
2. Faith's simplicity. She believed in His ability to save; v. 28. Cp. Heb. 11:6; Mark 9:23; Luke 8:50.
3. Faith's boldness. She came in spite of the crowd; v. 24. She did not allow the crowd to deter her. There is always "a crowd" to keep a seeking sinner from the Savior. Jer. 29:13; Prov. 29:25; Ezek. 2:6; Jer. 1:8.
4. Faith's attitude. She came as she was; v. 24. Matt. 11:28; Isa. 46:12, 13. She didn't try any more remedies, or attempt to make herself feel better before she came. Her very need drove her to the Savior.
5. Faith's objective. She touched Him; v. 27. Acts 5:31. "Him;" John 3:16; 1:12. She realized her only hope lay in personal contact with the Son of God.

III. Her Blessing. Vs. 29-34.

1. She was cured; v. 29. Note. (1) There is healing virtue in Christ because of (a) Who He is—the holy, sinless Son of God. (b) What He has done; Isa. 53:5, 6; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:20, 21. (2) This virtue is sufficient for the most desperate cases; Heb. 7:25. (3) This virtue goes out at the touch of faith; Eph. 2:8. (4)This virtue is consciously given, and consciously received. "I perceive." "She felt." Cp. 1 John 3:14; 5:13, etc.
2. She confessed; v. 33. Based on knowledge; Romans 10:5-10; Mark 8:36; 1 John 4:16.
3. She was comforted and assured; v. 34. Cp. Luke 8:48 Cp. Romans 5:1; 4:5; Gal. 2:16.

255. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S DEATH

Mark 6:14-31

Golden Text: Matthew 5:10

I. The Faithful Herald. V. 18.

1. Fearless—He was afraid of none. During his short life of public ministry he had stood before all kinds of people and fearlessly witnessed for God. He had faced the (1) Multitude; Luke 3:7. (2) Publicans; Luke 3:12. (3) Soldiers; Luke 3:14. (4) Pharisees; Matt. 3:7. (5) Saducees; Matt. 3:7. (6) The King; Matt. 14:4; Mark 6:18, 19. Cp. Prov. 29:25; Jer. 1:8; Psalm 27:1; Ezek. 2:1-6.
2. Faithful to the word of God—"not lawful." Cp. Acts 20:20-27; 2 Tim. 4:1-4. The world's attitude toward Christ and His disciples has not changed with the centuries. The believer is not guaranteed immunity from persecution, imprisonment and death. John 15:20-27; 2 Tim. 3:12.
3. Feared; Mark 6:20. Cp. Isa. 33:13, 14. We little know the effect of a faithful testimony upon the worldling who often hides his real feelings behind a veneer of indifference.

II. The Wicked King.

1. Sinful—Like all the Herods, he was a wicked man. Cp. Isa. 1:4-6, etc.
2. Privileged; Mark 6:20. (1) He knew John was a just and holy man; v. 20. (2) He heard him preach and teach. Cp. John 3:32-36; Romans 10:13-15; Ezek. 33:3-6; John 5:40; Acts 7:32-34; John 12:47, 48. (3) He did "many things," but not the one essential thing—repentance to God. Mark 6:20. Partial obedience—"almost persuaded" as another King. Acts 26:28; Heb. 2:3, etc.

III. The Foolish Vow. Vs. 21-28.

1. The Circumstances; vs. 21, 22. (1) The voluptuous feast; v. 21. What a different feast to Luke 14:21-23! Here the guests gave rein to all the lusts of their wicked hearts. (2) The dance of Herodias' daughter; v. 22. 1 John 2:16, 17; Eccles. 11:9. (3) The Vow; v. 23. Matt. 12:36, 37. (4) The Request; vs. 24-26. Herod feared more the ridicule of the worldlings that surrounded him than he did the wrath of a holy God. No wonder "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Had he feared God he never would have done this thing.
2. The Crime; vs. 27, 28. Murder. Gen. 9:5; Psalm 5:6; Ezek. 35:6; Rev. 22:15.
3. The Consequence—The great tribunal. Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:12; Romans 14:12; Rev. 22:15; 21:8.

IV. The Disciple's Care. Matt. 14:12.

1. The Burial; Matt. 14:12.
2. The Interview; Matt. 14:12. "Told Jesus." Cp. Heb. 4:15, 16; Phil. 4:6. "What a Friend we have in Jesus!"
3. The Result; Mark 6:31. "With Himself." Their greatest need at this time was to be alone with Him. It is possible to be too busy for Him. Every believer should take "time out" for secret prayer and communion with Him.

256. FEEDING FIVE THOUSAND

READ Matthew 14: 15-21.

THEME: Bring all you have to Jesus. TELL THE STORY.

This is the only miracle related in all the four Gospels.

THE FIVE BARLEY LOAVES.—

THEY BELONGED TO A LAD (John 6: 9). We do not know his name and we know nothing about him, but he was the right lad in the right place. He had the barley loaves and the fishes upon which the people were to be fed. He was an unknown, insignificant lad, but the Lord needed just what he had. How wonderful it was that a mere lad should have something which the Lord could use to feed five thousand people. It was Andrew who brought him into notice when the Lord needed him.

THE DISCIPLES THOUGHT THEM INADEQUATE, insufficient for the purpose. "Five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" (John 6: 9). If the boy heard them say this he might have been discouraged. People may say of us, "What is the use of your trying to do anything. You are only a boy or a girl, what can you do?" Or we ourselves may think, "How can I, or anything I have, be of use to God?" When God called Moses to go to Pharaoh to ask him to let the Children of Israel go, Moses replied, "Who am I, that I should go?" (Ex. 3: 11). When God called Gideon, he said, "I am the least in my father's house" (Judges 6: 15). God gave a word of encouragement to each of them.

THE LAD WAS WILLING TO PART WITH THEM ALL.—No doubt he, too, was hungry, yet he gave them. The boy whom God uses will not be selfish. Someone may have said to him, "You look after Number 1 and keep them" or, "Do not give them *all*, keep some for yourself." But the lad did not lose anything by giving his all to Christ, and neither do we. He himself was fed and had more than if he had eaten them in the first place. Let us bring our loaves and fishes to Christ (anything of ours He wants to use) instead of following Christ to get the loaves and fishes.

THE LORD ACCEPTED THEM (v. 19). Because they were willingly given, He accepted them and used them. It does not matter how few talents we may have, how small our ability, if we bring all we have to Jesus, He will accept it. How condescending of the Lord to deign to use anything that we bring to Him. But they must be given over unreservedly.

THE LORD BLESSED THEM (v. 19). If we serve God we shall never run dry. He will bless any little service we seek to do for Him or any word we speak for Him. Do we show our gratitude to God by asking a blessing or returning thanks for our food? This is not only pleasing to God — for we should not take His daily gifts as a matter of course — but it is a witness to others when we are away from home.

HE MULTIPLIED THEM.—The boy gave all, although that was not much, but Christ multiplied it.

THEY HAD TO BE DISTRIBUTED.—Christ's additions mean subtraction. He gives that we might give away. He multiplies the loaves that others may be fed. It is from the overflow in our lives that others are blessed. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth . . . he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Prov. 11: 24. 25).

THE DISCIPLES.—

THEY WANTED TO SEND THE MULTITUDE AWAY, to shift responsibility. This seemed the easiest way out of the difficulty. Perhaps they thought it was not their responsibility. "Let the people look after themselves" or, "let someone else do it." But Christ said to them "Give ye them to eat." There are people round us needing help, but we try to put the responsibility on to someone else and shirk our own. There are people in heathen lands, hungry for the Bread of Life, and it is our job to see that they get it. The Lord says concerning them also, "Give ye them to eat."

THEIR UNBELIEF.—"Five loaves," they said, "but what are they among so many?" They thought the loaves were too small to be of any use and they did not take Christ's power into account. They had seen Him work many miracles but it did not occur to them that He would work another now in order to supply the people's need.

THEY WERE USED BY JESUS TO DISTRIBUTE THE LOAVES. He could have done without their help but He did not. He could do without us but He allows us to share with Him in His work. This is a very blessed privilege. Here are some of the things the Lord needed and used:—

He needed Simon's boat to cross the lake; the line to catch the fish; the bread and fish to feed the crowds; the baskets to gather up the fragments; the dish to hold the sop; the little child to be the text for the sermon; the clay for the blind man's eyes; the women to minister to Him of their substance, as well as the apostles to preach the Gospel. He needs men, women and children for His service. Everyone can do something for Him.

"Mine are the hands to do the work;
My feet shall run for Thee;
My lips shall sound the glorious news;
Lord, here am I; send me."

THE FRAGMENTS.— "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost," said the Lord Jesus (John 6: 12). He meant the broken pieces that remained over, not the scraps let drop by the multitude. How careful He was. Although so wealthy, He cannot afford waste. It is sinful for us to waste good food that God has provided. Let us also gather up the fragments of time, of money and of opportunity. We are stewards, and one day must render an account to our Lord.

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 14: 16—"But Jesus said unto them . . . give ye them to eat."

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

Luke 9:10-17; Matthew 14:13-21

Golden Text: John 6:27

I. The Starving Multitude. Mark 8:2, 3.

1. Their purpose; Luke 9:10, 11. (1) To hear Him; v. 11; Isa. 55:1. (2) To be healed; v. 11. Cp. Matt. 15:30. Note the variety of conditions and cp. Isa. 1:4-6; Matt. 9:13. (3) The result—"He healed them." Heb. 7:25; Matt. 28:18.
2. Their condition—starving; Matt. 15:32. Cp. Matt. 5:6; Psalms 27:4; 107:9; Amos 8:11.
3. The need—bread; Matt. 15:33. Our need—salvation; Romans 3:19-24. etc.

II. The Compassionate Saviour. Note the many references to the compassion of Christ. May the Lord give us compassionate hearts! Mark 8:2. Cp. Luke 4:2; Mark 11:12; Lam. 3:22; Mark 1:41; Luke 7:13; Heb. 5:2; Ezek. 33:11; John 3:16; 1 John 4:10; 3:16, etc.

1. He knew their condition. Matt. 8:2; Psalm 14:1-3; Hosea 5:12.
2. He knew their need; John 6:5. Cp. John 6:32-35.
3. He could supply their need. With Him was "all power." Matt. 28:19.

III. The Questioning Disciples. Mark 8:4; Luke 9:12.

1. Their hardness of heart. How cold and unsympathetic they were. "Send them away;" Luke 9:12. Cp. Matt. 19:13; Mark 16:14. How different from their Master!
2. Their unbelief; Mark 8:4. "Can a man?" They forgot the great Provider was in their midst, the Son of God and Son of Man. Cp. Mark 10:27; Isa. 40:26-28; Matt. 28:18, etc.; Eph. 3:20.
3. The little lad; John 6:8, 9, and his "all." He brought it to the Savior and handed it over to Him. Cp. The handing over of our lives to Him to be used in multiplied blessing to others.

IV. The Providing Saviour. Matt. 15:34-37; Luke 9:14-17.

1. Rest. "Set down;" Matt. 11:28.
2. Order. "By fifties"—no overlapping or confusion; 1 Cor. 14:40.
3. Thanks. Cp. 1 Cor. 11:24; John 11:41; Matt. 11:25; Eph. 5:20; Heb. 13:15; Rev. 4:9.
4. Broken. The bread broken. Only as we are broken in spirit and our wills submissive can He use us. Luke 9:16. Cp. John 6:48, 51 and Matt. 26:26; 1 Cor. 11:24; Ps. 51:17.
5. Given to disciples to distribute. Mark 16:16; Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Cor. 5:19-21, etc.

V. The Plentiful Repast. Luke 9:17.

1. All provided. Cp. Phil. 4:19; Psalm 23:1.
2. All fed. Isa. 55:1-3; Luke 1:53; John 6:35.
3. All satisfied. Phil. 3:7, 8; Gal. 2:20.

VI. The Astounding Result. John 6:12, 13—Twelve baskets full. Eph. 3:20; 2 Cor. 9:8.

257. JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER

READ Matthew 14: 22-27.

THEME: Christ's Presence and help in difficulties.

TELL THE STORY.

THE LORD JESUS.—

HE CONSTRAINED HIS DISCIPLES TO GET INTO THE SHIP (v. 22). Why did He have to constrain them? The reason is given in John 6: 15. The people wanted to take Jesus by force and make Him king. They were more concerned about the yoke of the Romans than about the yoke of their sins. They were willing to accept Him as their earthly King, but it was His will that they should first accept Him as Saviour. Probably the disciples were one with the people in their desire to make Him king.

HE COULD NOT GO ON WITHOUT PRAYER (v. 23). He must have time alone with His Father, and if He, the Son of God, needed this, how much more do we? We may have difficulty in securing a place where we can be alone with God, because of lack of privacy in the home. Some have made use of open churches to have their Quiet Time there.

THE DISCIPLES IN DIFFICULTY.—

THE WIND WAS CONTRARY (v. 24), and they were toiling in rowing (Mark 6: 48). Contrary winds may represent sorrow and difficulty in the life. When contrary winds came to Jacob he said, "All these things are against me" (Gen. 42: 36). Are there contrary winds in your life? Do you meet with opposition in the home or at school? Does everything seem to be against you? When the contrary winds of trial and persecution came to the apostle Paul he was able by God's grace to say, "None of these things move me" (Acts 20: 24). Let us believe that when God sends us to face a contrary wind, He knows best.

IT WAS DARK (John 6: 17). This made the condition of the disciples worse. There is a danger of our getting into the darkness of doubt when the winds are contrary. We may doubt our Lord's love and care. Sometimes, particularly after a time of blessing, we seem to be in darkness and have no light (notice this is the description of one who feared the Lord and obeyed His voice, not of one who was out of touch with Him through disobedience) (Is. 50: 10). In times of such darkness we are to "stay ourselves upon God." He sometimes with-

draws the consciousness of His Presence that we may learn to walk by faith instead of by trusting our feelings (2 Cor. 5: 7). The disciples were certainly not taking a wrong course, for the Lord Himself had told them to get into the ship and go to the other side.

THE LORD JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES.—

HIS CARE FOR HIS OWN — HE SAW THEM (Mark 6: 48). He knows just how strong the wind is, He knows all the toiling in rowing and He cares. He saw them and was praying for them all night. And He still prays for us (Heb. 7: 25). He will never allow the winds to be too strong nor will He allow us to sink. The disciples could not see the Lord, but He could see them. Just as He is the Lord over all nature (Ps. 95: 5; Ps. 77: 19), so He controls all the circumstances of our lives. What rest of heart this would bring if we really believed it!

HE DELAYED HIS COMING TO THEM (v. 25). He did not come to them till the early hours of the morning. He allowed them to toil all night without making any headway. He wanted them to learn to trust Him, to believe that He was watching over them even though they could not see Him. The disciples had much to learn, and their faith could grow only by being tested.

HE CAME TO THEM IN AN UNEXPECTED WAY, and so they did not recognise Him and were afraid (v. 26). He sometimes comes "in another form" as He did to the two disciples going to Emmaus (Mark 16: 12). He comes to us sometimes in the form of pain, of sorrow and of difficulty and we do not recognise Him and so we fail to learn the lessons He is seeking to teach us. He appears in the form that meets our need at the time. He came to Abraham as a pilgrim, to Joshua as a soldier, to Shadrach as one walking in the fire, and to the two disciples, on a journey as One journeying.

HIS VOICE DISPELLED ALL FEAR. He said, "Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid" (v. 27). "It is I," the One Who loves you, your Saviour and Friend. We all know how a frightened child in the dark is at once comforted when she hears her mother's voice, even though she cannot see her.

HE DOES NOT PROMISE ALWAYS TO TAKE AWAY STORMS. He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," but He also says, "Be of good cheer," "My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled" (John 14: 27). It is possible for our hearts to be kept in peace in the midst of trouble and anxiety, like a compass quiet and steady in a rolling ship.

MEMORY VERSE.—Isaiah 26: 3—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."

258. PETER WALKING ON THE WATER

READ Matthew 14: 28-33.
THEME: Walking by faith. TELL THE STORY.

Peter was a true disciple of the Lord Jesus. He had forsaken all to follow Him, but he had varied experiences. Sometimes he was on the mountain top in his Christian life but at other times he was down in the valley. He was hasty, impetuous and self-confident and, in spite of our Lord's warning to him that Satan desired to have him that he might sift him as wheat, he denied his Lord. In many respects he was a difficult character, yet how greatly he was used by God after Pentecost. The Lord had said to him in the early days of his Christian life, "Thou art Simon . . . thou shalt be called Cephas . . . a stone" (John 1:42). The weak, vascillating Simon was to become strong as a rock. What Christ did for Peter, He can do for us.

PETER WALKING ON THE SEA.—

THIS IS LIKE THE LIFE OF FAITH. It can only be done in the power of God. Faith enables us to step out of the boat into the sea, to do something for the Lord, or undertake some service for Him which we have never attempted before.

PETER WAITED FOR THE LORD'S COMMAND. He said, "Bid me come" (v. 28). For Peter to have stepped out of the boat without the Lord's "Come" would have been presumption, and would have led to certain failure. He wished to be certain that it was *the Lord's* command he was obeying, for he said, "*If* it be Thou, bid me come." Let us do nothing without the Lord. Moses said, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Exodus 33: 15).

PETER WAS ABLE TO DO WHAT HIS MASTER DID. He walked on the water to go to Jesus (v. 29). Faith will make any of us like Christ and enable us to do His works (John 14: 12). It often seems impossible in certain conditions to act in a Christlike spirit, but faith can enable us to walk the waves of the sea even when there are billows of temptation, difficulty and trial.

THE REASONS FOR PETER BEGINNING TO SINK.—

HE SAW THE WIND BOISTEROUS and he was afraid (v. 30). He had seen the waves while he was still in the boat and yet he had had faith to step out. But he apparently had not reckoned on the wind. Sometimes we can trust God to keep us under certain conditions or in one set of circumstances but not in another, but we need to learn that we are "kept by the power of God through faith" (1 Peter 1: 5). Let us take our eyes off our circumstances.

HE TOOK HIS EYES OFF THE LORD. If we are to run well in the race we must keep "looking unto Jesus" (Heb. 12: 1, 2). David was able to say, "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord" (Psalm 25: 15). Peter could not be looking at the waves and at the Lord at the same time, and neither can we.

WEAK FAITH. The Lord rebuked him for his weak faith. This rebuke was given to one who had had many privileges; he had been the Lord's close companion; he had seen many miracles; he had heard messages from the Lord on faith. How could the Lord let Peter drown? His safety was not dependent on his faith but on the Lord's faithfulness.

PETER'S PRAYER.—

HE CRIED TO THE LORD in his extremity (v. 30). If we are accustomed to spending time alone with God in prayer, then in sudden emergencies we shall cry to God almost involuntarily. How good it is to know that we can lift up our hearts to God just where we are and just when we need His help.

HIS PRAYER WAS BRIEF — "Lord save me." There was no time for more but the Lord heard his prayer. We are not heard for our much speaking. We can cry to God just where we are and, in a few words, send up an urgent plea for help. We have other instances of very brief prayers, "Lord help me"; "Lord increase our faith"; "Help Thou mine unbelief."

HIS PRAYER WAS DEFINITE. "Lord, save me." He could not afford to lose time by talking vaguely to the Lord; he went straight to the point. Are we always as definite in our prayers?

HIS PRAYER WAS PERSONAL. "Lord save *me.*" There are times when we need to forget others and feel that there are only two persons concerned — the Lord, and myself.

HIS PRAYER MET WITH A QUICK RESPONSE. "Immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him" (v. 31). The same hand that was stretched forth to heal the leper and many others, the same hand that raised Jairus' daughter from the dead will be stretched out on our behalf also.

HIS PRAYER WAS ABUNDANTLY ANSWERED. When the Lord Jesus came into the boat, they quickly reached their destination (John 6: 21). If we are toiling fruitlessly against wind and tide, let us take Christ into the boat with us. He will take charge and bring us to our desired haven (Psalm 107: 30).

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 14: 31—"O thou of little faith wherefore didst thou doubt?"

259. THE GENTILE WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER

READ Matthew 15: 21-28.

THEME: Faith tested. TELL THE STORY.

This woman was a Gentile, a Canaanitish woman, a descendant of those idolaters who, because of their sins were driven out of Canaan. She was therefore an alien and a stranger from the covenant of promise (Eph. 2: 12).

HER GREAT NEED.—

THIS BROUGHT HER TO CHRIST, as Jairus' need brought him. The mother herself could do nothing for her child, and she knew of no one else who could. People often turn to Christ in their great need.

IT CAUSED HER TO PRAY EARNESTLY. She fell down at the Lord's feet and cried to Him (Mark 7: 25; v. 22). Her prayer was *reverent*. She said, "O Lord" (v. 22). It was *brief* and *direct*, "Lord, help me," as Peter's was when he cried, "Lord, save me."

HER DAUGHTER WAS POSSESSED WITH A DEVIL (v. 22). Those who live in heathen lands know how real this is. It differs from insanity, and once a person has seen and heard a demon-possessed person, he cannot mistake it for anything else. The power of Christ to give instant and complete deliverance from the power of demons is just the same today as it was when He was upon earth, and missionaries have seen His wonder-working power in this way.

HER FAITH TESTED.—

CHRIST ANSWERED HER NOT A WORD (v. 23), but perhaps he looked at her with love and compassion, and this may have encouraged her to keep on asking. Why did He remain silent to her pleading? She called Jesus, "Son of David" (v. 22), as the Jews did. But it was not till our Lord died, rose and ascended that the door of faith was opened by Peter to the Gentiles.

THE DISCIPLES SAID, "Send her away" (v. 23). They had not much interest in, or sympathy with this Canaanitish woman. On three occasions the disciples wished to send away people who came to Christ — the hungry multitude (14: 15); the mothers with their little children (19: 13), and now this woman. But their action did not dim her faith or cause her to go away.

THEY SAID, "She crieth after US" (v. 23). But she was not crying after the disciples but after their Master. Let us beware of becoming important in our own eyes.

THE LORD'S APPARENT REFUSAL. He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to give it to dogs (the small household pets). Let the children first be filled" (Mark 7: 27). He was testing her faith, which was much more precious than gold (1 Peter 1: 7). He meant, this is Israel's time and the Gentiles may follow after, but not yet.

SHE STOOD THE TEST OF FAITH. She believed in the mercy of the Lord, Who would not spurn even a little dog. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6: 37).

SHE ACCEPTED THE LORD'S ESTIMATE OF HER, and said, "Truth, Lord" (v. 27). She acknowledged her condition before Him. She did not plead her own righteousness, for she had none, but in her great need she cast herself on His mercy. We, too, must believe His Word, "There is none righteous, no, not one. . . . For all have sinned and come short" (Romans 3: 10, 23).

SHE REFUSED TO BE DISCOURAGED. Hers was persistent, persevering faith in spite of all obstacles. Do not give up praying for a thing because the answer is long delayed (Luke 18: 1).

HER FAITH REWARDED.—

HER DAUGHTER WAS MADE WHOLE FROM THAT SAME HOUR (v. 28). All who come as this woman did, taking the low place and acknowledging their sin, and exercising faith by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and His power to save, will find deliverance from Satan's power.

HER FAITH WAS COMMENDED. The Lord was delighted with her faith and said, "O woman, great is thy faith" (v. 28). Her faith was great in spite of the great trial in her home. The conditions of our home may be such that Satan opposes us at every turn, yet God can make us people of faith, because our great need drives us to Him. Only two were thus commended by Christ and both were Gentiles. "In spiritual things the best plants often grow in the most barren soil."

THE LITTLE DAUGHTER.—

SHE WAS IN SATAN'S POWER. We read in the Gospels of other children who needed Christ — Jairus' daughter, the boy who had a devil, the nobleman's sick son; and children need Him today.

SHE HAD A PRAYING MOTHER, who took her in prayer to Christ. How many there are today who have cause to thank Christ for a godly, praying mother who was the means of bringing them to Christ.

SHE WAS IMMEDIATELY AND COMPLETELY HEALED. This is a picture of conversion. The moment we accept Christ as Saviour, we are made whole, we receive new life, we are born again. Our salvation is *complete.* Christ finished the work of our salvation. He said "It is finished."

MEMORY VERSE.—I Peter 1: 7—"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire."

THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN

Matthew 15:21-28

Golden Text: Romans 10:12

I. Her Position. V. 22. A Gentile and, as such, a stranger from the covenants of promise to Israel. Read Eph. 2:11, 12 and cp. Romans 9: 4, 5; 3:1, 2. etc., etc.

II. Her Need. V. 22. Twofold.

1. For herself—Mercy. (1) The need of mercy—all have sinned and sin must be punished. Romans 6:23; Ezek. 18:4, etc. (2) The Supplier of mercy—the Lord. See Psalm 103. (a) Its quality—tender; v. 4. (b) Its measure—plenteous; v. 8. (c) Its magnitude—"great;" v. 11. (d) Its duration—"everlasting;" v. 17. Cp. Matt. 9:13; Luke 18:13.
2. For her daughter—healing. (1) Devil possessed and vexed. Cp. Eph. 2:2, 3; 1 John 5: 19; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:26. (2) Helpless to save or cure herself. Cp. Titus 3:3-5; Eph. 2:8, 9, etc.

III. Her Ignorance—v. 22—of the true way of blessing. She called Him "Son of David." As such, He came only for Israel; v. 24. The ignorance of the sinner. Eph. 4:18; 1 Peter 1:14; Acts 17:23; Romans 10:3; 1 Cor. 14:38.

IV. The Lord's Silence. V. 23. No doubt to test her faith and to show her her true condition.

V. The Disciples' Request; v. 23.

1. Their heartlessness. What a contrast to the compassionate Savior. See V. 32. Cp. Lam. 3:22.
2. Their selfishness "crieth after **us.**"

VI. Her Persistence. Vs. 24-27.

1. The Savior's reply. As Son of David. He came for lost of Israel and she was outside of Israel. Luther said, "This woman learned to wring a 'yea' from God's 'nay;' or rather to hear the 'yea' which many times lurks under His seeming 'nay'."
2. Her attitude; v. 25. "Worshipped."
3. Her cry; v. 25. "Lord, help **me.**"
4. The Savior's response; v. 26. He put her in her true place—that of a Gentile dog whose place was outside.
5. She took her place and claimed the blessing; v. 27. **Truth**—Lord. She owned her position, stated her need, and pled her cause. Cp. Luke 14:11; Isa. 57:15.

VII. Her Faith. V. 28.

1. Tried by His (1) Silence; v. 23. (2) Refusal; v. 24. (3) Rebuke; v. 24.
2. Commended by the Lord; v. 28. Christ did not say "Great is thy argument, patience and love," although these were great; but he saw the source of all these things—faith—and commended it. Heb. 11:6; Luke 1:45; John 3: 33; Gal. 3:6, 7; Eph. 2:8; 1 John 5:4.

VIII. Her Reward. V. 28. The daughter cured. Faith is the key that unlocked the store of blessing which she needed so much and which He was so eager to give.

260. THE DEAF AND DUMB MAN HEALED

Mark 7:31-37

Golden Text: Mark 7:37

I. His Condition. Vs. 31, 32. Typical of unsaved.

1. Deaf. Picture a person in this condition living in a world of absolute silence, deaf to the voice of nature as expressed by the singing of birds and the speech and songs of fellow men. Now compare the sinner deaf to God's voice through His word and the sweet chimes of the gospel bells. Cp. Matt. 13:15; Psalm 58:4; Prov. 28:9; Jer. 7:23 ,24; Zech. 7:11; Jer. 5:21; Matt. 11:15.
2. Dumb. Sin has put a padlock upon the lips of all humanity, so that "every mouth is stopped." (Romans 3:19.) Until God unlocks the lips, He can receive no praise from man. (Psalm 51:15.) Man pities the "dumb animals," little realizing that they can teach him much. (Isaiah 1:3.) Far better to be a dumb animal than to die a dumb sinner. Cp. Job 40:3-5; 42:5, 6; Matt. 15:11; 22:12.

II. The Prayer. Vs. 32. The power of prayer. They did the best thing they could. They brought him. just as he was, to the only One Who could meet his deep need. Let us bring needy sinners, in the arms of prayer, to the feet of the Savior. 1 Tim. 2:1-4. Cp. Psalms 9:12; 34:17; Jer. 33:3; Ezek. 33:37; Matt. 6:6; 7: 7,8; Phil. 4:6; James 5:17, 18.

III. His Cure. Vs. 33-35.

1. Brought to Jesus; v. 32. Cp. Acts 4:12; John 14:6.
2. Taken aside; v. 33. Alone with Him. Salvation is personal. John 1:12; Rev. 3:20; Romans 10:9; John 10:9, etc. (Ill. Saul, Acts 9:9-11).
3. The heavenward look; v. 34. Cp. Mark 6:41; John 11:41; 17:1; Matt. 11:25.
4. The sigh of Compassion; v. 34. John 11:33; Matt. 15:32; Mark 5:19; Lam. 3:22.
5. The touch of pity; v. 33. Cp. Heb. 2:14-17; Isa. 63:9.
6. The word of power; v. 34. Cp. Luke 5:24; John 5:24; Matt. 28:18.
7. The complete cure; v. 35. (1) Ears opened. Isa. 55:3; 32:3, 4; John 5:24, 25; Matt. 11:15; John 10:27. (2) Tongue loosed. Cp. Romans 10:8-11; Psalm 51:15; Romans 10:17; Psalm 40:3. The opened ears must precede the opened mouth. The opened ears, the result of conviction and conversion, is evidenced by the opened mouth in glad confession of the Lordship of Christ.

IV. The Result. Vs. 36, 37.

1. Testimony; v. 36. Mark 8:38; Psalms 66:16, 17; 145:7; Mark 16:15.
2. Praise. "He hath done all things well." (1) The work of substitution; John 19:30. (2) The work of salvation; Heb. 7:25. (3) The work of security; John 10:27-30. V. 37. Psalms 103:1-4; 91:1. 2; 102:18-20; Heb. 13:15; Col. 1: 12-14.

261. PETER'S CONFESSION

Matthew 16:13-26

Golden Text: Romans 10:9, 10

1. An important question. Eternal issues at stake. Cp. John 8:24, 21; Mark 16:16; John 3:36; 1 John 5:1; John 20:31.
2. A personal question—"say ye." Cp. Matt. 22: 42; 27:22. Note what (1) Think ye? Matt. 22: 42. (2) Say ye? Matt. 16:15. (3) Will ye do? Matt. 27:22. Here are thoughts. words and deeds about Christ.
3. A question that must be answered—in time or eternity. Phil. 2:9-11; Acts 9:5.

II. The Confession. V. 16. Christ's Deity asserted. This confession of the essential and eternal Deity of Christ is

1. Essential to salvation. Romans 10:9, 10; 1 John 5:12, 13. No one who doubts His Deity can be saved while in that condition.
2. Evidence of new birth. 1 John 5:1; John 1: 11-13; 1 Cor. 12:3.
3. Essential to sound doctrine. Heb. 1:1-8; Col. 1:15-18; 2:8-10. This is the day when His Deity is being assailed from behind the pulpit of many a denomination and the faith of many undermined in this great foundation truth of Christianity.

III. The Declaration. Vs. 17-20.

1. As to its origin—"The Father" Cp. 1 Cor. 2:10, 12-14; Gal. 1:16; John 3:27; Matt. 3:17; Romans 8:5-9; Matt. 17:5, etc.
2. As to its import; v. 18. The Church to be built on this truth—Christ the Son of God, Christ as Lord. Cp. Acts 2:21, 36; 3:14, 15, 26; 8:5, 37; 9:5, 17, 20; 20:28; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2: 20; 1 Peter 2:6-8.
3. As to its effect; vs. 18. 19. Eternal verity. Cp. Matt. 24:35; Eccles. 3:14; 1 Cor. 15:25, etc.

IV. The Revelation. V. 21.

1. The Divine Division. "From that time." This verse marks a division in Matthew's gospel. From this point on, Christ's rejection by Israel is assumed.
2. The Divine Compulsion, "must." Cp. John 3:14; 9:4; 6:38; 4:4; Mark 10:45; Heb. 9:22; John 10:11, 17, 18; 12:27, 24, 32, etc.

V. The Rebuke. V. 22. Note the margin, "Pity Thyself" or "spare Thyself." This was due to

1. Peter's ignorance. Cp. John 13:6, 7; 16:7, 12.
2. Satan's strategy; v. 23. Satan ever sought to dissuade and turn Christ from the cross. Cp. Luke 4:3. 6, 9-11; John 14:30, etc.

VI. The Reply. Vs. 23-26.

1. Denunciation; v. 23. 2 Cor. 8:9; Matt. 1:21; Heb. 10:7-9; 12:2.
2. Renunciation; v. 24. Cp. Phil. 3:7-9; Gal. 6:14; 1 John 2:15-17.
3. Compensation; v. 25. Cp. Phil. 3:8; 2 Tim. 4: 8; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Mark 10:29, 30.
4. Interrogation; v. 26. This question has never been answered, but it must be faced by all.

262. CHRIST TRANSFIGURED

READ Luke 9: 28-36.
THEME: The glory of Christ.
TELL THE STORY.

This wonderful scene proved that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah. The Lord had been speaking to the disciples about His approaching death (Matt. 16: 21) and this vision of His glory would give them strength and courage for the coming trial.

ON THE MOUNTAIN.—

NOT ALL HAVE THE SAME SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES. Only three of the twelve disciples saw the Lord transfigured. Not all have the same gifts and privileges (1 Cor. 12: 5, 11), but all have the same Lord. Do not grow discouraged if your experiences differ from those of others. Peter and John were to become writers of Books of the New Testament, and were thus able to pass on to others the record of what they had seen (2 Pet. 1: 17, 18; John 1: 14). The experiences through which we pass are not only for our own sakes but for the sake of others (2 Cor. 1: 4; Matt. 10: 27).

AS JESUS PRAYED HE WAS TRANSFIGURED (v. 29). He had already undergone another transformation before this, when He was made in the likeness of men (Phil. 2: 6, 7). Now He took again some of His glory. We, too, may be transformed now, for we should be daily growing more like our Master (2 Cor. 3: 18).

MOSES AND ELIJAH talked with the Lord Jesus about His death (v. 31); of the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9: 26); the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (1 Pet. 1: 11). This is the central and most vital fact of Christianity. There could have been no salvation for us had it not been for Christ's death upon the cross.

THE DISCIPLES RECOGNISED MOSES AND ELIJAH, though they appeared in glory (Luke 9: 31). This is some indication of the state of the dead who belong to Christ even though the resurrection has not yet taken place. We, too, shall know our loved ones when we see them.

PETER'S MISTAKES.—

HE THOUGHT THEY COULD ALWAYS REMAIN ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP. He said, "It is good for us to be here" (v. 33). So *he* thought. But our mountain-top experiences, perhaps at Conventions, house parties and camps, are only to fit us for the service in the valley below, doing our everyday jobs. We are not given these times of blessing

merely for our own enjoyment. Some may dread going down from the mountain, perhaps to difficulty or opposition in the home, at school, in the office or workshop. But we do not go alone. Our Lord returns to the plain with us, and there are those who need our help.

PETER WAS INCLINED TO PUT MOSES AND ELIJAH ALMOST ON A LEVEL WITH THE LORD. "Let us make three tabernacles — one for Thee, one for Moses and one for Elias" (v. 33), he said. Some would include the Lord Jesus with other great teachers, heroes and martyrs. Many of the heathen religions recognise Jesus as *one* of the great teachers, but God's Word says, He is "*far above all*" (Eph. 1: 21). "Him hath God exalted . . . to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance . . . and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5: 31), and this no one else can do.

PETER TALKED WHEN HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO SAY (v. 33). Do we not often talk merely for the sake of talking, and we have nothing worth while to say? "He that refraineth his lips is wise" (Prov. 10: 19).

GOD'S TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIS SON.—

HE PROCLAIMED HIS DEITY when He said, "This is My beloved Son" (v. 35). Jesus was not only man, but He was truly God. "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3: 16).

HE APPROVED HIS WORK when he said, "In Whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17: 5). Christ Himself was able to say, "I do always those things that please Him" (John 8: 29). "Enoch . . . had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11: 5). Have we, too, this testimony? Are we well pleasing to God?

HE PROCLAIMED HIS AUTHORITY when He said, "Hear *Him*" (v. 36). This word applies to those who do not belong to Christ. They are to hear Him saying, "Come unto Me." "Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you" (Acts 3: 22). And these words apply also to those who belong to Christ. Hear *Him*, take your orders from *Him*. "Whatsoever He saith unto you do it" (John 2: 5).

JESUS ONLY (v. 8). Moses, who represented the Law, had gone; Elijah who represented the prophets, had gone, and there remained "Jesus only" (Matt. 17: 8). Their work was finished, for salvation is in Christ alone. As the disciples went down again to the plain they had with them "Jesus only," and He was all-sufficient. Let us take our eyes off everything and everyone else and see "Jesus only."

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 17: 5—"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Matthew 17:1-13

Golden Text: Hebrews 2:9

We shall look at various groups in this lesson and seek to discover what each can teach us.

I. The Disciples.

1. The "inner circle"—Peter, James and John. They enjoyed a peculiar intimacy with Christ which was not shared by the others. Psalm 25:14. Cp. Mark 5:37; Matt. 26:37, 38; 2 Peter 1:16-18; John 1:14; 1 John 1:3, 7; Phil. 3:10.
2. The "apart" place. Cp. Matt. 14:13; Mark 6: 31. Cp. Matt. 6:6; Gal. 6:14; John 17:15-17; 2 Cor. 7:1.

II. The Lord Jesus. Vs. 1-5.

1. Transfigured—note when; "as he prayed." Luke 9:29. Here is a glimpse of His eternal power and Godhead. Peter never forgot this wondrous revelation; 2 Peter 1:16-19.
2. Type of His coming glory. Cp. Matt. 16:28. Heb. 2:9; Acts 7:55, 56; Rev. 4:11; 5:9; Mark 8: 39; Rev. 1:12-17; 2 Peter 1:17.
3. Talked with Moses and Elias; v. 3.
4. Testified to by the Father; v. 5.

III. Moses and Elijah. V. 3.

1. Moses—type of dead raised—and of the Law witnessing to his glory.
2. Elijah—type of living changed and caught up—and the prophets.
3. Their subject; Luke 9:30, 31.—His decease or exodus. The great central fact of all time and eternity. Cp. Luke 24:25-27, 44. The Lamb of God (1) Typified in the Law. (2) Prophecied in the prophets. (3) Described in the Psalms. (4) Crucified in the Gospels. (5) Magnified in the Epistles. (6) Glorified in Revelation.

IV. Peter. V. 4.

1. Sleepy. See Peter's three sleeps.. (1) Of unripe Christian experience; Luke 9:32. (2) Of faithlessness; Mark 14:37. (3) Of confidence and trust; Acts 12:6. Cp. Luke 9:32; Eph. 5: 14; 1 Thess. 5:16; Romans 13:11, 12.
2. Hasty. Mark 9:6; Eccles. 5:1; James 1:19.
3. Erring. By this proposal he put Christ on a level with Moses and Elijah and this God did not tolerate for one moment for He has given Him the place of preeminence. Col. 1:15-19; Phil. 2:9-11.

V. The Father. V. 5.

1. Covers up Moses and Elijah. Col. 1:15-19.
2. Testifies to His Son. Matt. 3:17; John 12:28. Note God here quotes 3 passages from the O. T. (1) "My beloved Son;" Psalm 2:7. (2) "Well pleased;" Isa. 43:1. (3) "Hear Him;" Deut. 18:15. From Moses the prophets and the Psalms.

VI. The Result. Vs. 6-9.

1. Fear; v. 6. Cp. Isa. 6:3-5; Dan. 10:4-11; Job 40:1-5.
2. Comfort; v. 7. 1 John 4:16-19.
3. "Jesus only;" v. 8. Cp. Heb. 12:1; Phil. 1:20, 21.

263. THE DEMONIAC BOY

READ Mark 9: 14-29.
THEME: Christ's power over Satan.
TELL THE STORY.

In this lesson we see the awful power of Satan to mar people's lives, but we see also Christ's almighty power to overcome Satan.

THE BOY.—

HIS CONDITION IS DESCRIBED in the accounts of this incident in the three Gospels. He was lunatic (mentally deficient), but in addition he was demon-possessed and deaf and dumb. Even childhood may be spoiled by passion and sin, and many are thus spoiled before they grow up. A demon-possessed boy is a type of a sin-controlled boy. The physical miracles of Christ are types of His spiritual works. Contrast this boy with the beautiful boyhood of Jesus (Luke 2).

HIS GREAT NEED. This was one reason why it would not have been the best thing for the disciples to remain on the mountain top of vision. We need both vision and service, mountain and valley.

THE FATHER.—

HE CAME FIRST TO THE DISCIPLES expecting help from them (v. 18). But he did not give up because of their failure and powerlessness, as so many do when they are disappointed in Christians.

HE CAME THEN TO THE LORD HIMSELF. He was in earnest; he came kneeling (Matt. 17: 14), beseeching the Lord for help for his only child. He told the Lord all about the boy's terrible condition.

HIS WEAK FAITH. He said, "*If* Thou canst do anything . . . help us" (v. 22). Probably the powerlessness of the disciples had weakened his faith. He put the "if" in the wrong place — against Christ's power, but the "if" was really in his own inability to believe. Then the father said, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." The Lord values faith even though it is small, so he accepted the father's faith, small though it was, because it was real.

BUT IT WAS A FAITH THAT OVERCAME DIFFICULTIES. The case was apparently hopeless, because the boy had been in that condition for so long. Yet nothing is too hard for the Lord. He had tried the disciples without success, but he did not lose faith in the Lord. Others may fail us but the Lord never does.

HIS FAITH WAS TESTED. The boy at first grew worse instead

of better (v. 26). Sometimes when we pray for others that they may be delivered from the dominion and power of sin, they seem to grow worse, more antagonistic to the Gospel, more bitter in their opposition and more opposed to Christ. May it not be that the enemy of souls is trying desperately to keep his hold over them (Mark 1: 26), knowing that his time is short (Rev. 12: 12).

THE LORD JESUS.—

HE SAID, BRING HIM UNTO ME (v. 19). He always hears the cry of those in need, whether it be for ourselves or for others. The disciples had, for the time being, lost their power, though they had been commissioned by their Master to cast out devils, but Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13: 8). When they brought the boy to Him, He showed His almighty power.

HE SAID IF THOU CANST BELIEVE, all things are possible to him that believeth (v. 23). The father put the "*if*" on to Christ; He put it back on to the father, who responded by saying, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief" (v. 24).

HE SHOWED HIS POWER and cast out the evil spirit with a word. Even the demons must obey Him. His Word is with power (Luke 4: 32). He has power to forgive sins; He can overcome Satan and turn defeat into victory.

THE DISCIPLES FAILURE.—

"*THEY COULD NOT*" (v. 18), though they had been commissioned by their Master to do this very thing. Their failure must have weakened the faith of the father; it caused the Sadducees to reproach them (v. 14), and their lack of faith wearied the Lord, Who had been so patient with them (v. 19).

REASONS FOR THEIR FAILURE. They went to the Lord to find out why they had failed (v. 28) — the very best thing they could have done. He told them it was *because of unbelief* (Matt. 17: 20), which is at the root of so much failure and lack of power on our part. We do not trust the Lord sufficiently to show His power through us. It was also *because of lack of prayer* (v. 29). We cannot expect to have power in service for Christ if we do not take time to pray. If the Lord Himself, when on earth needed to take time to pray to His Father, how much more do we? If we would help others, then we must draw power and strength each day from Christ.

MEMORY VERSE.—Mark 9: 29—"This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer . . ."

HEALING OF THE LUNATIC BOY

Mark 9:14-29

Golden Text: Mark 9:23

I. The Boy. Vs. 14-18.

1. Possessed of an evil spirit; v. 17. Demon possession is a very real thing and far more prevalent than we imagine. Cp. Eph. 2:2. 3; 1 Cor. 12:2; 2 Tim. 2:26; 2 Cor. 4:3, 4; Luke 11:21, 22; Luke 16:13.
2. Dumb; v. 17. Cp. Romans 3:13, 14, 19; Psalm 51:15.
3. Controlled entirely by this evil spirit—notice its malignity; vs. 18, 22. Cp. Job 1:9; 2:4; Eph. 6:12; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 2:13; 2 Cor. 11: 14.

II. The Disciples' Failure. Vs. 18, 28, 29. Due to

1. Lack of communion; v.29. "Prayer." 1 Chron. 16:11; Luke 18:1; John 15:7; Eph. 6:18; James 4:2, 3.
2. Lack of faith; v. 19. 1 John 5:4; Heb. 11:6, 33, 34; Mark 11:23; James 1:6.
3. Lack of self-denial; v. 29. "Fasting." 2 Sam. 24:24; Acts 20:24; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 Cor. 9:25-27.

III. The Boy's Father. V. 17.

1. His reproach; v. 22. "If thou canst."—Note the "ifs." (1) Of divine willingness; Luke 5:12. (2) Of divine power; Mark 9:22. (3) Of personal fitness; Matt. 9:21. (4) Of divine word; Matt. 14:28. (5) Of divine providence; 2 Kings 7:2.
2. His appeal; v. 22. "Have compassion." Cp. Isa. 63:9; Lam. 3:22. 23; Isa. 42:3; Matt. 14:14.
3. The answer; v. 23. "If thou canst believe." Here is Christ's answer to the man's "If Thou canst." Faith is the channel through which omnipotence works. Faith believes God's word, counts on God's power, receives God's Son and glorifies God's name. Cp. Mark 5:36; Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8; Luke 1:45, etc.
4. His cry; v. 24. What a depth of meaning is in this cry that has been re-echoed by thousands since! Cp. Heb. 11:6; Psalms 40:17; 25:1, 2; 56:3; Matt. 8:30; Luke 8:50; John 6:29; 11:40; 20:27, 29.

IV. The Savior. Vs. 19-27.

1. The Invitation; v. 19. "Bring him to Me." This is the solution of all our problems, and how slow we are to do it! Cp. Matt. 11:28; John 5:40; 6:37; 7:37; 14:6; 10:9, etc.
2. The Command; v. 25. Cp. Romans 1:4; Luke 5:24; Acts 2:22; 10:38; Matt. 28:18; 2 Chron. 16:9; Psalms 33:9; 62:16; Romans 1:16, etc.

V. The Result. Vs. 26, 27.

1. Complete deliverance; vs. 26, 27. Cp. Acts 13: 38.
2. The disciples' question answered; vs. 28. 29. Does this explain our fruitlessness in the service of Christ? Are we laying hold upon God for the souls of our classes or hearers?

264. CHRIST AND VARIOUS CLASSES

Luke 9:46-62

Golden Text: Ecclesiastes 12:1

In this chapter Christ is seen dealing with various classes and dispositions, each of which requires a different method of procedure. We may learn much from the way the Lord meets and answers the various problems that arise.

I. The Ambitious. Vs. 46-48.

1. Ambition; v. 46. The old question of who shall have the preeminence; the cause of more trouble amongst the people of God than anything else. Cp. Matt. 18:1; 20:20-26; 23:11, 12; Jer. 45:5; Heb. 13:5.
2. Perception; v. 47. Cp. Isa. 11:2, 3; Heb. 4:13; Psalm 139:1-12.
3. Illustration; v. 48. Cp. Matt. 18:1-4; 20:28; Jer. 9:23, 24; Ezek. 28:17; 3 John 9; Gal. 6:3.

II. The Bigoted. Vs. 49, 50.

1. Its cause; v. 49. "Saw one." Here is the sectarian spirit that would forbid anyone to preach unless "he is one of **us.**" Cp. Gal. 6:4; John 20:21, 22.
2. Its consequence; v. 49. "Forbad." Cp. Phil. 1:15-18; Gal. 3:26-28.
3. Its censure; v. 50. Luke 16:13; Matt. 12:30. Illus. 1 Kings 19:14, 18.

III. The Revengeful. Vs. 51-56.

1. The Savior's purpose; v. 51. From this purpose of going to the cross He allowed none to turn Him aside. Cp. John 3:14; 4:34; Psalm 40: 6-8; Heb. 12:1.
2. The Savior's reception; v. 53. Cp. John 5:40; Rev. 3:20; Prov. 1:24, 25, 30, 31.
3. The servant's haste; v. 54. Cp. Phil. 2:3; Prov. 10:19; 2 Kings 1:10-12.
4. The Saviour's rebuke; vs. 55, 56. How little the disciples realized the new era of grace that had come by Christ; John 1:17. Cp. Romans 12:19-21; John 3:17; Mark 10:45. etc.

IV. The Calculating. Vs. 57, 58.

1. The proposal made; v. 57. We would gladly have enrolled him as a convert, but Christ saw his shallowness and fickleness. He had emotion without motion. Cp. Luke 22:33.
2. The cost propounded; v. 58. Cp. 2 Cor. 8:9; 2 Cor. 11:23-28; Luke 14:25-33.

V. The Procrastinating. Vs. 59, 60.

1. The command; v. 59. Cp. John 1:43; 10:27; Matt. 11:28, etc.; Mark 10:21.
2. The excuse; v. 59. His father was not necessarily dead but probably was aged. What he said in effect, was: "Let me wait until my father dies." Cp. Luke 14:18.
3. The application; v. 60. Cp. Eph. 2:1, 2; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 John 2:15-17.

VI. The Hesitating. Vs. 61, 62.

1. The offer—with a "but;" v. 61. Cp. Acts 26: 28; 24:25.
2. The statement; v. 62. Cp. 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Heb. 10:38, 39; Phil. 3:13, 14; Heb. 12:1, 2.

265. THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

READ Matthew 18: 21-35.
THEME: Showing mercy and forgiveness.
TELL THE STORY.

Peter asked the Lord, "How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" (v. 21). The Lord answered him by giving this parable.

THE DEBT OWED.—

THE DAY OF RECKONING. When the king began to reckon he found that one servant was heavily in debt, owing him an enormous sum. And we, too, owe a large debt to God; we are guilty before Him (Rom. 3: 19).

"Year after year we have filled the score,
Owing the Lord still more and more."

THE SERVANT MUST BE PUNISHED TILL THE DEBT WAS PAID (v. 25). God is a righteous God, and must punish sin. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23), and our sin deserved punishment.

THE SERVANT PROMISED, "I WILL PAY THEE ALL" (v. 26). But could he ever pay the whole of this great debt, even though the king should wait, as he asked him? Now thoroughly awakened to his danger, the servant thought if only he were given time he could do certain things which would enable him to pay off the debt. Some people, when they find out they are sinners, in debt to God, begin to think that by their own efforts and good works they will, in time, succeed in paying off the debt they owe to God, or they make good resolutions, saying that they will never again go into debt. But even if this were possible what becomes of the old debt? It still remains. The fact was, the servant had nothing with which to pay (v. 25).

"Nothing to pay! ah, nothing to pay!
Never a word of excuse to say!
Year after year thou hast filled the score,
Owing thy Lord still more and more.
Nothing to pay! the debt is so great;
What will you do with the awful weight?
Nothing to pay! yet it must be paid!
How shall the way of escape be made?"

HOW THE DEBT WAS PAID.—

THE MASTER WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION (v. 27). He saw the servant at his feet and longed to help him. The Lord is full of compassion (Ps. 86: 15).

THE MASTER FORGAVE HIM THE DEBT (v. 27). But how, being righteous, could God do this? Not by overlooking it, but by *paying it himself* on the cross of Calvary, otherwise there could be no forgiveness, the debt could not be cancelled. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22). We must distinguish between divine and human forgiveness. Human forgiveness means remission of the penalty. God is holy, and could only forgive sin because the penalty had been paid in full by the Lord Jesus Christ, Who perfectly accomplished the great work of redemption.

"Hear the voice of Jesus say,
Verily thou hast nothing to pay,
Ruined, lost art thou, and yet
I forgave thee all that debt.
All has been put to my account,
I have paid the full amount."

THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT.—

HE REFUSED TO FORGIVE HIS FELLOW-SERVANT who threw himself on his mercy, though the amount he owed was much smaller than he himself had owed to his king (vv. 28-30). This showed that he had never really accepted the offered pardon nor had realised what had been done for him at such cost. Only by accepting Christ's mercy and forgiveness shall we be able to show mercy to others.

HE WAS CALLED TO ACCOUNT (v. 32). The king was prepared to forgive him the whole of the debt, therefore he should have had compassion on his fellow-servant. This time the king addressed him as, "Thou wicked servant." His guilt was now greater than before because of the way in which he had treated the king's offer of mercy. "How shall *we* escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2: 3).

THE MEASURE OF HIS FORGIVENESS OF ANOTHER. "Even as I had pity on thee" (v. 33). "Forgive us our trespasses" "*for* we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us." If we are to enjoy the forgiveness which brings fellowship with God we *must* forgive others (Matt. 6: 14, 15). It is true we are forgiven because of grace, and we forgive *because* we have been forgiven.

THE OTHER SERVANTS, when they were grieved over the wicked servant's treatment of his fellow-servant, did the best thing; they took the wrong and grief to the king (v. 31). The best thing to do with griefs and wrongs, whether done to ourselves or to others, is to take them to God and allow Him to deal with them (Rom. 12: 19).

MEMORY VERSE.—James 2: 13—"For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy."

266. THE SEVENTY SENT FORTH

READ Luke 10: 1-12, 17-21.
THEME: Workers in the harvest.
TELL THE STORY.

Christ had already sent out twelve into His harvest; now He appoints seventy others.

SENT FORTH BY CHRIST.—

HE SENT THEM TWO BY TWO, knowing they could help each other. Peter and John worked together (Acts 3: 1); Paul and Barnabas were sent forth together (Acts 13: 2, 4); Paul worked with Silas, and Barnabas with John Mark. God's Word says, "Two are better than one," for one can help the other (Eccles. 4: 7-12).

HE SENT THEM FIRST AND HE WAS TO FOLLOW (v. 1). They were to announce His coming and prepare the people for this. Our work now is to prepare the way for His second coming.

HE TOLD THEM THE NEED WAS GREAT (v. 2). There is work for all, but so few who do it and, if left to itself, the harvest will be lost. Not all workers in the harvest will be asked to do something great or spectacular; there is much work that is hidden yet very necessary and *all* are needed to give a hand. Some may never actually work in the harvest field; their work may be to minister to the other labourers, but they will share in the reward (1 Sam. 30: 24).

HE FIRST SAID "PRAY," and then, "Go" (vv. 2, 3). If we are to pray effectively then we ourselves must be willing to go should the Lord call us and open the way. It is *His* harvest and workers must not be self-appointed. He said, "Behold, *I send you.*" He chooses his own workers, directs their service and supplies their needs. Moses, Gideon, Elisha, Paul, Barnabas and others, all were called by God. We are all called to have some share in the work of the harvest field, and our part is to find out from God what that work is. Some may be called to go to distant lands with the Gospel message, others to help at the home base.

HE SENT THEM FORTH AS LAMBS (v. 3). Lambs represent those who are young. Christ's cause has need of youth, and each one has his or her contribution to make.

HE SENT THEM AS LAMBS AMONG WOLVES (v. 3). The Lord warned them that the work would be difficult. They would meet with opposition and with those who, perhaps, would seek to destroy their faith and discredit their message. Christ has never promised the Christian

worker an easy path. On the contrary He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But He has promised to be with us always. Lambs cannot fight against wolves, but Christ will protect them.

THEIR ORDERS.—

THEY WERE TO TRUST GOD ENTIRELY FOR THE SUPPLY OF THEIR NEEDS (v. 4). On this occasion they were to take nothing with them, perhaps to teach them that they were not to give clothes, money and food an unduly important place; perhaps to teach them new lessons of faith and dependence upon Him. But God does not always lead His servants in this way for on another occasion Christ told the disciples to make provision for themselves (Luke 22: 35, 36). Paul preached and earned his living at the same time in certain places.

THEY WERE NOT TO WASTE TIME (v. 4). Salutations in the East are very lengthy, and if they spent time with each person they met, very little preaching would have been done. How much time can be frittered away in foolish or unnecessary conversation. "The king's business requireth haste" (1 Sam. 21: 8).

THEY WERE GIVEN THEIR MESSAGE. They were to offer "Peace" to the inmates of each house they entered (v. 5), and seek to introduce them to the Prince of Peace. The part of the preacher was to offer to them the Gospel of Peace; the responsibility of accepting it or rejecting it rested with the hearers.

THEY WERE TO ACCEPT WHAT HOSPITALITY WAS OFFERED THEM, not to expect anything different from what was ordinarily found in that home; to be satisfied with the food and accommodation and to remain there, not go from house to house (v. 7). On the other hand, the servant of the Lord who is giving full-time service is not to feel that because he is being supported he is a sort of beggar, for our Lord said, "The labourer is worthy of his hire" (v. 7).

THEY RETURNED AGAIN WITH JOY TO TELL THE LORD WHAT THEY HAD DONE (v. 17). They had proved God's power and had been used by Him to cast out devils. This was great cause for rejoicing. Satan's reign had been broken (1 John 3: 8). One day he is to fall as lightning from the heavenlies (v. 18) and finally he is to be cast into the lake of fire. Christ said to them, "I give you power . . . over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (v. 19). Yet an even greater cause for rejoicing than having power over devils was the fact that their names were written in heaven (v. 20). The names of all those who have received Christ as Saviour are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev. 21: 27).

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 10: 2—"The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest."

267. THE GOOD SAMARITAN

READ Luke 10: 25-37.

THEME: Loving our neighbour.

TELL THE STORY.

This parable was told by our Lord in answer to the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbour?" (v. 29). The story has practical lessons for us.

THE LAWYER.—

HIS FIRST QUESTION. "Master, what shall I *do* to inherit eternal life?" (v. 25). He made the mistake, as so many do, of thinking that salvation and life come by *doing*. But Scripture clearly teaches that we are not saved by our own works (Titus 3: 5). Works are the *result* of salvation, not a means of obtaining it.

THE LAWYER ANSWERED BY OUR LORD. He refers him to the law. "What is written in the law?" He said (v. 26). Did the Lord Jesus mean that by keeping the law one obtains eternal life? By no means, but, because the lawyer said, "What shall I *do* to inherit eternal life," then Christ refers him to the law which says, "This do and thou shalt live" (Lev. 18: 5). To be saved by the law, people would need to keep it perfectly, but this no man has yet been able to do. The work of the law is to show men their sin (Rom. 3: 20) and thus reveal to them their need of a Saviour. When they believe in Christ they obtain eternal life (John 3: 36).

THE LAWYER'S KNOWLEDGE (v. 27). He knew the law, as verse 27 shows. The Lord said to him, "Thou hast *answered* right" (v. 28). His views and his answers were right, but his practice was all wrong. What the law demands is not knowledge, but obedience, and if that obedience were perfect it would bring life. But man cannot render this obedience. This man knew the law, but he could not keep it. But, thank God, what the law demands of us, the Gospel produces in us.

THE LAWYER'S SECOND QUESTION. "And who is my neighbour?" (v. 29). He knew he had not kept the law, and yet he tried to justify himself. The Lord replies to his question by telling the story of the Good Samaritan, thus proving to the lawyer that he had not loved his neighbour as himself.

THE WOUNDED MAN.—

HE WAS WOUNDED, helpless and *NAKED.* He represents those who need our help regardless of race, creed or social position.

THE PRIEST AND THE LEVITE.—

THEY REPRESENT THOSE WHO PROFESS TO BE CHRISTIANS, for they were engaged in the service of the temple, doing work for God.

THEIR OPPORTUNITY. God brought them down the road just at the time that this man so greatly needed them. Here was an opportunity of putting their religion into practice.

THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS NEED. Both the priest and the Levite saw him (v. 30) and came and looked on him (v. 31). They could not excuse themselves by saying they did not know.

THEIR FAILURE. They passed by on the other side (vv. 31, 32). Their position in God's service made their failure greater. Of what use is a profession of faith or religious observances if it is not shown in deeds? (James 2: 18).

THEIR PROBABLE EXCUSES. I am not related to him; he may die in any case; I cannot be delayed; I may endanger my own life; who will repay me? Perhaps we have made similar excuses, when in contact with some needy person.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.—

HE PUT HIMSELF IN THE WOUNDED MAN'S POSITION. "He came where he was" (v. 33). If we are to give those in trouble the sympathy and practical help they need, we must put ourselves in their place. Ezekiel did this literally with the captives (Ezekiel 3: 15).

HE HAD COMPASSION ON HIM (v. 33). This was no mere passing feeling of emotion, for he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine (v. 34). His help cost him physical strength (for he himself walked, supporting the wounded man on the beast), and it cost him time and money. His own journey was delayed for he took care of him at the inn (v. 34).

HE WENT THE SECOND MILE (did much more than his duty). He asked the host of the inn to care for him and if there were any further expense he would pay it when he returned (v. 35). Any help that is really worth while must mean self-denial in some direction. This Good Samaritan was indeed a good neighbour who loved in deed (1 John 3: 18). His deed was all the more praiseworthy because the Jews and Samaritans regarded each other as enemies.

THE LORD'S COMMAND.—

"GO, AND DO THOU LIKEWISE" (v. 37). And this command is for each one of us. Day by day we are coming in contact with those who need a friend, who need the help we are able to give. Shall we be like the priest and Levite, or like the Good Samaritan?

MEMORY VERSE.—James 4: 17—"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:25-37

Golden Text: 1 John 4:9

I. The Circumstances. Vs. 25-29.

1. The lawyer's question: v. 25. Cp. Mark 10:17.
2. The law's demands; vs. 6, 27. Absolute perfection. Romans 7:12, 7; James 2:10; Gal. 3: 19, 21-24.
3. The Saviour's reply; v. 28. Note Christ did not say: "This try to do and thou shalt live," but "This do." Many imagine their attempts to keep the law will merit God's favor in spite of their failure to keep it. The law demands perfection which no one can give. Cp. Romans 2:17-21; Romans 8:3.

II. The Man. V. 30.

1. Where he went: (1) "Down." Cp. Isa. 53:6; Romans 3:12; Psalm 14:2, 3. (2) To Jericho (the place of the curse). Cp. Joshua 6:17, 18, 26. From Jerusalem. He left the place of blessing—the place of vision—the place of possession for Jericho the place of the curse, of no vision and no possession. Cp. Gal. 3:10; Deut. 27:26; John 3:36; Job 36:18.
2. What happened to him; v. 30. (1) Fell among thieves. Cp. Isa. 44:22; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Tim. 2:26 (2) Stripped. Sin strips of: (a) Purity, (b) Character, (c) Soul. Cp. Isa. 64:6; Zech. 2:2.3. (3) Wounded. Sin wounds. Cp. Isa. 1:4-6; Prov. 23:32; Jer. 10:19; 30:12; Psalm 38: 4-8. (4) Left half dead. Man, by nature, is half dead, physically alive but spiritually dead. Cp. Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13; Ezek. 16:5, 6; James 1:15.

III. The Passers-by.

1. Priest—representative of Religion, and Ceremonialism. Ordinances, etc., cannot help the sinner. They can do for him just what the priest did—nothing! Cp. John 3:3; Isa. 1:11-16; Gal. 2:16; 3:10, 13; Romans 3:19, 20, 28; 4:5, 15; John 3:3.
2. Levite—representative of the law. The law demands what we cannot give. Romans 7: 7-14. Therefore it cannot help the stripped wounded and half dead sinner. Cp. Eph. 2:8. 9; Romans 4:5; Gal. 2:16; Titus 3:4, 5.

IV. The Good Samaritan. Vs. 33-37.

1. Who he was—the despised one; John 4:9. Cp. Isa. 53:3. A picture of the Lord Jesus.
2. What he did: (1) Came to where he was. Cp. Heb. 2:14; Gal. 4:4, 5; Luke 19:10; John 3:17. (2) Had compassion. Cp. 1 John 4:9; 15:13; Exod. 34:6; 2 Cor. 8:9; John 1:14, 17, etc. (3) Bound up wounds. Cp. Luke 4:18; Matt. 9:13; Isa. 53:4, 5; 1 Peter 2:24, 25. (4) Placed him in his own place; v. 34. Cp. Psalm 40:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:3; 2:5, 6. (5) Provided for him; v. 35. Cp Eph. 1:3, 4, 5, 6, 7. 11, 13; Matt. 6:33; Phil. 4:19; 2 Peter 1:3. (6) Promised to return; v. 35. Cp. John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18. (7) Promised to reward. "I will repay." Cp. 1 Cor. 3:11-15.

268. MARTHA AND MARY

READ Luke 10: 38-42.

THEME: Learning of Christ.

TELL THE STORY.

In this story we see Martha and Mary contrasted. Both were loved by the Lord (John 11: 5). Martha was occupied for Jesus; Mary was occupied with Him. Martha was occupied with many things; Mary with the one thing. We need to maintain the balance of our spiritual life. We must not be so active as to neglect communion, nor so contemplative as to become unpractical. Christ perfectly combined the two. He was the Man of prayer (Mark 1: 35) and the Worker (John 4: 33, 34).

MARTHA.—

SHE RECEIVED CHRIST INTO HER HOME (v. 38). She invited Him and gave Him loving hospitality. We, too, if we will, may have Him come into the home of our heart (Rev. 3: 20).

SHE WAS DISTRACTED (R.V.) *IN HER SERVICE* (v. 40). Her much serving distracted her from the Lord Himself. Some are so taken up with work and worry in the Lord's service that they miss the privilege of hearing His words. "Cares," even in Christ's service can "choke the Word" and cause us to become unfruitful, just as much as the love of riches and the lusts of other things (Mark 4: 19). Christ appreciates our service for Him because of the love which prompts it, but not when we serve at the wrong time, when our work crowds out communion with Him.

SHE BECAME IRRITATED WITH MARY and told the Lord that Mary had left her to serve alone (v. 40). It is thought that Mary had already done her share of the work, and that Martha was doing many extras, perhaps cooking extra dishes for the Lord, when what He really wanted was her company so that He could teach her. She drew attention to the amount of work she was doing and the little that Mary was doing. We need to examine ourselves and see, whether by our service, much of which may be self-appointed, we are not robbing the Lord of that for which He is longing, fellowship with Him. The Lord would never have commended Mary for neglecting her duty and leaving all the work to Martha. A missionary in China, on one occasion, travelled a long distance in great discomfort in order to visit and help a Chinese woman. Imagine her disappointment when the woman spent practically the whole time cooking an elaborate meal for the missionary who wanted to teach her the Word of God and help her spiritually.

SHE BECAME IRRITATED WITH THE LORD HIMSELF. "Dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to . . ." (v. 40) thus sharply rebuking them both. Her irritability made her unreasonable, for after all it was neither the Lord's fault nor Mary's that Martha was serving so much. It was entirely her own. Then she told the Lord what He should do. It showed her state of mind when she tried to instruct Him.

SHE WAS GENTLY REBUKED BY THE LORD (v. 41). He did not mean to suggest that He would wish His disciples always to sit at His feet and never minister to others or work for Him. Christianity is eminently practical, as we have seen in Lesson No. 22. He rebuked her for her fussing, fretting and worrying over her service, for her fault-finding, and for serving when she should have been listening to Him. "Be careful (anxious) for nothing" (Phil. 4: 6).

ONE THING IS NEEDFUL (v. 42). If we judge by the context then the "one thing needful" is to sit at Jesus' feet and hear His Word. Contrast this one thing with the many things that so troubled Martha. Sitting at His feet is the place of a learner. All those who belong to Christ should be workers for God, but our work will be powerless unless we take time to sit at Jesus' feet and learn of Him.

MARY.—

SHE SAT AT JESUS' FEET AND HEARD HIS WORD (v. 39). She found comfort at His feet in her bereavement (John 11: 32); she was at His feet in worship (John 12: 3) and here she is at His feet as a learner.

SHE CHOSE THE BETTER PART (v. 42). Mary had deliberately to choose this better part and refuse other things. If we are to spend time regularly with God, it will mean choosing this and sacrificing something else. It may mean laying aside the fascinating book, foregoing extra time in bed, getting to bed early in order to rise early and meet with the Lord. We must deliberately *choose* this good part and it is not easy. The benefits gained by sitting at His feet are lasting; they shall not be taken away from us.

SHE WAS COMMENDED BY THE LORD, even though she was criticised by her sister. What does it matter if we are misjudged by others when we are well-pleasing to the Lord. This lesson brings before us the necessity of taking Quiet Time. The length of time spent in this way in reading the Word of God and in prayer, will depend on the individual, on circumstances, etc., but if we are to grow spiritually then we must spend time regularly alone with God and His Word each day.

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 10: 42—"But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

269. JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 8:12-25; 1:1-9; 3:19-21

Golden Text: John 8:12

I. The Circumstances; V. 1:11.

1. The homeless Stranger. Cp. John 7:53 and 8:1. Cp. Luke 9:58. A stranger in the world His hands had made; John 1:10.
2. The sinful woman; vs. 3, 4. Cp. Romans 3:22, 23; Gal. 3:22.
3. The crafty accusers; vs. 4-6. Cp. Luke 20:20.
4. The searching reply; vs. 7, 8. The only one that had the right to throw the stone was in their midst, but instead, He bowed Himself to the dust of the earth. Cp. John 3:17; Phil. 2:5-8; Eccles. 7:20; Prov. 20:9. Note the other occasions when Deity is said to write.
5. The result; v. 9. Conviction. Cp. John 16:12; Romans 2:15; Gen. 42:21.
6. The message; vs. 10, 11. Romans 8:1; John 3:18.

II. Darkness. Type of sin. 1 John 1:5.

1. Man is in spiritual darkness. Col. 1:13; Acts 26:18; Eph. 4:18; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Cor. 4:4.
2. He is in sinful darkness—the gross sins; Romans 1:21. Vile conduct, etc. (Illust. Judas, John 13:20. etc.).
3. He is in moral darkness—He may have an outwardly good character but be indifferent to the Gospel (Illust.). Rich young man. Mark 10:1; John 2:11.
4. He is in religious darkness. Illust. Pharisees; John 9:40, 41. Nicodemus; John 3.)
5. The ruler of darkness—Satan. Eph. 6:12; Luke 22:53; Eph. 5:11; Col. 1:13.
6. The end—outer darkness. Matt. 8:12; 22:13; Jude 13. Thus the sinner is described as having (1) A dark birth; Psalm 51:5. (2) A dark life; John 3:19. (3) A dark death; Romans 6: 23. (4) A dark eternity; Matt. 8:12. Truly a black picture!

III. Light—Christ as the Light. Light is the only thing that can come into contact with defilement and remain pure. So Christ had no sin, knew no sin and did no sin, though He lived in a world that reeked with iniquity.

1. Searched. John 8:3-9; 15:22; Heb. 4:12; Jer. 17:10. (Illust. X-rays). All lives are to Him an open book and nothing can be hidden from Him.
2. Warned. John 3:3; 8:21-24; Matt. 18:3; Luke 13:3. (Illust. Lighthouse).
3. Guided. John 12:46; 12:35, 36; 14:6; 2 Tim. 1: 10; Rev. 21:33. (Illust. Harbour light).
4. Result. (1) To those who accept Him: (a) Life. John 1:4; 1 John 5:12, 13; Col. 3:3, 4. (b) Light. John 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 5:8. (c) Liberty. John 8:32; Gal. 5:1. (d) Glory. Rev. 20:21-25; 21:1-7. (2) To those who reject (Illust. Luke 16:19-31): (a) Darkness. Romans 1:21; Matt. 13:12-15. (b) Death. Romans 6: 23: James 1:15; Ezek. 18:4; John 8:24. (c) Doom. Rev. 20:10-15; Matt. 22:13; John 3:36; Mark 16:16. (d) Despair, "weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth;" Matt. 25:30.

270. THE BLIND MAN

John 9:1-38

Golden Text: 2 Corinthians 4:4

I. The Man's Condition. V. 1. Born blind. This is the natural condition of all men. They can neither see nor understand spiritual things apart from the operation of the Spirit of God. That is why Christ said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again he cannot **see.**" He needed spiritual vision which only the Divine Oculist can give. Cp. 2 Cor. 4:3, 4; 4: 18; Acts 26:18; Psalm 51:5; John 1:5; 1 Cor. 2:14· Psalm 82:5; Jer. 5:21.

II. The Divine Compulsion. Vs. 2-5.

1. The disciples' question; vs. 2, 3. Cp. Romans 5:18, 20; 2 Cor. 12:8; Romans 5:10.
2. The Savior's declaration; vs. 4-5. Cp. John 4:34; 5:19, 36; 11:9; 12:35, 46; Isa. 42:7; Luke 4:18; John 8:12; 9:39; 2 Cor. 4:6.

III. The Savior's Command. Vs. 6. 7.

1. A strange act; v. 6. "Clay"—This would drive home to him his physical and spiritual blindness. The sinner must be convinced of his lost, guilty and ruined condition ere he can appreciate his need of God's saving grace. John 16:8, 9. (Ill. John 4:16).
2. A strange command—to test his faith; v. 7. Salvation is conditional. Matt. 11:28; John 1:12; Acts 13:38; John 3:16, etc. "Come," "look," "take," "receive." Here it was "go."

IV. The Wondrous Change. V. 7. "Came seeing." What it meant to him. Picture his first view of the wonders of God's creation. Cp. "At the Cross where I first saw the light." Cp. 1 Peter 2:9; Col. 1:13; 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:4, 5.

V. The Great Controversy. Vs. 8-25.

1. With the neighbours; vs. 8-12. Note the progress of his appreciation of the Person of Christ; vs. 11, 17, 25, 33, 35, 36.
2. With the Pharisees; vs. 13-18. (1) Their self-righteousness; v. 16. (2) Their blindness; v. 18. Cp. Vs. 40, 41. (3) His testimony; v. 17.
3. With the parents; vs. 19-23. Cp. John 12:42, 43.

VI. The Simple Confession; vs. 25-33. Not only his eyes but his mouth was opened. Romans 10:9, 10; Mark 8:38; 1 John 2:23. He told what he knew. Cp. 1 John 5:13. The power of a simple testimony.

VII. The Drastic Consequence. V. 34. "Cast out"—excommunication. They cast him out of that from which they had already cast out Christ. Cp. Matt. 5:11; John 15:18-25; Matt. 10:28; John 16:2-4.

VIII. The Blessed Communion. Vs. 35-41.

1. The revelation; vs. 35-37. Here is a definite testimony, from Christ, as to His Own Deity. Cp. John 10:30; 4:26; 8:24; Matt. 26:63, 64, etc.
2. The result—worship; v. 38. Cp. John 4:22-24; Heb. 10:12-22.

271. THE GOOD SHEPHERD

READ John 10: 1-18, 27-29.
THEME: True marks of the Shepherd and of the sheep.

This is the only parable in the Gospel of St. John.

SHEEP NEED A SHEPHERD.—

BECAUSE THEY GO ASTRAY and have no sense to enable them to find their way back again. Other animals, such as horses, dogs and cats have been known to find their way home from long distances, but not so sheep; therefore they need a shepherd to watch over them night and day. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way" (Isaiah 53: 6). Some may say they have not wandered far away, but who can say that he has not turned to his own way, and has not been guilty of self-will?

BECAUSE THEY NEED PROTECTION. They cannot defend themselves against wild animals such as lions and wolves, and so they are at their mercy. A sheep cannot fight and, even if it tries to flee, has not the swiftness of its enemy. We need the Good Shepherd to protect us from the roaring lion, Satan, who goes about seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5: 8).

BECAUSE THEY NEED PROVISION. Sheep can find neither food nor water for themselves; they are dependent on the shepherd to *lead* them to water and to grass. We need the Good Shepherd to feed us with the Bread of Life and give us living water.

BECAUSE THEY NEED SECURITY. If they go inside the door they will be safe. Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in he shall be saved" (v. 9). A door is that by which we enter. Christ is the door, the only way unto salvation. But to be saved we must *enter in*, and when we find salvation we find also security, pasture and liberty. The door is open now. Have you entered it?

MARKS OF THE TRUE SHEPHERD.—

Jesus is *the* Good Shepherd — not merely *a* shepherd.

HE IS THE OWNER. In the East the shepherd is usually the owner of the flock. He does not have many, as in this country, so he remembers when each one is born, where he led them, and what trials he has had in connection with them. He is wealthy or otherwise according to the number of sheep he possesses. Christ's sheep are His wealth.

HE KNOWS HIS SHEEP (v. 14). Because some are weak, ignorant or foolish, men cannot always pick them out, but the Lord knows them (2 Tim. 2: 19). He knows each individual sheep. He knows those that are weak and feeble and will not overdrive them. If Jacob was careful of his sheep knowing what each one could do, how much more does the Lord Jesus know His own and care for them. He knows each one by name (v. 3).

HE PROVIDES FOR THEM. He is responsible to find pasture and water for them. He leads them out; He goes before (vv. 3, 4). In dry seasons he searches out food and water for them. David could say, "The Lord is *my* shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures" (Psalm 23: 1, 2).

HE GIVES THEM ETERNAL LIFE (v. 28), and He gives it *now.* Eternal life means divine life, the same kind of life that God has, and this becomes ours when we receive Christ as our Saviour for, "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5: 12). "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5: 11). Eternal life is not secured by good works or merit. It is God's free gift. "I *give* unto them eternal life." "The *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 23).

HE CAME TO GIVE ABUNDANT LIFE (v. 10) — not only life, but life *abundant.* Many of those who possess physical life have not *abounding* life. They are alive, but sick, and thus dependent upon those round them. They have no stamina and are quite incapable of continuous and prolonged effort. They have no energy and can do very little work. Many Christians are like that. They have eternal life, but not the abundant life which makes them strong to work for God, full of zeal in His service, and able to continue in their witness for Christ as Paul did (Acts 26: 22). Unless we have this abundant life we are not living full, Christian lives; we are living below our privileges. Christ came that we might have life *abundant.*

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH (v. 28). His sheep can never be ruined or lost. Neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand, nor out of His Father's hand. Here we have double security. We are in the hand of both the Father and the Son. His sheep may fall, but He will lift them up again and restore them. He never loses a single sheep belonging to Him.

HE LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP (vv. 11, 15). Four times in this chapter the Good Shepherd speaks of giving His life, of laying it down. His death differs from that of an ordinary brave man or of a martyr. His death was purely voluntary. He was forced neither by God nor man to give up His life. He said, "I *lay down* my life . . . no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (vv. 17, 18). When he was being tried by Pilate, He said, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19: 11). He laid it down as an act of obedience to the Father (v. 18).

TRUE MARKS OF THE SHEEP.—

FAITH AND TRUST IN THE SHEPHERD (v. 26). This is a proof that we *are* His sheep and, if we do not possess this mark then we are not His. If we have never received Him as our Saviour then we do not know Him.

THEY HEAR (HEED) HIS VOICE (v. 27). They attend to Him and they do not know the voice of strangers. If we are to recognise the voice of Christ above all others, then we must become His sheep.

THEY FOLLOW HIM (v. 28) because they love Him, not because they are driven. Wherever He leads, they follow, up hill and down dale, along difficult and smooth paths alike. Do we follow closely behind the Good Shepherd, or do we sometimes, as Peter did, when the way was difficult, "follow afar off" (Luke 22: 54). There are some who "follow the Lamb *whithersoever* He goeth." We should follow Him by also following His example (1 Peter 2: 21).

MEMORY VERSE.—John 10: 11—"I am the Good Shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:1-18

Golden Text: John 10:11

1. He Seeks the Sheep. Read Luke 15:3-5. The condition of the sheep. Luke 19:10; Ezek. 34:16.

1. Astray. Isa. 53:6; Psalm 119:176; Matt. 9:36; Ezek. 34:11.
2. Lost. 2 Cor. 4:4; Ezekiel 34:12; 33:4-6.
3. Helpless. John 8:34; Romans 7:19, etc.
4. In danger. Job 36:18; John 3:18, 36. A lost sheep, like a lost sinner, is in danger of (1) The storm. That is, God's wrath revealed from heaven. Romans 1:18. (2) An attack from a lion. That is, the Devil, who lies in wait to blind, rob and take captive unwary souls. 1 Peter 5:8. (3) An attack from a wolf. That is, a teacher of false doctrine. See Matt. 7:15.

II. He Laid Down His Life for Them. Vs. 15, 11. 17, 18.

1. The solicitude. Cp. John 3:16; Hosea 11:4; Jer. 31:3; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25.
2. The sacrifice. Mark 10:45; John 3:14; 10:10; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Cor. 5:21; 8:9.
3. The salvation. Cp. Acts 13:38; 10:43; John 10:9; Isa. 45:22, etc.

III. He Gives His Life to the Sheep—Here is regeneration; v. 28. John 5:24; 3:36; 1 John 5:9-13; John 1:12; Col. 3:4; John 5:40.

1. As the Good Shepherd He gives His life for the sheep. John 10:11.
2. As the Great Shepherd He gives His life to the sheep. John 10:28; Heb. 13:20.
3. As the Chief Shepherd He will glorify His sheep. 1 Peter 5:4.

IV. He Knows His Sheep. Vs. 4, 14, 27. Note the two marks of His sheep:

1. Ear—They hear His voice: (1) In believing. John 5:24; Isa. 55:3. (2) In obedience: (a) Baptism. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:41. (b) Breaking bread; 1 Cor. 11:25, 26. (c) Witnessing. Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.
2. Foot—They follow Me. The walk. Cp. 1 John 2:19; 2:15, 16; 3:3; John 17:14-19; Eph. 4:1; Hosea 6:3.

V. He Keeps His Sheep. Vs. 28-30. Their eternal security. Due to:

1. Their acceptance of Him. John 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:12.
2. Their position in Him. Cp. Eph. 1:6; 1 John 4:17; 1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:9, 10.
3. His ceaseless intercession for them. Heb. 7:25; Romans 5:10; 8:34-39.

VI. He Provides for His Sheep. V. 9. "Pasture."

1. He supplies their temporal needs. Psalm 23:1; Phil. 4:19; Matt. 6:26-34; Ezek. 34:14, 15.
2. He meets all their spiritual needs, as (1) Forgiveness. 1 John 1:9; 2:1. 2. (2) Grace. 2 Cor. 12:9; 9:8, etc. (3) Guidance; John 10:4. He leads; Psalm 23:4.

VII. He Will Enfold All His Sheep. John 10:16.

1. The place prepared; John 14:2.
2. The gathering shout; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.
3. The heavenly home. Rev. 21:1-5; 22:1-7, 22; John 17:24.

272. THE PRAYER OF GOD'S CHILDREN

READ Luke 11: 1-4.
THEME: Learning to pray.

This prayer is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer, but it is actually the Disciples' Prayer. It could not be the Lord's Prayer, for He had no need to ask for forgiveness for Himself — He was sinless (1 Pet. 1: 19; Heb. 7: 26).

THE DISCIPLES' REQUEST.—

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY (v. 1), not teach us *how* to pray, but teach us *to pray*. We may know how to go about praying, and yet not pray.

THIS REQUEST WAS INSPIRED BY CHRIST'S EXAMPLE. "As He (Jesus) was praying . . . one of His disciples said . . . Lord, teach *us* to pray" (v. 1). He Himself was a Man of Prayer. Again and again we read in the Gospels that He drew apart to pray. And if prayer was necessary to Him how much more it is to us.

THE REQUEST WAS ANSWERED, for He taught them this model prayer. He will be our Teacher also, if we ask Him (Rom. 8: 26, 27). But we are not to limit ourselves to this prayer, rather is it to be a guide to prayer. "In *everything* by prayer . . . with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4: 6). C. H. Spurgeon said, "This prayer is a great chart, but I cannot cross the sea on a chart; so is a map, but a man is not a traveller because he puts his finger on a map." There is, however, one feature of prayer which is entirely lacking here, and this is to ask in the Name of Christ (John 14: 13, 14). We are to pray to the Father, in Christ's Name.

THE APPROACH.—

We say, *Our Father* (v. 2). But only God's children can rightly use this prayer — those who have been born again of the Spirit (John 3: 3), born into the family of God. And how may we become a member of this family? "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1: 12). We are children of God *by faith in Christ Jesus* (Gal. 3: 26). So here we have sonship, which relationship nothing can alter.

OUR FATHER — Here we have *brotherhood.* The children of God are all members of one family. They may not see eye to eye in everything, they may belong to different denominations but, if they are truly born again they, with us, belong to God's family. And so when we say *Our* Father it links us all together.

The first three petitions are for *God's* glory, the others are for the supply of personal needs.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME. The prayer begins with worship. All true petition puts God's glory first. Too often we are taken up with requests for the supply of our own needs, whether they be temporal or spiritual, and do not give time to *worship* Him. Worship is different from thanksgiving. We worship Him for what He *is*, for His love, His holiness, His power, majesty and mercy; but we *thank* Him for what He gives us and does for us. How are we to hallow His Name? Reverence it, never use His Name lightly. Think much upon His names or titles and, as we do this, our hearts will overflow in worship and adoration. Think on His titles — Jehovah Rohi — the Lord my Shepherd; Jehovah Shalom — the Lord send peace; Jehovah Tsidkenu — the Lord our Righteousness; Jehovah Jireh — The Lord will provide and so on. A book of remembrance has been written before Him for them that think upon His Name (Mal. 3: 16).

THY KINGDOM COME means Christ's coming on earth to reign (Rev. 19: 6); He shall reign in righteousness (Isaiah 32: 1); (no injustices then); He shall reign for ever (Rev. 11: 15); all dominions shall serve and obey Him (Dan. 7: 27); and during His reign all wars shall cease (Isaiah 2: 2-5).

But before His kingdom comes, Christ Himself must come (Zech. 14: 4, 9). When He says, "Surely I come quickly," may we respond, "Even so come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22: 20). But we can only truly say this if we are ready to meet Him, because we have received Him as Saviour and are living to please Him. We may hasten His coming by making known the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Then there is the personal side. Have we made Him King in our lives? He must first come to reign there before we can pray for His kingdom to come on earth.

THY WILL BE DONE, AS IN HEAVEN, SO IN EARTH. If we are to pray this prayer honestly then we must be willing to give up our own will and say, as our Lord did, "Not my will but thine be done" (Luke 22: 42). We must be ready to *do* God's will from the heart (Eph. 6: 6). Paul was able to say of God's will, "that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12: 2). That is what it meant to him. God's will should be the supreme delight of every child of His.

AS IN HEAVEN. How is His will done in heaven? Perhaps Psalm 103: 20 gives us some idea. "His angels that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." This seems to indicate that they listen carefully and then obey instantly and joyfully. The next petitions are for our daily needs.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD. God is interested in our temporal as well as in our spiritual needs and He wants us to look to Him for our daily food. If we "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6: 33) we can confidently look to Him to supply our need, for He has promised to do so (Phil. 4: 19). Because I am a child of God I have a claim on Him as my Father, to provide for my daily needs.

DAILY FORGIVENESS. "And forgive us our sins." We who have accepted Christ as Saviour have been forgiven all our past sins, but just as we need daily bread, so we need daily forgiveness; for the sins of omission as well as for the sins of commission. If we confess our sins He will forgive us and cleanse us (1 John 1: 9). The prayer for pardon is put first of the prayers for spiritual blessings because, unless our heart is right with God it is of no use to pray for other things (Psalm 66: 8).

FOR WE ALSO FORGIVE EVERYONE THAT IS INDEBTED TO US (who has sinned against us). This is a prayer for forgiveness that brings fellowship with God, and we cannot have this fellowship with Him if we do not forgive others (Matt. 6: 14, 15). This is taught us in (Matt. 5: 23, 24). We forgive others because we ourselves have been forgiven by God (Eph. 1: 7). We are to forgive others even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us (Eph. 4: 32).

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION. In this petition we pray for *daily protection.* God does not tempt us; sin, the old nature within tempts us (James 1: 13, 14), and so also does Satan. But there is a limit to our temptations, for God will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able to bear (1. Cor. 10: 13). Christ has told us to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation (Matt. 26: 41). Let us beware ourselves of going into unnecessary places of temptation, thinking that we are strong to stand, for, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10: 12).

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL (the evil one) (v. 4, R.V. marg.). We pray in this petition for *daily deliverance from the power of Satan.* We are to be always on our guard against the wiles of the devil. To overcome his power we are to watch and pray to resist him (1 Pet. 5: 8, 9), and to put on the whole armour of God (Eph. 6: 11).

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 11: 1—"As He (Jesus) was praying . . . one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray."

THE DISCIPLE'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-13

Golden Text: Luke 11:9

I. The Circumstances. Luke 11:1.

1. The Example—As "He was praying;" Luke 11:1. Study the prayer life of Christ. Luke 3:21; 6:12, 13; Mark 1:35; Matt. 14:23; Luke 9:29; John 11:41, 42; Luke 9:29; Matt. 19:13; Luke 22:32; John 17:20; Luke 22:44; Matt. 26:36; Luke 24:50; Heb. 7:25.
2. The Request—"Lord, teach us." (1) The Teacher—"Lord." Romans 10:9, 10; 1 Cor. 12:13. (2) The learner—"A disciple" or follower of the Lord Jesus. Prov. 15:8; John 9:31.

II. The Prayer. Matt. 6:9-13. This prayer is not intended to be used as a "vain repetition," though it may well be repeated by every child of God; but it is a **pattern** prayer, for it contains all those elements necessary to the prayer life of the believer. Needless to say, it is only for Christians, for God is only the Father of such.

1. Revelation in prayer. "Lord, teach us." The mouth, by nature, is closed to God. Romans 3:14, 19; Psalms 5:9; 51:15; 40:1-3. Oftimes the believer knows not what he should pray for as he ought; Romans 8:26. Therefore the need to be taught.
2. Relationship in prayer. "Our Father." Cp. John 8:44; 1:12; 1 John 3:1, 2; Romans 8:14-17; Gal. 4:5-7.
3. Reverence in prayer. "Hallowed." John 4:23, 24; Eccles. 5:1, 2; Isa. 6:3, 4.
4. Rule in prayer. "Kingdom come." The kingdom can only come when the King comes and He cannot come as King until He has removed His church. Therefore the prayer of each believer should be, "Even so, come Lord Jesus;" Rev. 22:20. Luke 1:31-33; Matt. 19:28; Rev. 20:4; Isa. 11:6-9.
5. Resignation in prayer. "Thy will be done." Prayer does not demand from God but seeks to be in His will. James 4:13-15; Romans 12:1, 2; Luke 22:42; Heb. 10:7.
6. Request in prayer. "Give us." Phil. 4:19; Matt. 6:6; Luke 11:9; John 16:24; Isa. 65:24; Jer. 33:3; Phil. 4:6, 7.
7. Repentance in prayer. "Forgive." 1 John 1:8, 9; Psalms 51:3, 12, 13; 32:3-5. Note also that the believer is not only viewed as being forgiven, but as being forgiving. The believer proves he has been forgiven by being forgiving. See Eph. 4:32.
8. Resolution in prayer. "Lead not, but deliver." 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:22; Acts 24:16; 2 Tim. 2:22. We need to be delivered from evil (1) Consciences; Heb. 10:22. (2) Heart of unbelief; Heb. 3:12. (3) World; Gal. 1:4. (4) Speaking; Eph. 4:31. (5) Work; 2 Tim. 4:18. (6) Company; 1 Cor. 15:33. (7) Appearances; 1 Thess. 5:22.
9. Rejoicing in prayer. "Thine kingdom," etc. Cp. Rev. 5:9-13; Jude 24:25.
10. Response in prayer. "Amen." "So be it." Rev. 22:20, 21.

III. The Illustrations. Luke 11:5-13.

1. The importunate friend. V. 5:10. (1) The need. V. 6. (2) The reply. V. 7. (3) The importunity. V. 8. (4) The response. V. 8. (5) The application. 9, 10.
2. The son's request. Vs. 11-13. And its application.

273. THE STRONG MAN IN HIS PALACE

READ Luke 11: 21-26.
THEME: Jesus — stronger than the strong.
TELL THE STORY of the Palace, of the strong man, of the fight and of the victory.

The strong man is Satan, the Palace is the heart of man, and the Stronger than the strong is Jesus Christ.

THE STRONG MAN — SATAN.—

HE IS STRONG because he knows the places where people are weak. He is *cunning* and knows the temptations best suited to each one. If anyone in his own strength tries to overcome him, he is doomed to failure. But after all he is only the strong *man*, and therefore is not all-powerful.

HE IS ARMED. This makes him a formidable enemy. Consider his armour. Ephesians 6: 14 tells us of "the girdle of truth" but the strong man wears a girdle of lies (John 8: 44). He tells people today, there is no heaven, no future punishment and no eternity. Sometimes he allays their fears by telling them they are perfectly all right, they have not done anything very bad, etc.

HE ALSO ARMS HIS SLAVE. He gives him a shield that the Gospel arrows cannot enter his heart to convince him of sin. He may give him a shield of doubt, so that when the man hears the Word he does not believe it.

HE KEEPS HIS PALACE. He is very watchful as a warder outside a prison. He will not allow anyone to go in and set the prisoner free. If he thinks the man is trying to escape he doubles his guard. If you are becoming interested in the Gospel and the way of salvation, Satan will do his utmost to snatch away the Word.

HE KEEPS HIS GOODS. He considers the man whose heart he inhabits to be *his* goods. But the palace does not rightly belong to him. God made that palace for his own dwelling place and Satan has taken it. Satan uses the tongue, the mind, the hands and the will of the one who is in his power.

HIS GOODS ARE IN PEACE. The man inside the palace is satisfied with his condition. He may hear about the Judgment but he is not concerned. He comes into the presence of death but is unmoved. He has a false peace, a false sense of security (Jer. 6: 14). He is not troubled about his sin because Satan keeps his goods in peace.

THE STRONGER THAN THE STRONG—JESUS CHRIST.—

THE FIGHT. Jesus Christ comes upon the strong man and attacks him (v. 22). The prince of darkness and the Prince of Light each strive for possession of the palace. If there is doubt in the man's heart then the victory is delayed because of unbelief (Mark 6: 5, 6). Jesus by His death, resurrection and ascension gains the victory.

THE STRONGER MAN TAKES FROM THE STRONG MAN ALL HIS ARMOUR. Christ renders Satan powerless and divides the spoil. He puts His own mark on everything in the house thus denoting possession. Christ now has full possession, and Satan has no power to enter.

THE EMPTY HOUSE (vv. 24-26).—

THE OCCUPANT, SATAN, VACATES THE HOUSE. Even though he pretends to give peace (v. 21), God's Word calls him an *unclean* spirit. He is always the same and cannot be changed. He decides to go out of the house for a time and says later, "I will return unto *my house.*" This is like the person who *says* he is saved, who may *look* different because there are some outward changes in his life, but there has been no real repentance, no turning from sin, no faith-acceptance of Christ as Saviour.

THE EVIL SPIRIT RETURNS, and is much pleased with the house. *He finds it empty.* Had it had another occupant, he could not have entered it again. If Christ had been at the door He would have overcome Satan.

HE FOUND IT SWEPT — swept but not *washed.* Sweeping removes the loose dirt, but washing takes away all the filth. Only Christ can wash the heart, cleansing it from sin (1 John 1: 7).

HE FOUND IT GARNISHED — ornamented and furnished. Perhaps there was a Bible on the table to make a show of religion, but there was no Bread of Life; a fireplace but no fire — no real love for Christ; imitation fruit, but no fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22).

THE MAN'S STATE WAS WORSE THAN EVER (v. 26). Satan invited seven others to return to the house with him. If anyone has made a profession without having come to Christ and returns to his former life, his old sins and old way of living, then he is harder than ever to win as Satan very well knows.

IS YOUR HOUSE EMPTY? The Lord Jesus, the rightful owner, wants to come in, not merely to sweep the house, but to clean and wash it (1 John 1: 7). Let Him come into your house and make it His temple. The house, empty, swept and garnished is a picture of reformation. Christ overcoming the strong man is a picture of conversion.

MEMORY VERSE.—2 Cor. 13: 5—"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."

274. REFORMATION NOT ENOUGH

Luke 11:21-26

Golden Text: Matthew 7:21

In this lesson there has been gathered much evidence to show the futility of reformation to gain God's favor. Drive this home to the class.

I. Definitions—Reform: To improve; to correct; to make better; to remove that which is objectionable; to reclaim; to repair.

II. Illustrations from Scripture.

1. By Parables. (1) The Tenantless House; Luke 11:24-26. (a) The tenant—"unclean spirit." as drink, swearing, etc., etc. (b) The eviction. "Gone out" by force of will. (c) The unoccupied heart. Its changed condition —"cleaned up"—"quit his meanness"—swept and garnished, but no occupant. (d) The return—with 7 fold worse condition. Cp. Rev. 3:20; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 1:13, etc. (2) The New Patch in the old garment. Matt. 9:16. (a) The old garment—our own righteousness. Cp. Isa. 64:6; Gen. 3:7, etc. (b) The new patch—a good resolve, etc. (c) The result—made worse. Cp. Isa. 61:10; Romans 3:20-22; 2 Cor. 5:21, etc. (3) The Wine Bottles; Matt. 9:17. Heavenly joy can only be contained in heaven-born people. (4) The Cleansed Cup; Matt. 23:26. Outside respectability covering unregenerate heart. Cp. Mark 7:21; 1 Sam. 16:7; Matt. 33:3-5; Jer. 2:22; 1 John 1:7; Acts 13:38; S. of S. 4:7. (5) The False Foundation; Matt. 7:24-29. Cp. 1 Cor. 3:11; Matt. 16:16-18. (6) The Untempered Mortar; Ezek. 13:10-15. (7) The Whited Sepulchre; Matt. 23:27.
2. By Incidents. (1) Nicodemus; John 3:1-3. (2) Rich Young Man; Mark 10:19-21. (3) The Pharisees; Matt. 23:23-28. (4) Judas—His privileges, his position, his end; Matt. 27:1-5. (5) Simon the Sorcerer; Acts 8:13; 18-23.
3. Give modern illustrations, as white-washing a black mark on a wall ,painting a rotten ship, putting a new body on an old chassis with a worn out engine. etc.

III. Application.

1. What it does. (1) It changes outward life. (2) Makes better citizens. (3) Gives respectability and pride in self.
2. What it lacks. (1) The Holy Spirit's regenerating power, apart from which there is no acceptance before God. Romans 8:5-8; John 3: 3-8; Romans 5:5; 1 Cor. 3:16; Phil. 2:12, 13. (2) Faith in Christ's finished work as the only foundation for eternal weal. Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9; Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5. (3) Love for Christ as the only constraining motive for service; 2 Cor. 5:14. etc.
3. What is needed. (1) Conviction of sin; Isa. 6:5, etc. (2) Repentance towards God; Acts 20:21; 17:30. (3) Faith in Christ. Acts 13:38, etc.

275. THE RICH FOOL

READ Luke 12: 13-21.

THEME: The sin of covetousness. TELL THE STORY.

We need to notice the circumstances under which this parable was spoken. A certain man who had been listening to the teaching of Christ asked him to speak to his brother and tell him to divide the inheritance with him. Obviously the teaching of the Lord had made little, if any impression upon him, for all he saw in the Lord was one who would act as a kind of arbitrator between them, one who would help him to get material gain. Probably there was covetousness on both sides, so the Lord took occasion to warn the disciples against this sin by giving them this parable.

OUR LORD'S WARNING.—

AGAINST GIVING RICHES AND PLEASURES FIRST PLACE IN THEIR HEARTS (v. 15). He tells us in Matt. 6: 33 to put first things first by seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The first and most important thing is the soul's salvation for, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8: 36).

LIFE DOES NOT CONSIST IN POSSESSIONS (v. 15), but in character, and that we take with us. What we *are* is much more important than what we *have*. What we *are* continues through eternity (Rev. 22:11).

RICHES.—

THEY CANNOT GIVE OR PROLONG LIFE. When God said to the rich man, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee" (v. 20), his riches could not give him an extension of time on earth. When shipwrecked, a rich man offered all his wealth to anyone who would give him a seat in the lifeboat, but riches were useless to anyone then.

THEY CANNOT GIVE REST OF HEART OR SATISFACTION (v. 17). The anxieties of the rich are often greater than those who have none. This man's chief concern was "where to bestow my fruits," how to keep what he had. The temptations of the rich are often far greater than those who have none. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10: 23). Not money, but the *love* of money is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6: 10).

THEY COME FROM GOD AND SHOULD BE USED FOR HIM. The silver and the gold are His (Hagg. 2: 8). "All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee" (1 Chron. 29: 14). God has entrusted some with wealth and riches, and these can be greatly used by God if placed in the hands of those who love Him and serve Him with all their hearts. God has need of stewards who will use their riches in His service (1 Tim. 6: 17, 18).

THEY MUST BE LEFT BEHIND. Men cannot take them with them when they die. "Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" (v. 20). This man had to leave them to be used by someone else.

THE RICH MAN.—

HE WAS INDUSTRIOUS AND PROSPEROUS. This was not wrong, for he had apparently come honestly by his wealth (v. 16). God had prospered his farm. But his perplexity was not how to use his wealth for

God and for the good of others, but where he was to bestow his goods (v. 17). He need not, however, have worried about this. He had no need to build more and bigger barns. He could have helped the poor (11: 41), and the maimed and the blind (Luke 14: 13, 14). Instead of storing it in barns, he would have stored it in heaven where it would have been safe. But he used all his riches for himself.

HE THOUGHT HE WAS VERY WISE. John Bunyan would have called him, "Mr. Worldly Wise." No doubt, others too, thought he was a keen, far-seeing business man and admired him for this. He thought he had made ample provision for the future, "Much goods laid up for many years" (v. 19), but in actual fact he had nothing laid up. All his possessions were perishable; he had no treasure laid up in heaven.

HE LIVED FOR THIS LIFE ONLY (v. 19). "Eat, drink and be merry" was his motto. "Take thine ease," he said to himself. This was not rightful rest and recreation after labour which the busy person really enjoys. Eating and drinking were to play a large part in the life of the rich man, not taking food in order to be strengthened to serve God, but living to eat. How different from the Apostle Paul, who said, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. 9: 27). "Be merry," he said. Pleasure was to fill up the greater part of his life. How foolish it was to spend so much time and thought on this life and to make no provision for the future life.

GOD CALLED HIM A FOOL (v. 20).—

HE WAS A FOOL BECAUSE HE FORGOT GOD. He left Him entirely out of his calculations. He forgot that it was *God* Who had prospered his farm. What success would he have had if God had withheld the sun and the rain? He took God's gifts as though they were his own, to do as he liked with them. He said, *my* barns, *my* goods, *my* fruits, *my* soul. He did not recognise God's Lordship and he had no sense of stewardship.

HE FORGOT DEATH. He thought he had many years before him, but he had only one night. Perhaps he thought he would have plenty of time at the end to think about his soul, and had never thought of the possibility of *sudden* death. If God should require *your* soul this night as He did the rich fool's, would you be ready? Death may come without warning. How important then, it is to be right with God. This man made provision for this life, but none for eternity. He thought he needed big barns, but he needed only a little grave.

HE HAD NO TREASURE LAID UP IN HEAVEN and was therefore a poor, rich man. Paul was one of the rich poor. "As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6: 10). "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich" (Prov. 10: 22).

LET US SEEK TO BE RICH TOWARD GOD. This means to be rich in *faith* (James 2: 5); rich in *mercy*, like God Himself (Eph. 2: 4); rich in *good works* (1 Tim. 6: 18), so that treasure is laid up in heaven where no decay affects it and thieves cannot touch it (Matt. 6: 20).

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 12: 21—"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

THE RICH FOOL

Luke 12:13-32

Golden Text: Mark 8:36

I. His Description. Vs. 15, 16, 17.

1. Rich; v. 16. Cp. 1 Tim. 6:17; 6:9, 10; Jer. 9:23; Mark 10:24.
2. Successful; v. 16. Cp. Psalms 49:11-18; 73:3-22.
3. Covetous; v. 17. Cp. Psalms 62:10; 119:36; Prov. 30:8.
4. Anxious; v. 17; Cp. Phil. 4:6-8; Matt. 6:25-34. The three rich men of the New Testament are nameless and combine to present a forceful picture of what covetousness leads to. (1) The choice of a rich fool; Mark 10:17-22. (2) The coveteousness of a rich fool; Luke 12:15-19. (3) The consequence of dying as a rich fool; Luke 16:19-31.

II. His Resolution. Vs. 17-19. Note the personal pronouns.

1. Its source—himself; v. 17. 2 Tim. 3:2; Phil. 2:21. He was all wrapped up in himself. He was self-horizoned and saw nothing beyond his own ease, comfort and pleasure. How like thousands today!
2. Its object—himself; vs. 18, 19. Hosea 10:1; 1 Cor. 10:24. "He was a self-made man and, as such, was a horrible example of unskilled labor!"

III. His Delusion. Vs. 17-19. Prof. Orr points out that this rich man made three fatal errors.

1. He mistook his body for his soul; v. 19. "Soul." Cp. Rev. 3:17; Luke 12:23; Mark 8:36. All the goods were laid up for his sleek, well-fed body. His soul was bankrupt!
2 He mistook himself for God; v. 19. "My and "I"—no God; Psalms 10:4; 14:1.
3. He mistook time for eternity; v. 19. "Many years." Eccles. 12:1; James 4:13-15. He spoke of "many years." God said: "Tonight."

IV. His Summons. V. 20.

1. The Summoner—God; v. 20. Cp. Heb. 4:13; 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chron. 28:9; Job 34:21; Psalms 33:13-15; 90:8; Jer. 17:10; Ezek. 11:5.
2. The summons; v. 20. (1) The name—Fool. What is a fool? Prov. 1:7; Psalm 53:1; Prov. 14:9; Matt. 7:24-29; Prov. 10:1; 15:2; 22:3. (2) The message—"soul required." Ezek. 18:4; Matt. 10:28. (3) The time—"this night." Cp. Jer. 28:16, 17. Cp. 2 Cor. 6:2. (4) The question—"whence?" Prov. 10:2; 11:4; 13:7; 23:4; Zeph. 1:18; Eccles. 5:15, 16.

V. The Application. Vs. 21-32.

1. The believer is the object of the Father's care; vs. 22-30. Illustrated by: (1) The ravens. (2) The lilies. Cp. Phil. 4:19; 4:6-8, etc., etc.
2. The exhortation; v. 31. Cp. Matt. 6:33; 2 Cor. 4:17, 18.
3. The encouragement; v. 32. Cp. Isa. 41:1; Psalm 37:1; 2 Cor. 4:6.

276. LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

READ John 11: 1-46.

THEME: Christ's power over death. TELL THE STORY.

THE LORD JESUS DELAYED HIS COMING.—Though He loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus (v. 5), yet when Martha and Mary sent for Him saying "He whom Thou lovest is sick" He remained on two days where He was. He could have come straight away, but He had a purpose in the delay. His delays are not denials. We may have to wait for the answer to our prayers, but let us trust God while we are waiting and believe that He will answer.

HE ALLOWED DEATH AND SORROW TO COME TO HIS FRIENDS.— Sometimes He does not answer our prayers for healing for our loved ones, but this is no proof that He does not love us. It is expressly said that He loved this family at Bethany, yet He allowed bereavement to come to them. Why?

THAT HE MIGHT GIVE THEM A GREATER BLESSING than physical healing for their brother. He sometimes withholds one gift, in order that He may give another and greater one. Think of the many who, through some physical handicap, have brought benefit to the world. The blind hymn writers, who have written hymns which have brought comfort and inspiration to thousands and, perhaps, hundreds of thousands, are one example.

THAT THEY MIGHT FEEL HIS SYMPATHY — for He wept with them (v. 35), and know Him as the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1: 3). He was sent "to bind up the brokenhearted . . . to comfort all that mourn" (Is. 61: 1, 2).

THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW HIS GREAT POWER.—The One Whose power stilled the storm, cast out devils, fed 5,000, healed the sick, made the blind to see and the lame to walk now was to show them He could raise their brother from the dead. They were now to learn that He is "the resurrection and the life." Martha thought of her brother rising at the last day, but Jesus said, "I *am.* (present tense) the resurrection and the life" (v. 25).

THAT IT MIGHT BE FOR HIS GLORY.—Something beautiful was to spring out of the trial, something that would shed abroad the name and fame of God. It may be so in our own lives or in the lives of others. Our Lord said to the disciples, "I was glad for *your* sakes that I was not there" (v. 15) so that they too might know His great power.

LAZARUS DEAD AND CORRUPT.— This is a picture of man's condition by nature, "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2: 1). When Adam sinned, God said, "Thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2: 17). Until Christ gives us new life we are dead in sins, and death means corruption.

LAZARUS RESTORED TO LIFE.—This is a parable of a soul passing from death unto life (John 5: 24).

JESUS SAID, "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE" (John 11: 25).—Life is in Christ and can only come from Him. There is no other way, "For there is none other name under heaven . . . whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12).

HE CAME TO THE GRAVE WHERE LAZARUS WAS.—Our Lord came right down from heaven's glory to sinful men in order to save them. He did not send an angel, He came Himself, and became Man, taking our nature upon Him in order that He might become sin for us (2 Cor. 5: 21).

HE SAID, "TAKE YE AWAY THE STONE" (v. 39). We have a part to play if we would have Christ bring life to dead souls. If Martha had had her way the stone would never have been removed, because she thought it was now too late. Let us take away from our hearts *the stone of unbelief*. We are sometimes tempted to think that it is impossible for certain people to be saved — they are too far gone in sin, but nothing is too hard for the Lord. Let us put away the *obstructions in our own life*, the things that cause us to be a hindrance to others and prevent life coming to their dead souls. Inconsistent Christians are a great hindrance to others.

JESUS SAID, "LAZARUS, COME FORTH . . . and he that was dead came forth" (v. 43, 44). "The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. 4: 12). In doing our part to bring dead souls into contact with Christ, let us use His Word.

LAZARUS BOUND WITH GRAVECLOTHES.—He was alive but still wore graveclothes. He is a picture of those who have life in Christ, but who are still bound by some of the graveclothes (sins) of the old life. Not only are those in Christ new creatures, but God says, "*All* things have become new" (2 Cor. 5: 17).

GRAVECLOTHES BOUND LAZARUS' HANDS.—There are many of God's people who are still using their hands for doing things which belong to the old life, or they are so bound that they are not active in Christ's service.

GRAVECLOTHES BOUND HIS FEET, like those who go to places where God would not have them go, places connected with our life when we were dead in trespasses and sins.

GRAVECLOTHES BOUND HIS MOUTH, he could not speak. Many who have received new life from Christ are so bound, that they have never opened their lips in a prayer meeting, or prayed before others, or spoken to any one about Christ.

LAZARUS LIBERATED.— The Lord Jesus was not content that Lazarus should have life only. He wanted him to have life more abundantly (John 10: 10). He wished to *liberate* him. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8: 36), and so He said, "Loose him, and let him go" (v. 44). It is His purpose that we should have not only everlasting life but that we should be entirely freed and liberated from all the graveclothes of the old life.

LAZARUS WITNESSED FOR CHRIST by letting people see that he was really alive, and many believed on Him (John 12: 11). May the change in our lives be so great that others may see it and believe on Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSE.—John 11: 25—"Jesus said . . . I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

RAISING OF LAZARUS

John 11:1-46

Golden Text: John 11:25

I. The Message. Vs. 1-16.

1. The place—Bethany. One of the homes that the Lord Jesus loved to be in. Is He in your home? Your heart? Your life? Rev. 3:20.
2. The message; v. 3. "He whom Thou lovest." Cp. 1 John 4:10, 19; John 17:23; 1 John 3:1. Therefore, Phil. 4:6-8.
3. The effect of it; vs. 4-16. Sickness and death can be to the glory of God if it be in the will of the Lord.
   (1) For God's glory; v. 4. Cp. Romans 8:28; 1 Peter 4:11, 16.
   (2) For His own glory; v. 4. John 12:28; 13:31; 17:5; 14:13.
   (3) Yet He lingered; v. 6. Apparent indifference but all for glory of God; v. 15. Cp. John 13:7.

II. The Death of Lazarus. Vs. 11-17.

1. Cause; Gen. 2:17. Cp. Gen. 3:7, 8. Sin. Romans 5:12, 15; 6:23. Cp. Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13; 1 Tim. 5:6. The natural condition of all men. Various stages in decomposition as seen in Jarius' daughter; widow's son; Lazarus; but no difference in the fact of all dead.
2. Effect of spiritual death. (1) No communion with God. (2) No obedience to God. (3) No hope in God.

III. The Sorrow. Vs. 19-31.

1. Their only brother—possibly the wage-earner.
2. Their reproach; vs. 21, 32. "Blind unbelief is sure to err." Cp. 1 Cor. 13:12; Job 33:13.

IV. The Sympathetic Savior. Vs. 33, 35. Though verse 35 is the shortest verse in the Bible, it is full of precious truth. The Eternal Son of God has wept through human eyes. He knows all the sorrows, trials and perplexities of life and can sympathize with all His own. Cp. Heb. 4:15, 16; 2:16-18; Isa. 53:3; Heb. 12:2, 3; Isa. 63:9; Exod. 3:7, etc.

V. The Promise. Vs. 25, 26, 40. The two-fold result of His coming:

1. The dead raised; v. 25. John 5:25.
2. The living changed; v. 26. 1Thess. 4:13-18.
3. Note v. 40. A reversal of human judgment. The world's axiom is "Seeing is believing." God reverses it and says "Believing is seeing." See John 20:25, 29.

VI. The Quickening Word. Vs. 43, 44. It has been suggested that had not Christ said, "Lazarus come forth," all the dead would have come forth from their graves. Cp. Luke 8:54, 55; 7:14, 15; John 5:25; Isa. 55:3; John 5:24; Eph. 2:5, 6; Romans 6:4. Have you heard? Believed?

VII. The Result. V. 45.

1. Life; v. 45. Cp. Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:10.
2. Liberty; v. 45. "Loose him." The grave clothes of legalism, tradition, prejudice, etc., must be removed for "He whom the Son makes free is free indeed." John 8:36. Gal. 5:1; Col. 2:16, 17, etc.
3. Testimony; v. 46. The new life is the best evidence of Christ's power to save. See 1 Thess. 1:3, 9, 10; Eph. 2:1, 10.

277. THE BARREN FIG TREE

READ Luke 13: 6, 7.

THEME: Fruitless Lives.
TELL THE STORY.

The fig tree in Scripture is generally taken to be a type of Israel. In this parable the primary application is probably to them. Christ may have been warning them that He was able to be with them only one year more. The lessons, however, are for all. The comparison of a man to a tree and of works to fruit, is very common in Scripture.

THE OWNER.—

HE CAME LOOKING FOR FRUIT ON THE TREE. He had a right to expect fruit. This was the end for which the tree existed. He had planted the tree in a vineyard (an unusual place for a fig tree), where it had every opportunity of bearing fruit. Fruit represents the good fruit of obedience and love. Fruit unto holiness (Rom. 6: 22); the fruit of good works (Col. 1: 10) which is produced in us by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5: 22). Christ is looking for fruit in our lives. Does He find it?

HIS DISAPPOINTMENT. In spite of the favourable conditions in which the tree was planted, in spite of all the labour and care bestowed upon it, the tree was fruitless. No doubt there were plenty of leaves but, like the fig tree of Mark 11: 13, there was nothing *but* leaves. Leaves on a fig tree always precede the fruit, thus giving promise of fruit, therefore they represent making a profession, giving promise of fruit but having none. Absence of fruit seems to represent sins of omission more than sins of commission. Many folk comfort themselves with the thought that they have never committed any great sin, but are they producing fruit? The owner of the tree was disappointed. How much greater must Christ's disappointment be over the lack of fruit in the lives of those for whom He died.

HIS JUDGMENT ON THE TREE. "Cut it down." This is God's warning both to the fruitless nation and to the individual. Trees which do not bring forth fruit must be cut down. Sinners who do not bring forth the fruit of repentance, faith and holiness must die. John the Baptist warned the people to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance (Matt. 3: 8). Barren trees are a dead loss to the owner because they give no return for the time and labour spent on them. They are also an encumbrance, taking up space which might well be occupied by a

fruitful tree. Barren trees may become diseased and therefore a menace to other trees. All this is true of the unfruitful life.

HIS PATIENCE. He had been seeking fruit on the tree for three years but without result. Why is it that God's sentence of judgment is not executed? Because "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3: 9). God always forewarns people of judgment to come in order to give them opportunity to repent (2 Peter 3: 5; 1 Peter 3: 20).

THE VINE DRESSER.—

REPRESENTS THE LORD JESUS AS THE GREAT INTERCESSOR pleading for sinners (Heb. 7: 25). His intercessions prevail for the sparing of the tree. Moses' intercessions held back God's judgment from falling on the Children of Israel (Ex. 32: 11-14; Numbers 14: 11-20; Psalm 106: 23). How much more do Christ's intercessions accomplish? "Let it alone this year also," He pleads. We little realise how much we owe to the intercessions of Christ; that it is for this reason we have been spared.

HE GAVE THE TREE ADDITIONAL CARE. He dug it and manured it. Digging loosens the hard soil round the roots and gives the tree another chance to bear fruit. There are times when the Gospel message softens the soil and digs into our hearts. *The digging* may be the special strivings of the Spirit, perhaps at a time when others are being saved, when God's power is felt and His Holy Spirit is working. The heavenly Dresser uses *the spade* of difficulty, sorrow and trial in the hope that it will cause the life to bear fruit.

HE GIVES THE TREE A LAST CHANCE. "If it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down" (v. 9). There is a limit even to the Lord's marvellous patience, a time when the day of grace will end. God's special grace usually precedes judgment, as with Noah before the Flood; Jeremiah, Isaiah and others before the captivity; Christ, and the apostles and Pentecost before the destruction of Jerusalem. If the goodness, forbearance and long suffering of God do not lead people to repentance, then the hard and impenitent heart will treasure to itself the righteous judgment of God (Rom. 2: 5).

FRUITBEARING IS THE TEST BY WHICH WE SHALL BE KNOWN. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Are *you* bearing fruit? If not, then you are in danger of being cut down. You may have plenty of leaves (profession), but it is the fruit for which God looks.

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 7: 20—"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

278. THE CROOKED WOMAN

Luke 13:10-17

Golden Text: Hebrews 2:14. 15

I. The Needy Sinner. Vs. 10, 11.

1. Infirm; v. 11. Cp. Gen. 6:5, 12; 8:21; Eccles. 7:29; Psalm 14:2, 3; 51:5; 58:2-5; Prov. 20:9; Phil. 2:15; Isa. 1:5; 48:8; Jer. 2:22; Romans 3: 23, etc.
2. Helpless; v. 11. The words "in no wise lift up" are translated "uttermost" in Heb. 7:25. Here is the "gutter-most" of need met by the "uttermost" of salvation! Cp. Romans 5:6; 8:8; Job 25:4-6; 14:4.
3. Bound by Satan; v. 16. Cp. Acts 8:23; 2 Tim. 2:26; Luke 11:21, 22; John 8:44; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 1 Tim. 5:15; 1 Peter 5:8.

II. The Ready Savior. Vs. 12, 13.

1. He called her to Him; v. 12. Cp. Matt. 11:28; John 6:37; Matt. 9:13; Rev. 22:17; John 11:28; Isa. 43:2.
2. He spake to her; v. 12. John 5:24; Isa. 55:3; 55:11; Romans 10:17; John 7:46; 1 Peter 1:23.
3. He touched her; v. 13. Cp. His touch for: (1) Healing; Luke 22:51. (2) Cleansing; Luke 5:12. (3) Life; Luke 7:14. (4) Blessing; Matt. 10:16. (5) Strength; Luke 13:13. (6) Help; Mark 9:27. (7) Deliverance; Matt. 14:31.

III. The Astounding Result. V. 13.

1. Made staight. Solomon, with all his wisdom, had much to learn. He declared "that which is crooked cannot be made straight" Eccles. 1:15. Here Christ makes the crooked straight so that she may walk the straight path. Psalm 5:8; Isa. 40:4; Jer. 31:9. Christ makes straight to go straight. Cp. Romans 3:25; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 4:17; Heb. 12:13; Phil. 2:15.
2. Glorified God. This is the Divine purpose in salvation; the glory of the One Who has saved us. Are we living God-glorifying lives? 1 Peter. 2:9; 2 Thess. 1:12; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 3: 21-23; 1:30, 31.

IV. The Fault-Finding Hypocrite. V. 14. This generation of fault-finding hypocrites hasn't died out. Wherever there is a work for God these carping critics will be found.

1. Found fault with Christ. Cp. Luke 7:30-35; Titus 1:15, 16.
2. Found fault with the woman. Matt. 9:13; Luke 19:10.
3. Found fault with the people. "six days."

V. The Public Rebuke. Vs. 15, 16. Cp. Matt. 23: 1-33.

1. His description of the critical hypocrites; v. 15. A hypocrite is one who pretends to be what he doesn't intend to be!
2. His illustration; v. 15. The common decencies of life demand kindness to animals that they be loosed on the Sabbath to drink water.
3. His application; v. 16. Apply this to all those who are still bound in their sins! "Ought not (this boy or girl) to be loosed this day?"

VI. The Joyous Sequel. V. 17.

1. The adversaries ashamed. Cp 1 .Peter 2:12; Phil. 1:28; 1 Tim. 5:14.
2. The people rejoicing. Romans 1:16; Acts 8: 6-8; Mark 12:37.

279. THE GREAT SUPPER

READ Luke 14: 16-24.

THEME: Making excuses.

TELL THE STORY.

THE GREAT SUPPER REPRESENTS THE GOSPEL FEAST.—

IT IS A GREAT SUPPER because of the great and wonderful provision which has been made. In Christ, there is for the sinner, the Bread from heaven; wine (representing joy); milk (of the Word of God), Living Water (everlasting life); honey from the Rock and many other blessings.

IT IS ALL PROVIDED BY GOD. We can contribute nothing towards it, nor can we help with the preparations. We can do nothing towards our salvation by our own good works. Ample provision has been made for all who will come.

IT IS FREE to all who will accept the invitation. Christ offers salvation "without money and without price" (Isaiah 55: 1). Eternal life is *a gift* for all who will receive it.

THE INVITATION.—

COME (v. 17). It is simple, direct and clear. "Come unto me" says Christ (Matt. 11: 28). "But *how* do I come?" some may ask. Come as a sinner just as you are and accept Christ as your Saviour and eternal life is yours.

FOR ALL THINGS ARE NOW READY (v. 17). *All* things, not some. The work of Christ is complete. He said on the Cross, "It is finished," meaning that the work of our salvation was a finished work; there was nothing more to be done on His part. "*Now* ready" — "*Now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2). God has done His part, ours is to accept the invitation.

BUT THEY ALL MADE FOOLISH EXCUSES (v. 18). They were excuses, not reasons. They did not say straight out that they did not wish to come but that is what they really meant. The first two were quite polite in declining the invitation, "I pray thee have me excused," but it was a refusal nevertheless. The third did not even ask to be

excused, but said, "I cannot come." What he really meant was, I *will not* come. Satan is always ready to help people with excuses and, if you cannot find one he will frame it for you.

Why do so many today decline God's loving and gracious invitation? One explanation is given in Jer. 17: 9. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Another is, "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor. 4: 4).

EXCUSES MADE.—

POSSESSIONS. The first man bought a field and must go and see it. But who would buy a field without first looking at it? Obviously this was an excuse. Many are kept from coming to Christ because of their possessions as was the case of the rich young ruler (Luke 18: 23). Esau sold his birthright for one morsel of meat (Heb. 12: 16). But God's invitation is of far more importance than any earthly possessions because "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (1 John 2: 16). Like the Rich Fool (Lesson 27) we shall have to leave our possessions behind.

BUSINESS. The second man said he had bought some cattle and that he wanted to try them (v. 19). He was *too busy* to come to the feast. Business absorbed his whole time and attention. Are you among those who have too much to do, too many things on hand to think of eternal things? But the true order is, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6: 33).

HOME AND DOMESTIC TIES, HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS. What kind of a wife had he, we wonder? It had not occurred to him that he might take his wife with him if he really wished to go. She may not have been willing but he does not seem to have asked her. How many have been kept back from accepting the Gospel invitation because they were afraid of what their relatives might say and do? They feel they could not face up to the sneers, ridicule or opposition. But when on earth the Lord Jesus Himself knew what it was to meet with opposition in His own home. He said, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10: 36, 37).

OTHER EXCUSES some make today are these. *It is too soon to accept* the invitation; I shall wait till I am older, or till I have had a good time in the world. Another may say, *I am too good*, I am not a sinner. There is nothing wrong with me, I do not need the Gospel. And perhaps a greater number still say, "It is no use my attempting to accept Christ's offer of salvation, I could never live the life, so it is

of no use for me to try." It is true they could not live the Christian life in their own strength, but when we come to Christ *He supplies the power to live the life.* All their excuses were reported to the master.

THE MASTER.—

HE WAS ANGRY AT THEIR REFUSAL (v. 21). He did not accept their excuses. He showed his anger by leaving them and turning to others. The Lord said in the days of Noah, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6: 3), and then came the Flood in judgment upon them. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3: 36). What a terrible thing the wrath of God will be. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10: 31).

HIS COMMAND TO THE SERVANTS. They were to go out quickly and bring in the people (v. 21). No time was to be lost, for "the time is short" (1 Cor. 7: 29). "The night cometh when no man can work" (John 9: 4). Those who were bidden first were the Jews. To the Jews first the Gospel was preached. They rejected it and then the message was taken to the Gentiles (Acts 13: 46; ch. 28: 28).

They were told to go to *the poor* — those who have nothing and know it. They were to go to *the maimed.* These represent men who do not attempt to work for salvation, because they know they can never obtain it by their own works. They were to go to *the blind* — those whose eyes have been closed to the light of the Gospel.

THEY WERE TO COMPEL THEM TO COME IN (v. 23). How was this to be done? By persuasion (2 Cor. 5: 11), by beseeching them (2 Cor. 5: 20), by preaching the Word in season and out of season; that is, using every opportunity (2 Tim. 4: 2).

God wants His house to be filled. What are *you* doing to help fill it?

THERE IS NO HOPE IN THE FUTURE FOR THOSE WHO REFUSE THE INVITATION IN THIS LIFE. "Ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8: 21), said Christ. "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. 29: 1).

HOW ARE YOU treating God's invitation?

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 14: 17—"Come; for all things are now ready."

THE GREAT SUPPER

Luke 14:12-24

Golden Text: Revelation 19:9

I. The Feast Prepared. V. 16.

1. In honor of the King's Son Cp. Matt. 22:2. Not for convenience of guests. Cp. Matt. 3:17; John 12:28; Col. 1:18. All that a king's power and wealth could procure was there.
2. It was a feast—not a funeral. Salvation a joyous fact. Cp. Luke 2:9-14; Romans 10:15.
3. All was provided by the King—even to the garment. Cp. Matt. 22:11-13. Titus 2:11; Eph. 2:8; 2 Cor. 5:18; 2 Cor. 5:21; Romans 3:22; Isa. 61:10, etc. The guests were not expected to invite themselves, i. e., prayer; or earn their meal by their own efforts, i. e., good works; nor were they asked to pay for their supper. It was all of grace and apart from human merit.
4. "All ready—Finished!" John 19:30; 17:4. Picture the gospel supper and the provision of Forgiveness, Peace, Salvation, Eternal Life. Justification, etc., on the table. Cp. Romans 4:24—5:1; Mark 7:37.

II. The Invitation Given. V. 17. Matt. 22:3, 4.

1. The messengers—the servants. Cp. 2 Cor. 5: 20; 6:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8.
2. The message: "Come, for all things are now ready." (1) Invitation—"Come." Cp. The "Comes of the Bible. Gen. 7:1; Isa. 1:18; 55: 1; Matt. 11:28; Rev. 22:17, etc., etc. (2) Inclusiveness—"All things." Cp. Acts 13:38; John 19:28; 17:4; Luke 22:44. (3) Urgency—"Now ready." 2 Cor. 6:2; Romans 10:6-8; Acts 17:30, 31; Isa. 55:6, 7; Prov. 8:17.

III. The Excuses Made. Vs. 18-20. Matt. 22:5.

1. Their Attitude—"Made light of it." Cp. Acts 17:31; Psalm 106:24, 25; Prov. 1:20-26; 9:12; 8: 36; Acts 13:41.
2. Their Excuses; vs. 18-20. Note they gave no reasons but simply excuses. Their excuses but covered the underlying motive which was contempt for the King's Son. (1) Something to see; v. 18. Cp. Eccles. 1:8; 1 John 2:16, etc. (2) Something to prove; v. 19. Mark 8:36—Here is a good problem to prove. (3) New relationships. Cp. Isa. 28:17. (4) Give some present-day excuses and show their fallacy.

IV. The Further Invitation. Vs. 21-23.

1. The poor, maimed, halt and blind. Here is a graphic picture of each unsaved one. He is a (1) spiritual bankrupt. Luke 7:42. (2) Maimed or not complete. He has lost his innocency, truthfulness, honesty, etc. (3) Halt or lame. He hasn't walked straight. Romans 3:12. (4) Blind. 2 Cor. 4:4.
2. The servant's announcement; v. 22. "Yet there is room."
3. The outcasts brought in; v. 23. The homeless, outlaws and friendless.

V. The Result Upon the Rejecters. V. 24.

1. They were excused. God, one day, will take the excusers at their word. Prov. 1:31.
2. The house filled without them. Matt. 22:10.

280. THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Luke 14:25-35

Golden Text: Luke 14:27

I. The Historic Setting. V. 25. The multitudes that followed Him during His life gathered around Him for various motives. With some it was curiosity as Luke 19:3. Other came for gain John 6:26. Still others approached Him for political intrigue; John 6:15. Some came to praise Him; Matt. 21:8. Many came only to add their mockery; Matt. 27:27-31. The same crowd of Matt. 21:8 surrounded Him in Matt. 27:22. Great crowds is no indication of true discipleship. The narrow road is not the popular road. Matt. 7:13, 14.

II. Definition of Discipleship. A disciple is a learner, believer, and follower of Christ. Cp. John 1:35-42; 10:27; 8:31; 15:8; 9:28, etc. A disciple, then, in its proper sense, is one who has come to Christ, learns of Christ, follows Christ and serves Christ.

III. Cost of Discipleship. Vs. 26-33. Christ did not minimize what was involved in discipleship. He did not seek to make it attractive to the flesh by painting a rosy picture, but told them frankly what the cost of following would entail.

1. Discipleship enjoined; vs. 26, 27.
   (1) As to his own family life; v. 26. "Hate" here means to "love less." Cp. Matt. 10:37, 38; Phil. 3:7. Illus. Phil. 3:4-9. Cp. Mark 10:29. 30.
   (2) As to his own life; vs. 26, 27. Self-denial. Cp. Mark 8:35; Matt. 10:24; 2 Tim. 3:12; Acts 14:22. Cp. Romans 9:3.
   (3) As to his own possession; v. 33. Cp. 2 Cor. 8:1-7. Worldly possessions is often the acid test for true discipleship. Illust. of one who failed this test; Mark 10:21, 22. Illust. of one who succeeded; Phil. 3:7, 8.
2. Discipleship illustrated; vs. 28-32.
   (1) The unfinished tower; vs. 28-30. How many unfinished towers there are of those who made a profession of faith in Christ, but soon gave it up when they saw what it meant to live an out and out life for Christ!
   (2) The ambassage of peace; vs. 31, 32. Cp. Psalm 2:12. The believer can only face the enemy that approaches to oppose as he enjoys the assurance that obedience brings, and clothes himself with all the armor of God. See Eph. 6:11-18; 1 Tim. 6:11, 12.

IV. The Reward of Discipleship.

1. Worldly loss. Luke 14:33; Heb. 10:34; Gal. 6:14.
2. Present joy. Phil. 3:8; John 16:22, 24; 17:13; 15:11; Hebrews 12:2.
3. Eternal gain. Mark 10:30; John 14:1-3; 17:24. One moment in glory will amply compensate the believer for all the renunciations of earth. See 2 Cor. 4:16-18.

281. LOST THINGS

READ Luke 15: 1-10.
THEME: Seeking the lost.
TELL THE STORY.

In this chapter the Lord tells three parables which describe three things lost and found. Parables are simple stories of real life which are told to teach spiritual truths.

The parable of the lost sheep speaks of Christ the Good Shepherd seeking the sinner.

The parable of the lost piece of silver speaks of the Holy Spirit.

The parable of the prodigal son speaks of the love of the Father.

THE SHEEP.—

IT WAS LOST. In the Old Testament, as well as in the New, we are frequently likened to lost sheep. "I will seek out my sheep . . . I will seek that which was lost" (Ezek. 34: 12, 16).

IT WAS IN DANGER OF PERISHING. Unless we have been found by the Saviour, we are already lost, and in danger of perishing if we do not allow the Good Shepherd to rescue us. "Ye were as sheep going astray" (1 Pet. 2: 25).

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.—

HE SOUGHT THE SHEEP (v. 4). The lost sheep was only one of a hundred to the outsider who thought it only a small loss, but how precious that sheep was to the shepherd.

"Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine,
Are they not enough for Thee?
But the Shepherd made answer, "This of Mine
Has wandered away from Me.
And although the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find My sheep."

THE SHEPHERD SOUGHT THE SHEEP NOT THE SHEEP THE SHEPHERD. When Adam sinned it was God Who searched him out (Gen. 3: 9). And He has been seeking man ever since. He sought it *personally*. He did not send someone else to search for it. The Son of Man Himself came to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19: 10).

HE SOUGHT IT PERSEVERINGLY — "Until He find it."

Regardless of time and of cost, He goes on until He finds it. No path is too rough, no danger too great, no suffering too severe for Him. His one thought is to find His lost sheep.

"Lord, where are these blood-drops all the way,
That mark out the mountain's track?"
"They were shed for one who had gone astray
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back."
"Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and torn?
They are pierced tonight by many a thorn."

Ah, yes, it cost the Good Shepherd much to bring back His sheep.

HE FOUND IT. It may have been the feeble bleat of the lost sheep which led the Shepherd to it. A short cry from us, such as the publican's, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner," is sufficient to reach the Good Shepherd and He will find us. But not all sheep are found. Christ had to say of some, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5: 40). We must be willing to be found, and this means to be in the care and keeping of the Good Shepherd. "Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd" (1 Peter 2: 25).

HE LAID IT ON HIS SHOULDERS (v. 5). The Shepherd became the burden-bearer. He had to lift it to place it on His shoulders, lift it from the pit or from among the thorns and briars where it had fallen — lift it *to a place of safety.* And that is just what the Good Shepherd did. "In his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and . . . carried them all the days of old" (Isaiah 63: 9). What a wonderful thing — to be carried by the Lord Himself. On his shoulders was place of *rest* for the sheep.

HE LAID IT ON HIS SHOULDERS REJOICING (v. 5). He does not feel it a burden or a load, for has He not found his sheep? Christ's love makes the burden a joy. So it was with the Cross. "Jesus . . . Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12: 2).

THE LOST PIECE OF SILVER (vv. 8-10).—

This piece was one of the ten pieces which the woman wore round her head as the equivalent of our wedding ring. The woman here is a type of the Holy Spirit working through the Church — the invisible Church of Christ which is made up of every true believer in Him, no matter to what part of the earthly, visible church they may belong.

IT WAS PRECIOUS TO THE OWNER. The set of ten pieces was incomplete without it. Just as this woman prized it, so the Lord prizes the lost sinner. In the first parable the lost sheep was one of a hundred;

in this, the lost piece was one of ten, and so the value rises.

IT BORE THE IMAGE OF THE EMPEROR. Man was originally made in the image of God, after His likeness, and stamped with great time and labour. But when he fell, the likeness was defaced, he was covered with the dust and dirt of sin, so that the likeness could no longer be seen.

IT WAS LOST IN THE HOUSE, not far away from home, like the sheep or the prodigal son, yet it was lost and needed to be found. You may think you belong to the household of faith, you may regularly attend church services and meetings, you may belong to Christian organisations and yet be lost "in the house." The silver, unlike the sheep, was unconscious of its lost condition, yet it *was* lost.

HOW THE LOST PIECE WAS FOUND.—

A CANDLE (OR LAMP) was used in searching for it. The woman searched "diligently." The search was her first concern, everything else being secondary to it. The light showed where the lost piece of silver lay. The Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and uses it to show our lost condition. "Thy Word is a lamp" (Psalm 119: 105). The woman sought continuously till she found it. She did all the seeking; the silver could do nothing.

A BROOM ALSO WAS USED. In "Pilgrim's Progress" John Bunyan describes a room in the Interpreter's house which was full of dust. A man was called to sweep it. When the dust began to fly, Christian was almost choked. The Interpreter explained that the room represented the heart of man, into which the Gospel has never entered and the dust is original sin. The sweeper is the Law which shows man his sin. In many cases, before the lost sinner can be found, the broom of God's Law has to do its work for, "By the Law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3: 20). This choking with dust (sorrow and conviction of sin) precedes the finding and the recovery of the lost one.

WHEN THE PIECE WAS FOUND THERE WAS GREAT REJOICING. Is the Lord Jesus rejoicing over you or is He still searching for you because you are lost? When He finds you "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied" (Isaiah 53: 11).

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 15: 10—"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

282. THE LOST SHEEP

Luke 15:1-7

Golden Text: Isaiah 53:6

I. The Setting of the Story. Vs. 1-3.

1. The Publicans and sinners; v. 1. (1) Drew near. Cp. Isa. 46:12, 13; Matt. 11:28. (2) Heard His word. Romans 10:17; John 5:24; Mark 12:37.
2. The Pharisees and Scribes. (1) Self-righteous; Luke 18:11, 12. (2) Proud; Matt. 23:6, 7. (3) Despisers; Matt. 23:13. (4) Murmuring; v. 2. Which class represents you?

II. The Wandering Sheep. A graphic description of us all.

1. Straying. The most natural thing for a sheep to do is to stray. Cp. Isa. 53:6; Psalms 58:3; 119:176; Romans 3:12; 2 Peter 2:15. etc.
2. Lost; v. 6. Cp. 2 Cor. 4:3; Luke 19:10; Jer. 50:6; Matt. 10:6.
3. In Danger of: (1) The lion—the devil. Cp. 1 Peter 5:8. (2) Wolves—false-teachers. Acts 20:29, 30; John 10:12. (3) The storm—God's wrath. Cp. John 3:36; Romans 1:18; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9.
4. Helpless to save itself. Cp. Romans 5:6; 7:14.
5. Perishing. John 3:36; 1 Cor. 1:18. Here is a test. Is the preaching of the cross to you, foolishness? Then you are included amongst those described as "perishing."

III. The Seeking Shepherd. V. 4.

1. He loved the sheep. It was love that brought Him down from the glory of heaven. Cp. John 3:16; Romans 5:7, 8; 1 John 3:16; 4:10; Matt. 9:36; 12:12.
2. He sought the sheep. (1) His purpose in leaving heaven. Luke 19:10; Ezek. 34:11, 12. (2) The awful cost—Calvary's deepest woe. Quote, "There were ninety and nine." He endured the storm and defeated Satan; Heb. 2:14. Cp. Isa. 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24; John 10:11, 15; Psalm 88:3-18; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 12:2. (3) The finished work. Attested to by resurrection; Heb. 13:20.
3. He found the sheep. "Until—he found it." Cp. Ezek. 34:12, 16; 16:6-10. Ill: The dying thief found; Luke 23. Saul found; Acts 9, etc., etc. Have you been found?
4. He cared for the sheep. (1) On shoulders; v. 5. The place of strength and security. Cp. John 10:27-30. (2) Safe home; v. 6. Cp. John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18. The safety of the sheep was inseparably linked with the strength of the Shepherd. He has never lost a sheep. John 17:12; 10:26-30.

IV. The Rejoicing. Vs. 6, 7. All heaven is interested in the salvation of souls. Note who rejoices when a sinner is saved.

1. The Father's joy; Zeph. 3:17.
2. The Son's joy. Luke 15:6; Hebrews 12:1. 2.
3. The Spirit's joy; Romans 14:17.
4. The sinner's joy. 1 Thess. 1:6; Psalm 32:1; Romans 15:13.
5. The Christian's joy. Every believer rejoices when he hears of the salvation of a sinner. Acts 11:23; 1 Thess. 2:20.

283. THE LOST COIN

Luke 15:8-10

Golden Text: Luke 15:10

This depicts another phase of the sinners' state; i. e., he is without life—dead in trespasses and in sins, and therefore utterly helpless to save himself. Eph. 2:1-3. In Luke 15 there is a fourfold picture of the sinner.

1. In the lost sheep he is seen as a **senseless** sinner.
2. In the lost coin he is viewed as an **insensible** sinner.
3. In the prodigal son he is described as a **sensual** sinner who fulfills the base passions of his fallen nature.
4. In the elder brother he is seen as the **sanctimonious** sinner, filled with the pride of his own fancied self-righteousness.

I. The Coin—Typical. The coin is typical of the sinner in many ways.

1. It was obtained from the earth. Cp. Gen. 2:7; 3:19; Psalm 139:15, 16. Picture the cost and trouble of obtaining ore from earth and compare the marvelous construction of man. The most complicated piece of machinery cannot begin to compare with man—God's masterpiece.
2. It was of value—it could be exchanged for something else, so we. Cp. Mark 8:36. See some of the bad bargains of scripture. Essau's; Heb. 12:16. Judas'; Matt. 27:3, 4. The sinner's; Isa. 50:1; 52:3.
3. It had the image of the king on it. Cp. Gen. 1:27. Although man has fallen, yet traces of this image still remain, such as his spirit, soul, conscience, intelligence. will, etc .

II. The Coin—Fallen. V. 8.

1. Through the fault of another. So we all fell through Adam's sin. Cp. Romans 5:12, 15, 17-19.
2. Lost in the house. Lost because (1) Dead; i.e., lifeless. Cp. Eph. 2:1; 4:18; 1 John 5:12; John 3:36. (2) Hidden by dirt. Eph. 2:2, 3; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Romans 3:10-19. (3) In the darkness. John 3:19, 20; Acts 26:18; Romans 1:21; Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:18; 1 Peter 2:9.

III. The Coin—Sought. V. 8. Note the means used.

1. Light. The word of God. Cp. Psalm 119:105; Eph. 5:13. What the light revealed—the dirt. Cp. Mark 7:21; Jer. 17:9; Heb. 4:12.
2. The broom—the Spirit's conviction; 1 Cor. 2:10. Cp. Acts 2:36, 37; 9:5; 16:29; John 16:8.
3. The diligence. She searched until she found it. Doubtless lots of dust was raised during the process, but she didn't mind the dust. There will always be plenty of the dust of criticism. Cp. Ezek. 33:11; 1 Cor. 9:19-22.

IV. The Coin Found. V. 9.

1. Found just where it lay, as a result of the light and broom. Cp. 2 Cor. 4:6.
2. The rejoicing that followed. Cp. Acts 8:8; 15:3.
3. The application made; v. 10. What repentance means. Cp. Matt. 21:28-31. Cp. Acts 17:31; Luke 13:3; Acts 20:21.

284. THE LOST SON

Luke 15:11-32

Golden Text: Ezekiel 33:11

I. His Home. V. 11. Picture the home of a prosperous farmer of those days. The comfort, care. counsel, provision and protection of a kind father were all his. Illust. this by the goodness of God to His creatures and to man. Health, strength, food, clothing, etc., etc.

II. His Request. V. 12. Apparently no gratitude. Why the desire to leave? Perhaps bad companions and bad books, and an evil heart of unbelief. Cp. Romans 2:4, 5; Heb. 3:12. Note the father grants request. Often God allows us our own way so that we learn by bitter experience the folly of sin.

III. His Departure. V. 13. He turned his back on a good home, father, care. provision, advice. Cp. Isa. 53:6; 59:1, 2; Romans 3:12; Ezek. 33:11; Isa. 1:4; Jer. 7:23, 24. The far country is a picture of the world opposed to God's will and ways. Cp. 1 John 2:15, 16; James 4:4; 1 John 5:19; 2 Cor. 4:4.

IV. His Folly. V. 13. What he wasted—his money, his health, his strength, his character and his time on the Devil's baubles. So with every unsaved person. Cp. Isa. 55:2; Mark 8:36. All the world has is but lust and pride, yet millions waste all they have to get it. 1 John 2:16; Jer. 2:13.

V. His Destitution. V. 14. "Spent all."

1. His bankruptcy. Cp. Luke 7:41-43.
2. The famine—the drought—the bubble had burst. All his so-called friends have disappeared with his money.
3. The need: no food, no friends. no clothes, no money. What a picture of the sinners' need, poverty and ruin. Cp. Jer. 2:19.

VI. His Degradation. V. 15.

1. The citizen—a picture of the devil—the prince of this world. Friend at first; now employer.
2. The task—feed swine. Feeding the unclean, base lusts of the flesh. Note: No famine in husks! Gal. 6:7.

VII. His Deliberation. V. 17. "Came to himself." Cp. "Consider." Deut. 4:39; Hag. 1:5, 7; Deut. 32:29. (Ill.: Stop! Look! Listen! sign.)

VIII. His Resolution. Vs. 18, 19. The result of consideration.

IX. His Return. V. 20. He not only resolved but performed.

X. His Reception. Vs. 20-24. What he received:

1. The kiss of reconciliation. Cp. 2 Cor. 5:19, 21; Eph. 2:13; 1:6.
2. Doubtless a good bath which speaks of regeneration. Titus 3:5; John 13:10.
3. The best robe, which speaks of righteousness. Cp. Romans 3:22; 4:3-6; Isa. 61:10.
4. The ring—eternal love, life, and link. John 10:27-30; Jer. 31:3.
5. The shoes—sonship. John 1:12; 1 John 3:1; Romans 8:15-17.
6. The feast—provision. Cp. Phil. 4:19; Matt. 6: 33, etc.
7. The joy. Cp. Luke 15:10; Romans 15:13; John 15:11.

XI. The Elder Brother. Vs. 25-32. Self-righteous and proud. Left outside the door of father's house. Cp. Luke 13:24-30, etc. Cp. Romans 10:1-3.

285. THE PRODIGAL SON

READ Luke 15: 11-24.

THEME: The repentant sinner welcomed and forgiven.

TELL THE STORY.

In this parable there is no mention of the Saviour because the first one speaks of Him as the Good Shepherd. There is also no mention of the work of the Holy Spirit. This has been described in the second parable, the lost piece of silver. The three stories together represent different aspects of salvation. The sheep and the silver were sought, the prodigal had to return. In these parables all men are sheep, silver and prodigal sons for all are lost, and the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19: 10). But Scripture clearly teaches that only those who have received Christ are made the sons of God (John 1: 12). "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 26).

THE PRODIGAL SON AT HOME.—

HIS DESIRE TO BE INDEPENDENT (v. 12). The request for his portion of goods showed that he wished to live his own life independently of his father. Perhaps he felt that he could not do as he liked at home; there were too many restraints. What an ungrateful son he was. But how many people there are, young and old, who are like this young man, trying to be independent of God, leaving Him absolutely out of their lives and, in spite of all His love and care going their own way.

HIS SELFISHNESS. He did not love his father; he looked on him merely as one who would give him things. His cry was, "*Give me*" (v. 12). He remained at home for what he could get out of his father. Some folks' religion is summed up in these words, "Give me." They adopt religion (but, alas, not Christ) for what they can get out of it.

HIS FATHER GAVE HIM WHAT HE WANTED (v. 12). Did he not know what use his son would make of his inheritance? Of course he did. Why then did he do as his son asked? He knew he must let him have his own way, that the son must find out for himself that "the way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. 13: 15). The father would not force him to remain with him. God has given us free will. We are to *choose* whom we will serve (Josh. 24: 15). "I have set before you life and death . . . therefore *choose* life" (Deut. 30: 19).

THE PRODIGAL SON IN THE FAR COUNTRY.—

HE LOST NO TIME IN GETTING AWAY. "Not many days after he took his journey into a far country" (v. 13), thus showing where his heart had been all the time. He had probably attended the services in the synagogue, but he had no real interest in the worship of God. What is represented by being in the "far country"? It means to be "far off" from God (Eph. 2: 13). "They are gone far from me," said God of Israel. "Thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God" (Jer. 2: 5, 17).

HE SPENT ALL HIS FATHER HAD GIVEN HIM (vv. 13, 14). We have only a limited amount of spending money — health, strength, time, opportunity and everything that is worth having. How sad then to waste it. "He *wasted* his substance."

HE HAD TO EAT THE FRUIT OF HIS SIN. "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked" (Psalm 32: 10). "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6: 7). Here are some of the fruits of his sin and folly:—

Famine, want and shame. Sin never satisfies the heart. He was in want of food, clothing and shelter. Being in "the far country" causes us to be in want of all the things which are really worth while. But he had only *begun* to be in want (v. 14), so not yet did he think of going to his father, but tried instead to get help from one in the far country. He was like Israel, of whom God said, "They have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return" (Jer. 5: 3), so He had to afflict them yet more (Psalm 119: 67). God often does this to bring wanderers to Himself. Later the son was near to starving point. He was in want and misery (Deut. 28: 48) instead of having abundance.

Loneliness. "No man gave unto him" (v. 16). While he had plenty, his friends in the far country flocked round him, but when he had nothing they deserted him. No one in the far country will care for our souls; it is only those who belong to God who have any concern (Psalm 142: 4).

THE PRODIGAL'S REPENTANCE AND RETURN.—

HE CAME TO HIMSELF (v. 17). He saw himself as he really was — a sinner. He saw his sin as it was — not a thing to be desired and loved but something to be hated and shunned. He saw his father in a new light and realised something of his love and goodness. *Repentance* is a change of mind about sin, about myself and about God.

HE RESOLVED TO RETURN TO HIS FATHER. Repentance alone was not sufficient. "I will arise and *go* to my father" (v. 18), he said. This was the turning point. If he had not come to his father his repentance would have availed him nothing. Repentance on our part is not sufficient; there must be repentance *and faith* — faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. In the case of the backslider there must not only be repentance but a forsaking of the sin and a return to God.

HE CONFESSED HIS SIN (v. 21). He made no excuses. He did not try to justify himself, but acknowledged his sin. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid" (Ps. 32: 5; 1 John 1: 9). He not only confessed his sin; he had *forsaken it* (Prov. 28: 13). This is necessary before there can be forgiveness. He confessed he had "sinned against heaven and before thee" (v. 18). True repentance is a realisation that sin has been committed against God.

HE WAS RESTORED. He received a great welcome from his father, showing that he was forgiven freely and for ever. He was given the *kiss* of love and reconciliation. He was given the *best robe,* representing to us the robe of Christ's righteousness (Isaiah 61: 10). *A ring* was put on his hand. A ring was used as a seal. It was an indication that he belonged to the father. When we come to Christ we are sealed as His own (Eph. 1: 13, 14). *The shoes* denoted service. The Christians feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace (Eph. 6: 15). *The killing of the fatted calf* denoted satisfaction and joy (Psalm 63: 5). What more could have been done by the father to welcome the prodigal? All this will God do for us if we will come to Him in repentance and faith.

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 15: 20—"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him."

286. The Prodigal Son's brother.

Luke 15.25-32.

WORKING WITHOUT LOVE.

1. **The elder brother did not rejoice** when his backsliding brother came home. He was angry and jealous and would not go in. Are we like this?
2. **His father was loving and patient** with the elder brother and tried hard to get him to rejoice with him.
3. **He measured his work.** He worked hard while the others were at the feast but he counted up the years; he worked without love in his heart. This kind of work never brings joy to God. Col. 3.23; II Cor. 5.14.
4. **He was proud because he had obeyed his father** and had not wandered into the far country like his brother. He was like the Pharisee of Luke 18, v. 11-12.
5. **He did not thank his father, he grumbled.** But he had never asked his father for a kid. He was satisfied to go on working without love and joy. We should serve the Lord with **gladness.** Psalm 100.2.
6. **He did not love his backsliding brother.** He said, This thy son" (v. 30), he did not say, "This my brother."
   Though the prodigal son humbled himself and repented, the elder brother picked up all his brother's sins again and talked about them. Gal. 6.1.
7. **His father said to him, "Son, thou art ever with me,"** and all that I have belongs to you, v. 31.

Verse to learn. Galatians 6.1.

287. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

READ Luke 16: 19-31.
THEME: Living for this life only.
TELL THE STORY.

RICHES.—

WHO ARE THE RICH? Rich men are not only those who are wealthy, but the term applies to those who have more than sufficient for their own needs. We are all accountable to God for that which He entrusts to us. Riches in themselves are not wrong; on the contrary, if rightly used they can be a great blessing. The rich man of this parable was not lost because of his riches, nor Lazarus saved because of his poverty.

RICHES ARE A GREATER TEMPTATION THAN POVERTY (Mark 10: 23). Paul, writing to Timothy, told him to instruct the rich not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God (1 Tim. 6: 17-19). The rich man in this parable did all the things he should not have done and left undone the things he should have done.

THE RICH MAN ON EARTH.—

HE WAS THOROUGHLY SELFISH. His trouble was not that he was rich, but that he used all his riches for himself and was indifferent to the need of the beggar at his door. All his interests were centred on clothes and food for himself. His sin was the same as that of Sodom (Ezek. 16: 49). He was callous to the suffering and need of Lazarus. Amos 6: 1, 6, was also true of the rich man.

HE LIVED AS THOUGH THIS LIFE WERE THE END OF ALL. He did not think of death and made no preparation for it, but neither poverty nor wealth can keep away the last enemy. "The beggar died . . . the rich man also died and was buried" (v. 22). Probably he had a grand funeral but what good did that do him. He had lived for this life only, and had made no provision for eternity.

THE RICH MAN IN HADES.—

HE WAS IN TORMENT (v. 24). Even though this language may be figurative, still the place of which fire and torment is the figure must be dreadful. All we learn about this place comes from the Lord Himself and His words are full of solemn warning. The rich man was not there because of his riches, but because of his wrong use of them and because he had left God entirely out of his life. Punishment is according to the sin. God must be just, therefore some will be beaten

with many stripes, some with few (Luke 12: 47, 48). "God will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2: 6). This terrible picture of a lost soul is given by Christ Himself, and we must take notice of the warning.

HE CARRIED HIS MEMORY WITH HIM (v. 25). Memory and remorse for lost opportunity and a life misspent, will be part of the torment endured. Even in this life we have sometimes seen how terrible a thing remorse can be, and how it can torture the soul of the one who cannot undo the past.

HIS ABODE THERE WAS PERMANENT. Because of the great gulf fixed (v. 26), there was no way out. It is described as "everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25: 46). "The wrath of God *abideth* on him" (John 3: 36). There is no hint of a second chance, no room for repentance. Prov. 1: 28, was true of him, "Then they shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

HE ASKED THAT ONE MIGHT RETURN FROM THE DEAD to warn his brothers (vv. 27, 28), but if they had failed to hear Moses and the prophets, they would not listen to one from the dead. Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, came back from the dead, and many of the Jews became even more bitterly opposed to Christ than before (John 11: 44, 46-48). Faith comes not by seeing something spectacular, but by hearing the Word of God; not by communication from the dead, but by heeding the Word which we already have (Romans 10: 17).

LAZARUS.—

LAZARUS ON EARTH. He suffered greatly for he was sick, hungry and very poor. His only friends seemed to be the dogs (vv. 20, 21). Yet he trusted in God, for his name means "God is my help." Suffering on earth is no sign of God's displeasure, neither are wealth and prosperity a sign of God's favour. Lazarus' poverty and trouble may have caused him to set his affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

LAZARUS IN PARADISE. At his death he was carried by the angels, whereas it was said of the rich man that he died and was buried. The affliction of Lazarus was *light* compared with the eternal *weight* of glory (2 Cor. 4: 17).

A TERRIBLE WARNING is contained in this parable, but the hope of it is that none need go to the place described. It is not God's will that "any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9). Christ said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6: 37). He Who is now the Saviour pleading with men to come to Him will one day be the Judge. Come before it is too late.

MEMORY VERSE.—Isaiah 55: 6, 7—"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near."

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Luke 16:19-31

Golden Text: Luke 16:13

This has been called a parable but Christ did not term it thus. In this incident Christ draws aside the veil between time and eternity and gives us a glimpse of what comes after death.

I. Life and Its Inequalities.

1. The rich man; v. 19. What he had. (1) Riches. Note the perils of riches. (a) Pride; 1 Tim. 6:17. (b) Worldly ease; Luke 16:19. (c) Neglect of God; Prov. 30:8. (d) Selfishness; Luke 12:17. (e) Covetousness; Luke 12:15. (f) Lying; Acts 5:3. (g) Trusting in them; Mark 10:24. (h) Disregarding the gospel; Matt. 13: 22. (2) Power—"purple." plenty of servants, etc. (3) Popularity—"plenty of friends," well thought of, etc. (4) Pleasure—His life was one ceaseless whirl of gaiety. (5) No preparation for eternity—No thought of God, of his soul, of death, and of eternity.
2. Lazarus; vs. 20, 21. (1) His name means, "God my help." (2) Poor—he was a beggar. (3) Despised—not allowed in the house. (4) Sick —full of sores. (5) Prepared for eternity and right with God. What a contrast between the two! Cp. 1 Sam. 16:7.

II. Death and Its Equalities. V. 22. They both died.

1. Death is a fact. Heb. 9:27; Zech. 1:5. Both scripture and experience testify to this. On an average about 78 persons die each minute.
2. Death is a power. None can gainsay, bribe, or evade it;Heb. 2:14. Sooner or later all must come under its power unless the Lord comes prior to that time.
3. Death is an equalizer. Eccles. 5:15; Psalm 49:10. Both rich and poor alike die and both look alike in a shroud.
4. Death is the determinator of our eternal destiny. Rev. 22:11; Dan. 12:12.

III. Eternity and Its Distinctions.

1. The rich man's awful discoveries. (1) That hell was a reality; Psalm 9:17. (2) That death is not soul sleep. The moment he died he was conscious of what was happening to him. (3) That death doesn't end all. Death simply introduced his spirit into a different sphere. (4) That his faculties were present—sight, feeling, conscience. memory. (5) That punishment is eternal; v. 26. Cp. Rev. 14:11; 20: 10; Matt. 25:41-46; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9. (6) That there is no mercy in hell; v. 25. "Tormented." (7) That there is only one way to escape it; v. 29. The word of God heard, believed and acted on.
2. Lazarus discovered he was in (1) A place of rest; v. 23. (2) A place of blessing—"Abraham's bosom." (3) A place of comfort; v. 25. What a contrast! The believer, at death, goes to be "with Christ, which is very far better." Phil. 1:23. To be "absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord." 2 Cor. 5:6-8. The great question each one must face is, "Where shall I be in eternity?"

288. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEN LEPERS

READ Luke 17: 11-19.

THEME: Gratitude.

TELL THE STORY.

THE TEN LEPERS.—

THEY HAD A LOATHSOME DISEASE which was a disease of the blood. Its progress was slow but sure, and it ended fatally. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23). There was no healing for these lepers apart from God. And the sinner can do nothing to rid himself of sin.

THEY STOOD AFAR OFF (v. 12). They must live outside the camp (Lev. 13: 46). They could not go into the temple or take any part in worship. They were outcasts because they were unclean (v. 45). All who have not accepted Christ and have not been cleansed from sin, are "Far off" (Eph. 2: 13). "We are all as an unclean thing" (Isaiah 64: 6).

THEY CRIED TO JESUS. "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (v. 13). Like the publican who cried, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner," they knew they had nothing to plead except their great need. They could only cast themselves upon His mercy. And the Lord heard them, even though they cried to Him from a distance and even before He could see them. He will hear the cry also of any who call upon Him for forgiveness of their sins and for cleansing (Rom. 10: 13).

AS THEY WENT THEY WERE CLEANSED. Christ said, "Go, show yourselves unto the priests" (v. 14). They were required to believe even though they had no outward evidence of healing. Their going to the priests at the Word of Christ was "the obedience of faith" (Romans 16: 26). This was faith shown in action. After we have cried to the Lord for forgiveness of sin, and accepted Him as our Saviour, we are to *believe* that we have been cleansed from sin even though at first we may not *feel* any different. We are to rest upon His Word, act upon it, and the evidence — the joy, the peace and assurance of salvation and forgiveness will follow (John 3: 36; John 5: 24). Christ sent them to the priests because He had regard for the ceremonial law as long as it was in force. He came to fulfil the law, He kept it himself.

THE INGRATITUDE OF THE NINE.—

THEIR INGRATITUDE GRIEVED THE LORD. He said, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" (v. 17). They were more occupied with the gift which had been bestowed upon them than

with the Giver. Ten were healed of their leprosy but only one returned to thank Christ.

ARE WE AMONG THE NINE? Have we forgotten to give thanks for our wonderful cleansing and salvation? Then, too, we cry to God in sickness, distress, trouble and sorrow, but forget to thank Him when He answers our prayer. Have you ever thanked Him for the common mercies which are "new every morning" (Lam. 3: 22, 23) — for health and strength, for home and loved ones, for the beauties of nature and for so much which God has showered upon us?

INGRATITUDE TO OTHERS. Perhaps you have taken as a matter of course all that your parents have done and are doing for you. You have never even expressed your thanks to them, but have taken everything from them as a matter of right. Even if you have thanked them in words, more than that is needed. Real gratitude will express itself in loving deeds for them. Others, too, have been kind to you and helped you in many ways. Are you grateful to them?

THE GRATITUDE OF THE ONE.—

HIS PRAISE WAS PROMPT. He did not wait to see if the cure would last. He came back immediately and began to praise God.

HE WITNESSED TO THE PEOPLE (v. 15). He was not ashamed to confess the great things the Lord had done for Him. When we have been saved and cleansed from sin through believing in Christ with our heart, we should confess with our mouth (Rom. 10: 10). Many do not go on in their Christian life because they have never confessed Christ to others. We are to go home and *tell* and to *show* by our lives what great things the Lord has done for us (Mark 5: 19; Luke 8: 39.)

HE CAME WITH HUMILITY AND WORSHIPPED (v. 16). He fell down on his face at Jesus' feet and gave thanks. He knew that he was unworthy of all the Lord had done for him, therefore his gratitude was the greater.

HE RECEIVED A GREATER BLESSING THAN THE NINE. Jesus said to him, what he did not say to the others, "Thy faith hath made thee whole" (v. 19). Gratitude and thankfulness always bring blessing. Nine were healed but they were not blessed as this man was. His great gratitude and praise were an expression of his love, and evidently pleased the Lord. If we would live a Christian life on the higher plane, and a victorious life, then we must offer continually the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name (Heb. 13: 15).

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 17: 17—"Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?"

THE TEN LEPERS

Luke 17:11-19

Golden Text: Romans 12:1

I. Their Condition. Vs. 11, 12. Typical of the unsaved.

1. Unclean. Cp. Lev. 13:45; Isa. 64:6; Psalm 14: 2, 3; Job 15:14-16; 9:30, 31; Isa. 6:5. Though they were different racially, there was no difference between them physically. Romans 3:23.
2. Afar off. Cp. Eph. 2:13. Note "Afar off." (1) By sin. Eph. 2:13; Isa. 59:2. (2) By wandering. Luke 15:13; Isa. 53:6. (3) From grace; Luke 18:13. (4) For judgment; Rev. 18:10. (5) For eternity; Luke 16:23.
3. Without hope—No cure for their leprosy. Helpless to cleanse themselves—Doomed. Cp. John 3:18; 3:36. etc., etc.

II. Their Cry. V. 13.

1. Earnest. "Lifted up." Cp. Jer. 29:13; Isa. 55:6; Romans 10:13. They realized their fearful condition—Do you?
2. Humble—"Mercy." They did not demand their "rights" but pled for mercy. Cp. Micah 7:18, 19; Psalms 103:8, 10, 11, 17; 51:1; Matt. 9:13; Titus 3:3-5, etc.
3. To the right Person—"Jesus." Matt. 1:21; Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25, etc.

III. Their Cure. V. 14.

1. The word given, "Go." Cp. Romans 10:6-9. Cp. "Come;" Matt. 11:28. "Look;" Isa. 45:22. "Hear;" John 5:24. "Receive;" John 1:12, etc.
2. The word obeyed—the obedience of faith. Romans 16:26; 6:17; Heb. 4:2. Note it was "as they went, they were cleansed." They were cleansed in the act of obedience as they exercised simple faith in the spoken word of the Son of God.

IV. The Thankful One. Vs. 15-19. His gratitude was expressed in a four fold way.

1. In turning back from types and shadows of the law to the antitype Himself. While the others went to the priests, he went to Christ the Fountain-Head of all blessing. Cp. Matt. 8:4; Gal. 4:9; Heb. 10:1-14.
2. In praise; v. 16. Cp. Psalms 50:23. 14, 15; 100:4; 107:1, 2; 147:7-12; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6; Col. 1:12; 1 Thess. 5:18; Heb. 13:15.
3. In humility—"At His feet." Cp. Luke 7:38; 8: 35; 10:39; Eph. 4:1, 2.
4. In worship—"On his face." John 4:23, 24; Heb. 10:19-22.
5. All this glorified God; v. 15.

V. The Application. Vs. 17-19. Where are the nine? Are you amongst the nine or the one? The effect of salvation should be manifested in—

1. Praise to God. Psalm 40:2, 3; Heb. 13:15.
2. Confession to our fellow men. Romans 10: 9, 10; Mark 5:19.
3. Whole-hearted devotion to the Lord Jesus. Gal. 2:20; 6:14; Phil. 1:20, 21.
4. Whole souled service for Him. Romans 12:1, 2; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

289. THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

READ Luke 18: 9-14.

THEME: The sin of self-righteousness. TELL THE STORY.

This parable was spoken to those who trusted in their own self-righteousness and despised others (v. 9). Our Lord had said to such in chap. 16: 15, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts."

THE PHARISEE.—

HE PRAYED . . . WITH HIMSELF (v. 11). He went up to the temple to pray, but he did not really pray at all. We, too, may say our prayers regularly and yet never pray. It is true that he addressed God, but he had no thought of God; he was occupied with himself, his own virtues, his own good works. He very much admired himself, but he was an abomination to God (16: 15).

THERE WAS NO THANKSGIVING IN HIS PRAYER, though he said, "I thank Thee" (v. 11). He merely thanked God for what he was not, or for what he *thought* he was not. God did not wish to hear such a prayer.

HE MEASURED HIS OWN LIFE BY THAT OF OTHERS. Had he measured himself by God's standard — His Law — he would have quickly discovered that he came short, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). Had he measured himself by God's holiness he would have seen how black and sinful he himself was. Although he may not have committed the sins he mentions that other men had committed (v. 11), yet in God's sight he was even a greater sinner than they. God's Word says, "All our unrighteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64: 6). It does not do to compare ourselves with others and think that we are better than they. Compare your own washed, white garment with one not quite so clean and your own will appear to you to be absolutely spotless, but compare it with a piece of new, white material and your own will appear dirty in comparison. Paul speaks of some who, "measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Cor. 10: 12).

HE PARADED HIS OWN GOOD WORKS AND VIRTUES BEFORE GOD. "I fast . . . I give tithes of all I possess" (v. 12). He thought he would be accepted by God because of these good deeds. But it was all absolutely valueless because he did it for display and with no love in his heart toward God. Good works are only of value to God if they are the outcome of faith and love; if done for display or to obtain merit, they become sinful. See the fast that *God* has chosen. "To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry . . . ?" (Isaiah 58: 6, 7). The Pharisee did not speak of all the things he had *omitted* to do. There are sins of omission as well as of commission.

HE HAD NO SENSE OF NEED. He was one of those who trusted in himself (v. 9). The following verses describe him: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and

blind and naked" (Rev. 3: 17, 18). He did not ask for mercy or for forgiveness, because he felt he had no need of either. He would not acknowledge that he was a sinner; how then could God show mercy to him?

HE DESPISED AND TALKED AGAINST THE PUBLICAN (v. 11). He had no love for his fellow-men and this showed that he had no love for God. In God's sight the self-righteous Pharisee was a greater sinner than the publican whom he despised and criticised.

THE PUBLICAN.—

HE STOOD AFAR OFF (v. 13). He knew that this was his rightful place, that as a sinner he could not come near to a holy God (Ephes. 2: 13). He showed his humility and sense of unworthiness, for he would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven (v. 13). He smote upon his breast, so great was his sense of sin and guilt. Like David, he could say, "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 51: 3).

HE PRAYED, "God be merciful to *me.*" He was not thinking about anyone else and praying about *their* sins, as the Pharisee was; he was too much occupied with the burden of his own sins for that. God deals with us as individuals, and we need to deal with Him in the same way just as though there were only the two of us.

HE PLEADED FOR MERCY. "God be *merciful,*" which really means, "be propitiated, accept a sacrifice." The word "merciful" was used in connection with the mercy-seat on which the blood of the sacrifices was sprinkled, and God, looking upon that blood, could forgive sin (Exodus 25: 17, 18, 21; Heb. 9: 5). It is as though the publican were saying, "Be toward me as Thou art when Thou lookest upon the atoning blood." There is no divine forgiveness apart from sacrifice. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22). The publican saw the lamb slain at the time of the evening sacrifice and pleaded for forgiveness because of the atoning blood. That lamb was a type of Jesus, the Lamb of God Whose blood was soon to be shed for the whole world.

HE REALISED THE GREATNESS OF HIS SIN. "God be merciful to me *the* sinner" (R.V.). This is the only ground on which Christ will accept us. It is of no use coming, as the Pharisee did, and pleading our own good works, for Christ "came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Matt. 9: 13). "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1: 15).

HIS PRAYER WAS ANSWERED. He was justified (v. 14). This means that God Himself, the Judge, declared him righteous. We are justified *by grace* — this means we have neither earned nor merited it (Romans 3: 24). We are justified *by blood* — the blood of Christ (Romans 5: 9). We are justified by faith — faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5: 1).

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN CONTRASTED. The Pharisee justified himself and God condemned him (vv. 11, 12, 14); the Publican condemned himself, and God justified him (vv. 13, 14). The Pharisee came and talked of his own virtues, and God sent him away empty (vv. 11, 12, 14); the Publican came and confessed his sin and God forgave him (vv. 13, 14).

MEMORY VERSE—Luke 18: 13—"God be merciful to me a sinner."

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

Luke 18:9-14

Golden Text: Romans 5:8

I. Two Men. V. 10.

1. The Pharisee. What the Pharisees were. (1) Proud; Matt. 23:5-12. (2) Self righteous. Luke 18:9; 16:5. (3) Religious outwardly. Matt. 23: 14, 23, 28; 9:14. (4) Self sufficient; Luke 18:11. 12. (5) Ostentatious. Matt. 23:5; 6:5; Luke 21:2. (6) Hypocritical. Matt. 23:15, 25-28. (7) Despisers of others; Luke 18:9. What a picture of the present day religious professor who has never been regenerated!
2. The publican. What he was: (1) A tax-gather; Luke 5:27. Very often used his power to defraud; Luke 3:12, 13. (2) Scorned by Pharisees; Luke 15:1, 2. (3) Despised by the public; Matt. 11:18, 19. (4) A sinner who knew his need, hence came to hear Christ.

II. Two Prayers. Vs. 11-13.

1. The Pharisees; vs. 11, 12. (1) Where he prayed "with himself." He had an audience of one! (2) How he prayed—"he stood" full of pride, self-importance and self-righteousness. (3) What he prayed about—himself. Self-congratulation, self-complacancy. self-sufficiency. "I," five times. His religion began and ended in himself. Note the Devil's five "I's." Isa. 14:12-14. Also Paul's five "I's," but they were all crucified with Christ. Gal. 2:20. This is the only place for the "I." The cross is a capital "I" crossed out!
2. The Publican's; v. 13. (1) His position, "afar off," an acknowledgement of his state before God. Eph. 2:13; Isa. 59:1, 2; 53:6, etc. (2) His attitude: (a) Humility—eyes to earth. His sense of sin humbled him before God as well it might. Ill.: Dan. 9:7-9; Isa. 6:5; Luke 5:8; Job 33:27, 28. (b) Repentance—"beat upon breast"—the seat of iniquity. Jer. 17: 9; Mark 7:21; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:31. (3) His cry; v. 13. Literally, "Be unto me as when Thou lookest on the atoning blood." Doubtless he saw the evening sacrifice being offered, and realized that the lamb was bearing his sins. dying in his stead and accepted by God on his behalf. This is the very heart of the Gospel, the substitutionary work of Christ. One trusted in his own fancied self goodness, the other in the God-provided sacrifice. Herein lies the difference between a mere religionist and a truly regenerated person. Cp. Romans 3:25, 26; 1 John 2:2.

III. Two Results. V. 14.

1. The Pharisee—He walked out as he had walked in—self-righteous. Romans 10:3.
2. The Publican—Justified. Cp. Romans 5:1; Acts 13:38, 39; Romans 3:24. Made acceptable to God through faith in the offering. Heb. 10: 14; 9:14, etc.

290. THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Read Mark 10: 17-27.

Theme: One thing lacking.

Tell the story.

1. **His Possessions.** He had youth, position (he was a ruler), great wealth, a knowledge of the Law, yet he was not satisfied. "What lack I yet?" he said (Matt. 19: 20). It is splendid to have youth, position and wealth, for these mean influence, and if used for God can accomplish much, but all these things, though good in themselves, can never satisfy the heart. God has made us for Himself, and we can never find true satisfaction till we find it in Him.

2. **His character.** He was eager and earnest—he came running to Jesus (v. 17). He was respectful and reverent to one whom he considered a great teacher (v. 17). He was religious, for he accepted the faith of his fathers; he believed in eternal life; he was moral, he said he had kept the law from a youth. He was attractive and loveable, for Jesus beholding him, loved him (21). In spite of all this, like Nicodemus, he was not saved and knew it, for he inquired of Jesus the way of life (v. 17).

3. **His mistakes.**

(a) He acknowledged that Jesus was a good man and a teacher, but did not recognise that He was divine.

(b) He thought he could be saved by **doing**, by performing more good acts. "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" he asked. But eternal life is not gained by doing. He used the word "inherit," and he was right in this, but an inheritance becomes ours by birth, and the inheritance of eternal life becomes ours by the new birth. This eternal life is a gift through faith. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2: 8). "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2: 16). How many people to-day, like the young ruler, think they will go to heaven because they have done the best they can, they say they have never done anyone any harm, they have paid twenty shillings in the pound, etc.

(c) **He made his boast in the Law.** He said, "All these have I observed from my youth" (v. 20). He was perfectly sincere in this, for he honestly thought he had done so. He did not see himself as a sinner. But if we are going to heaven through keeping the Law, then it must be kept perfectly, and only the Lord Jesus has done that. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2: 10).

4. **The Lord's answer.**

(a) **He refused to be recognised merely as a good man** by one who did not acknowledge him as the Son of God. "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but he, that is God."

(b) **He pointed him to the Law, the Ten Commandments** (v. 19). Not because keeping the law could give eternal life, but to show this young man he was a sinner. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the

knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3: 20). The Lord points the self-righteous to the Law, but those who know they are sinners, to the Gospel. He said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Mark 2: 17). "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1: 15).

(c) **One thing thou lackest** (v. 21). This young man did not lack morality, religion, sincerity, or zeal. He did not lack even anxiety about eternal life. What then did he lack?

He lacked knowledge. He did not really know the inner meaning of the law, he did not know the plan of salvation, that it is a gift from God, not something we can earn by our own good works.

He lacked faith. He lacked the faith that "worketh by love" (Gal. 5: 6). and lacking this he lacked all, for "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11: 6). He lacked the full surrender of his heart to God.

5. **Christ's command to him.**

(a) **Sell all.** He could not earn eternal life by doing this. Why, then, did the Lord tell him to sell all that he had and give to the poor? Christ wanted to show him his own heart, that he did not love his neighbour as himself. This command tested him and showed that his wealth was everything to him. He loved his possessions more than he loved God, and was not willing to give them up at His bidding. His riches were his idol, and when Christ told him to sell all he meant him to give up his idol. Only one thing will make it easy for us to give up all for Christ, and that is, love for Him. "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5: 14). Loving Him does not save us, loving Him is the **result** of our being saved.

(b) **Take up the cross.** This meant openly confessing Christ, the One Who was despised and rejected of men. To the ruler it probably would have meant loss of friends and position in the synagogue, and this would be in a very real sense taking up the cross.

(c) **Follow Me**—obey Me, follow in My footsteps. Following Him means forsaking all for Him (Luke 14: 33), following Him wherever He may lead (Luke 9: 59, 60), following "the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. 14: 4), and denying self (Luke 9: 23).

6: **The young man's response.** "He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions" (v. 22). He had to choose between his idol (riches) and Christ, and he chose his riches. Had he given up his own self-righteousness he could have had Christ's righteousness and for his riches he could have had "treasure in heaven" (v. 21).

What is your response to Christ's call?

7. **The disciples' perplexity.** "Who then can be saved?" (v. 25), they asked, and the Lord replied, "With men this is impossible," but not with God, "for with God all things are possible" (v. 26). Christ wanted to teach us that our salvation is all of God, and that we cannot by our own good works save ourselves. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3: 5).

Memory Verse.—Luke 14: 33.—"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

THE RICH YOUNG MAN

Mark 10:17-31

Golden Text: Mark 10:24

I. What he was. Vs. 17-20.

1. Young; Matt. 19:20. At the threshold of life with all its boundless possibilities before him. Eccles. 11:9; Prov. 8:17; Eccles. 12:1.
2. Rich; v. 22. This is, to some, the most desirable thing in life. Unfortunately, these riches possessed him. 1 Tim. 6:17; Eccles. 7:11; 1 Tim. 6:9-11.
3. Moral; vs. 19-29. Christ did not deny the truth of these statements. He was truly a model young man. Deut. 4:8; Psalm 78:5, 7.
4. Religious; v. 17. He desired eternal life; Romans 10:2, 3.
5. Sincere—"running," "kneeled." He had splendid moral and religious qualities as well as natural advantages.
6. Loved by Christ; v. 21. John 3:16, etc.

II. What he wanted. Vs. 17-20.

1. His question; v. 17: "What shall I **do** to inherit eternal life?" He desired to obtain eternal life on the basis of his own efforts; but Scripture clearly indicates it is a gift and therefore is entirely apart from human merit. See John 4:10; Romans 6:23; John 3:16; Eph. 2:8, 9; John 5:24; Rev. 22:17; Titus 3:3-6.
2. The answer; v. 18. (1) Note the indirect claim of Christ's Deity; v. 18. He is the only One with the right to the title of good for He is God. If He only is good, then no one else is good. See Romans 3:12. (2) The Law's demands; v. 19. Note—Only the last six comcandments are mentioned. Cp. Romans 7:12-14; Gal. 3:19-25.

III. What he lacked. V. 21.

1. "One thing"—faith in the Son of God. He thought more of his treasures than he did of Christ. It is possible to be young, rich, moral, religious and sincere and loved, and yet be **lost.** (Ill. Nicodemus lacked the new birth; John 3:3). What lackest thou?
2. Christ's three looks. (1) Love; v. 21. John 3:16, 17; Gal. 2:20; Romans 5:8. (2) Sorrow; v. 23. Matt. 23:37; Isa. 53:3. (3) Hope; v. 27. Mark 9:23.
3. What keeps you from Christ is the value you are placing on your soul; Mark 8:36. Is it worth it?

IV. What he did. Vs. 22-27.

1. He heard Christ; v. 21. Think of the privilege! John 5:24.
2. He was sad; v. 22. Psalm 16:11; John 15:11; 17:23.
3. He went away; v. 23. Turned his back on the Savior. Cp. Prov. 1:24-33. The Great Refusal. He became a pilgrim to oblivion! He is the man without a name, for he was the man who refused the Savior.
4. The incredulous question; v. 26. "Who, then, can be saved?"
5. The satisfying answer; v. 27.

291. THE PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS

Read Matthew 20: 1-16.

Theme: Work and Rewards.

Tell the story.

Notice the context of this parable. In chapter 19 we read of the rich ruler who was not willing to forsake all and follow Christ. The disciples **had** done this (Luke 5: 11, 27, 28), so Peter wished to know what they would get for having forsaken all for Christ. He seemed to have been more taken up with this thought than of thinking of all that Christ had done for him—hence this parable.

1. **The Householder—God.**

(a) **He needed labourers,** because "the harvest truly is great but the labourers are few" (Luke 10: 2). It was the master who sought the labourers, not they him. And to-day the Lord of the harvest is seeking labourers for His great vineyard. In many places, particularly in the mission field, the fields are "white already to harvest" (John 4: 35).

(b) **He hired labourers.** A hired servant must not work for another, he must work for his master; neither does he work on his own account, for he is not his own master. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20).

(c) **He hired them at different hours.** The first were hired early in the morning (v. 1). This may represent those who have entered Christ's service in childhood or in youth. Then work is easy, not hard toil. They have not learned to stand idle in the market place. If spared, they have twelve good hours before them. Happy are those who begin to serve early in the morning.

Others enter His service at the third hour, representing perhaps young manhood and womanhood.

Others again begin working for Him at the sixth hour—noon, people of middle age; yet others at the ninth and eleventh hour in old age. They have come late; they have lost many valuable years; but thank God it is not too late for them.

2. **The Householder's question.** "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" (v. 6.) To many who have wasted the best hours of the day, God is saying that now. What are some of the excuses folks make to-day in answer to that question?

(a) **"There is plenty of time yet."** How do we know that? God's Word says, "The night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9: 4). Who knows how soon it may be before some of us are called Home, or how soon the Lord may come? This is the day of opportunity. "The time is short" (1 Cor. 7: 29). "To every man his work" (Mark 13: 34).

(b) **"No man hath hired us"** (v 7). But have they ever listened to God's call to service? Perhaps they are so taken up with listening to the calls of pleasure, of business, and of the world, that they have failed to hear His voice. When God said, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" Isaiah responded and said, "Here am I, send me" (Isaiah 6: 8).

(c) **"I do not know how to do the work."** But God will teach and train you. Furthermore, He will work **with** you. What a privilege! "Be strong. . . saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you" (Haggai 2: 4).

(d) **"I have no tools."** But God supplies the tools; He gives us His power and His Word. When He gives us work to do for Him, He equips us.

(e) **"It is too late for me now."** The eleventh-hour workmen might have said that, but perhaps they accomplished more in that one hour than those who had worked for a much longer time.

3. **The Labourers.**

(a) **Those hired first—bargained.** They worked for what they could get out of it. They agreed with the master for a penny which was a fair day's wages, and this they received at the end of the day. The Lord will always give what is right. "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord" (Eph. 6: 8). They grudged others their penny and grumbled against the master, implying that he was unjust, like the brother of the Prodigal son in Luke 15: 28-30).

(b) **Those hired later—trusted.** They made no bargain; they worked, leaving the matter of wages entirely with the master, believing he would do as he had said, give them what was right (v. 4). Their service counted for more than that of those who worked from the first hour. Work cannot always be judged by the amount of time spent on it. God looks at the **motive** and the **character** of the service rather than at the quantity. If we work in simple trust, leaving the amount of reward to God, He will do for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3: 20).

4. **The Reckoning and Reward.**

(a) **The certainty of it.** "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5: 10). Believers will not be judged for their **sins**, but they will be judged for their **work** which will be tried by fire (1 Cor. 3: 13).

(b) **The justice of it.** "Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?" (v. 13.) God cannot be unjust. He is the righteous Judge (2 Tim. 4: 8). "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' (Gen. 18: 25). The labourer **agreed** with the master for a penny and he received what he had bargained for. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" (v. 15.) No one has a right to call God to account (Rom. 9: 20). The master told them their eyes were evil (v. 15). Their complaint rose from the blindness of their own jealousy, and not from the lack of his goodness.

This parable is not intended to teach that all God's servants will receive the same reward, or that those who have borne the burden and heat of the day will get no more than those who work only one cool evening hour. But it does teach us that one hour's service, in the spirit of humble trust, and that leaves the reward as a matter of grace, will be at least as abundantly rewarded as twelve hours' legal service which tries to drive a close bargain with God.

Memory Verse.—Matthew 9: 37.—"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

292. BLIND BARTIMEUS

READ Mark 10: 46-52.

THEME: From darkness to light.

TELL THE STORY.

Blind Bartimeus was a picture of those who do not know Christ as their Saviour for "darkness hath blinded his eyes" (1 John 2: 11). They are blind to their own sin, to their need of a Saviour, blind to Christ's love and the truths of His Word.

HOW HE RECEIVED HIS SIGHT.—

HE HEARD ABOUT JESUS (v. 47). He heard that He was passing. He must have heard about what He had done for others. There are many today who need to know that the Lord Jesus is passing their way, but "how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10: 14). "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10: 17). Before people can know Jesus as the Light of the world, they must hear about Him.

HE CRIED TO JESUS FOR MERCY (v. 47). He asked for nothing on the ground of merit, otherwise the Lord would have been deaf to his cry, for "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2: 17). He knew he deserved nothing at the hands of the Lord Jesus and so he merely asked for mercy. He seized his opportunity, he did not delay. The Lord heard this cry and "stood still." Servants wait on their masters but here is the Lord of all waiting on the cry of a blind beggar. He always hears the cry of those who call upon Him for mercy. "Seek *ye* the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Is. 55: 6). You may cry to Him as you listen to this lesson, just where you are, and He will hear you. Bartimeus cried out, "Jesus," which means "Saviour."

HE WAS PERSISTENT.—People tried to hinder him from calling upon Jesus, but "he cried the more a great deal" (v. 48). There will always be those who will try to hinder you from calling upon Jesus to save you, perhaps telling you not to become a "religious crank," that you are all right, and so on. Do not let sneers or reproofs keep you from coming to Him. Then the Lord Himself called Bartimeus to come to Him. If we truly cry to Him in sincerity He will tell us to come to Him.

HE WAS EAGER, for he cast away his outer garment which would have hindered him in his progress (v. 50). This old garment of his is a picture of our own righteousness, our own good works, trying to make ourselves better before we come. We must throw this away when we come to Christ, realising that we can do nothing towards procuring our salvation (Is. 64: 6; 55: 7). You remember in the lesson on the Fall (Gen. 3) the apron of fig leaves is spoken

of as a picture of our own good works which could not cover the sin of Adam and Eve; they had to take the coats of skins provided by God. The garment of one's own righteousness prevents many from coming to Jesus as poor sinners. Let us be like Bartimeus, throw away this garment and come just as we are to Him.

HE WAS DEFINITE IN HIS REQUEST (v. 51). The Lord Jesus asked him what he wanted though He already knew his need. He wants us, too, to be definite in our request, to acknowledge our blindness and to ask Him to open our blind eyes that we may see Him and His salvation. He wanted his sight more than anything else in the world. He knew that there was no help for him in man, and that the Lord Jesus was the only one who could help him. (It is our part to tell sinners of Jesus: their part to cry to Him and Jesus' part to save).

HE HAD FAITH — faith to believe that the Lord Jesus had power to give him his sight. The Lord said, "Thy *faith* hath made thee whole" (v. 10). "By grace are ye saved *through faith*" (Eph. 2: 8). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31).

WHEN HE RECEIVED HIS SIGHT.—He received it *immediately* (v. 52). He had not to keep on crying and agonising, pleading with the Lord to open his eyes, for the Lord answered his request at once. The moment we look to the Lord Jesus and trust Him to save us, that same moment we are saved. We do not grow into salvation (though we grow in grace afterwards), light comes immediately we trust Him to do it for us.

AFTER HE RECEIVED HIS SIGHT.—

HE DID NOT RETURN TO THE OLD LIFE, begging by the roadside; there was no further need for him to do this. There was a complete change in his life which was seen by all, and this affected his conduct. When our eyes are opened to see Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are new creatures in Christ Jesus — there is a complete change in our life, our walk and our habits.

HE FOLLOWED JESUS IN THE WAY (v. 52). What a contrast to what he did formerly. When we belong to Him we must follow Him. The way that Bartimeus went was the way of the Cross. It was not easy for Bartimeus to do this, but he was prepared to follow all the way the One Who had done so much for him. We also shall not always find the way easy, but as long as we are following the Lord Jesus we shall feel His presence and experience His power, and nothing else matters.

IT WAS BARTIMEUS' LAST OPPORTUNITY, for the Lord did not pass that way again. If he had not seized this opportunity he would have been blind all his life. Jesus is now passing by. Come to Him while there is yet time. "Now is the accepted time . . . now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2).

MEMORY VERSE—Acts 26: 18—"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light."

BARTIMAEUS

Mark 10:45-52

Golden Text: Mark 10:52

I. His State. V. 46.

1. Blind; v. 46. Blind to beauties of nature, etc. What a picture of the sinner blind to beauties of Christ, salvation, new birth, peace with God, etc. Cp. 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 4:18; 5:8; Acts 26:18; John 3:3. "Cannot see." John 3: 19, 20; 2 Peter 1:9.
2. Poor—"begging." The poverty of the sinner and his dependence upon God's bounty for food, clothing, health, strength, soundness of mind, etc. Romans 5:6-8; Eph. 2:11-12; Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17; James 1:17.

II. His Opportunity. V. 47.

1. This was Christ's last visit to Jericho and was Bartimaeus' last chance. Every man hears the gospel for the last time. This may be God's farewell address to you! Prov. 27: 1; 29:1; Luke 13:24, 25.
2. He heard of Christ. V. 47. What had he heard? Doubtless of Christ's power to heal and to forgive. Perhaps he had met some who had been wonderfully healed from blindness. Cp. Romans 10:17. Have you heard? Cp. John 12:47, 48; 5:24; Mark 4:24, 25.

III. His Cry. Vs. 47, 48.

1. Its earnestness—"cried . . . more." Cp. Isa. 55:6; Prov. 2:3-5. No opposition could silence him for he knew his need better than anyone else.
2. Its subject—"mercy." Cp. Luke 18:13; Matt. 9:13; Psalm 130:7. He did not demand to be cured; but he cast himself on the Merciful One.
3. Its individuality, "me." Salvation is a personal thing. Ill.: Acts 16:30; Luke 18:13, etc.

IV. His Privileges. Vs. 49-51.

1. He was called; v. 49. Cp. Matt. 11:28; Isa. 55: 1; 45:22; John 7:37; Rev. 22:17; Acts 17:31. "Whosoever;" John 3:16. God calls now through the preaching of the gospel.
2. He cast away his garments. Cp. Isa. 64:6. Rid himself of all encumbrances. Some of our garments that would prove good riddance to bad rubbish are pride, religiousness, and self-righteousness, etc.
3. He came to Jesus; v. 50. The only One Who could meet his need.
4. He was questioned by Jesus; v. 51. "What wilt thou?" Apply individually. What is the supreme desire of your heart? Now cp. Psalm 37:4.

V. His Cure. V. 52.

1. Received sight; v. 52. Immediately. Cp. 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Peter 2:9. Who was the first person he saw when his eyes were opened? The Son of God, and it was a case of love at first sight!
2. Followed Christ; v. 52. Cp. John 10:27; 12:26; Matt. 16:24.
3. Glorified God. Luke 18:43; Psalm 50:23.
4. Caused praise to God; Luke 18:43. Cp. Psalm 40:3; Romans 1:8.

293. ZACCHEUS

Read Luke 19: 1-10.

Theme: Seeking the lost.

Tell the story.

Zaccheus was chief among the publicans, a tax-gatherer. He was rich because he was an extortioner, getting money from the people under false pretences. He was regarded as a sinner by his fellow men and despised by them. Contrast him with the rich young ruler (of chapter 18) who was moral and religious, yet it was not the ruler who was saved, but Zaccheus. This was the man whom the Saviour sought.

1. **The Seeking Sinner.**

(a) **He sought to see Jesus** (v. 3). We do not think this desire on his part was mere curiosity. He was obviously a hungry soul, dissatisfied with his life in spite of all his riches. Seeking Jesus was the first step in his salvation. God's Word says, "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29: 13).

(b) **He overcame all obstacles.** He allowed neither the crowd nor his own short stature to hinder him in his desire to see Jesus. He cared little for the opinion of others, and did not mind sacrificing his dignity by climbing a tree in order to see Jesus.

2. **The Seeking Saviour.** Zaccheus was seeking the Saviour, but the Saviour was also seeking the sinner, and when people are looking for each other they are sure to meet, sooner or later.

(a) **He came right to the place where Zaccheus was** (v. 5). The Good Shepherd went out to search for the lost sheep. The Lord Jesus left His home in heaven and came right down to the place where we were sunk in sin. "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5: 21).

(b) **He looked up and saw Zaccheus** (v. 5). He knew where he was and everything about him, as He did Nathaniel under the fig tree (John 1: 48). He could see right into Zaccheus' heart and knew his need. He knew that here was one who was ready to respond tc His invitation. He knows just where you are, and knows all your need. He knew that Zaccheus was to become one of His own dear sheep, and a true disciple (John 10: 3).

(c) **He came to seek and to save that which was lost** (v. 10). He was going on His way to Jerusalem, where He was to die for the sin of the world, yet He delayed His journey in order to save one lost sinner. We are not only lost by nature but by our own sin.

"God loved the world of sinners lost
And ruined by the fall;
Salvation full at highest cost
He offers free to all."

3. **The Saviour's Call**

(a) **It was a personal call.** He called him by name. "Zaccheus" could not think the call was for someone else. There was no mistaking the fact that the call was for him. Christ deals with us as individuals. His call is always a personal one. It was as though God were saying to Zaccheus, "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isaiah 43: 1).

(b) **It was an urgent call.** "Make haste. . . to-day" (v. 5). God's call is not a call for to-morrow, "To-morrow is in Satan's calendar

and nowhere else." The Holy Spirit says, "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 3: 15). There may be no to-morrow for you. Christ's call is an urgent one. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55: 6).

(c) **It was a humbling call.** "Come down" (v. 5). God always humbles those who would come to Him. It must be a coming **down** from the tree of our own self-righteousness, our own self-sufficiency, our good works and good resolutions. We must come **down** before Him, acknowledging ourselves as sinners needing a Saviour, as those who are without God and without hope. Unless we are prepared to do this, there is no salvation for us.

(d) **It was an abiding call.** I must **abide** at thy house (v. 5). He was coming right into Zaccheus' house, not merely to the door. Salvation is not mere passing emotion; it **lasts.** Christ invited Himself to the house of Zaccheus because He knew how much Zaccheus wanted Him, and that he would not have invited Him to his house, feeling that he was too unworthy.

4. **Zaccheus' response to the Saviour's call**

(a) **He did not delay,** "he made haste" (v. 6). This would have been the last opportunity for Zaccheus, for Christ did not return that way again. How sad if he had missed his chance. No one knows when Christ will call to him for the last time. In the days of Noah, God said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6: 3).

(b) **He received Jesus** (v. 6). Receiving Him is to receive salvation, for "this life is in His Son" (1 John 5: 11). This is the only way to be converted. Zaccheus did not wait till he was a better man, nor did he wait to straighten out all the crooked things in his life; he came **just as he was,** and became a child of God, "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God" (John 1: 12).

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come"

(c) **He received Him joyfully** (v. 6). This was the very best thing had happened in the life of Zaccheus. It brought joy into his life, and no man could take it from him. The Gospel is good tidings of great **joy.** Christ gives back to us far more than we could ever give up for Him. The Christian should be the happiest of all people.

5. **Evidences of Zaccheus' Conversion.**

(a) **It affected his pocket-book.** He was changed from a grasping, unscrupulous, dishonest man into a large-hearted, generous saint. He was now prepared to use his money for Christ. When we come to Christ everything we have belongs to Him, and we realise then that we are only stewards of those things which He has given us.

(b) **He was prepared to make restitution,** to give back with interest all he had stolen. This was a harder thing to do than to give half his goods to the poor, for it would mean going to those he had wronged, and confessing his sin to them. Conversion affects every part of our life.

(c) **He received assurance of salvation.** "This days is salvation come to this house" (v. 9). It was instantaneous. Unless we have this assurance of salvation we cannot witness effectively for Christ. It is God's purpose that "ye may **know that ye have eternal life**" (1 John 5: 13).

Memory Verse.—Luke 19: 10.—"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

ZACCHAEUS

Luke 19:1-10

Golden Text: Luke 19:10

I. His Opportunity. V. 1. The last visit of Christ to Jericho. He was on His way to Calvary. It was Zacchaeus' last chance to see. hear and meet the Saviour. Perhaps this is your last chance to be saved. Prov. 27:1; 29:1; 2 Cor. 6:1; Heb. 3:7, 8.

II. His Desire. Vs. 2, 3.

1. What he was: (1) Chief of the Publicans. Hated and despised by all. (2) Rich in this world's goods but poor towards God. Riches does not bring joy, peace and satisfaction. Cp. Eccles. 1:2, 14; 2:8-11. (3) A sinner; v. 7. Romans 3:23, etc.
2. What he wanted—To see Jesus. Perhaps he had heard of Matthew's call; who was a fellow tax gatherer. Matt. 10:3; Luke 5:27. Perhaps of Christ's wondrous words and works. Perhaps there was soul thirst and a desire for forgiveness, salvation and peace with God. Have **you** sought to see Jesus? Cp. John 12:21; 1:38, 39.

III. His Obstacles. V. 3. Wherever there is a genuine desire to be saved, the Devil will see to it that there is plenty of opposition.

1. Little of stature; v. 3. Physical disability.
2. The crowd. How often the "crowd" keeps the sinner from seeing Jesus! Fear of man; Prov. 29:25. Fear of laughter, ridicule, persecution, loss of popularity and esteem keep many from Christ. What keeps you?

IV. His Plan. V. 4. Showed his earnestness. Cp. Jer. 29:13. He thought he was hidden in the tree, but cp. Heb. 4:13; Psalm 139:1-10.

V. His Invitation. V. 5. The seeking sinner and the seeking Savior soon meet. What the Savior did:

1. Came to where he was. Cp. Luke 10:33; 2 Cor. 5:21; Luke 19:10; 14:4, etc.
2. Saw him in all his sin and need, and knew about him. Amos 5:12; John 2:25.
3. Called to him—"Come down." Salvation is a "come-down." Many up the tree of self-righteousness, pride, morality, respectability, religiousness, etc. Luke 14:11; Matt. 18:3, 4.
4. Promised to abide with him; v. 5. What the presence of the Saviour means; Rev. 3:20.

VI. His Response. V. 6.

1. Quick; v. 6. "Haste." He was in a hurry to see Jesus and to obey Him—are you? Prov. 27:1; 2 Cor. 6:1, 2; Heb. 3:7, 8.
2. Joyful; v. 6. Think of Who he came to meet—the Saviour—Forgiver—Peacemaker—Creator Redeemer. Who wouldn't be joyful!

VII. His Testimony. V. 8. Proof of his true conversion. Money is often the acid test! Zacchaeus made a right about turn. Here is true conversion. Cp. 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 2:13; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Peter 2:9.

VIII. The Savior's Declaration. Vs. 9, 10. The assurance of salvation; v. 9. "This day has salvation come." Why? Because the Savior came. Cp. 1 John 5:9-13; 10:27-30, etc.

294. MARY ANOINTING JESUS

Read John 12: 1-11.

Theme: Love poured out. **Tell the story.**

Before the Passover, the Lord Jesus came to Bethany. Perhaps He returned there to build up and strengthen the faith of those who had believed on Him as a result of the miracle He performed in raising Lazarus from the dead. There Martha, Mary and Lazarus made a feast for Him, no doubt as an expression of their love and gratitude.

Martha served—She expressed her love in **service.**

Lazarus sat at the table with Him—a silent **witness.**

Mary worshipped, and it was she who brought most joy to His heart.

1. Mary's devotion.

(a) **She loved Jesus with all her heart,** and must do something to show her love. Love must express itself not only in words but in actions. "Let us love not in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3: 18). In anointing the Lord, she had no thought for others, or for their opinion of her action; she did it for her Lord alone. She had come to His feet before as a learner (Luke 10: 39), and later as a mourner when her brother Lazarus died (John 11: 32). Now she came to His feet again in worship and adoration (v. 3).

(b) **She kept nothing in reserve.** "She brake the box and **poured** it on His head" (Mark 14: 3). In breaking the box she was giving all, like those disciples who left all and followed Him. Nothing was too good for her beloved Lord. She made no calculations as to what the ointment cost—for love does not count—nor did she think of laying up part of it for her own future use—for she could safely leave the future to Him.

(c) **She gave a very costly gift** (John 12: 3), "very precious" (Mark 14: 3). She gave her best to Jesus, not something she did not value, or what was left over. David said, "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing" (2 Sam. 24: 24). Have we not an alabaster box, a sacrificial gift to bring to Him and pour out at His feet? Our lives may seem commonplace, just the daily round and the common task, yet these may become a sacrificial offering if poured out to Him. If our lives are presented to Him, a living sacrifice (Rom. 12: 1), they will be a "sweet savour" unto Him (Eph. 5: 2).

(d) **The house was filled with the odour** (v. 3). Although her gift was for the Lord alone, yet others shared in the fragrance of the gift. In refreshing Him others also were refreshed. If our lives are wholly yielded to Christ, being poured out for Him in service for others, then they. too, will be helped and blessed.

2. The Disciples' Criticism.

(a) **Mary's love gift was cal'ed "waste"** (Matt. 26: 8). Even Christians sometimes criticise those who give all in an abandonment of love to Christ. "Why waste your life in the mission field, or among the poor, or in some other service for Christ," they say, "when you might make a name for yourself and rise to the top of your trade or profession?" We must be prepared to meet with criticism, even from the Lord's own children, if we give up all for Christ. But nothing is a waste if given to the Lord. He can take our gifts and multiply them as He did the five loaves and the two fishes.

(b) **Judas' protest.** He was willing to be generous with other people's money, saying that the ointment might thave been sold for 300 pence (about £35), and given to the poor (v. 5); yet he himself sold his Lord for a much smaller sum than that. We sometimes see this same spirit to-day.

3. **The Lord's Defence.**

Mary remained silent, leaving her vindication to the Lord. It is a safe thing to allow Him to defend us. Job had learned this blessed lesson when he said, "I would seek unto God, and unto **God** would I commit my cause" (Job 5: 8). David, too, could say, "For Thou hast maintained my right and my cause" (Ps. 9: 4).

(a) **"Let her alone,"** said the Lord (v. 7). We are so precious to Him that we are as the apple of His eye, and anything done to one of His disciples is as though it were done unto Him, whether it be good or bad. "Why persecutest thou Me?" He said to Saul when He appeared to him on the way to Damascus.

(b) **She hath wrought a good work on Me** (Matt. 26: 10). This was the highest praise. What the disciples called "waste" He described as "a good work," because it was done to Him. He who was so soon to hear the cry, "Away with Him, crucify Him," deeply appreciated this loving act of Mary.

(c) **She hath done what she could** (Mark 14: 8), and this is all He expects from any one of us. Let us not sigh about things we should like to do and cannot, but let us do what we can. "For if there first be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8: 12).

(d) **Her action was to be told to all the world** (Matt. 26: 13). At that time it did not seem possible that this prophecy of the Lord could be fulfilled, yet the record of it has gone to the uttermost parts of the earth and, because of it, hearts have been stirred and lives devoted to His service.

(e) **She did it for my burial** (Matt. 26: 12). Others did not know about His approaching death, but Mary knew, because she had sat at His feet learning of Him. In anointing Him she did it beforehand for His burial. The other women came with sweet spices for His dear body after He was dead; Mary anointed Him while He was still alive. How much better it is to pour out our gifts on those we love while they are still with us, rather than to wait and give them an expensive funeral.

Memory Verse.—Romans 12: 1.—"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

295. The Pounds.

Read Luke 19.11-27.

Many people thought the Lord Jesus was ready to be King on the earth, so He showed them in this parable that He must first go away, then He would come back to try His servants' work. After that He will be the King.

1. **The Nobleman—picture of Christ:**
1. He gave a pound to each servant and said, "Occupy"—this means work till I come back. v. 13.
   God has put us to trade with the Gospel. I Thessalonians 2-4.
2. When he came back he called them together to try their work. v. 15. Romans 14.10.
3. One servant gained ten pounds; one gained five; but they did not praise their own work. They said, **Thy** pound hath gained. v. 16, 18. I Corinthians 4.7; 3.7.
4. He rewarded them according to their work and praised them. v. 17, 19. Revelation 22.12.
5. But one servant was not faithful; he did not use his pound and when his master came he made excuses. v. 20, 21.
6. His master rebuked him, called him a bad servant, and took away his pound. v. 22, 24. He received no reward, he suffered loss.

Verse to learn, Luke 19.13.

ANOINTING BY MARY

John 12:1-11; Matthew 26:6-16

Golden Text: 2 Thess. 1:12

I. The Home. V. 1. What memories cluster around Bethany. It was the place of:

1. Death and resurrection; John 11.
2. Service and instruction; Luke 10:38.
3. Worship and communion; John 12.
4. Blessing and ascension; Luke 24. Note also the various homes Christ entered and for what purpose: (1) Luke 7:36-50, as Forgiver. (2) Luke 19:5-10, as Savior. (3) Mark 1:30, 31, as Physician. (4) Luke 8:49-56, as Comforter. (5) John 2:1-11, as Provider. (6) Luke 22:7-12, as Master. (7) Luke 10:38-42, as Friend. (8) Luke 24:29-32, as Revealer. (9) John 20:26-29, as Restorer. Is He in your home in any of these ways? Rev. 3:20. Let Him in!

II. The Feast. V. 2.

1. The purpose, "For Him." Here is a lovely picture of the Lord's Supper at which believers only gather in His name to remember and adore Him. Cp. Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11: 23-26. It was that He might be pre-eminent, and remembered. They had every reason to remember and love Him.
2. The guests—"With Him." What company! Matt. 18:20. At home in His presence.

III. The Anointing. V. 3. Cp. Matt. 26:7. What she did:

1. She loved the Lord Jesus. Do you? 1 Cor. 16:22; 1 John 5:19.
2. She brought her most precious possession to Him. Love is ever measured by sacrifice. God loved and gave His best. Christ loved and gave His life. How much do we love Him?
3. Brought her glory to His feet. "Wiped feet with hair;" 1 Cor. 11:15.
4. Filled the house with fragrance. A beautiful illustration of worship which results from heart occupation with Christ.
5. Understood His words. Matt. 26:12; John 12: 7. Do you? The reason; Luke 10:39. Cp. Matt. 11:29. She had learned of Him.

IV. The Murmuring. Matt. 26:8. The carnal mind cannot appreciate the value of worship.

1. Pharoah, who is a picture of the world, says: "Ye be idle;" Exod. 5:17.
2. Carnal Christians say, "Wherefore is this waste?" Matt. 26:8.
3. Legalists speak of it as "heresy;" Acts 24:14. Is anything too precious to give Him?

V. The Commendation. Vs. 7-9. Matt. 26:10-13.

1. She did what she could. The highest commendation ever given; Mark 14:8.
2. Perpetuation of its history commanded; Matt. 26:13. This is the value He set upon worship; John 4:23, 24, etc.

296. THE COLT MADE FREE

Read Luke 19: 28-36.

Theme: Free to serve.

Tell the story.

1. **The colt condemned.** This colt may have been the firstling of the ass. The following illustration from "Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment," will help us to understand why the colt was condemned. "Come with me in thought to a supposed scene 3000 years ago. Two men (a priest of God and a poor Israelite) stand in earnest conversation. Let us stand by, with their permission, and listen. It is not difficult to see that the subject of conversation is a little ass that stands trembling before them.

"I am come to know," says the poor Israelite, "if there cannot be a merciful exception made in my favour this once. This feeble little thing is the firstling of my ass, and though I know full well what the law of God says about it, I am hoping that mercy will be shown and the ass's life spared. I am but a poor man in Israel, and can ill-afford to lose the little colt."

"But," answers the priest firmly, "the law of the Lord is plain and unmistakeable: 'Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck (Ex. 13: 13).

"Where is the lamb?"

"Ah, sir, no lamb do I possess."

Then go and purchase one, and return, or the ass's neck must surely be broken. The lamb must die, or the ass must die."

"Being under condemnation means the day of punishment is fixed. The sentence of death has been passed. 'He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God' " (John 3: 18).

2. **The colt redeemed.** While the above conversation proceeds between the man and the priest, a third person joins them and, after hearing the poor man's tale of sorrow, he turns to him and says kindly, "Be of good cheer, I can meet your need," and thus he proceeds: "We have in our house one little lamb which is without spot or blemish. It has never once strayed from home. I will bring the lamb." Presently you see him leading the lamb, and very soon both the lamb and ass are standing side by side. Then the lamb is bound to the altar, its blood is shed, and the fire consumes it. The righteous priest now turns to the poor man and says: "You can freely take home your little colt in safety; no broken neck for it now. **The lamb has died in the ass's stead,** and consequently **the ass goes righteously free.**" This is God's picture of our salvation. We could not find a substitute to take our place, but in His Son God provided the Lamb. We have believed on Him, we have accepted Him and we are redeemed (1 Peter 1: 18. 19). In the case of the colt it had no say, but we have to make a choice.

3. **The colt tied** (v. 30). It was alive, but tied, not free for service. Some are like that colt. They have eternal life because they have received Christ as Saviour, but they are bound by a rope and therefore are not free to serve the One Who has redeemed them. The rope tying them up may be that of selfishness—always wanting to

please themselves; bad testimony which spoils their witness before others; disobedience to parents; evil speaking; pride—priding themselves on being better than others; laziness, putting on to the others work they should be doing themselves, and grumbling.

4. **The colt untamed** "whereon yet never man sat" (v. 30). It was apparently not broken in, like a Christian who has never yet surrendered His will to God. The will is usually the last thing to be yielded. He may be able to say.

"Take my silver and my gold, Not a mite would I withhold," but he has not yet reached the place where he can truly say,

"Take my will and make it Thine, It shall be no longer mine."

Some are afraid to yield their will to God lest He should demand of them something they think would be too hard for them to give up. But He will give back to us joy, power and blessing in exchange for that which we have yielded up to Him. "His service is perfect freedom."

5. **The colt loosed** (v. 30). "Loose him," said the Master. For what purpose? Not to run wild, not to go where he likes, not merely to feel happy and have a good time, but to serve Christ. "Bring him hither," said the Lord. But there are conditions to being made free.

(a) **We must be willing to be loosed** from that which ties us up, and not kick against the hand that would set us free. We must co-operate with Him, placing our will alongside His. And if we find that we are not willing, let us pray **to be made** willing.

(b) **We must trust His power to do it for us,** believing that "He is able." We ourselves may have tried again and again to be freed from the things which tie us up and have almost given way to despair. Now "let go, and **let Him.**" "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8: 36). "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" "There is nothing too hard for Thee" (Gen. 18: 14; Jer. 32: 17).

6. **Opposition from others**—or if it is not actual opposition, it is questioning. "Why loose ye the colt?" (v. 33). Perhaps they thought he is better as he is. When we want to be all out for God, others may say to us, "You are quite all right as you are. Do not get too religious, there is nothing wrong with the rope which ties you up." But the Lord's Word was enough for the owners when the disciples said, "The Lord hath need of him" (v. 34).

7. **The Lord hath need of him** (v. 34). Is the fact that the Lord needs you, or anything that you may have, sufficient for you? The Lord could have done without the colt, but He deigned to use it. He could do without us, but He allows us to share with Him in His work. Here are some of the things the Lord needed:

He needed Simon's boat to cross the lake; the line to catch the fish; the bread and fish to feed the crowds; the baskets to gather up the fragments; the dish to hold the sop; the little child to be the text for the sermon; the clay for the blind man's eyes; the woman to minister to Him of their substance, as well as the apostles to preach the Gospel. He has need of **you,** of your witness in the home, at school or in the office. How wonderful that the Lord needs us. He needs men, women and children for His service. Everyone can do something for Him. How privileged was that colt! He was honoured by being chosen to carry the Lord into Jerusalem. We, too, may have the great honour of being used by our Lord and Master.

Memory Verse.—Luke 19: 31.—"Why do ye loose him? Thus shall ye say unto him, because the Lord hath need of him."

297. CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Luke 19:28-48

Golden Text: Luke 19:38

I. The Preparation. Vs. 29-35. The ass in Scripture is a beautiful illustration of salvation by grace. Note:

1. The ass by nature—(1) Its home—the wilderness; Job 39:5. (2) Its dwelling—barren lands; Job 39:5. (3) Its attitude (a) scornful; v. 7a. (b) heedless; v. 7b. (c) restless; v. 8a. (d) searching; v. 8b. Cp. Job 11:12; Gen. 16:12; Prov. 26:3; Romans 8:7.
2. The ass under the curse. Exod. 13:3; Eph. 2:3. (1) Unclean; Lev. 11:3, 4. Cp. Isa. 64:6, etc. (2) Condemned. Exod. 13:13; John 3:18, 36; Romans 3:19; 6:23, etc.
3. Redeemed. Exod. 13:3; 1 Peter 1:18. By the blood of the Lamb. Gal. 3:13; John 1:29; Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6.
4. Loosed. Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-35. Note: (1) Where it was. (a) Tied; Luke 19:30. A true description of all. (b) Outside; Mark 11:4. Cp. Eph. 2:13, etc. (c) "Where two ways met;" Mark 11:4. The crossroads—one led to Christ, the other to oblivion. Cp. Deut. 30:19, etc. (2) What was done to the colt. (a) Loosed—made free. John 8:32, 36; Romans 6:18; Gal. 5:1. (b) Brought to Jesus. Cp. Romans 12:1; 6:13; Matt. 11:28. (c) Used by Jesus. The Lord hath need of him. Not that He cannot do without us, but He is pleased to use us. He can use our faith to please Him. Heb. 11:6. Our love to minister to Him; John 12:3. Our service to work through us; Eph. 3:7. Our heart to live in us; Gal. 2:20. Our house to be received in it; Luke 10:38. Our possessions that He may use them. John 12:14; Luke 5:3, etc. Cp. 2 Cor. 5:15, 20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8.

II. The Entry. Vs. 36-38.

1. The disciples. Obedient and rejoicing. Luke 19:34-37.
2. The multitude; Matt. 21:8, 9. Paying homage, but this same crowd a little later demanded His death! Matt. 27:20-24.
3. The Pharisees; Luke 19:39. Self-righteous, envious, and murmuring.
4. The rebuke; v. 40. Cp. Matt. 21:16.

III. The Prophecy. Vs. 41-44.

1. The weeping Savior; v. 41. Cp. Matt. 23:37; Isa. 53:3. Would that they had wept!
2. The doomed city; vs. 42-44. Fulfilled in A. D. 70 under Titus.
3. The cause; v. 44. "They knew not." How sad! Their ignorance. Cp. Mark 9:32; Acts 13:27; Romans 10:3; 2:3; 2 Peter 3:5.

IV. The Cleansing. Vs. 45-48. The great eviction. When Christ comes in sin must go out. See Col. 3:8-17. Note the attitude of chief priests, v. 47; and of people, v. 48. Cp. Acts 17:32-34. What is your attitude? Are we willing to allow Him to turn our "den of thieves" (Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21) into a temple of praise? (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

298. THE VISIT OF THE GREEKS

John 12:20-36

Golden Text: John 12:24

I. The Historic Setting. V. 1.

1. The period. The passover. The last one that Israel should ever rightly celebrate, for He was the Lamb that fulfilled all the types and offerings of the Old Testament scriptures. See 1 Cor. 5:7. Cp. The type with the antitype.
2. The occasion. After Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.
3. The place. Jerusalem, the city of the great King.

II. The Seekers. Vs. 20, 21.

1. Greeks or Gentiles. Eph. 2:11, 12; Romans 3:9; 10:12. As such they were outside the commonwealth of Israel, but not outside the sphere of God's superabounding grace.
2. Their request; v. 21. Is it yours? The Bible given for this purpose. Heb. 10:7; John 5:39; Luke 24:27. Would you see Jesus? Then see (1) His Incarnation; Luke 2:15. (2) His spotless life; John 1:36. (3) His sufferings; Heb. 2:9. (4) His resurrection; Matt. 28:7. (5) His ascension; Acts 1:9, 10. (6) His exaltation; Heb. 2:9; 12:2. (7) His coming again; Rev. 1:7. Here are the greatest sights possible to humanity. God will open your eyes to see them if you really desire it.

III. The Servants. Vs. 21, 22.

1. Received the message; v. 21.
2. Brought it to Jesus; v. 22. Note what Andrew did. (1) He brought his own brother to Christ; John 1:40, 41. He began in the right place. Cp. Luke 8:39; Romans 10:9, 10. (2) He brought a lad to Jesus; John 6:8, 9. (3) He brought certain Greeks; John 12. Are you a bringer?

IV. The Savior. Vs. 23-33.

1. Stated the necessity for His substitutionary death; v. 24. He illustrated, by the simplest natural law, the most profound spiritual truth. Our life is based on His death. Mark 10:45; John 3:15. "Must."
2. The application of this principle to His disciples; vs. 25, 26. Cp. Matt. 10:37-39; 1 John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. Only as the believer dies to sin and self shall he really live, in the true sense of that term, unto God. Romans 6:1-23; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15.
3. The Father's testimony; vs. 27-30. (1) The cross foreshadowed; v. 27. "The hour." An eternal past had looked toward this hour. (2) The words from Heaven. Cp. Matt. 3:17; 17:5. (3) The misconception; v. 29. They had no ears for the voice of God and mistook it for thunder. Cp. 1 Cor. 2:14.
4. The Son's declaration; vs. 31-33. His own prophecy as to the manner and purpose and result of His death. Think of the mighty multitude who have been drawn to Him!

299. THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

Matthew 21:28-46

Golden Text: Matthew 21:44

I. The Two Sons. Vs. 28-31. An illustration of what repentance is. Not sorrow for sin merely, or tears, but a change of mind resulting in a changed attitude towards God.

1. The command—v. 28—"Go and work!"
2. The refusal; v. 29. Rebellion. Cp. Romans 8:5-8.
3. The repentance; v. 29. A changed mind, attitude, and employment.
4. The application; vs. 31, 32. Repentance an absolute necessity. (1) Its need. (a) Because of sin. Romans 3:10-19, 23; Acts 8:22. (b) Because commanded. Mark 1:15; Acts 17:30; 20:21; Luke 13:3. (2) Its nature—a change of (a) Mind about yourself—instead of self-complacency now self-abhorrence. (b) Attitude. Toward God—instead of turned from God; Isa. 53:6, etc.; turn to God. Acts 26:20; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10. (c) Leads to faith in Christ; Acts 20:21; Matt. 9:13. (3) Means used: (a) Goodness of God; Romans 2:4. (b) Preaching of Gospel. Acts 20:21; 26:20; 17:30, 31, etc.

II. The Householders. V. 33. God's goodness to men. Note: This parable, though primarily applicable to Israel, can in principle be applied to all men. God's goodness seen in

1. His creation. All perfectly ordered for man's benefit.
2. His provision. Harvest, food, clothing, health, strength, soundness of mind, faculties, etc.

III. The Vineyard. V. 33.

1. Israel. Cp. Isa. 5:1; Psalm 80:8-11; Jer. 2:21.
2. World; v. 43. In one sense all men should bring fruit to God; Gen. 1:28.
3. The purpose—fruit. Matt. 3:8; 7:16; Phil. 1:11; 2 Tim. 2:6.

IV. The Husbandmen. V. 33.

1. Israel; Isa. 5:7.
2. Men; Romans 10:18. Man's responsibility to God. Romans 14:12; Matt. 12:36.

V. The Harvest; v. 34. The time of fruit. Every one is producing fruit.

1. Of sin. Cp. Romans 6:21. The black, blasted fruit of sin. Jude 12; Matt. 12:33.
2. Of salvation. Romans 6:22; Gal. 5:22; Heb. 13:15; John 15:5; Romans 7:4; Col. 1:6.

VI. The Rebellion. Vs. 35-39. Culminating in murder of God's Son. Cp. Romans 8:5-8; Acts 4:25-27; :23, etc.

VII. The Application. Vs. 41-46.

1. To Israel as a nation; vs. 41-43. Cp. Romans, chapter 11.
2. To each one as an individual; v. 44. Cp. John 3:36; 3:18; Mark 16:16; Romans 10:9, 10, etc.

300. THE MAN WITHOUT A WEDDING GARMENT

READ Matthew 22: 8-13; Isaiah 61: 10.
THEME: The Garment of Righteousness. TELL THE STORY.

Scripture constantly likens receiving Christ and His salvation to putting on a garment.

THE MAN WITHOUT A WEDDING GARMENT.—

HE CAME TO THE FEAST ONLY IN APPEARANCE, NOT IN HEART. The feast was intended to honour the son, but this man had no intention of doing this. He defied the rules of the palace and insulted the king by refusing to wear the wedding garment, which the king expected all who came to the feast, to wear. He was indifferent and independent. He was prepared to get all he could out of the wedding, but not to give loyalty and obedience to the true king. He did not *openly* refuse to come, like some who said, "we will not have this man to reign over us," yet he was just as much a rebel as they were. He represents those who make a profession, join the church and God's people without ever having accepted Christ. To take one's place as a believer, join the Lord's people, and even sit at the Lord's table, does not give us salvation.

HE WAS SEEN BY THE KING (v. 11). He singled him out immediately. We cannot deceive Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire (Rev. 1: 14), for "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. 2: 19). He sees right into the heart, even though man looks on the outward appearance.

HE WAS QUESTIONED BY THE KING (v. 12). "*How* camest thou in?" Perhaps one will answer, "I came in by church membership"; another will say, "I came in at a Mission, or a meeting, or at a camp." But what the king looks for is the wedding garment, and if we are not wearing that we have no right to be at the wedding with the other guests. "How camest *thou* in?" The king questioned him personally. He did not ask him about the other guests, or about *their* wedding garment. He made His question intensely personal. How did *you* come in without a wedding garment? This man could not plead ignorance. He knew the wedding garment was essential and so do we.

THE MAN WAS SPEECHLESS (v. 12). He knew there was no excuse he could make which would satisfy the king, so he remained silent. He might have been bragging to the others that *he* did not need a wedding garment; *he* came in without it. But his mouth was stopped when he stood before the king (Rom. 3: 19).

HE WAS THEN JUDGED BY THE KING, and the unworthy guest becomes a criminal. The gracious Saviour Who now lovingly calls us to come to Him will one day be the Judge of those who have refused His invitation. This was the sentence that was passed upon the man. "Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness" (v. 13). It is always darkness away from God, the Light of the world, and once cast out it is for ever.

THE WEDDING GARMENT.—

IT IS THE GARMENT OF SALVATION — Christ's righteousness, which becomes ours, that is, we are accounted righteous before God when we have accepted Christ as Saviour. It is probable that He was referring

to Isaiah 61: 10 when He spoke of the wedding garment. "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

IT IS PROVIDED BY GOD. He provided the coats of skins for Adam and Eve when they had sinned (Gen. 3: 21). Blood had to be shed in order to provide these coats of skins, and they were thus made fit for God's presence. God is willing to provide the garment of salvation for all who will receive it.

IT IS FREE — without money and without price, but most people do not value that which they may receive as a gift. "The *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 23). How important it is to have it for we cannot enter heaven without it.

BUT THOUGH FREE, IT IS COSTLY. It is free to us, but costly to God. In order to provide it for us it cost God His Son and it cost the Son His life. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3: 16).

HOW TO OBTAIN THIS GARMENT.—

WE MUST PART WITH THE OLD RAGS OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. God says, "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64: 6). C. H. Spurgeon says, "If our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, then what must our *un*righteousnesses be like in God's sight?" It is difficult for many people to part with their self-righteousness to which they cling. They say, "I have never done any harm"; "I am as good as anyone else"; "I pay twenty shillings in the pound," etc., etc. The Lord said of Joshua the priest, "Take away the filthy garments from him . . . and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (Zech. 3: 4). The garment of salvation cannot be worn on top of the rags of self-righteousness. But parting with these old garments is not sufficient.

WE MUST TAKE THE NEW GARMENT OF SALVATION AND PUT IT ON. God provided the coats of skins for Adam and Eve, but they had to take them and put them on. When we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, we take His righteousness, which then becomes ours. We are clothed with righteousness and with salvation (Psalm 132: 9, 16). "*Put ye on* the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 13: 14).

THEN WE WEAR THE GARMENT OF A HOLY LIFE. A holy character is the proof that we have the garment of salvation. "Let thy garments be always white" (Eccles. 9: 8). "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments" (Rev. 16: 15). Those who belong to Christ are to hate even the garment spotted by the flesh (Jude 23). If this garment of a holy life becomes soiled then we must come to Christ for cleansing (Rev. 7: 14; 1 John 1: 7, 9). We cannot ourselves keep our garments white; our part is to watch, and it is the Holy Spirit's part to keep us. "Kept by the power of God" (1 Peter 1: 5). The garment of a holy life should accompany the garment of salvation. Let us ask ourselves the question, "Have I the robe of righteousness without which I cannot enter heaven?"

MEMORY VERSE.—Isaiah 61: 10—"He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

THE WEDDING GARMENT

Matthew 22:1-14

Golden Text: Philippians 3:9

I. The Feast Provided. Vs. 1-4.

1. The feast was in honor of the King's Son; v. 2. Vp. Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 19:7-9. What the King's Son has done. 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 1 Peter 3:18, etc.
2. The feast was all provided by the King; v. 4. Even to the wedding garment for each guest. This is grace. Cp. Titus 2:11; 3:5; Eph. 2:8, 9. Man helpless to provide anything himself. Romans 3:20; 5:6; 8:32; 11:6; Gal. 2:16, etc.

II. The Invitation. V. 4.

1. Through His servants. Cp. 2 Cor. 5:20; 4:5; Phil. 1:1; Romans 6:22; 1 Peter 2:16.
2. Its content, "Come." (1) To a work done; v. 4. Cp. John 19:30; Romans 6:10; John 17:4. (2) To a feast prepared; v. 4; "Ready." Cp. Rev. 22:17. (3) To honor the Son. Cp. Matt. 3:17; John 5:23, etc.

III. The Rejection. Vs. 5, 6. "Made light;" same word as "neglect" in Heb. 2:3.

1. Some neglected; v. 5. Cp. Acts 17:32; 24:25; 26:28.
2. Some rejected; v. 6. Cp. Acts 17:32; John 12: 47, 48.
3. Some despised and ill-treated the servants. Ill.: Acts 4:17, 21; John 5:40, 41; 7:54-60; 1 Thess. 4-8, etc.

IV. The Condemnation. V. 7. Cp. Mark 16:16; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9; John 3:36; Job 36:18; Rev. 6: 16, 17.

V. The Proclamation. Vs. 8-10. The universal invitation to **all** "whosoever."

1. God loves all; John 3:16.
2. Christ died for all; 2 Cor. 5:15.
3. That all might be saved. John 3:17; 1 Tim. 2:4.
4. Salvation offered to all; Acts 13:38. Have you accepted?

VI. The Question. Vs. 11, 12.

1. The man. He thought his own robe was good enough. Cp. Romans 10:3; Isa. 64:6. In spite of King's provision. 2 Cor. 5:21; Romans 3: 20-22; 1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9.
2. The question: v. 12. Cp. Heb. 2:3; Jer. 13:21; Hosea 9:5; Matt. 27:22.
3. The answer—speechless. No excuses in day of judgment; 1 Thess. 5:3. All the glib excuses and objections to God's salvation that come so readily to the lips of the Christ rejecter, shall die unuttered as he stands before the searching eyes of the Judge of all the earth in that day. Rev. 20:11-15.

VII. The Sentence. V. 13. Have you on the garment? Cp. Isa. 61:10. Can you say this? This garment

1. Has been provided. Romans 3:22; 2 Cor. 5:21.
2. Is being offered; Romans 4:24, 25.
3. Is placed upon every believer the moment he trusts in Christ; Romans 4:5.

301. THE TEN VIRGINS

Read Matthew 25: 1-13

Theme: Readiness. **Tell the story.**

This parable likens the coming of the Lord to a wedding feast, which is a time of rejoicing. There are two processions, one from the bridegroom's house and one from the bride's. When the evening is far spent, the bridegroom comes forth with his friends to meet the bride and bring her to her new home.

(A) The Five Foolish Virgins.

1. **They were foolish because they were not prepared.** They **thought** they were ready and went out to meet the bridegroom. They had had plenty of time in which to prepare, for the bridegroom had "tarried," yet they were not ready. How foolish for us to fail to prepare now for the coming of the Heavenly Bridegroom, for it will affect us for all eternity.

2. **They took lamps, but no oil** (v. 3). **Lamps** represent our profession, our testimony before others. "Let your light so shine before men" (Matt. 5: 16); "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning" (Luke 12: 35). They looked the same as the wise virgins, for they also had lamps. They were for a time companions of the wise virgins, they went out with them to meet the bridegroom, they went by the same road, they began to trim their lamps as the others were trimming theirs. They were so like the wise virgins that, until the bridegroom came, only He knew the difference. They put emphasis on the external and minor things.

They had no oil, and of what use then were the lamps or torches. Oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10: 38), and "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. 8: 9). Profession is no use without possession.

3. **They heard the cry, "Go ye out to meet him"** (v. 6), and it was not till then that they found out they were not ready. The cry has now gone forth, "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4: 12), but one day the cry will be heard, "Go ye out to meet him" and it will then be too late.

4. **They asked the wise virgins for oil.** "Give us of your oil," they said (v. 8), but were told to buy for themselves (v. 9). Spiritual life cannot be shared. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14: 12). "None of them can by any means redeem his brother" (Ps. 49: 7). They could have bought oil for themselves but at such an hour it was too late. We may "buy" now, "without money and without price" (Is. 55: 1). While they went to buy the bridegroom came.

5. **The door was shut.** "Lord, Lord, open to us" (v. 11), they cried. They were like those who may have been church members, and even accustomed to attending prayer meetings, saying, "Lord, Lord," but Christ said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 7: 21). The door was not ajar, it was **shut,** denoting finality. Once the door is shut it will be too late to gain an entrance. The door of the ark was shut against unbelievers (Gen. 7: 16); the children of Israel were shut out of Canaan (Heb. 3: 19); and Esau was shut out from the blessing (Heb. 12: 17).

Jesus is the Door (John 10: 7). The door is open now for all who will enter (John 10: 9), but "when once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer. . . I know you not" (Luke 13: 25).

(B) The Five Wise Virgins.

1. **They were wise because they were ready,** and they were ready because they took oil with their lamps. They represent those who make no empty profession; they are genuine Christians, truly born again. Those who would be ready must be washed from sin, justified by Christ's righteousness. We cannot do this ourselves, Christ does it for us.

2. **They ALL slumbered and slept**—both the wise and the foolish virgins. At first they only slumbered, but while the bridegroom tarried they slept. They had all grown tired of waiting because the bridegroom delayed his coming, and were aroused by the cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." While Christians sleep their lamps do not shine brightly for those who are in darkness. Our lamps should be filled, bright and shining. We should be watching, waiting and ready.

The awakening came at midnight, when they were not expecting the bridegroom. The Church (all those who truly belong to Christ) will be aroused by the shout of the Lord Himself, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God (1 Thess. 4: 16). How sad to be found sleeping. Let us be like those who wait for their Lord (Luke 12: 36).

3. **They went in to the marriage.**

(a) **They went in immediately,** as soon as the bridegroom appeared. If we die before Christ comes, we shall be "absent from the body . . . present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5: 8). If we are alive when He comes we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We shall rise to meet our Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with Him (1 Thes. 4: 16, 17).

(b) **They went in WITH HIM** (v. 10). Our Lord Himself will take us into glory. "The Lamb. . . shall lead them unto living fountains of waters" (Rev. 7: 17). How could we hope to go in if we did not go in with Him, hidden behind Him, covered with His righteousness, washed in His blood? A holy God will make no objection to our entrance into glory when we go in with Him, our Saviour.

(c) **They went in to the marriage** to share His joy. **Now** we are soldiers of Christ, fighting His battles, **then** we shall go into the marriage. The shut door which excluded the five foolish virgins, shut in with Him the five wise virgins.

(d) **They that were ready went in** (v. 10). Who makes us ready? The Lord Jesus does, we cannot do it ourselves. We must be ready not only in the great matter of salvation, being supplied with oil, but in the smaller things, obeying even the least of His commands, living in such a way that whenever He comes we may be ready. We have on the best robe, the robe of righteousness (Is. 61, 10), yet we need to see to it that we are wearing the garments of a holy life, keeping them, by His power, white and clean. "Let thy garments be always white" (Eccles. 9: 8), "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments" (Rev. 16: 15).

(C) The Bridegroom.

1. **He tarried** (v. 5). He does not come as soon as expected, but because our Lord's coming is delayed, that does not mean that He is not coming. His coming is certain.

2. **He will come suddenly and unexpectedly**—at midnight, when men are not looking for Him. The time of His coming is secret. Let us watch therefore, lest coming suddenly, He finds us sleeping.

Memory Verse.—Matthew 25: 13.—"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

THE TEN VIRGINS

Matthew 25:1-13

Golden Text: Matthew 25:13

I. The Circumstances. The Lord Jesus wished to impress His audience with at least five facts in connection with His second coming:

1. The certainty of His coming; John 14:1-3.
2. The uncertainty of the time He would come; Matt. 24:36, 43.
3. The necessity for preparedness; Matt. 24:44; 25:13. "Ready."
4. The blessedness of the prepared; Matt. 25:10.
5. The wretchedness of the unprepared. Matt. 24:51; Luke 13:24-28. These five facts are all indicated in this parable.

II. The Ten Virgins. Vs. 1-4. Represent professing Christians.

1. Their similarity. (1) They were all called virgins, as today many call themselves Christians. (2) They looked alike. So today moral, clean, sincere, church-going, yet not saved. (3) All carried a lamp; i. e., all had a profession or testimony. (4) All on same errand —"meet bridegroom." So today S. S. class, preach, charity work, yet unsaved.
2. Their dissimilarity. (1) Five wise, five foolish—only two classes saved, lost, etc. (2) Difference was inward. The vessel is the body. 2 Cor. 4:7. Oil=Holy Spirit. Five were indwelt. Cp. John 3:3, 5; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19, etc. (3) How this oil is obtained. By the new birth. Eph. 1:13; Romans 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13, etc.

III. The Slumbering Guests. V. 5. All alike slept.

1. The cause of Christian's sleep: Lack of (1) study of the word; (2) Prayer; (3) witnessing; (4) self-denial, etc.
2. The effect of this sleep: Loss of (1) communion; (2) joy; (3) usefulness.
3. The command to such. Eph. 5:14; Romans 13:11, 12; 1 Peter 1:23; Eph. 2:8.

IV. The Midnight Cry. V. 6.

1. The time—midnight. The hour of darkness. Cp. 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Luke 22:53.
2. The manner: Unexpected, Sudden. Matt. 24: 44; 1 Cor. 15:52.
3. The cry: "Behold," etc.
4. The message: "Go ye."

V. The Prepared Virgins. Vs. 7-10.

1. Arose. Eph. 5:14; Romans 13:11.
2. Trimmed lamps; Rev. 3:3.
3. They were ready—Preparation. Ill.: 1 Thess. 1:9, 10. Are you ready?
4. They went in—Salvation. Heb. 9:28; Romans 13:11.
5. With Him—Fellowship. John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.
6. Marriage—Blessedness; Rev. 19:6-9.
7. Door shut—Division; Rev. 21:27.

VI. The Foolish Virgins. Vs. 8, 10-12.

1. Unprepared. Are you? Amos 4:12.
2. The shut door. Rev. 3:7; Luke 13:24-28 (Ill. Gen. 7:16).
3. The awful cry; v. 11. Cp. Luke 16:24-26.
4. The sad answer; v. 12. John 10:27.
5. The pointed application; v. 13. 2 Peter 3:8-14.

302. THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Read Matthew 25: 14-30.

Theme: Diligence. **Tell the story.**

The chief lesson taught in the parable of the Virgins is readiness, and in this parable of the talents, diligence. There are two classes of people represented by the men with the talents; **true** servants, and those who are **called** servants, but are not servants at all. A servant is one who serves, and this one-talent man did not do this. All men owe service to God, even though they never become servants in deed and in truth.

1. **The Goods or Talents** represent opportunities, spheres of service.

(a) **Talents were given to each one,** none were without. Yet how often we hear the remark, "I have no talent and no opportunity of doing anything for God." This is not true, for all have at least one talent and the opportunity and responsibility of using it.

(b) **They were given according to each one's ability.** One had five talents, one two, and another one. Not all have the same gifts or the same opportunities. The Master gives what He has fitted us for. He does not expect a two-talent person to make five more talents, or a one-talent person to make two more. He knows our ability, for He has made us.

(c) **They were given by the master.** God divides to each man severally as He will. "Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with mine own?" the master said (Matt. 20: 15). They still belong to Him and are only lent to us.

(d) **The purpose for which they were given** was for trading, to make gain. They are not for our own personal advantage but for the Master. These talents are not ours. We are only entrusted with them. We are to use them in helping others. "Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (1 Cor. 14: 12).

2. **The Reckoning** (v. 19). The master came back to reckon with the servants and, as the talents were only lent to them, they had to render an account. The Lord Jesus is coming again and then there is to be a reckoning, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body" (2 Cor. 5: 10). We shall give account of **ourselves,** not of others. So then every one of us shall give account of **himself** to God" (Rom. 14: 12). If we are true believers, that is, if we have received Christ as our Saviour, we shall not be judged for our **sins,** for we shall not come into condemnation (John 5: 24), but we shall be judged for our work (1 Cor. 3: 14, 15). The reckoning will be **particular;** God will go into each item. It will be **personal;** we shall be judged individually. It will be **impartial;** absolutely just.

3. **The five-talent man.**

(a) **He traded with his talents** (v. 16). How can we trade, labour for Christ, use all we have for Him, and for His sake work for others? We can use our talents and opportunities for Him and increase them. This man made five more talents.

(b) **He acknowledged that the talents had been given him,** for he said to his master, "Thou deliveredst unto me five talents" (v. 20). He knew he could have accomplished nothing if he had not received them. Paul could say, "By the grace of God I am what I am. . . yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15: 10). "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. 4: 7). This then precludes pride and boasting.

4. **The two-talent man.** He traded and did as well as the first man, for they each doubled their talents (v. 22). He did not spend his time sitting down and envying the man who had five, and pitying himself because he had only two. He determined that each of his talents should gain a talent, and he succeeded.

5. **The master's commendation** (vv. 21, 23) was the same to the two-talent man as to the five. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8: 12).

Well done. It will be worth anything to hear those words from the lips of our Lord. "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Cor. 10: 18). The more we love a person, the more their praise and approval mean.

Good and faithful servant. It is faithfulness He praises, and not success. We may consider ourselves unsuccessful servants because we have seen little fruit for our labour, but if we have been **faithful** the reward and praise will be ours. The reward will far outweigh the labour. "Thou hast been faithful over a **few** things, I will make thee ruler over **many** things" (v. 23). Though our reward will be, in a measure, according to our work, yet it is, in a measure, a matter of grace also.

Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. The joy of the Lord means **honour** (John 12: 26); it means fulness of joy in His presence and pleasures for evermore (Ps. 16: 11); and it means, Beholding His glory (John 17: 24).

6. **The one-talent man.**

(a) **He buried his talent.** It is always a temptation to the one-talent person to envy those who have five or two. They then become discouraged and do nothing. They forget that "an ounce weight may turn the scale where hundred-weights are balanced." Paul warned Timothy against this very thing. "Stir up the gift of God." "Neglect not the gift that is in thee" (2 Tim. 1: 6; 1 Tim. 4: 14). We all need this warning to-day, particularly one-talent people. They can least afford to neglect their opportunity because they have the least ability, and yet these are the people who usually do so. No one can improve our talent for us. If it is not used we lose it.

(b) **He misjudged and slandered the master.** He had no love for him, only a great fear, and he tried to shift the blame of his own laziness on to the master (vv. 24, 25). The fact that he had such an opinion of the master surely shows that he was no true servant at all.

(c) **Perhaps because he returned the talent he thought he was all right.** "There thou has that is thine," he said. Perhaps he prided himself on not **wasting** it as the steward of Luke 16: 1 did, he had only buried it. But leaving it lying idle is wasting it, because he should have been trading with it.

(d) **His judgment.** He was called by the master a wicked, slothful and unprofitable (useless) servant (vv. 26, 30), and was cast into outer darkness. This proved that he had never been a real servant at all. What a warning to those who think that because they have not done much that is wrong, that therefore they are all right.

7. **Gifts, opportunities are taken from those who neglect them and given to others.** The position of being God's spokesman was taken from Moses and given to Aaron (Ex. 4: 14, 15); the apostleship was taken from Judas and given to Matthias (Acts 1: 25, 26). If we neglect our opportunities we, too, shall lose them.

Memory Verse.—Matthew 25: 23.—"Well done, good and faithful servant. . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

THE TALENTS

Matthew 25:14-30

Golden Text: 1 John 2:28

Note: In the parable of the ten Virgins the test of reality lay in the unseen—the oil in the lamp. Here it lies in the seen—active, devoted, loyal service. Both profession and possession are viewed.

I. The Commission. Vs. 14, 15. This teaches:

1. The Lord has servants. All true Christians are Christ's servants. Phil. 1:1; Eph. 6:6; Col. 3:24, etc.
2. These servants all have ability for service. 2 Tim. 4:14; Romans 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4.
3. To such He gives gifts, according to their ability. 1 Cor. 7:7; Eph. 4:8; Mark 13:34.
4. Their work is to administer the gift given. 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Cor. 9:1; Gal. 6:4.

II. The Departure. V. 15. Cp. Luke 19:12, 13. "Till I come;" John 14:1-3. The servants' attitude: "Till He come," should be:

1. Remembrance; 1 Cor. 11:26.
2. Steadfastness; Rev. 2:25.
3. Service; Luke 19:13.

III. The Service. Vs. 16-18.

1. On the part of two: busy in the Master's service. Cp. 1 Cor. 9:20-23; 15:58; 2 Cor. 1:12; 6:3-10; 4:5.
2. One the part of mere professor—nothing. Activity is an indication and proof of life.

IV. The Return. V. 19.

1. The time of it uncertain. Cp. Matt. 24:44; 25: 13.
2. The suddeness of it: "Moment," etc.; 1 Cor. 15:52, etc.
3. The certainty of it. John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4: 15.

V. The Result. Vs. 20-30.

1. Reward; vs. 20-23. To the good and faithful servant. Cp. 1 Cor. 3:11-14. Cp. (1) The soul winner's reward. Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19. (2) The warrior's; 2 Tim. 4:6-8. (3) The runner's; 1 Cor. 9:24-27. (4) The shepherd's; 1 Peter 5: 24. (5) The endurer's. Rev. 2:10; James 1:12.
2. Judgment upon the mere professor; vs. 24-30. (1) His accusation; vs. 24, 25. (2) His answer; vs. 26-29. God, in a sense, has given abilities to all men (a) To hear the word—have you heard? Mark 16:15; Romans 10:17. (b) To believe on His Son—have you believed? John 3:17; Acts 16:31, etc. (c) To confess Him as Lord of the life; Romans 10:9, 10. (3) His sentence; v. 30. How sad an ending to a professor. Cp. James 1:22; 2:14-26. Emphasize this.

303. CHRIST'S TEACHING ON FUTURE RETRIBUTION

Matthew 12:36, 37, 41, 42; Luke 12:1-5; Mark 9:43-48; Matthew 25:41-46

Golden Text: Luke 12:5

I. Certainty of It. Attested to by:

1. The word of God. Psalm 9:17; Isa. 66:24; Job 36:18; Heb. 9:27; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9; Jude 14, 15; Rev. 20:10-15, etc.
2. The words of Christ, ten passages in which He used "Gehenna." Think of Who it is that speaks. Matt. 5:22, 20, 30; 8:12; 10:28; 13:41, 49, 50; 23:15; 23:33. Note for whom prepared; Matt. 25:41. He did not lie, deceive or merely frighten but spake as God.
3. Christ's sufferings. Why the need of His birth, His infinite sufferings, His death for sin, if no eternity of woe? (1) He died to save from hell; John 3:16, etc. "Should not perish." (2) He lives to deliver from the pit. 1 Thess. 1:10; Job 33:24.

II. The Description of It. Matt. 8:12; 13:41, 42; 25:30, etc.

1. Sorrow—"weeping." Ill.: Luke 16:24. Weeping that's too late.
2. Misery—"wailing." The cry of the lost soul: "O that I had been saved when I had the chance." The bitter regrets. Memory is active in this fearful place. See Luke 16:25. "Son, remember." The worm that dieth not. Mark 9:43-48; Luke 13:38.
3. Torment, "gnashing of teeth." The fearful fire! How solemn. Matt. 25:41; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Rev. 20:14; Luke 16:24.

III. The Duration of It—Everlasting. The word "Aionios" translated "everlasting" and "eternal" is used in these scriptures: Matt. 18:8; 19:16; 25:46; Mark 3:29; Luke 14:9; 18:30; John 3:15, 16, 36; 5:24; Romans 16:26; 2 Cor. 4:17, 18; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:10; Heb. 5:9; 9:14; 9:12; 2 Peter 4:11; 1 Peter 5:10; Jude 7. The same word that describes the lifetime of God, and the duration of the glories of heaven is used to denote the duration of punishment. How unspeakably solemn! The "gulf fixed" of Luke 16 eliminates all "larger hope" theories.

IV. The Cause of It:

1. Sins. Matt. 12:36, 37; Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Rev. 20:12; Heb. 9:27.
2. Rejection of Christ. Mark 16:16; John 3:18; 3:36; 5:40; 8:24. 21; 1 Peter 4:17. This is the damning sin; John 16:9.

V. The Escape From It. Only one way. John 14:6; 10:9; 3:16.

1. Hearing the word. John 5:24; Romans 10:17. (1) As to your need. (2) As to Christ's work. (3) As to way of salvation.
2. Believing the Person. Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31, etc.
3. Confessing His name; Romans 10:9, 10.

304. WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET

Read John 13: 1-17.

Theme: The Lord — our Example.

Tell the story.

This incident took place on the night of our Lord's betrayal. He knew that the Cross, with its sufferings, lay before Him, and yet He regarded death as a departure to the Father. If we are His children, death to us, too, will be only a departure to the Father's house of many mansions (John 14: 2), "to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1: 23), and so to be for ever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4: 17).

1. **Our Lord's love for His own.**

(a) **His own** (v. 1). Who are His own? Those who have received Him into their hearts as Saviour. How precious are these words, "His own," showing us that we are His own personal possession. We are His own because He has chosen us (Deut. 7: 7); because the Father gave us to Him (John 17: 24), and because He has purchased us with His own blood (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19).

(b) **He loved them unto the end** (v. 1), (to the uttermost). His is a love which never changes, a perfect love. Our love to Him may fail, but His love never fails. He knew that Peter was going to deny Him, and that the disciples were going to forsake Him, yet He loved them unto the end. He not only **saves** to the uttermost (Heb. 7: 25), but He loves to the uttermost.

"Earthly friends may fail or leave us,
One day soothe, the next day grieve us,
But this Friend will ne'er deceive us,
Oh! How He loves."

2. **Our Lord's humility.** Though He was conscious of His Sonship and His authority (v. 3), that the Father had committed all things into His hands, and that He had come from God, He laid aside His garments (v. 4). This is a picture of laying aside His divine majesty (Phil. 2: 6, 7). He took a towel and girded Himself. He wore the slave's clothes. He took upon Him the form of a servant. Was Peter thinking of this incident when he afterwards wrote, "Be **clothed** with humility" (1 Pet. 5: 5)? He did the slave's work, He began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel (v. 5). "He came not to be ministered unto but to minister" (Mark 10: 45). He poured water into a basin—He provides the cleansing Word (John 15: 3). He washed the disciples' feet—He applies the cleansing water (Eph. 5: 26). By His actions He also teaches us that the most commonplace duties may become glorified.

3. **Peter's mistake. His false humility.** It is a false humility those possess who refuse the abounding mercies of Christ, saying they are not worthy to receive them. He did not understand in the least the spiritual meaning of the washing. Though Peter had been so long with the Lord he still had a great deal to learn, and spiritual things are only spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2: 14).

4. **The Lord's warning.** "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part

with me" (v. 8). Until we are washed from our sins and born again, we have no part with Christ, no part in His salvation, no part in His service. "Ye **must** be born again" (John 3: 7).

5. **The bath and the basin.** The bathing of the body and the cleansing of the feet. The picture in verse 10 is that of a person returning from the baths where he had been washed entirely. He is already "clean every whit." This represents the "washing of regeneration" (Titus 3: 5), the cleansing which is ours when we accept Christ as Saviour and are born again by the Word of God (1 Pet. 1: 23); the entire cleansing which is once for all (Heb. 10: 10). But the feet of those who have been cleansed become dusty and dirty on the way home and require cleansing. "He needeth not save to wash his feet." We who belong to Christ contract defilement on our journey heavenward, and we need daily cleansing. Our aim should be "to sin not," but "if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2: 1). Just as water cleanses the body, so the Word of God applied by the Holy Ghost through Christ, cleanses us from the things which may have grieved Him. "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word (Eph. 5: 26). "Now ye are clean through the Word" (John 15: 3). "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word" (Ps. 119: 9). We need to confess instantly and thus keep a good conscience. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9). Keep short accounts with God.

6. **The Lord's example.**

(a) **He taught them humility.** "I have given you an example" (v. 15). By His action He taught His disciples to perform the lowliest tasks. He taught them that they were to "by love serve one another" (Gal. 5: 13). "Do as I have done to you," He said (v. 15). Praise God, Christ not only shows us an example, but gives us the power to obey.

(b) **Jesus Himself is our example,** not teachers or other men. He came not only to die for our sins, and thus become our Saviour, but to be our Example, our standard, to set us a copy. He is the perfect Example. Pilate said, "I find no fault in Him." He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7: 26). Let us look to our blessed Example and do as He did. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image" (2 Cor. 3: 18). It is not sufficient to **call** Him Master and Lord. "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6: 46).

7. **Washing one another's feet** (v. 14). How is this to be done? It is not a literal washing, but applying the water of the Word to one another's needs. This must be done **in love.** Someone has said that we need to be careful that we do not attempt to wash the feet of the saints with **boiling** water!

8. **Knowing and doing** (v. 17). It is not sufficient to **know** His will, but we must be prepared to **do** it. Happiness comes not from merely **knowing** these things but by **doing** them.

Memory Verse.—Galatians 5: 13.—"By love serve one another."

WASHING OF THE DISCIPLES' FEET

John 13:1-17

Golden Text: Philippians 2:8

I. The Occasion. Vs. 1, 2.

1. The night of His betrayal; the cross and all its fearful sufferings just before Him.
2. The hour of His sacrifice at hand. Cp. John 7:30; 2:4; 12:23, 27; 17:1. The hour to which all the prophets pointed, "the consumation of the age;" Heb. 9:26. The most fateful hour of all eternity, towards which an eternal past looked forward, and to which an eternal future shall look backward.
3. The feast of the Passover of which He was the antitype; v. 1.
4. The traitor in the midst; v. 2. What were his thoughts as he faced the One he was to betray so treacherously?
5. His ceaseless love for His own; v. 1. Cp. John 17:12; 15:9; Rev. 1:5 (R. V.).

II. His Matchless Humility. Vs. 3-5. Who He was; v. 3. His eternal Deity, His absolute authority. Cp. John 8:42; 16:28, etc. Col. 1: 16, 17.

2. What He did; vs. 4, 5. (1) Took the place of a slave; v. 4. Cp. Phil. 2:6-8; Mark 10:45; John 4:34. (2) Washed His disciples' feet; v. 5. What wondrous humility! What Divine condescension! What infinite grace! Cp. Heb. 1:1-3; John 1:14.

III. Peter's Objection. Vs. 6-11.

1. Due to false humility; v. 6. True he was not worthy but Christ knew that.
2. Due to hasty judgment; vs. 7, 8. Christ never makes mistakes; v. 7. Cp. John 14:26; 1 Peter 5:5.
3. The answer; v. 7. Peter learned his lesson. See 1 Peter 5:5, 6.

IV. The Teaching. V. 10.

1. The Bath: "Washed"—bathed all over. This is regeneration, which is done once and for all, never to be repeated! Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23; Heb. 10:1-12; John 15:3; Heb. 10:14.
2. The Bason "for the feet." Daily cleansing is necessary. As the word of God, like a mirror, reveals our defilement, we are to judge, confess and turn from all known sin and thus realize what "the washing of water by the word" really means. By the bath we are made clean. By the bason we are kept clean. Eph. 5:26; 1 John 1:7; Psalm 119:9. Ill.: Exod. 40:6, 7: first the altar, then the laver.
3. The Bosom; v. 23. For communion and fellowship. Cp. 1 John 1:3; John 14:23.
4. The Badge; v. 35. His disciples are to be known, not by the great sermons they preach, or the great miracles they perform, but by their love for each other. Cp. 1 John 4:7-12.

V. The Application. Vs. 12-17.

1. The Lord's example; vs. 13-15. Cp. 2 Cor. 8:9.
2. The lesson to His disciples; vs. 14-17. Cp. Phil. 2:3; 1 Peter 5:6.

305. THE LORD'S SUPPER

Luke 22:1-20; Cp. 1 Corinthians 11:23-28

Golden Text: Mark 10:45

I. The Circumstances. Vs. 1-6.

1. The Passover feast; v. 1, 7, of which He was to be the antitype. Cp. Ex. 12:3-13; 21-24; 1 Cor. 5:7; John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18.
2. The fearful bargain; vs. 2-5. What an awful exchange! Cp. Mark 8:37. What are you exchanging Him for?
3. The fateful night—the night of His betrayal. The dark shadows of Gethsemane and Calvary just ahead. With all this before Him He instituted the memorial feast.

II. The Place. Vs. 7-13. The upper room.

1. The commission; vs. 7, 8. His commands are His enablings.
2. The revelation; vs. 9-13. Another proof of His omniscience.
3. The man of the city; vs. 10:12. (1) He was a servant; v. 11. "Master." Are you? Cp. Luke 16:13; Eph. 6:6; Phil. 1:1, etc. Who is your Master? Romans 6:16. (2) He had room for Christ in his house; v. 12. Have you? Luke 19:5. Is He in your heart? Rev. 3:20; Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:27; John 14:23.

III. The Persons.

1. Christ the Lord of Glory, Creator of all things, the eternal Son of the eternal God. John 17:24; 1:1-3; Heb. 1:1-38.
2. The disciples. Poor, failing, weak, all of whom were to forsake Him; Matt. 26:56. Yet He loved them and they loved Him. Do you? John 14:23. This supper is only for those who are born again. Judas went out after the Passover supper. See John 13:30.

IV. The Purpose—Remembrance; vs. 15-20. Distinguish between the Passover supper and the Lord's supper. Note Matt. 26:17-25—the Passover; vs. 26-28—the Lord's supper.

1. The Bread. Symbol of
   (1) The bruising of Christ by scourge, nails and spear as the wheat is bruised between the upper and lower millstone.
   (2) His death as "corn of wheat." John 12: 24; Heb. 2:11.
   (3) The fire of God's wrath. The bread goes into the oven. This speaks of Christ's unseen sufferings. Psalm 88:7.
   (4) The union of Christ with His own. They are one. It is one loaf and speaks of the believers union with Christ in
   (a) Substance. John 17:21; Heb. 2:11.
   (b) Destiny; John 17:24.
   (c) Eternal union; Rev. 19:9.
2. The Cup—reminder of
   (1) Life given. John 10:18; Isa. 53:12.
   (2) Life taken. Heb. 9:22; Lev. 17:11.
   (3) Life received; John 6:55.
   (4) Life in its fullness of joy. John 15:11; Psalm 104:15.

Emphasize that the bread and fruit of the vine are but **symbols** and merely picture to us the body and blood of Christ.

306. JESUS THE COMING SAVIOR

John 14:1-14

Golden Text: John 14:1, 2

I. The Circumstances. John 13.

1. The betrayer gone; v. 30. "Into the night." What a tragedy! John 3:19. Cp. Eph. 5:11; Jude 13.
2. The Lord's supper observed; Matt. 26:26-28.
3. Peter's rash avowal; John 13:36-38.

II. The Person Who Promised. V. 1. The Lord Jesus. His promises rest on three pillars:

1. His truth—He cannot lie. Matt. 24:35; John 14:6.
2. His love—He will not falter. John 17:26; 13:1; 14:21, etc.
3. His power—He will perform. Matt. 28:18; John 5:26, 27; Romans 1:4, etc.

Note in vs. 1, 2. Three great problems are solved.

(1) The problem of this present providence—"Ye believe in God." This will satisfy the believer.

(2) The problem of sin—"Believe also in Me." Faith in Christ will settle this.

(3) The problem of the future—"I go to prepare a place."

III. The Promise Made. Vs. 2-4.

1. To go and prepare a place. This has been done; Acts 1:10, 11.
2. To come again. This is the great subject of the N. T. On an average one out of every twenty-five verses refers to the second coming. Cp. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1:10; 2:19; Acts 1:11; Romans 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:7, etc.
3. To receive all His own to Himself; v. 3. Cp. 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:14, 17.
4. To be forever with Him; v. 3. (1) To see Him; 1 John 3:2. (2) To be like Him; 1 John 3:2. (3) To dwell forever with Him; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:3; 22:3. (4) The effect of this hope on the life. 1 John 3:3; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 1 John 2:28, etc.

IV. The Question Asked and Answered. V. 5.

1. The question; v. 5. Where is the way? The question of the hour: Man lost in sin needs a way, needs the truth, needs the life.
2. The answer: Christ the way, truth and life. (1) The way (a) of salvation. Acts 4:12; 13:38; 16:31, etc. (b) Of access. Heb. 10:20; Eph. 2:8. (c) To heaven; Rev. 21:27. (2) The truth because (a) Truth exposes error. John 3:19, 20; 15:22. (b) Makes free; John 8:34-36. (3) The life (a) He came to give it; John 10:10. (b) He died to procure it; John 12:24. (c) He lives to impart it. John 10:27-30; 5:12, etc.
3. The question of Philip; v. 8.
4. The answer; vs. 9-14. How sublime and yet how simply expressed.

(1) The Father revealed in the Son; vs. 9-11. Cp. John 1:18; 5:19, 30; 17:8, 23.

(2) The promise of future miracles; v. 12. See the triumphs of the gospel in all the world. The spiritually dead raised; Eph. 2:1, etc.

(3) The encouragement for prayer; vs. 13, 14. A blank check on the Bank of Heaven.

307. THE COMFORTER

John 14:16-26; 16:7-15

Golden Text: John 16:8

I. The Promise of the Comforter. John 14:16 Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4.

1. His work in the Old Testament. He came "upon" certain ones. See Exod. 31:3; 1 Sam. 10:10; 2 Chron. 15:1; 2 Peter 1:21; John 16:17. For specific service.
2. The Divine expediency; 16:7. It was better for the disciples that He went and that the Holy Spirit came. His coming was dependent on Christ's going.

II. The Personality of the Comforter. John 14: 17; 16:7, 8, 13, 14. Not an "influence" but a Person who

1. Can be Grieved; Eph. 4:30.
2. Interceeds; Romans 8:26.
3. Searches and knows; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11.
4. Reveals and speaks; Acts 10:9; 13:2.
5. Hears, etc.; John 16:7-15.
6. Can be Quenched; 1 Thess. 5:19.
7. May be despised; Heb. 10:29.

III. His Titles:

1. "Comforter" or "Paraclete," which means "one called to the side of another." Same word as advocate; 1 John 2:1.
2. Holy Spirit; John 14:26. Cp. Eph. 4:30, etc. Emphasizing His infinite holiness.
3. Spirit of Truth; John 16:13.

IV. His Deity. Cp. John 15:26; 14:26; with John 13:3 and 16:28. Note passages where Father, Son and Holy Spirit are seen working together. Matt. 3:16, 17; John 15:26; Eph. 2:18; 2 Cor. 13:14; Acts 5:3, 4. He is the third Person in the Trinity.

V. His Work.

1. In relation to the world; John 16:8-11. To convince, convict or reprove the world of (1) Sin, because of unbelief; v. 9. Cp .Acts 2:37; 7:54; 9:5; 16:29; 24:25, etc. Conviction of sin is produced by the Spirit. (2) Righteousness by the resurrection of Christ. Proof of His sinless life, finished work, accepted sacrifice. Cp. Acts 2:24; 17:31; Romans 4:24, 25. (3) Judgment: Its certainty because Satan has been judged. Acts 17:31; Heb. 9:27, etc.
2. In relation to the Believer: (1) To baptize into the body of Christ upon his believing. John 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:13. (2) To indwell every believer. 1 Cor. 3:16; John 14: 27; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 4:30. (3) To produce fruit in the Christian's life as He is allowed to be ungrieved; Gal. 5:22, 23. (4) To reveal Christ through the word. John 14:26; 16:13. (5) To guide into all truth; John 16:13. (6) To intercede for us; Romans 8:26. (7) To comfort and give victory over the flesh; Gal. 5:17, 18, 25.

308. JESUS THE TRUE VINE

John 15:1-27

Golden Text: John 15:8

I. The Necessity For This Union.

1. Man is separated from Him. Cp. Isa. 59:1, 2; Eph. 2:12.
2. Man is dead and without life. Eph. 2:1; 4:18; Col. 2:13.
3. Man is fruitless; vs. 4-6. Luke 13:6-9; Matt. 3:10; 21:19. Ill. Isa. 5:1-7.

II. The Means of This Union.

1. The ploughing of the soil in preparation for the planting. Here is the conviction of the Spirit. John 16:8; Hosea 10:12, 13; 6:1; Isa. 28:24, etc.
2. The sower. The Lord Jesus. By His death and resurrection. Matthew 13:37; John 12:24.
3. The seed. The word of God . 1 Peter 1:23-25; James 1:18; Heb. 4:12. Living, powerful, life giving.
4. The soil—the human heart; Luke 8:15.
5. The result. Life in Christ; Col. 3:3.

III. The Results of This Union. Vs. 2-25.

1. Fruit; vs. 2-6. Note the various fruits that should be seen in every Christian's life.
   (1) Of the Spirit; Gal. 5:22, 23—ninefold.
   (2) Of righteousness; Phil. 1:11. In a righteous life before men.
   (3) Of holiness—separation; Romans 6:22.
   (4) Of lips—thanksgiving. Heb. 13:15; Psalms 92:1-4; 50:23.
   (5) Of work; Col. 1:10. Consistency and constancy.
   (6) Of soul-winning. Romans 1:13; 1 Cor. 9: 20-23.
   (7) Of generosity. Phil. 4:17; 2 Cor. 8:1-9; 9:6-15.
2. Abiding in Christ. Note its consequences in the prayer life of the believer. Vs. 7-9.
   (1) The condition, "abide."
   (2) The privilege, "ask." Note the fourfold conditions for prayer. (a) Ask believingly; Matt. 21:22. (b) Ask in His Name; John 14:13. (c) Abiding in Him; John 15:7. (d) According to His word; John 15:7. (e) According to His will; 1 John 5:14.
   (3) The result, "love and joy."
3. Obedience; vs. 10, 14, 17. Note the emphasis on obedience. There is no substitution for this in the Christian life. "If any will do he shall know;" John 7:17.
4. Joy; v. 11. Cp. Phil. 2:2; 3:1; 4:4-7; 1 John 1:4; Romans 15:13.
5. Love to others; vs. 12-14, 17. Cp. 1 John 2:9-11; 3:14-18.
6. Communion and fellowship; v. 15. Note the threefold division of this chapter.
   (1) "My disciples"—known by what we are; Vs. 1-8.
   (2) "My friends"—known by what we do; vs. 9-15.
   (3) "My witnesses"—known by what we say; vs. 16-27.
7. Service; v. 16. Here is "the mighty ordination of the pierced hands," the only ordination required for service for Him.
8. Separation from the world; vs. 19-25. Cp John 17:15-17; 1 John 2:15, 16.

IV. The Power to Maintain This Union. V. 26 The Spirit. Cp. Romans 8:8, 9, etc.

309. THE LORD'S PRAYER

John 17:1-26

Golden Text: John 17:4

I. The Setting. On the eve of the most momentous events of His life. His betrayal, judgment, passion and death. With all this before Him, yet in calm, unbroken confidence in the Father, He prays this High Priestly prayer. This chapter has well been called, "the holy of holies," and every believer should study it upon his knees and meditate much on its marvelous unfoldings of Divine revelation.

II. The Testimony. Vs. 1-4.

1. As to His Deity, "Thy Son," etc. He claimed full and essential Deity. See John 5, etc.
2. As to His purpose—"The hour." What hour? The hour to which an eternal past pointed—the hour of redemption. Cp. Gal. 4:4; Romans 5:6; (marg.) Rev. 13:8; Matt. 26:45; Mark 14:34; Luke 22:53; John 7:30; 12:23, 27; 13:1.
3. As to His power; v. 2. "Over all flesh." His eternal prerogative. Cp. John 5:21, 26.
4. As to His perfect life; v. 4. Cp. John 8:29. His whole spotless life glorified God. Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28.
5. As to His work, "finished;" v. 4. Cp. Luke 2:49; John 4:34; 9:4; 19:30.

III. The Prayer. Vs. 5-26.

1. For Himself; vs. 5-8. (1) Co-glorification with the Father as in the eternal past. (2) The believer referred to as God's gift to Him: "Thou gavest them me." Cp. Vs. 6, 9, 11, 12, 24. The believer is Christ's by donation. (3) The words of the Father given to His own; v. 8. Note the order "gavest . . . received . . . known."
2. For His Own; vs. 9-26.
   (1) That they might be kept; vs. 9-12. Cp. John 10:27-30; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 1, 24, 25; Romans 16:25-27.
   (2) That they might be separated; vs. 13-19. The believer, like the Lord Jesus, is not of of this world as to his (a) birth. Luke 1:35; John 1:13; 2 Peter 1:4. (b) Father. John 5:18; Romans 8:15; He the Son; we, the sons. (c) Experience. John 4:32; 1 Cor. 2:9, 10. (d) Power. John 16:32; Phil. 4:13. (e) Home. John 14:3; 2 Cor. 5:1-8. Note carefully the believer's sevenfold relationship to the world. He is chosen and given to Him out of the world; v.6. He is in the world; v. 11. He is not of the world; v. 16. He is sent, by Christ, back into the world; v. 18. He is hated by the world; v. 14. He is kept from the evil in the world; v. 15. Through his testimony the world is to believe; v. 21.
   (3) That they might be united; vs. 20-23. Cp. 1 Cor. 12:13, 27; Eph. 4:3-6; 3:5, 6; 1:22, 23; Gal. 3:28.
   (4) That they might be with Him in glory; vs. 24-26. What marvelous words—what a wonderful prospect! Cp. 1 John 3:1, 2; Rev. 5:9-14; 19:7-9; 22:1-7, etc.

310. GETHSEMANE

READ Matthew 26, 36-46.

THEME: Willing for the Father's will. TELL THE STORY.

The Bible opens with a garden, the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2). It closes with a garden (Rev. 22) and between these two is a third garden, the Garden of Gethsemane. It is through Gethsemane that we find again the garden through which flows the "river of the water of life." Without Gethsemane, there is no heaven. "We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Let us not then regard our redemption lightly. After hearing in a religious instruction class in one of our schools, the story of Gethsemane, a girl said, "I never knew before how much the Lord Jesus suffered for me, and what it cost Him to save me."

CHRIST'S AGONY IN THE GARDEN.— He was exceeding sorrowful even unto death (v. 38). No wonder he was called "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53: 3).

HE LONGED FOR HUMAN SYMPATHY AND COMPANIONSHIP. — He took with Him Peter, James and John, and told them to watch with Him (v. 38). We must never forget that He was man as well as God; that when He became flesh (John 1: 14) and took our nature upon Him. He was capable of loneliness, sorrow and suffering. "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4: 15).

BUT HE FOUND NO HUMAN COMFORTERS (Ps. 69: 20).— There was no one who understood and entered into His sorrow. The three disciples slept when He so greatly needed them. He knew that they would all forsake Him and flee, that Peter would deny Him and that Judas would betray Him to His enemies. All these things added to His sorrow.

HIS LIFE OF PRAYER.— Prayer was the habit of His life. He prayed at His baptism, when choosing the apostles, late at night and early in the morning; on the Mount of Transfiguration; He prayed for Peter and for His own; he prayed that the cup might pass from Him.

HE PRAYED WITH SIMPLE FAITH AND TRUST.—He said "Father," even though God was allowing Him to go through this agony, He could still trust Him and call Him "Father." Let us never doubt our Heavenly Father's love, even when He says "No" to our requests. And when He rose up from prayer, what then? (Luke 22: 45). He was quietly ready for anything, for Judas' betraying kiss, for the crucifixion. "Rise, let us be going" (v. 46) He said.

HE PRAYED WITH SUBMISSION TO THE FATHER'S WILL.— "Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (v. 39). God always answers prayer. Sometimes His answer is "Yes," sometimes it is "No," but whatever the answer, we should be satisfied with our Father's will, for us. It is a grand thing to be able to say, "that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12: 2).

THE CUP from which He shrank was not the physical suffering, great though this was. What then did it mean? It meant two things:—

BEARING OUR SINS.— We cannot imagine what it meant to the Son of God Who was holy, harmless, undefiled (Heb. 7: 26) to bear our sins in His own body on the tree (the Cross of Calvary); the One Who knew no sin to be made sin for us. This was the cup He shrank from drinking, which caused Him to say, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

THE FATHER HIDING HIS FACE FROM HIM.—He knew that the time was at hand when His Father would not be able to look on His Son because He would be bearing our sins in His own body on the Cross. Never before had anything come between them.

This helps us to understand a little of what it meant to the Lord Jesus to have His Father turn away His face from Him. It is in this Garden that we come to know the great price our Lord paid to redeem us.

THE LORD JESUS' WORDS TO HIS DISCIPLES.—

WATCH WITH ME (v. 38).—What a privilege to watch with the Lord Jesus. The apostle Paul counted it a great honour to know the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3: 10). What a wonderful opportunity these disciples missed when they failed to watch with Christ, and slept instead. The Lord gently rebuked Peter when He said to him, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (v. 40). It would seem as though Peter were specially addressed, because of his boasting (v. 33, 35), yet he failed just as the other two did.

HIS WARNING.—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (v. 41). *Watch* as a sentry watches the approach of the enemy. We have three enemies — *the world* with its attractions tries to draw us away from Christ and dim our vision of Him; *the flesh* (self, the old nature) rises up and seeks to gain the mastery causing us to walk in the flesh, to please ourselves instead of walking in the Spirit; *the devil* who comes to us either as a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5: 8) tempting us to commit great sins or as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11: 14) making us believe that wrong is right and right is wrong.

PRAY to God to keep us in the hour of temptation. These two, watching and praying must go together. In the list of armour given in Ephesians 6 there is one weapon, all prayer, "Praying always . . . and watching" (v. 18).

THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS (Luke 22: 43).—An angel came to strengthen the Lord Jesus in his time of great need. There is much in the Word of God about angels and their ministry. They are messengers of God, "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1: 14).

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 26: 39—"Father . . . not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

311. THE BETRAYAL

Matthew 26:14-29, 49, 50; John 13:27-30; Matthew 27:3-5

Golden Text: Mark 8:37

I. The Betrayer. Matt. 26:14.

1. His character. (1) Unregenerate. Judas was never born again or saved. Cp. John 13:11; 3:5. Note John 17:12. Literally it reads: "But there is one soul that is lost, even the son of perdition." (2) Devil possessed. Luke 22:3; John 13:27. Cp. Eph. 2:2. (3) Son of Perdition; John 17:12.
2. His privileges. Think of his unparalleled opportunities. (1) He was one of the twelve. Mark 3:13-19. Called by Christ. Cp. Matt. 11:28. Have you been called? John 7:37. (2) He saw the power of Christ in His miracles. Cp. Matt. 11:4, 5, etc. Every born again person is evidence of Christ's power. (3) He heard the word of Christ. Words of comfort, advice, invitation, warning, denunciation. What a responsibility to hear the word. Cp. John 12:47, 48. (4) He was definitely warned. Matt. 26:24, 25; Mark 14:21. Yet in spite of all these privileges he went on in his sin and to the awful eternity for which he had fitted himself by his devilish treachery. Before we judge him let each ask himself, "What have I done with Jesus?"

II. The Bargain. Matt. 26:15.

1. What he got. (1) Thirty pieces of silver ($15.00). The price of a slave; Exod. 21:32. (2) The name of a betrayer or traitor. John 18:2; Matt. 26:16. (3) Undying contempt and execration of all men. (4) Hell as his eternal portion; Acts 1:25.
2. What he lost. (1) The Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, Savior and Redeemer. (2) Salvation from his sins. (3) Peace with God. (4) Heaven and eternal glory. Was it a good or bad bargain?
3. Many are exchanging Him for (1) Pleasure. (2) Popularity. (3) Power. (4) Treasures of earth. (5) Business. (6) Friends. (7) Ambition. What will it profit?

III. The Betrayal.

1. The false kiss; Matt. 26:48--50. Note: Judas did not call Him, "Lord." Cp. 1 Cor. 12:3.
2. The remorse; Matt. 27:3. It was not repentance but remorse, and this remorse drove him on to suicide.
3. The confession; Matt. 27:4; to Christ's sinlessness. Note also the demon's confession; Mark 1:24. Pilate's; John 19:4-6. Both enemies and friends alike bore testimony to His absolute purity.
4. The awful end; Matt. 27:4.[5]
5. The fearful doom. Acts 1:25; Matt. 26:24. He went to "his own place." Someone has said (1) Every man has his own place, both here and in eternity. (2) Every man fits himself for his own place. (3) Every man will find himself in his own place. (4) Every man will feel it is his own place when he gets there. Cp. The believer's "place." John 14:2. A place of eternal joy. Where is your place?

312. JUDAS ISCARIOT

READ John 12: 4, 6; John 13: 2, 21-30; Matthew 27: 3-10; Acts 1: 16-19.

THEME: A lost life. TELL THE STORY of his life from the above verses.

Our Lord was betrayed by a disciple, "one of the twelve." Christ was wounded in the house of his friends (Zech. 13: 6).

HIS OPPORTUNITIES.—It is possible to have great privileges and opportunities and yet to be lost as Judas was.

HE WAS WITH THE LORD FOR THREE YEARS.—He was under His influence, He watched His beautiful and holy life, and yet he was not saved. Perhaps you have been in close contact with some Christian, a godly and devoted mother or a consecrated Sunday School teacher; you have felt the influence of a Christian home, and yet all this has not really affected your life, you are still unsaved.

HE WAS CALLED AN APOSTLE, but was only so in name. Being called a Christian does not make us one. Being called a church member does not make us a child of God. Judas was associated with the other apostles, but that did not make him a true apostle. Being associated with the children of God does not make us a child of God. Outsiders probably detected no difference between him and the other apostles "for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16: 7). Not all church members are members of the body of Christ but only those who have been born into the family of God by the new birth and accepted Christ as Saviour. The apostle Peter said to Simon the sorcerer, who had professed to believe and who had been baptized, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent . . ." (Acts 8: 13, 21, 22).

HE CONSTANTLY HEARD CHRIST'S TEACHING AND PREACHING, but it may have only hardened him. We can get so accustomed to hearing the Word of God and not obeying it, that it ceases to affect us. It is possible to become gospel hardened, for the Word to fall by the wayside and so be snatched away from our hearts by the devil (Luke 8: 12). Judas must have constantly heard the Lord preaching against the very sins which were spoiling his life — a false profession, covetousness, thefts and yielding to temptation, yet it made no difference to him. Our Lord said, "Take heed therefore *how* ye hear" (Luke 8: 18).

HE SAW CHRIST'S POWER IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS.—He saw sight restored to the blind, the lame made to walk, the deaf made to hear, the sick made well and the dead raised to life yet all this left him unchanged. He had seen sinners gloriously saved yet he himself had no experience of a personal salvation. We, too, may see the power of Christ transform the lives of others; see them passing from death unto life; old things passing away and all things becoming new; see them living a victorious life and yet be quite unaffected by it. Simon the sorcerer saw the power of the Holy Ghost in the lives of others, yet all he thought about was using this power for himself in order to make money.

HIS GROWTH IN SIN.—

HE LOVED MONEY and allowed this covetous spirit to grow in his heart. When he rebuked Mary of Bethany for breaking the box of very precious ointment and anointing the Lord, he said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" (John 12: 5). It was not that he cared about the poor but that he wanted the money for himself. A person who loves money above everything else will do anything to get it. It might well have been said to Judas as it was said to Simon the sorcerer, "Thy money perish with thee" (Acts 8: 20). Money in itself is not evil. It can be a great power for good if used aright, but "the *love* of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6: 10).

HE WAS A THIEF (John 12: 6). Even before he had betrayed our Lord for thirty pieces of silver, he had already begun to steal from the bag which he held in trust for our Lord and the other disciples. At first he may have taken very small amounts which he thought would not be missed, and then he went on to take more. Let us watch against the sin of pilfering, for this sin will grow. It was the love of money which turned Judas into a thief.

HE LISTENED TO SATAN'S TEMPTATION (John 13: 2).—Instead of turning a deaf ear to Satan's suggestions, he allowed them to remain in his heart. This is what Eve did when tempted by Satan in the Garden of Eden. The result was that she fell into sin and she and Adam were sent out of Eden. Let us give no quarter to the enemy. Let us refuse to listen to him.

"Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin,
Each victory will help you, some other to win."

SATAN ENTERED INTO HIM (John 13: 27). If we do not allow the Lord Jesus into our heart as Saviour, then Satan can enter in. In the parable of the empty house, Satan enters in because the house is *empty*, swept and garnished (Luke 11: 24-26). Satan cannot enter a heart unless room is made for him, unless there is a yielding to him.

HE BETRAYED JESUS.—Where? In the garden of prayer, in the place where our Lord often went with His disciples, and Judas knew the place (John 18: 1, 2). In the most hallowed place, which should have had holy memories for him, he gave the most unhallowed kiss. He brought defilement and sin into the place of sacred memories and the place where the Lord sweated drops of blood. And so it may be with me. I can bring my sin into the church. I can be thinking evil thoughts when on my knees, I can make fun of the Word of God and of prayer; I can betray the Lord Jesus by pretending I am His friend when all the time I am at enmity with Him.

HIS REMORSE AND END (Matt. 27: 5; Acts 1: 16-19). There was remorse but no true repentance, and he had a terrible end. He was never a child of God, and so was lost, in spite of all his opportunities, and in spite of the warnings the Lord Jesus gave to him. What a warning the life and death of Judas is to those who have never really accepted Him as Saviour.

MEMORY VERSE.—John 13: 30—"He . . . went immediately out and it was night."

313. PETER'S DENIAL

READ Matthew 26: 33-75.

THEME: Forsaking the Lord Jesus. TELL THE STORY.

Peter's fall was a terrible one but it was not sudden. He must have failed in the smaller issues which went before. One sin leads to another and each time we yield to sin it makes it harder to resist the next temptation. We see a tree blown down by a great storm, but its interior had first been eaten by white ants. Let us consider the steps in Peter's Fall.

STEPS IN PETER'S FALL.—

HE WAS SELF-CONFIDENT.—He trusted his own strength instead of looking to Christ to keep him (v. 33), and this, after the Lord's warning that he should betray Him. He thought himself better than the other disciples. "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." When the Lord again warned him (v. 34) he protested still more strongly, "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee" (v. 35). A little child, learning to walk, sometimes refuses to hold his father's hand thinking he can quite well walk alone, and then he has a tumble. He then learns that he needs his father's strong hand to hold him up. We, too, like Peter, need to learn that in ourselves we have no strength; we must look to Christ to keep us.

HE SLEPT WHEN HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN PRAYING (v. 40). Satan finds out the weak places in our armour, but if we pray, we are sensitive to his approach and can call on the Lord to help us. If Peter had watched and prayed he would not have shamefully denied his Lord.

HE FORSOOK JESUS AND RAN AWAY (v. 56). He shrank from persecution and suffering and was not prepared to follow a rejected Lord. On one occasion when the Lord Jesus spoke of going to the Cross (Matt. 16: 22), Peter tried to turn Him away from it, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord." Peter himself was not then prepared for suffering nor was he willing that the One Whom he loved should go through it. When Peter ran away he had not yet denied his Lord by his words, but by his actions he had done so. We can deny our Lord by refusing to take His side before those who are denying Him. Our very silence can be a denial that we know Him.

HE FOLLOWED AFAR OFF when he should have stood by his Master (v. 58). He returned to see what was going to happen to Him, but it was only a partial return. He did not attach himself to the Lord Jesus, but followed afar off. It is easy to deny our Lord when we are not following closely.

HE WALKED INTO TEMPTATION not considering his own weakness (John 18: 18). He warmed himself at the fire of the enemies of our Lord. He was cold physically, but he was colder still spiritually There are various fires at which people try to warm themselves — the world's pleasures, popularity, etc. He should not have fraternised with the Lord's enemies, making out that he was one of them (John 18: 25).

HE DENIED HIS LORD WITH AN OATH (v. 72).—"How are the mighty fallen." Who would have thought, much less Peter himself, that in so short a time he could have fallen so low. He denied his Lord, not because he coveted money, like Judas, but because he feared man. "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29: 25). It was cowardice which decided his course. He was afraid of where loyalty to Christ in His rejection might lead him. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10: 12).

Because Peter was a true child of God, he was restored and used again.

STEPS IN PETER'S RESTORATION.—

THE COCK CREW, and this awakened his conscience. It brought back to his memory the Lord's words to him, "Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny Me thrice." God often uses some memory to awaken conscience and bring the backslider to repentance.

THE LORD TURNED AND LOOKED ON PETER (Luke 22: 61). What a look of sorrow and disappointment that must have been. Peter's denial grieved Him more than all the suffering He endured at the hands of wicked men, because he was one of the three disciples who were in the inner circle of our Lord's friendship. The more we love a person, the more deeply they can hurt us. "What are these wounds in Thy hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends" (Zech. 13: 6). That look broke Peter's heart for he went out and wept bitterly (v. 75).

A SPECIAL MESSAGE WAS SENT TO PETER ABOUT THE LORD'S RESURRECTION.—How much this message must have meant to Peter, otherwise he would have been too ashamed to meet the Lord. How tender and forgiving Christ is towards His own. They may fail Him, but He never fails.

THE LORD HAD A PRIVATE INTERVIEW WITH PETER (1 Cor. 15: 5).—We are not told what happened at that interview but we may be sure that Peter poured out his heart in deep repentance and humility, and we know that he was graciously forgiven and restored.

THE LORD MET HIM AT THE SEA OF GALILEE (John 21: 15-17). Three times He asked him, "Lovest thou Me?" Three times Peter had denied his Lord, therefore it was fitting that three times he should confess his love. But how few are his words now compared with those he used when he boasted that though all men should be offended because of Christ, *he* would never be offended. "Though I should die with Thee," he said, "yet will I not deny Thee" (Matt. 26: 33, 35). The boasting has now dropped out of his words and he simply says, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." The Lord then recommissioned him to feed His sheep and lambs (John 21: 15-17).

MEMORY VERSE.—Galations 6: 1—"If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness."

PETER'S DENIAL

Luke 22:31-34; Mark 14:26-31, 50-72

Golden Text: Galatians 6:3

God's biographies, unlike man's, not only emphasize the good points of a person's life for our encouragement; but depict his failings for our warning.

I. The Prayer. Luke 22:31, 32.

1. Satan's desire; v. 31. Cp. 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Tim. 2:26. To sift as wheat. In Satan's sieve. (Illust. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-8). Temptation comes from the devil, testing from God; James 1:13.
2. Christ's prayer; v. 32. An illustration of Christ's advocacy for His people. Cp. 1 John 2:1; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 4:12-16; John 17:15. Note the content of this prayer. For (1) Unfailing faith. (2) A changed attitude, "converted." See Acts 2:14; 4:13, etc. (3) A useful service, "strengthen." Cp. 1 Peter 1:3-9; 2:20, 21, etc.

II. The Avowal. V. 33. Cp. Mark 14:29. All "I."

1. Due to self confidence. Cp. 1 Cor. 10:12; Prov. 28:26; Psalm 30:6; Prov. 3:5, 7; 26:12; 28:26; Isa. 5:21; Romans 12:16, etc.
2. Due to ignorance of himself. Cp. Jer. 17:9. He little knew the deceit and wickedness of his own heart. Do we?
3. Due to desire to make a "fair show in the flesh." Gal. 6:12; John 6:63; 1 Cor. 1:29.

III. The Warning. V. 34. The Lord knew Peter, though Peter did not know himself; John 2:25, etc.

IV. The Test. Mark 14:43-53. Cp. 1 Peter 1:7; James 1:2-4. Tested by Christ's betrayal, arrest and trial.

V. The Denial. Mark 14:50, 53, 54, 66-71.

1. His backsliding was not sudden. It never is. Note steps. (1) His carnality; Matt. 16:21-23. Cp. 1 Cor. 3:1-3. (2) Self confidence; Mark 14:26-31. (3) Open denial; Mark 14:66-71. (Illust. Abraham—"he journeyed toward Egypt. Gen. 12:9, 10. David, etc.).
2. His attitude. (1) Forsook Him and fled; v. 50. (2) Followed afar off; v. 54. (3) Sat with his Master's enemies; v. 54. Cp. Psalm 1:1. (4) Warmed himself at their fire; v. 54. No wonder he denied the Lord.
3. His denial; vs. 66-71. (1) The cause—"A maid." Three times he had the opportunity to fulfill his boast; Mark 14:31. (3) The denial—three times, punctuated by the old Galilean oaths and curses! How are the mighty fallen! (4) The cock crow; v. 72.

VI. The Repentance.

1. The word; Mark 14:72. Cp. Psalms 119:11, 59.
2. The look. What a look it must have been! Luke 22:61.
3. The effect of the word and look—Repentance! Luke 22:62. Cp. 2 Cor. 7:9-11: Psalm 119:59, etc.

314. THE TRIAL OF CHRIST

Luke 22:54—23:24

Golden Text: Matthew 27:22

I. Gethsemane. Luke 22:39-46.

1. The prayer; vs. 41-43. Cp. John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; Psalm 40:6-8. (1) It was a lonely prayer. "He was withdrawn." (2) A humble prayer; "fell on His face." Mark 14:35. V. 41. (3) A filial prayer; "Father." He was One with Him. Mark 14:36. (4) An earnest prayer—blood like sweat; v. 44. (5) A preseverving prayer. Three times repeated. Mark 14:39. (6) A resigned prayer. "Not My will." Mark 14:36; Matt. 26:42. (7) An answered prayer; v. 43. The angel strengthened Him. His perfect submission to the Father's will. The cup of sacrifice and suffering was His that the cup of salvation might be ours. Psalm 116: 12, 13; 1 Cor. 10:16.
2. The agony; v. 44. Unfathomable were His sufferings. Cp. 1 Peter 3:18. The heavenly visitant; v. 43.
3. The sleeping disciples; v. 45. How dull they were of hearing and slow to learn! Eph. 5:14; Romans 13:11-14, etc.

II. The Arrest. Vs. 47-53.

1. The betrayal; vs. 47, 48.
2. The hasty blow; vs. 49-51. Cp. Matt. 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-50; John 18:3-11.
3. The submission; vs. 52, 53. The hour of man and the power of darkness. What a wealth of meaning is contained in these words.

III. Before the High Priest. Vs. 66-71.

1. The accusation; vs. 66, 67.
2. The proclamation; vs. 67-70. The force of the words, "Ye say that I am" is "You have said it exactly."
3. The effect; v. 71. The high priest understood Christ's words and realized He definitely claimed Deity, and for this claim condemned Him.

IV. Before the Soldiers. John 19:2, 3; Luke 22: 63-65. The brutality of the Gentiles here shown against God's Christ. Cp. Acts 4:27: Psalm 2:2, 3.

V. Before Pilate. Luke 23:1-5.

1. The false accusation; vs. 1, 2.
2. The confession; v. 3.
3. The acknowledgement; v. 4. Cp. John 18:38; 19:4, 6.

VI. Before Herod. Luke 23:8-12.

1. Pilate's quandary; v. 7. Tried to escape responsibility.
2. Herod's curiosity; vs. 8-10. Christ doesn't satisfy mere curiosity.
3. The soldier's mockery; vs. 11, 12. Note v. 12. They were united because of their common rejection of Christ.

VII. Before Pilate Again. Luke 23:13-24.

1. Pilate's testimony; vs. 4, 14, 22. Cp. 1 Peter 2:22, 23.
2. Pilate's suggestion; Matt. 27:17. (1) Barabbas?—Murderer. Picture of world's representative. (2) Christ?—Sinless Son of God. God's representative. Which? Matt. 27:22.
3. Pilate's condemnation; v. 24. (1) It was against his right judgment; vs. 22-24. In this trial it was the Judge who became the accused and the condemned. (2) It was for the purpose of pleasing the public. John 19: 12, 13; Acts 3:13. Many a person since has sold his soul for popularity. (3) What are you doing with Him?

315. CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

READ Matthew 27: 1,2, 11-28.

THEME: What will you do with Jesus? TELL THE STORY.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE LORD JESUS.—

HE WAS BOUND (v. 2).—Think of the humiliation of it, the Lord of glory, King of kings, Creator of heaven and earth being bound with cords like a common prisoner. They could not have bound Him without His consent. Why then did He submit to it? Because we were bound with the cords of our sins (Prov. 5: 22). and this was part of the price He had to pay to set us free. "He hath sent Me . . . to proclaim . . . the opening of the prison to them that are bound (Isaiah 61: 1).

HE WAS SCOURGED (v. 26).—Let us not be too much taken up with Christ's physical sufferings, great though these were, but let us look for the deeper meaning in them. Let each one of us say, "He was wounded for our (my) transgressions, He was bruised for our (my) iniquities....and with His stripes we are (I am) healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

HE WAS STRIPPED (v. 28) in order that we might have the garment of His righteousness (Isaiah 61: 10). But only after He was crucified were His garments obtainable, it was then that the soldiers parted His garments. And only after we have looked by faith to the Crucified One, and trusted Him as Saviour, can we be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.

HE WAS CROWNED WITH THORNS (v. 29). The thorns, of which we read in Genesis 3: 18, were the result of the curse after Adam and Eve had sinned, therefore our Lord wearing a crown of thorns reminds us that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3: 13). And so we can thank Him that, because He wore a crown of thorns we may receive a crown of life (Rev. 2: 10). There is a day coming when "there shall be no more curse" (Rev. 22: 3)

HE WAS MOCKED (v. 28: 29) by the soldiers (v. 29) and by Herod (Luke 23: 11). They put a crown of thorns on His head, they bowed mockingly to Him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews." Then they spat upon Him and took the reed and smote Him on the head.

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood,
Sealed my pardon with His blood,
Hallelujah! What a Saviour."

I, too, may mock the Lord; I may bow before Him and profess to crown Him King of kings, singing, "Crown Him Lord of all," when in my heart I have no intention of crowning Him King of my life; on the contrary, I refuse to recognise His right to control my life; I refuse to surrender to Him.

Because of the hostility of the chief priests and elders, "He answered nothing" (v. 12), and because of Herod's mockery and curiosity Jesus "answered to him never a word" (Luke 23: 11; Matt. 27: 14). "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Is. 53: 7).

PILATE.—

HE BORE WITNESS TO THE SINLESSNESS OF JESUS CHRIST.—He described Him as "This just Person" (v. 24). He said, "I find no fault in this Man" (Luke 23: 4); he said the third time, "What evil hath He done, I have found no cause of death in Him" (Luke 23: 22). He could do no other because He "is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7: 26). He was without sin; "He . . . Who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5: 21).

HIS ACTIONS WERE GOVERNED BY THE FEAR OF MAN.—He knew what was the right thing to do but for fear of man he failed to do it. The Jews cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend" (John 19: 12). Pilate wanted to keep in favour with Caesar and to retain his position, and so he delivered an innocent man to be crucified (John 19: 16). How often the fear of man prevents us from doing that which we know to be right for "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. 29: 25).

HE WAS SOLEMNLY WARNED BY HIS WIFE who had a mysterious dream and, as a result, sent to him saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man" (v. 19). God reached Pilate's conscience by sending him a message. The warning could not come through Peter for he had denied Christ; nor through John, for he had forsaken Him. Where then was a messenger to be found? God can get at men's hearts. however hardened they may be. When he could find no other way he used the dream of Pilate's wife. We, too, have warnings when treading dangerous paths. Sometimes the warning comes from God's own Word, just as a lighthouse shows where the treacherous rocks are; sometimes it comes through a faithful friend or a parent and our conscience rings like an alarm bell; sometimes through sickness, sorrow, trial or bereavement. We can do one of two things with the warning. We can heed it, or we can ignore it, like Pilate who handed the Lord over to be crucified and then washed his hands of it, thinking he could shirk his responsibility and escape the issue.

THE GREAT QUESTION.—"What shall I do then with Jesus?" (v. 22). The people made an awful choice when they chose Barabbas instead of Jesus the Saviour. Barabbas was a murderer, and the devil, who "is a murderer from the beginning," is always demanding my service. Have I chosen the devil and sent the Lord to be crucified afresh, and put to an open shame? (Heb. 6: 6). "What shall *I* do with Jesus?" is the great personal question which I must answer one way or the other.

"Jesus is standing on trial still,
You can be false to Him if you will,
You can be faithful through good or ill,
What will you do with Jesus?
"What will you do with Jesus,
Neutral you cannot be,
Some day your heart will be asking,
What will He do with me?"

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 27: 22—"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

316. CALVARY

READ Matthew 27: 33-56.

THEME: Christ died for our sins. TELL THE STORY.

CHRIST'S DEATH.—

IT WAS VOLUNTARY.—He said, "I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again" (John 10: 17, 18). In this His death was different from any other. *We* must all face death one day, for "it is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. 9: 27), but Christ lay down His life of Himself. He need never have died, except for our sakes. When the soldiers came to take Him in the garden of Gethsemane, He said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26: 53).

THE PURPOSE OF HIS DEATH.—

CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS (1 Cor. 15: 3). The Cross shows us that God is a holy God and must punish sin. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23). God hates sin because He is holy and righteous, but He loves the sinner, and so gave His Son to die on the Cross of Calvary. He died for *me* in order that I may never taste death. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John 11: 26). The Lord went through death to make a path to life.

HE DIED TO BRING US TO GOD (1 Pet. 3: 18).—We were far off from God, we were at enmity with Him and, because of our sin, we could not approach a holy God, but Christ died to bring us to God and we are now "made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2: 13).

HE DIED THAT WE MIGHT HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD — the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1: 7). "We *have* — we do not *hope* we have it, we have it *now.* "The forgiveness of sins is bound up with redemption by blood. We cannot have one without the other. Redemption is not through His love but through *His blood.* Let us always remember that the forgiveness of sins is of grace, "according to the riches of His grace." This forgiveness of sins binds us to our Lord Jesus Christ "*in Whom* we have redemption." We have nothing apart from Him for it is all in Him.

HE DIED THAT HE MIGHT BE LORD (Master) (Rom. 14: 9).—As we learned in Lesson 9 He is not only a Saviour, but a Saviour, Christ *the Lord.* He died not only to save us from punishment but that He might be Lord of our lives. Do we know what the Lordship of Christ means? It means He is Lord *of all.* We must acknowledge that the only practical evidence of a living faith in Christ as my Saviour is a daily recognition of His Lordship in every department of my life.

THE SEVEN SAYINGS OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS.—

"THEN SAID JESUS, FATHER FORGIVE THEM" (Luke 23: 34).—It was while they were in the very act of nailing Him to the cross that He prayed this prayer. He asked not for punishment for them but for forgiveness. Their bitterness had not embittered Him. Nothing could change His loving kindness. He "made intercession for the transgressors" (Is. 53: 12). This prayer was answered on the Day of

Pentecost when 3,000 were added to the church (Acts 2: 41). If we meditate on the forgiveness of sins we have experienced through Christ, it will become easy for us to forgive others. "Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4: 32).

HE SAID "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM."—He seemed to say, "Father, as I am Thy Son, answer my prayer and pardon these sinners."

"FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO."—They must have known what they did for when Pilate had asked them whom he would release to them, they had shouted, "Not this man but Barabbas" (John 18: 40). When he said "What shall I do then with Jesus," they said, "Let Him be crucified" (v. 22). What then did our Lord mean by this prayer? He must have meant that they were ignorant of the greatness of their sin in crucifying the Lord of glory. They should have known, for they had seen His wonderful miracles and had watched His sinless life. Ignorance is no excuse. If we had read God's Word, if we had taken to heart the preaching of the Gospel and the teaching given at Sunday School we too should have known of our sin.

"TODAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE" (Luke 23: 43).—These words give us the assurance that if we belong to Him, at death we are admitted instantly into the Lord's presence.

"WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON! . . . BEHOLD THY MOTHER!" (John 19: 26, 27).—Even in His hour of awful agony, He thought of His mother and made provision for her. In this saying He teaches us the duty of filial love. No Christian should ever fail in this. Right to the end of His life the Lord recognised His human relationship to Mary.

"MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" (Matt. 27: 46).—The Father turning His face from His son was the worst of the suffering through which our Lord passed. Never before had God forsaken Him, Christ had lived in constant fellowship with Him. Why then did the Father hide His face? The answer to this question is: He stood in our stead, He was taking our place, bearing our sin.

"I THIRST" (John 19: 28). These words show His humanity, His human suffering; He thirsted for water, but surely it has a deeper meaning; He was thirsting for the souls of men.

"IT IS FINISHED" (John 19: 30).—What was finished? The work He came from heaven to do, and this was to bear the punishment of our sin. He perfectly accomplished the great work of redemption. We cannot add to that work because He had wrought out and brought in a perfect salvation. His mortal life was finished; never again would He suffer and die. The long line of sacrifices was finished because His body was offered once for all (Heb. 10: 10).

"FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT" (Luke 23: 48).—What rest of heart came to Him as He committed Himself into the loving hands of His Father. This, too, may be our experience, for dying for the Christian is going home to our Father. But this prayer may also be used each morning as we commit ourselves by faith into the care and keeping of God.

MEMORY VERSE.—Galatians 2: 20—"The Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

THE CRUCIFIXION

John 19:14-42

Golden Text: Isaiah 53:5

I. The Person on the Cross.

1. The Lord—He was God. Heb. 1:1-3; John 1:1. Think of it! God, clothed in humanity, expiating sin by the sacrifice of Himself! Heb. 9:26.
2. Jesus—He was a Savior; Matt. 1:21. He came for this. Mark 10:45; John 10:15-18.
3. Christ. He was "the Anointed." The Messiah; Matt. 26:63, 64.

II. The Path to the Cross. It was

1. A path of rejection; vs. 14, 15. Cp. Isa. 53:3. Does your cry resemble theirs?—"Away with Him."
2. A path of surrender; v. 16. They led Him—He did not resist. Isa. 53:7; 1 Peter 2:21, 22.
3. A path of labor; v. 17. "Bore His cross." He knew what it was to sweat and thus assumed the curse that sin had brought; Gen. 3:19.
4. A path of physical suffering; v. 18. The scourging. The crown of thorns. The buffeting of men. The nail pierced hands and feet. The tortured body. Isa. 53:5; Zech. 13:6, 7.
5. A path of ignominy and shame;Mark 15:19-32. Cp. Psalm 69:4-14.
6. A path of darkness; Mark 15:33. Three hours of it. How dark the world was when its Light (John 8:12) was despised and rejected!
7. A path of infinite suffering. Sin laid upon Him. Isa. 53:6; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21; John 1:29; 1 Cor. 15:3. The awful cry; Mark 14:34. Who can comprehend it? Cp. Psalm 88:6, 7, 16, 18.
8. A path of substitution. Barabbas could say, "He died instead of me." Cp. 1 Peter 3:18; Gal. 2:20. Can you?
9. A path of a completed work—"It is finished!" Cp. Luke 2:49; John 4:34; 17:4; 19:30. All the work that saves the sinner has been fully done.

III. The Words From the Cross.

1. Intercession, "forgive;" Luke 23:34.
2. Promise; Luke 23:43.
3. Love; John 19:26.
4. Spiritual suffering; Mark 14:34.
5. Physical suffering; John 19:28.
6. Victory; John 19:30.
7. Authority; Luke 23:46. "He dismissed His Spirit."

IV. The Work on the Cross. Emphasize this aspect.

1. It is an historic fact.—Christ died. Romans 14:15; 8:34; 1 Cor. 8:11.
2. It was substitutionary in its character—for the ungodly, etc. Romans 5:6-8; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Peter 3:18; Gal. 2:20; Romans 4:24, 25.
3. It is complete in its work, "once." Romans 6:9, 10; Heb. 9:12, 28; 10:12, 14.
4. It is delivering in its purpose. 2 Cor. 5:15; Romans 5:17; Luke 11:21, 22; 1 Thess. 1:10.
5. It is practical in its aim. To deliver the believer (1) From the consequences of his sin; 1 Cor. 15:2-4. (2) From the control of sin; Romans 6:14. (3) From the committal of sin at His coming; Rev. 22:3. See also Romans 14:9; Gal. 1:4; Romans 6:10, 11; Gal. 6:14.

317. THE DYING THIEVES

READ Luke 23: 32-46.

THEME: Saved at the last hour.

TELL THE STORY.

ENCOURAGEMENT.— One thief was saved at the last hour that none may despair. "The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9). What wonderful grace that Christ should be willing to save at the last hour. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7: 25). He is willing to save all who turn to Him in true repentance and faith. But how much better not to leave the matter of our soul's salvation till the last hour, but to remember our Creator in the days of our youth (Eccles. 12: 1); to come to Him while we have years before us in which to serve Him.

WARNING.— Only one of the two thieves was saved, that none may presume by leaving this vital matter till the last moment. God's Spirit will not always strive with man (Gen. 6: 3), and there comes a time in the lives of some when they cease to hear His call and nothing leaves an impression upon their lives. This second thief died as he had lived. Men cannot trifle with God.

THE SAVED THIEF.—

HE WAS A GREAT SINNER, LIKE THE OTHER THIEF.— He, as well as the other thief, at first reviled Jesus (Matt. 27: 44). But he was not too great a sinner for the Lord to save him. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. Now let us observe his repentance and faith:—

HE HEARD THE LORD PRAY FOR HIS ENEMIES.—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (v. 34). This must have impressed him greatly and, no doubt, made him hope that the Lord Jesus would have mercy, even on him. This may have been the first thing which led to his salvation.

HE REPENTED.—How did he show his repentance? He confessed that he was a sinner who deserved punishment. He made a full confession of his guilt and said he was worthy of punishment, "We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds" (v. 41), he said. Finding out that we are sinners and acknowledging that fact is a necessary prerequisite for salvation. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," Christ said (Mark 2: 17).

HE DEFENDED THE LORD BEFORE MEN AND DECLARED HIS INNOCENCE (v. 41).—Think of the greatness of his faith. He believed in Christ and called Him "Lord" when he saw Him dying the death of a common criminal. He saw Him in agony and death and yet he believed in Him as the King Who would come to His kingdom. He believed in Him and defended Him when all other voices were silent and the Lord's own disciples had forsaken Him and fled. How many people today, although they may have known the Lord for years, have never stood up for Him and defended Him and confessed Him as did this thief who had known the Lord for only a few hours. He believed in Him even though he himself was in great torture.

HE PRAYED TO HIM.—It was a very short prayer but it was definite and sincere and was right from the heart. We do not need many words when we are calling on the Lord to help and save us. There are many short prayers in the Word of God — "Lord, save me"; "Help thou mine unbelief"; "Lord, that I may receive my sight"; "Have mercy on me"; "God be merciful to me a sinner"; "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

HE WAS FORGIVEN AND SAVED, for in answer to his prayer the Lord said, "*Today* shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (v. 43). Those words, meant that the thief would go straight to be with the Lord. There was to be no probation period before being admitted into heaven. "*With Me*" — he was to be for ever with the Lord. What grace was shown to this thief. If he were to be saved by works then he would have been lost, but he was saved by grace alone. "Not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2: 8, 9).

THE OTHER THIEF.—Let us not think from this lesson that we may leave the matter of our soul's salvation till we are on our deathbed. Remember this other thief.

HE CONTINUED TO REVILE JESUS (v. 39).—He apparently thought only of being saved from physical suffering and not of being saved for eternity. Even though he was at the very end of his earthly life he did not think of securing eternal life.

HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT JESUS WAS THE CHRIST.—"*If* Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us" (v. 39), he said. He did not repent and believe and so was lost, for he died in his sins. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3: 18).

Who of these two men will you be like — the one who repented, believed and was saved, or the one who did not repent and who died in his sins.

MEMORY VERSE.—John 6: 37—"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

THE DYING THIEF

Luke 23:27-43

Golden Text: Ephesians 2:8, 9

From the Gallows Through Grace to Glory.

I. His Character. Of all people, the most undeserving.

1. He had wasted his life in a criminal career. Spent all his health, strength, money, time and opportunities on sin of desperate character. Now cp. Romans 3:22, 23; 3:10-19.
2. He had lived on bounties of God, breathed His air, eaten His food, etc., and yet had given Him not a moment of his time—have you? See David 5:23, last clause.
3. He had stolen from himself, his fellow man and God. He was a thief, robber and outlaw. Luke 10:27; Mark 8:37; Mal. 3:8.
4. He was a rejecter and blasphemer of the Son of God. See Mark 15:32; Matt. 27:41-44. Have you rejected Him and despised Him?

II. His Condition.

1. He was suffering for his own sins; v. 23. Sin brings its own punishment. Gal. 6:7; Hosea 8:7; Prov. 13:15.
2. He was unworthy of the least mercy. He was a rebel sinner. Cp. Romans 8:5-8; Eph. 2:1-3, 12, 13.
3. He was helpless to save himself. (1) Couldn't work for his salvation—his hands were nailed. Eph. 2:9; Gal. 2:16; Romans 4:5. (2) Couldn't go down on his knees in attitude of prayer; Romans 6:23. (3) Couldn't pay for his salvation—he was penniless. Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17. (4) No ordinance or ceremony could be received by him. He could not be baptized or take communion, or join the church, etc. If he is to be saved it must be on the ground of free, full and sovereign grace.

III. His Confession. Vs. 40, 41.

1. Its source—the fear of God. V. 40. Eternity had been coming before him with judgment to follow. Heb. 9:35; Matt. 12:36, 37.
2. Its content. (1) As to his sinfulness. V. 41. Cp. Luke 18:13; 15:18, etc. (2) As to his punishment. V. 41. "Justly." Do you deserve to go to hell? (3) As to sinlessness of Christ. "Nothing amiss." Cp. 1 Peter 2:22; Heb. 7:26, etc

IV. His Cry. V. 42. Note what he saw.

1. He saw in Christ a Substitute—If "nothing amiss"—then He must be there for someone else—could it be for him?
2. He saw in Christ a Savior—"Jesus"—Savior; Matt. 1:21.
3. He saw in Christ—Deity, "Lord;" 1 Cor. 12:3. Cp. Romans 10:9, 10.
4. He saw Christ on the cross where every sinner must see Him; John 1:29.
5. He anticipated a resurrected Savior—"When Thou comest;" Romans 4:24, 25.
6. He had the word of Christ to rely on. V. 43. Cp. John 5:24, etc.
7. He heard the triumphant cry "finished;" John 19:30.

V. His Comfort. V. 43. He had

1. The best Promiser—"Jesus."
2. The best place—"Paradise."
3. The best time—"today."
4. The best company—"with Me."

318. THE RESURRECTION

READ Matthew 27: 62-66; chapter 28: 1-15.
THEME: Triumph over the tomb.
TELL THE STORY.

THE BURIAL.— The chief priests sealed the stone and soldiers watched the grave (v. 65, 66), but it was not possible for death to hold the Lord Jesus Christ. God had said that He would not suffer His holy One to see corruption (Acts 2: 24, 27). Men did their worst, but there came a time when God would not allow them to go an inch further in connection with the body of His Son.

THE RESURRECTION.—

IT BEGAN TO DAWN (v. 1).—Here was a new day for the world; no longer was it the night of sorrow, darkness and despair when they thought of a dead Lord and all their hopes seemed crushed. Everything was to become new — a living and risen Lord.

THERE WAS A GREAT EARTHQUAKE (v. 2). The physical earthquake was a picture of a greater upheaval when the kingdom of the devil was upheaved from its foundations, when his kingdom was turned upside down. How Satan and his hosts must have trembled in their great defeat.

THE STONE WAS ROLLED AWAY.—The angel did this, not to allow the Lord Jesus to go out of the grave, for He had already risen when God tore the bars away, but to allow all to see the empty grave. It was in vain that the soldiers had sealed the sepulchre, and set a watch.

GOD RAISED JESUS IN MIGHTY POWER (Acts 2, 24). Again and again we are told in the Word of God that it was the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead. And that same power is to raise us (1 Cor. 6: 14); "Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15: 23).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION.—

IT IS A PROOF THAT GOD WAS SATISFIED WITH THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST, that He had paid in full the price of our redemption. There is now no record of sin against those who have trusted Him as their Saviour.

IT SHOWS THAT CHRIST HAS OVERCOME SIN, SATAN AND DEATH.—Satan is a defeated foe, sin has been conquered and death has now no sting for the child of God, the grave no victory (1 Cor. 15: 55). To the Christian death is only sleep; Christ has robbed it of its terrors for us.

IF CHRIST HAD NOT RISEN! (1 Cor. 15: 17).—This is a most appalling "IF" because it would mean:—

"YOUR FAITH IS VAIN," that it is of no use, for it has never been a living thing but a delusion with no reality, no permanency. If

the resurrection did not take place then we have nothing to which to cling, no assurance that Christ took our punishment on the cross, no hope for eternity.

"*YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS*," because if Christ had not risen it would mean that our sins remain, that Christ had not satisfied God's claims and that *we* must therefore take the punishment for our sins; and that "we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15: 19).

"*BUT NOW IS CHRIST RISEN*" (1 Cor. 15: 20) and our faith is *not* vain, we are *not* in our sins, we are *not* miserable but gloriously happy because we can praise God for a risen, ascended and glorified Saviour who now "Ever liveth to make intercession" (Heb. 7: 25), and is seated in power at the right hand of God (Rom. 8: 34).

THE WOMEN'S QUESTION: "WHO SHALL ROLL US AWAY THE STONE?" (Mark 16: 3).—They met trouble before it came; they worried needlessly, for, on their arrival at the sepulchre, they found that the stone *was* rolled away (Mark 16: 4). We often think, who will roll away for us the obstacle, the great stone of difficulty which is in the way; and when we arrive at the place, we find that the angel has been there before us and the obstacle is gone. Let us then not be troubled about a new stone, when we remember that all our fears about the old one were needless. Someone has said, "My greatest troubles were those which never came."

The rolling away of the stone is significant also of the resurrection. The great barrier is rolled away and the grave becomes a way to heaven.

THE ANGEL'S WORDS.—

"*HE IS NOT HERE: FOR HE IS RISEN*" (v. 6). The disciples and the women had looked for a dead Saviour; they found a living One. This is true also of those whom we love, they are not in the grave; their bodies are there but their spirits are with the Lord. Let us not "seek the living among the dead."

"*COME, SEE . . . GO QUICKLY, AND TELL*" (v. 6, 7).—If they saw, then they could go and tell from first hand experience. We must come to Christ ourselves; we must ourselves be sure that He not only paid the price of sin, but that He bore *Our* sin before we can tell others with any certainty about Him. Instead of mourning for a dead Christ, they were to go "quickly" and tell others the joyful news.

"*HE GOETH BEFORE YOU*" (v. 7).—When we go to tell others about Him, He goes before and prepares the way. We do not go alone. "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before" (John 10: 4).

"*THERE SHALL YE SEE HIM*" (v. 7).—He will show Himself to us as we seek to tell others the glad message of His death and resurrection. The women were the first to see the risen Lord because they were the first to carry the good news.

MEMORY VERSE.—1 Corinthians 15: 55—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

THE RESURRECTION

John 20:1-18, 24-31

Golden Text: 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4

I. The Guarded Tomb. Matt. 27:62-66.

1. The world had crucified its Creator. The darkest period in the world's history. Gen. 1:2; Matt. 12:38-40.
2. The powers at the tomb. (1) The civil power—the seal. (2) The religious power—the temple watch. (3) The military power—the Roman soldiers. (4) The Devil—He that had the power of death. All these four powers combined to keep Him in the tomb. Imagine trying to bind the Creator!
3. The power in the tomb! The Son of God. "Death could not keep its prey." Cp. Acts 2:24; Romans 1:4; Eph. 1:19, 20. Read Matt. 28:2-4.

II. The Visitors to the Tomb. John 20:1-10.

1. The women. Cp. Matt. 28; Luke 24; Mark 16. Their message; Matt. 28:7, 8. Here is "the gospel according to the angels." It was a gospel of (1) Reassuring declaration, "fear not." (2) Fullest appreciation, "I know." (3) Divine substitution, "was crucified." (4) Unanswerable vindication, "as He said." (5) Joyous proclamation, "Go and tell." (6) Satisfying revelation, "Ye shall see Him."
2. The disciples—Peter and John. What they found—an empty tomb. "The eloquence of the empty tomb."
3. The angelic message; Luke 24:5-7; and its effect on the disciples;Luke 24:11. Christ's enemies remembered what His disciples forgot! Cp. Matt. 27:63.

III. The Risen Savior. Vs. 11-29. These appearances will be dealt with more fully in the next lessons.

1. Revealed to Mary; vs. 13-18.
2. To the women; Matt. 28:8-10.
3. To Peter; Luke 24:34. Cp. 1 Cor. 15:5.
4. To disciples on way to Emmaus; Luke 24:30.
5. To apostles; Luke 24:36-43.
6. To apostles with Thomas; John 20:24-29.
7. To disciples on the lake; John 21.

IV. The Meaning of the Resurrection. Too little is preached about the resurrection of Christ. It is a truth that is an essential part of the gospel and, apart from which, there is no gospel. See 1 Cor. 15:1-5; Acts 4:2, 33; 17:18; 23:6; 1:22.

1. It is the proof of His death; 1 Cor. 15:3.
2. It is the proof of the completeness of His redemptive work. Romans 4:25; 1 Cor. 15.
3. It is the unanswerable proof of His eternal Deity. Romans 1:4; Acts 2:24.
4. It is the full proof of the Old Testament authenticity; Acts 2:24-32.
5. It is the pattern and pledge of believers resurrection; 1 Cor. 15:19-22.
6. It is the proof He will be Judge of all men; Acts 17:31.
7. It is the full and complete vindication that He was all He claimed to be; John 10:18, 19. The resurrection was God's "Amen" to Christ's "It is finished!" The greatest Man alive today is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the unescapable One Whom all must meet, either in time or eternity. Happy are those who are linked in life to "the Man in the glory!"

319. MARY MAGDALENE

Read John 20: 1-18.

Theme: Grateful love.

Tell the story.

1. Her Love.

(a) **The reason for it.** Christ had done great things for her. She had been tormented by seven demons, and our Lord had delivered her by casting them out of her. How could she help greatly loving Him in return? He has done great things for us also (Ps. 126: 3). We can say with the Psalmist, "Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling" (Ps. 116: 8). We (therefore) love Him, because He first loved us (1 John 4: 19).

(b) **How she showed her love.** She was one of the few who remained last at the Cross (John 19: 25), and was first at the tomb of our Lord. In her love she offered to do the impossible, take away the body of her Lord (v. 15). This, being a weak woman, she could not have done, but in her love she felt she would attempt anything. Love does not count the cost, or think of difficulties or even impossibilities.

(c) **The result of her love.** So great was her love that she overcame all fear of death and of the tomb. While it was yet dark she ventured forth to the tomb. "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4: 18).

2. Her Privileges.

(a) **The stone was rolled away for her** by the angels, in order that she might gain access to the empty tomb (v. 1). How often the stones of doubt and difficulty, and other obstacles. are rolled away for us before we come to them.

(b) **She had a vision of Jesus,** who revealed Himself to her. She was granted a vision of the angels, but what meant far more to her than this was a vision of the Lord Himself. Angels meant nothing to her compared with Him. This privilege may be ours. One day we are to see our Lord face to face, but we can, even now, see Him with the eye of faith. He will always reveal Himself to the longing soul.

3. Her Mistakes.

(a) **She imagined her Lord was stolen when, in fact, He was risen.** She wept over a stolen Lord when she should have been rejoicing over a risen Saviour. She should have remembered that He was to rise again, because many times He had spoken of His resurrection. We, too, need the Comforter, the Holy Ghost to teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance (John 14: 26).

(b) **She failed to recognise her Lord.** In her grief she mistook Him for the gardener. Do we always recognise His Presence? Perhaps we most often fail to do so, in our grief when sorrow blinds our eyes, as it did Mary's. When He came to the disciples on the lake they did not know Him, and cried out for fear (Matt. 14: 26). Sometimes He comes to us "in another form" as He did to the two disciples going to Emmaus (Mark 16: 12), and we, as they, do not know

Him. He may come to us in the garments of pain, sorrow or trial, and we do not recognise Him. Unbelief, sorrow, worldliness, self and sin may hide Him from our gaze.

(c) **She tried to hold on to His physical presence.** But she had to learn to know Him by faith when she would no longer be able to see Him with her physical eyes. We may often have longed to see our Lord, to have a vision of Him as Saul had on the way to Damascus (Acts 9: 3-6), but we must believe that He is near us, and with us, just as though we could see Him, and look forward to the day when we shall see Him face to face.

4. **Her Response.** Because Christ called her by name, her response was glad. No other voice called her name just as He did. To her He was the Good Shepherd, who calleth His own sheep by name (John 10: 3). "Rabboni, Master" (v. 16), she replied. He was to her not only Saviour and Deliverer, but her Lord and Master. Is He yours? Many are prepared to accept the benefits and blessings of His Saviourhood, but not the implications of His Lordship, but there cannot be any real acceptance of Him as Saviour unless there is a recognition of Him as Lord. "Christ died. . . that He might be Lord" (Rom. 14: 9). "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say" (Luke 6: 46), said Christ to His disciples.

5. **Her Commission.** "Go to my brethren and say unto them. . ." (v. 17). What a privilege was given to this woman who had once been possessed with seven demons. "And such were some of you" (1 Cor. 6: 11). And yet to us, who have been saved by His grace, is given the commission to tell others that He died, has risen and is ascended. "Death hath no more dominion over Him" (Rom. 6: 9). "My Father and your Father; my God and your God," He said (v. 17), thus linking all His own with Himself.

6. **Her Obedience.** She obeyed, even when Christ bade her leave Him and the place of vision, in order to tell the glad news to others. Her obedience was the test of her love. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14: 15). We cannot always remain in the place of vision, merely enjoying the Presence of Christ and being quite unconscious of the need all round us. There is work to be done. Others must be told of Jesus and His love, but as we go forth to obey His command, we can take Him with us. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations. . . and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 19, 20). Mary went from the Lord's physical presence, but He was with her in spirit.

7. **Her Testimony.** She was able to tell the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had spoken to her (v. 18). We have no message for others unless we have had a personal experience of the Lord ourselves, unless we have received from Him the forgiveness of sins and heard His voice. We must know Him ourselves as our own personal Saviour and Lord if our witness is to be effective.

Memory Verse.—John 4: 19.—"We love Him because He first loved us."

320. THE RISEN LORD COMFORTING AND RESTORING

John 20:11-18; Luke 24:34

Golden Text: Colossians 3:1, 2

The 40 days post-resurrection ministry of the Lord is an illustration of His present ministry as our great high Priest. What He did for His disciples in those days, He is doing for His disciples in these days.

I. Comforting the Sorrowful. John 20:11-18.

1. The sorrowing woman; vs. 11, 18. Mary Magdalene. Who she was; Mark 16:9. A miracle of grace and of testimony to the omnipotent power of the Son of God, as is every Christian. Eph. 2:1; Romans 1:16; Eph. 1:19, 20.
2. The sad lament; v. 13. The lost Christ. Cp. Luke 2:43-45. How forgetful she was! He had plainly taught His resurrection.
3. The unrecognized Master; vs. 14, 15. Cp. Luke 24:16. See Matt. 18:20. Do we always realize His presence? Why not? Unbelief, worldliness, self-seeking and sorrow, etc., often hide Him. Often "behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face."
4. The blessed revelation; v. 16. "Mary." She recognized that voice and saw her risen Lord before her. The glad response, "Master"—Lord. Is it yours? Cp. Luke 16:13; John 13: 13, 14; Romans 10:9, 10; 12:1, 2.
5. The wondrous commission; v. 17. (1) To whom. "My brethren." Cp. Heb. 2:11; John 1:12; Romans 8:14-17; Psalm 22:22. What an honor to be members of the royal family! Do we belong to "the brethren?" (2) Its content. "I ascend." Death forever past. In His resurrection and ascension all His own are linked with Him. "My God—your God," etc. Cp. 1 John 4:19; 1 Cor. 1:30; Isa. 8:18; Heb. 2:10. Note "the togethers." Rom. 6:5; Col. 2:13; Eph. 2:6; Romans 8:17.

II. Restoring the Fallen. Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15: 5; Mark 16:7.

1. The man. "Peter." The sad history of his denial. Picture his feelings. The Lord had been rejected, despised, crucified and entombed, and he, the proud boaster, had denied he ever knew Him! Mark 14:71.
2. The message of the angel. "And Peter;" Mark 16:7. Emphasize the "and Peter." The Lord knew what was going on in Peter's heart and, lest he should be "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (2 Cor. 2:7), sent this special message to him. How gracious of the Lord! The Lord was still unchanged as to His love. (John 13:1). His prayer (Luke 22:32) and intercession was restoring in its influence.
3. The interview. Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5. What transpired we are not told, but we can well imagine that memorable interview. What humbling, sorrow, self-distrust, confession, etc., must have taken place! 1 John 1:9; Heb. 4:15, 16.
4. The result. Restoration. See his eagerness; John 21:7. Private restoration, in heart, unto the Lord, must always preceed public restoration.

321. THE WALK TO EMMAUS

READ Luke 24: 13-35.

THEME: Jesus comforts His disciples. TELL THE STORY.

We do not know who these men were but we do know that they were friends and disciples of the Lord Jesus, and that they were familiar with the events connected with His death. They were not of the Apostolic Band, for, after they returned to Jerusalem, they sought out the eleven apostles.

THE LORD AND HIS DISCIPLES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.—

HE COMFORTED AND TAUGHT TWO WEAK AND DOUBTING DISCIPLES and walked seven miles and spent several hours in an eventful day to help them. Our Lord always thought it well worth while to spend time on individuals. He would spend just as much time in teaching and helping one, as in preaching to the multitudes. Notice all the personal interviews in John's Gospel. This brings comfort to us, for He is interested in each of us individually and personally. It also has another lesson for us. Should not we also take time and trouble to help and teach people individually?

He was a faithful Friend, for He rebuked them for their lack of faith and so dealt with the cause of their sadness.

JESUS DREW NEAR AS THEY TALKED OF HIM (v. 15.)—He always comes to those who talk together of Him and His Word. We know from Mal. 3: 16 that He keeps a record of such conversations. He asked them what they were talking about. What would be our answer if the Lord drew near and asked us the subject of our conversation? Would we be able to tell Him just as readily as the disciples did, or would we have to hang our head in shame because our conversation has been such that we would not wish Him to hear? It may be that we have been guilty of criticising others, speaking unkindly of them, talking foolishly or even worse.

HE ALREADY KNEW THEIR PERPLEXITY, SORROW AND DESPAIR yet He asked them to tell Him about it because He wanted them to open their hearts to Him (v. 19). He knows all about our difficulties and trials, yet over and over again we are told to call upon Him (Jer. 33: 3); to cast our care upon Him (1 Pet. 5: 7); and to pour out our hearts before Him (Ps. 62: 8). He is interested in all that concerns us, the everyday things of life, the ordinary, common duties, the little things as well as the big, and the pinpricks as well as the greater trials.

HE EXPLAINED TO THEM THE SCRIPTURES WHICH SPOKE OF HIMSELF (v. 27). Many people say that the Bible is too difficult to understand. Of course it is if we do not know the Lord Jesus. He, by His Holy Spirit, opens our minds and understanding so that we may see Him in His Word. "He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (v. 27). The Old Testament as well as the New speaks of Him. We see Him in the types, in the sacrifices and in the prophecies. We need to use as a prayer Psalm 119: 18 every time we read God's Word.

THE DISCIPLES.—

THEY DID NOT RECOGNISE HIM (v. 16) though He was with them, walking with them and talking with them. Sometimes we, too, fail to recognise our Lord and think that He is not with us. They did not recognise Him — "their eyes were holden" (v. 16) for the following

BECAUSE OF SORROW (v. 17).—They had lost their Master, they could not find His body. There is no sorrow to the Christian equal to that which comes when they have not the presence of the Master with them. But they did have His presence with them but sorrow blinded their eyes. Sometimes our eyes are so blinded with tears that we cannot see our dear Lord when He is actually there with us, ready to speak to us, waiting to comfort us.

BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF (v. 25).—"O fools, and slow of heart to believe," said the Lord. He had told them many times that He would rise again, but they either did not remember or did not believe. However they were willing to accept rebuke from Him and they were willing to learn. Because we do not believe God's promises, we too are often sad.

BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES (v. 27).— Ignorance of the Word brings sadness, knowledge of the Word brings gladness. Neglect and doubt of the Word rob us of hope. Reading it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit will produce a burning heart.

BECAUSE HE APPEARED IN ANOTHER FORM (Mark 16:12). —He appears in the form that fits our need. He appeared to Abraham the pilgrim, as a pilgrim; to Joshua the soldier as a Warrior; to Shadrach, Meschech and Abednego in the fire as One walking in the fire, and here to the two disciples walking He also is walking. He comes to us, too, in different ways; sometimes as the Purifier of silver; sometimes as the One Who is cleansing the temple; sometimes as the Shepherd; and sometimes as the Comforter. May we recognise Him in whatever form He may come.

THEIR HEARTS BURNED AS HE TALKED WITH THEM (v. 32).— We, too, may experience a burning heart, a heart burning with love for the Lord Jesus, as we talk with Him in prayer and as He talks with us in the Word. Jeremiah said, "His Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Jer. 20: 9). Let us not be satisfied with anything less; let us beware of reading and praying mechanically; let us look for the burning heart.

THEY WENT QUICKLY TO TELL THE OTHER DISCIPLES, and so passed on the blessing to them (v. 33, 34).—One way of retaining the burning heart is to pass on to others what God teaches us from His Word. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth" (Prov. 11: 24) is true of sharing with others the blessing we have found from contact with Christ and from reading His Word.

THE WORD OF GOD.—

NEEDS CHRIST TO INTERPRET IT TO US (v. 32). The disciples knew the Old Testament Scriptures, but it was only when Christ Himself explained them that they understood. Those who have only the old nature cannot understand the Word of God (I Cor. 2:14). When we receive Christ as our Saviour He, through His Holy Spirit, will throw light upon His Word.

IT WAS FULFILLED TO THE LETTER (v. 25-27). Christ's sufferings were foretold in the Old Testament, centuries before Christ was born.

MEMORY VERSE.—Luke 24: 45—"Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures."

THE RISEN LORD, TEACHING

Luke 24:13-48

Golden Text: Luke 24:27

III. Teaching the Ignorant.

1. The unbelieving disciples. V. 11. In spite of the plain statements of Matt. 20:19, 10:21, 12: 38-40; Mark 9:31; Luke 18:33, etc. They had seen His word verified in healing of sick and raising of dead, yet doubted this.

2. The sad walk. Vs. 13-17. All their hopes were gone. V. 21. Nothing left to live for. The light had departed from their lives. Try to imagine this world with no resurrected, living, loving and powerful Savior. How great the darkness! What it would mean; 1 Cor. 15:17-19.

3. The wondrous Stranger. Vs. 15-31. (1) The Person—"Jesus, Himself." Not an apparition, or influence, but Himself. Note "Himself" (a) Our Sacrifice; Heb. 1:3. (b) Our Substitute; Gal. 2:20. (c) Our Savior; Titus 2:14. (d) Our Uniter; Eph. 5:25. e) Our Teacher; Luke 24:13. (f) Our Hope; 1 Thess. 4:13-18. (g) Our Presenter; Eph. 5:26, 27. (2) The question; vs. 17-24. Note the eagerness of Christ to hear from human lips the first news of His resurrection! (3) The answer; vs. 19-24. (a) Note their description of Him, "Mighty in deeds and words," etc. Cp. Moses. "Mighty in words and deeds." (b) Their disappointed hopes. V. 21. Their thoughts were far from God's thoughts. They could only see a reigning Messiah but forgot that the suffering Messiah of Psalm 22 must come before the reigning Messiah of Psalm 24. (c) The astonishing story; vs. 22-24. (3) The Royal reply; vs. 25-27. (a) Expostulation; v. 25. Cp. Heb. 5:11-14; 1 Cor. 3:1-3. (b) Elucidation; v. 26. The divine necessity. Suffering and glory are linked together. Cp. 1 Peter 1:11; Romans 8:18. (c) Exposition; v. 27. Note the Expositor—the greatest—Jesus Himself; Col. 2:3. The Authority, the surest. The Scriptures. Matt. 24:35; 1 Peter 1:23-25. The Theme, the grandest—Himself! John 5:39; Heb. 10:7; Luke 24:44. (4) The Invitation; vs. 28, 29. "Abide with us." Cp. John 15:4, 7; 14:23; Rev. 3:20; Eph. 3:17; Col. 3:16. (5) The revelation; vs. 30, 31. Note when and how. Doubtless they saw the nail-marked hands as He broke the bread. (6) The Testimony; vs. 32-35. The burning heart. Its cause. (a) Fellowship with Christ; 1 John 1:3-7. (b) Communion with Christ. (c) The opened Scriptures—opened by the Lord Himself. (7) The effect; vs. 33, 34. They returned to Jerusalem with a change of heart, hope and pace to tell the glad news!

322. THE LORD APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES

Read John 20: 19-21.

Theme: Seeing the Lord.

Tell the story.

1. **The disciples met together for worship** on the first day of the week (v. 19). They were afraid, they were sorrowful, yet they met, and thus experienced the joy of Christ's own Presence. Shut doors could not keep Him out, and wherever even two or three are gathered together in His name, He is in the midst (Matt. 18: 20).

2. **The Lord stood in the midst to calm their fears and give them a message of peace,** because He is the Prince of Peace (Is. 9: 6). But we must first experience peace **with** God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5: 1) before we can know and possess the peace **of** God (Phil. 4: 7). The disciples had the first, but they had yet to learn that they could have the peace **of** God in all circumstances. The Apostle Paul had this peace in abundant measure, and this may be our experience also. The Lord bequeathed this peace to His children, but we do not always claim it. How may we constantly experience this peace? By trusting in God, knowing that He will undertake in everything which concerns our lives (Is. 26: 3), then we shall be kept in perfect peace. By being careful (anxious) for nothing, but in everything by prayer with thanksgiving letting our requests be made known unto God (Phil. 4: 6, 7). His message of peace had to be repeated (v. 21). How slow we are to learn. and how often we must be taught the same lessons.

3. **The Lord showed unto them His hands and His side** (v. 20).

(a) **The wounds of Christ speak of sin punished.** "He was wounded for our transgressions" (Is. 53: 5).

(b) **They speak of sin put away.** "This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission (putting or sending away) of sins" (Matt. 26: 28). "Now. . . hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9: 26).

"Wounded for me, wounded for me,
There on the cross He was wounded for me;
Gone my transgressions and now I am free,
All because Jesus was wounded for me."

The power to remit sins mentioned in verse 23, does not mean that man has power to forgive sins. **Every** true child of God can make known the forgiveness of sins to those who fulfil the conditions, "That through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 13: 38).

(c) **They speak of sacrifice completed.** "This Man. . . offered one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Heb. 10: 12). Christ on the Cross said, "It is finished" (John 19: 30).

4. **The result of their seeing the Lord.**

(a) **Joy.** "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord" (v. 20). A vision of Christ always brings joy.

(b) **Salvation.** "Look unto Me and be ye saved" (Is. 45: 22).

(c) **Likeness to Himself.** As we continue to behold Him by faith we are growing like Him (2 Cor. 3: 18), but one day when we see Him face to face, we are to be altogether like Him (1 John 3: 2).

(d) **Preparation for service.** "So send I you" (v. 21). First of all we must have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ if we are to be sent forth as His ambassadors to proclaim His message, and we must have the power of the Holy Ghost. Without this equipment our service will be useless. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1: 8).

THOMAS (verses 24-31).

1. **Thomas's Mistake.** He missed the blessing the other disciples received because he absented himself from the place of worship. Doubt, sorrow, and fear were probably the reasons for this. When passing through sorrow or trial, we are sometimes tempted to shut ourselves up to our grief or anxiety and remain away from God's people and the House of Prayer. But in doing this we cut ourselves off from the comfort God would give us in our united worship and fellowship. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is" (Heb. 10: 25).

2. **Thomas's Unbelief.** It was wilful. "Except I shall see. . . the print of the nails. . . I will not believe" (v. 25), he obstinately said. He should have believed in the resurrection because, again and again, Jesus had spoken of it (Matt. 16: 21). He should have believed because Mary had seen Him, Simon Peter had seen Him, and He had appeared to the two disciples going to Emmaus. Unbelief angers God (Ps. 78: 21, 22). Unbelief limits Christ's power, yet He is patient and long suffering.

3. **The Lord's Patience** (v. 27). He is full of compassion and pity (Ps. 78: 38; Ps. 103: 13, 14). How patiently He dealt with Thomas, giving him the sign for which he asked.

4. **Thomas's Declaration of faith.** "My Lord and my God" (v. 28). It was **personal**—**My** Lord and **my** God. You have owned Christ as Saviour; have you ever owned Him as Lord (Master) of the whole of your life? "He died that He might be Lord" (Rom. 14: 9).

5. **The Lord's Rebuke.** "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (v. 29). How can we believe without seeing? "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10: 17). We have other instances of those who believed the bare word of Christ without seeing; The Virgin Mary (Luke 1: 38, 45); Abraham (Heb. 11: 8); the Nobleman (John 4: 50).

Why the Gospel of John was written. It was not merely to show the Lord Jesus as an example, though He was the perfect Example, but that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ (v. 31), and that believing they might have life. "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6: 47). This is not merely believing **about** Him, but believing **on** Him, receiving Him (John 1: 12). The Gospel of John was written that we might **believe**; the epistle of John was written that we might **know** that we have eternal life (1 John 5: 13).

Memory Verse.—John 20: 31.—"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name."

THE RISEN LORD CHEERING AND CONFIRMING

John 20:19-31

Golden Text: John 20:31

IV. Cheering the Fearful. John 20:19-23.

1. The fearful disciples; v. 19. They were beginning to realize the truth of John 15:20; Matt. 5:11.
2. The comforting message; v. 19. Locked doors cannot keep Him out. Note the day; v. 19. Cp. V. 26. Acts 20:7. The message of peace. He was the Prince of Peace; Isa. 9:6. (a) He has made a peace possible with God; Romans 5:1. (b) The peace of God; Phil. 4:6-8. (c) The presence of the God of peace; Phil. 4:8, 9. Note. (1) He made peace; Eph. 2:15. (2) Is our peace; Eph. 2:14.
3. The displayed wounds; v. 20. He left them in no doubt as to His identity. The wounds were fresh. What the wounds spoke of. (1) Sin punished; Isa. 53:5. (2) Sin put away; Gal. 3:13. (3) Sacrifice completed; Romans 4:24, 25. (4) Forgiveness obtained; 1 John 2:1, 2.
4. The joyful disciples; v. 20. Seeing the Lord brings: (1) Conviction; Isa. 6:1. (2) Salvation. Exod. 14:13; Isa. 45:22. (3) Deliverance. Mark 5:6; John 1:29. (4) Joy; John 20:20. (5) Worship; Heb. 2:9. (6) Example; John 1:36. (7) Likeness. I John 3:2; 2 Cor. 3:18.
5. The commission; vs. 21-23. (1) Its Authority —Himself; v. 21. (2) Its power—the Holy Spirit; v. 22. (3) Its Content; v. 23.

V. Confirming the Doubtful. John 20:24-31. There is a difference between doubt and unbelief. Doubt is the suspension of judgment because of the lack of evidence to confirm a statement. Unbelief is the suspension of judgment in the face of unimpeachable evidence that confirms that statement. Doubt is therefore quite proper, but unbelief—never.

1. The assertion; vs. 24, 25. He believed in the foolish proverb of an unbelieving world that "seeing is believing," but cp. John 11:40; Psalm 27:13. "Blind unbelief is sure to err." The believer is to walk by faith and not by sight.
2. The revelation; v. 26. With the benediction "Peace," He purchased peace. He proffers peace. He bestows peace. Note the three peace proclamations: (1) The peace of an accomplished redemption; v. 19. (2) The peace of an imparted power; v. 21. (3) The peace of an assuring word; v. 26. The believer needs all three!
3. The invitation; v. 27. Reveals Christ's omniscience. He knew Thomas' thoughts and had heard his words.
4. The confession; v. 28. The Lordship and Deity of Christ. Can you say this?
5. The application; v. 29. The blessedness of the believer. Cp. 1 Peter 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:7; 2 Cor. 4:18. Faith takes God at His word and trusts implicitly. Heb. 11:1, 6. Are you one of the blessed ones?

323. THE RISEN LORD MINISTERING AND COMMISSIONING

John 21:1-25

Golden Text: 1 Peter 2:7

VI. Ministering to His Own. John 21:1-14.

1. The proposal; vs. 1-3. Peter proposed to go back to the old occupation from which He had called them. Matt. 4:18-22; Luke 5:10, 11. Was this a backward step? Impetuous Peter could not wait for Divine directions so acted in self will.
2. The fruitless toil; v. 3. Its reason; John 15:5. This explains a lot of fruitless effort. Phil. 4:13; 1 Cor. 15:10.
3. The Divine command; vs. 4-6. Omnipotence is behind His word, "He spake and it was done." His commands are His enablings. Note His question: "Have ye any meat?" They had nothing either for Him or themselves. "The flesh profiteth nothing."
4. The recognized Lord; vs. 7, 8. Note who by and why; John 13:23. Do we see Him in the circumstances of life? Romans 8:28; Heb. 13: 5; Matt. 6:26.
5. The Divine provision; vs. 9-14. He knew their needs and anticipated it with His own provision, "Come and dine." We must dine for ourselves first before we can feed others. (1) The question; v. 5, revealed their need. (2) His invitation; v. 12, revealed His provision Cp. His care now for His own. (a) Temporal needs. Phil. 4:19; Matt. 6:33. (b) Spiritual needs. Heb. 7:25; 4:15, 16; 1 John 2:1, 2.

VII. Commissioning a Disciple. Vs. 15-25.

1. The repeated question; vs. 15-17. Three times Peter had denied he ever knew the Lord and three times he re-affirms his love.
2. The commission; vs. 15-17. "Feed my lambs.' Feed my sheep. The sheep. (1) Astray; Isa. 53:6. (2) Sought; Luke 15:4. (3) Found; Luke 15:5. 2 Peter 2:25. (4) Shepherded—cared for; Ezek. 34:11-16. Christ the Shepherd. (a) The Good Shepherd Who died; John 10:11. (b) The Great Shepherd Who rose; Heb. 13:20. (c) The Chief Shepherd Who rewards; 1 Peter 5:4. The Under-Shepherd's responsibility to feed, care, protect, warn and guide; 1 Peter 5:1-4. Our responsibility as S. S. Teachers is to feed the lambs.
3. The prophecied death; vs. 18, 19. Cp. 2 Peter 1:14. Tradition tells us that Peter was crucified upside down as he refused to be crucified like His Lord.
4. The command, "follow me." Cp. John 10:27; Matt. 4:18-22; 1 Peter 2:21.
5. The deserved rebuke; vs. 20-22. (1) The question; v. 20. Peter in turning around lost sight of Christ. How often, like Peter, we are more concerned about what others are doing or not doing than seeking to follow the Lord closely ourselves. Gal. 6:4 5. (2) The rebuke; v. 22. In other words: "Mind your own business, Peter, and follow me!"
6. The concluding words; v. 25.

324. THE ASCENSION

READ Luke 24: 50-53; Mark 16: 19; Acts 1: 8-12, 14.

THEME: The Lord Jesus ascending to heaven. TELL THE STORY.

There were forty days between the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ from the Mount of Olives, from the place where He had often talked with and taught His disciples. These forty days were sufficient to prove to all mankind that He had truly risen from the dead, for He made many appearances to His disciples in different ways and in many places.

HIS BLESSING.— His hands were uplifted to bless (Luke 24: 50).

HIS HANDS.—Multitudes had received blessing from His hands. They had touched and healed the sick, they had multiplied the loaves and fishes and fed five thousand people, they had been laid on lepers and they were made whole. The hands now lifted up in blessing were pierced. They show us the price of the blessing He has given us — how much these blessings cost Him.

HE BLESSED THEM IN A NEW WAY, not as the priest who is offering the sacrifice, but as the One Who *has* offered it. It is all finished; and now, as the One Who has power to give, He lifts up His hands and blesses them. Before His death He prayed for them and called down a blessing on them; now He himself bestows the blessing.

HE BLESSED THEM, His own disciples, His chosen ones. Though He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good (Matt. 5: 45), yet He has a special blessing for His own people and when He blesses us, we are a blessing to others (Gen. 12: 2).

HIS ASCENSION.— "He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1: 9). They could no longer see Him, but there was only a cloud between Him and them. And there is only a cloud between His visible presence and us. One day that cloud will no longer hide Him from our view, and we shall see Him face to face.

HIS PLACE OF AUTHORITY.—"He . . . sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16: 19). This shows He has completed the work of redemption, His sacrificial work is ended, but He still continues to work for us. There are three things He is doing:—

HE KEEPS US FROM FALLING INTO SIN (Jude 24).—We have no power to keep ourselves, He must do it, but we must claim His power and keep in close touch and fellowship with Him.

HE PRAYS FOR US.—"He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). When He said to Simon Peter, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat," He followed with the words, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22: 31, 32). In the hour of testing and temptation we can count on His prayers for us.

HE IS PREPARING A PLACE FOR US IN HEAVEN (John 14: 2).—He returned to His Father's house, but there are many mansions there in which He wants us to live with Him for ever.

GOD WOULD HAVE THEM PREPARE FOR ACTIVE SERVICE.— "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" (Acts 1: 11). Meditation is good and is commended, but not if it ends there. It

should result in service for our Lord and the inspiration for this service should be the thought of the coming of the Lord. "This same Jesus (the Saviour) . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go" (Acts 1: 11).

HIS LAST WORDS BEFORE HE ASCENDED.—

"ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME" (Matt. 28: 18), all power *in heaven*; this shows He is divine. He has at His command all the power of the Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He has power to save to the uttermost, and assures us that all power is in Himself. He is willing to give us that power for He said, "Ye shall receive power" (v. 8). So here we have a word of *assurance.*

"GO YE THEREFORE AND TEACH ALL NATIONS" (Matt. 28: 19). Here is a word of *command.* This command is not only to the few who go to the Mission Field but to the whole Church of God. Have you faced up to this command. Have you asked God if He wants *you* to go, and if not, why not? Obviously we cannot all go, but this does not free us from our obligation and responsibility. We should all do something about it. We can go by our prayers, gifts and service.

"YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME" (Acts 1: 8), first in *Jerusalem,* representing our home circle and those with whom we associate day by day. Our first duty is towards them, and we must prove ourselves first there, before we can be entrusted with service in a wider sphere. But the witnessing is not to end there. They were to witness next in *Judaea,* still in their own country, but in a wider circle; then *Samaria* which was still further afield, and lastly unto *the uttermost parts of the earth.*

HIS PROMISE.— "Lo, I am with you alway" (Matt. 28: 20). Although He has gone up into heaven He assures us that in spirit He will be with us always, wherever we may be. He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13: 5).

THE DISCIPLES (Luke 24: 52. 53).

THEY WORSHIPPED HIM.—They could no longer see Him, for He had ascended into heaven, but they could still worship Him. In worship we think of what God is in Himself. His love, His mercy, His righteousness, His justice and His holiness. Worship differs from thanksgiving; we thank Him for what He does for us and for His gifts; we worship Him for what He *is.* God longs for our worship (John 4:23: I Chron. 16:29).

THEY OBEYED HIM, they returned to Jerusalem (Acts 1: 12).— They had to return from the place of blessing and vision to the daily round and the common task — and so must we. We must go back to our Jerusalem, our home, our school or our business life; we must return to those who, perhaps, may not be in sympathy with us. But—

THEY RETURNED WITH GREAT JOY, PRAISING GOD (Luke 16: 52, 53).—We should give expression to our joy as the disciples did. Joy comes from doing His will and, for the Christian, the only thing that matters is being in the will of God. Let us praise God for a risen, ascended and glorified Saviour.

MEMORY VERSE.—Romans 8: 34—"Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us."

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

Acts 1:1-11

Golden Text: Acts 1:11

I. The Great Commission. Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16.

1. The Person Who gave it. He had the right by virtue of His Person and His work.
2. The power for it—"Himself;" v. 18. Note the "power" as seen in (1) His birth; Luke 1:35. (2) Ministry; Luke 4:32. (3) Miracles; Luke 4:36. (4) Forgiveness; Matt. 9:6. (5) Death; John 10:18. (6) Resurrection. Romans 1:4: Col. 2:13-15. (7) Ascension; Eph. 1:20. (8) Coming; Matt. 24:30.
3. The plan of it. (1) The command "go ye." (2) The scope, "world." (3) The theme, "the Gospel." (4) The persons, "every creature."
4. The persons to whom given—His disciples. (1) Chosen. Mark 3:14; John 15:16. (2) Saved; Matt. 16:16. (3) Taught. (4) Commissioned. (5) Equipped.
5. The privilege of it. Ambassadors, co-workers, witnesses, trustees, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. The price of it. "Go" means leave. Cp. Luke 14:26.
7. The promise with it. "I am with you." Cp Heb. 13:5.

II. The Promise. Acts 1:4, 5.

1. Promised in O. T. Isa. 32:15; Jer. 31:33; Ezek 11:19; Joel 2.28.
2. Promised in N. T. John 15:26—16:14.

III. The Questioning Disciples. Vs. 6-8.

1. The question; v. 6. (1) An earthly kingdom expected; Isa. 2:2-4. (2) The King being rejected, the kingdom is in obeyance. Luke 19:14; Acts 3:14. (3) He will yet be King over the Earth; Psalm 2.
2. The answer; vs. 7, 8. (1) The time for the Kingdom not revealed. Cp. Matt. 24:36, 42, 44; 25:13. (2)The mission and commission to the church; v. 8. (a) To be indwelt by the Holy Spirit; v. 8. Cp. John 14:17. (b) To witness for Christ world wide. Note the work of witness—the duty of each Christian is to be a witness. The field of witness is the whole world. The power for witness is the Holy Spirit.

IV. The Ascension. Vs. 9, 10.

1. The attitude—Blessing. Cp. Luke 24:50, 51.
2. The significance of it. (1) The work of reconciliation completed; John 16:10. (2) The work of intercession begun. Romans 8:34; Heb. 7:25.

V. The Promise of His Return. V. 11.

1. The Person—This same "Jesus." Cp. 1 Thess. 4:16.
2. The certainty—"shall come." Cp .Heb. 10:37; John 14:1-3.
3. The result. (1) To believers—joy; 1 Cor. 15: 55-57. (2) To unsaved—"woe." 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Luke 13:25-28.

325. PENTECOST

READ Acts 2.

THEME: The Coming of the Holy Spirit TELL THE STORY.

The Day of Pentecost was fifty days after the resurrection of Christ, and ten days after His ascension. The Holy Spirit is a PERSON the third Person of the Trinity.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.—

HE IS IN EVERY CHRISTIAN, in everyone who is born again (John 3: 5), for "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8: 9). The moment we receive Christ as our Saviour, the Holy Spirit comes to live in our heart; our body becomes His temple (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20). But many do not allow Him to occupy every room in His own house; that is the reason all are not *filled* with the Holy Spirit.

HIS POWER IS FOR ALL, not only for the favoured few. "They were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2: 4). The mother in the home, the school girl and boy, those who are confined to the home, the office or workshop all need to be filled with the Spirit, just as much as those who are called to special service. When deacons were needed in the early Church to distribute food to the poor widows, for this humble work, men full of the Holy Ghost were chosen (Acts 6: 1, 3).

GOD COMMANDS US TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT (Eph. 5: 18).—This is not optional or merely a high standard of Christian living to be attained by a chosen few, or a special few; it is a definite *command* to all God's children and if we are not filled with the Spirit we are living in disobedience. It is just as much a command as to repent and believe.

CONDITIONS OF BEING FILLED.—

YIELD EVERYTHING TO GOD (Rom. 6: 13). "Present your bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12: 1). Hand over the key of every room of your heart. Let Him cleanse it and remove everything that is displeasing to Him. Let Him have full control. *Yield your will.* This is usually the last thing the Christian yields to God, for the will is the citadel of the soul, and if He has the will He has all.

CLAIM GOD'S PROMISE THROUGH FAITH.—Paul prayed that the Ephesian Church might be filled with all the fulness of God (Eph. 3: 19). Fulfil the conditions and then believe that God will fill you. The filling of the Spirit is yours by right, then claim the gift. A legacy may be left you, it is yours by right, but you do not gain possession of it till you *claim* it.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN THE BELIEVER.—

HE WILL GIVE VICTORY over the old nature (see Lesson 15) and over all the power of the devil. When Satan comes to tempt us God gives us weapons to use against him (Eph. 6: 11-17). Do not make the mistake of thinking that when you are filled with the Spirit there is no longer any spiritual conflict. On the contrary, the fight will be more fierce than before. It was after the Lord Jesus was filled with the Spirit at His baptism, that Satan tempted Him in the wilderness. But He returned *in the power of the Spirit* (Luke 4: 14).

HE WILL TEACH US and bring things to our remembrance (John 14: 26). The natural man, that is the person who is not born again, who is not in possession of eternal life, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them" (1 Cor. 2: 14). We can only understand the Word of God and spiritual things through the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

HE WILL GLORIFY CHRIST (John 16: 14). This is His special work. He will make the living Christ real to us and will magnify Him in our lives. The one who is Spirit-filled is more taken up with Christ than with his own experience; more concerned about His glory than about his own reputation.

HE WILL PRODUCE FRUIT IN US (Gal. 5: 22). The filling of the Spirit has practical results first in our life and then in our service. The following fruit will be manifested, "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (self-control). There will be obedience to parents and honour given to them (Eph. 6: 1, 2); faithful service rendered to employers (v. 5-9) done "from the heart" and "with good will." He will make us like Christ.

HOW TO KEEP FILLED.— The new life needs to be maintained The Apostles were filled again and again so it is not a once-for-all filling, though there is a crisis when we first yield all to God and claim the filling of the Spirit. We cannot depend on one blessing or one spiritual experience to keep us going for the remainder of our spiritual life. Therefore there are some things we must do if we are to be filled always with the spirit.

TAKE TIME ALONE WITH GOD EACH DAY, for prayer and the reading of His Word (Matt. 6: 6). We need fresh supplies of grace, strength and power each day, and these we obtain through prayer and the reading of the Word. Keep short accounts with God. Confess instantly if anything comes between you and Him and ask for forgiveness and cleansing.

ALWAYS OBEY THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 5: 32). Be sensitive to His leading and obey instantly, whether it be to do something for Him, to speak a word for Him, or to let go something which He may show you is a weight in your spiritual life. A lady whom God had greatly used was once asked what was the secret of her powerful and Christlike life, to which she replied, "I do not know that there is any secret; all I can say is, that I have never refused God anything."

DO NOTHING TO GRIEVE HIM by allowing sin, however small, in your heart and life. He is easily grieved and, when this happens, He withdraws His power and can no longer use us. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4: 30).

MEMORY VERSE.—Ephesians 5: 18—"Be filled with the Spirit."

PENTECOST

Acts 1:12—2:13

Golden Text: John 16:13

I. The Choice of Matthias. Acts 1:12-26.

1. The prayer meeting; vs. 12-14. Note their unity, "one accord." Cp. Acts 4:24; 2:1, 46; 5:12; 8:6; 15:25; Romans 15:6. Here also is the last view of Mary; v. 14. She is on her knees in prayer, with the rest of the disciples, a dependent suppliant. She is never mentioned again.
2. Peter's address; vs. 15-22. (1) Prophecy fulfilled; v. 16. Cp. Psalm 41:9. This, however, did not interfere with Judas' free will. Cp. Acts 2:23; 4:27, 28. (2) The need for a twelfth Apostle; vs. 21, 22. His qualifications. (a) A disciple of Christ. (b) A witness of the resurrection. Cp. 1 Cor. 9:1.
3. Choice of Matthias. Cp. Prov. 16:33. Since the advent of the Spirit and the gifts of the risen Lord to the church, and the completion of the word of God; it is no longer necessary to cast the lot. See John 16:13; Eph. 4:10-12; 1 Cor. 13:8-10.

II. The Advent of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:1-4.

1. The unity of purpose and place; v. 1. Cp. Matt. 3:11; Luke 11:13; Mal. 3:1.
2. The Spirit's advent; vs. 2, 3. (1) Who He is. "From heaven." Cp. John 15:26; 16:13. The third Person of the Godhead. 2 Cor. 1:14; Acts 5:3, 4. (2) What He came to do. In the Old Testament. (a) To inspire its writing. Cp. 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Peter 1:11; 2 Sam. 23:2, etc. (b) He came upon certain men for special service. Cp. Exod. 31:1-5; Judges 6:34; 14:6; John 14:28. In the New Testament. (a) To form the church, the body of Christ. Cp. 1 Cor. 12:13. (b) To reveal Christ; John 16:13. (c) To convince of sin, etc.; John 16:8. Cp. Acts 2:37. (d) To deliver from sin's power. 1 Cor. 6:11-19; Titus 3:5. (e) To inspire writing of New Testament. John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:13. (3) How He came—The symbols used. (a) As a wind. Cp. Ezek. 37:1-10. (b) As a fire. Cp. Heb. 12:39. Note some other symbols used to illustrate the working of the Spirit of God. Water. John 3:5; 7:37-39. Oil; Zech. 4:2-6. Rain; Heb. 6:4-7. Dove; Matt. 3:16. Seal; Eph. 4:30. (c) Suddenly.

III. The Result of His Advent. Vs. 4-13.

1. Filled Disciples; v. 4. Distinguish between baptism with the Spirit which is once for all (1 Cor. 12:13), and the filling of the Spirit which may take place again and again. Eph. 5:18, etc.
2. Witnessing servants; vs. 4, 5.
3. Wondering multitudes; vs. 6-11. The purpose of these tongues was that all might hear, not an unintelligible jargon or meaningless mumble, but a clear statement of the gospel each in his own mother tongue.
4. Mocking critics; vs. 12, 13. These will always be present. They did not mock because they could not understand what was said, but they mocked because of the message given of a risen and glorified Messiah.
5. Saved souls; v. 41. Note what happened when the law was given; Exod. 32:28.

326. PETER'S SERMON

Acts 2:12-47

Golden Text: Acts 2:36

I. The Speaker. V. 14. Contrast Peter before and after Pentecost. Mark 14:69; Acts 2:14. What made the difference? Vs. 16, 17. Zech. 4:6; Gal. 5:22, 23.

II. The Sermon. Vs. 14-36. Here is a sermon that might well be a model for preachers today. It is full of Christ and the facts of His life, death and resurrection; and also full of Scripture quotations that gave the authority of the word of God to his utterances. "Go thou and do likewise."

1. The appeal to the prophets; vs. 16-21. Cp. Joel 2:28-32. Note. This prophecy was not fulfilled in its entirety at Pentecost, but was only a foretaste. Its complete fulfillment is yet future.
2. The appeal to historical facts concerning (1) The Person of Christ; v. 22. (a) Who He was. "Jesus." (b) What He was. "Approved of God." (2) The ministry of Christ; v. 22. "Miracles, signs, wonders." Cp. John 10:37, 38; 3:2; 5:36, 37, etc., Matt. 3:16, 17. This was common history and could not be denied. "Ye know." (3) The death of Christ; v. 23. (a) Its foreordination; v. 23. Cp. Rev. 13:8; John 12:27; Luke 24:26; Isa. 53:5, 8; Dan. 9:26, etc. (b) Its responsibility. "Ye have taken." Cp. Matt. 27:23, 25, etc. Their fearful guilt—the murder of God's Son! (c) Note the sovereignty of God does not interfere with the free will of man. Cp. Romans 8:28-31; Acts 4:27, 28. (4) The resurrection of Christ; vs. 24-32. (a) Its prophecy; vs. 24-31. Cp. Psalm 16. Read it all. (b) Its historicity, "we are witnesses;" v. 32. Cp. 1 Cor. 15:4-9. The resurrection is the best attested fact of history. (5) The ascension of Christ; v. 33. His present position. (a) Authority, "right hand." (b) Glory, "exalted." (c) Power, "shed forth." (6) The descent of the Spirit; v. 33. (a) They could see the evidence of His work in the apostles. (b) They could hear the wondrous story. (7) The application; vs. 34-36. Here is an ideal Gospel sermon. Note the points and cp. 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, etc.

III. The Sequel. Vs. 37-47.

1. Conviction; v. 37. "Pricked;" Acts 9:5. This was the work of the Spirit of God. Cp. John 16:8; Heb. 4:12; Hosea 10:9; Acts 5:33.
2. Contrition; v. 37. "What do?" Cp. Acts 9:5, 6; 16:30, 31.
3. Conversion; v. 41. "Received." They received both the spoken word and the living Word—Christ Himself. John 1:1. Cp. Matt. 18:3; John 1:21; 1 Peter 1:23.
4. Confession; v. 41. "Baptized." Cp. 1 Peter 3:21. By baptism they confessed their identification with the One Who had died, had been buried and was risen again for them. "What doth hinder you to be baptized?" Acts 8:36.
5. Communion; v. 42. "Breaking bread." Cp. Luke 22:19, 29; 1 Cor. 11:23-26.
6. Continuance; v. 42. "Steadfastly." They proved the reality of their discipleship by their continuance. Cp. John 8:31; 1 Cor. 15:58; Heb. 12:1, 2.
7. Consecration; vs. 44, 45. "Possessions." Cp. Romans 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 2 Cor. 5:15. Would that all sermons had the same effect upon one's audience!

327. THE LAME MAN HEALED

Acts 3:1-26

Golden Text: Acts 3:16

I. The Helpless Cripple. Vs. 1-3.

1. His condition, "Lame from birth;" v. 2. Cp. Psalms 51:5; 58:3; Romans 5:19; 3:12.
2. His helplessness; "carried." The helplessness of the sinner to save himself; Romans 7:10-19. Cp. 8:5-8, etc.
3. His poverty; "begged;" so with all. Cp. James 1:17; Acts 14:17.
4. His expectancy. V. 4. His brightest dreams were to be realized though he knew it not. Cp. Eph. 3:20. Doubtless he considered his condition hopeless.

II. The Apostle's Message. Vs. 4-6.

1. They were men of prayer; v. 1. Cp. Acts 1:14; 4:24, etc. Cp. John 14:13, 14, etc.
2. They were filled with the Spirit. Acts 2:4; 4:8. Cp. Eph. 5:18.
3. They had a message from the risen Christ; v. 6. Note: (1) The earthly loss, "Silver and gold have I none." Job 22:25 (Margin); Job 28:15; Psalms 19:10; 119:72; Prov. 16:16. (2) The heavenly gain, "Such as I have."—What had they? What every child of God has. See Romans 5:1; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 8:1 ;Eph. 2:17; Heb. 6:19; 2 Cor. 5:1; Rev. 22:14. Have you got these things?
4. They gave the message; v. 4. (1) Its authority, "In the Name." Cp. Acts 4:12; John 14:13, 14; Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 10:3; Acts 14:17, 18; 5:41; 1 Cor. 5:4, 5; Phil. 2:9-11. (2) Its power, "Rise up!" Cp. Eccles. 8:4; Matt. 28:18; Heb. 7:25.

III. The Marvelous Result. Vs. 7-11.

1. The immediate cure; v. 7. Salvation is sudden. John 5:24; 10:9, etc.
2. The joyous testimony; v. 8. Psalms 92:4; 126:3; 40:3; 50:23; Phil. 3:1; 4:4; Romans 15:13.
3. The amazed populace; vs. 10, 11.

IV. The Christ-Honoring Explanation. Vs. 12-26.

1. Peter's confession; v. 12. "Not I, but Christ." Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:10. What a rebuke to the priestly pretension of today!
2. His charge; vs. 13-18. (1) The Diety of Christ —See the Titles: "His Son," "Jesus," "Holy One," "The Just," "Prince of Life." (2) Their fearful sin; vs. 13-15. (3) Their appalling ignorance; vs: 17, 18. In spite of the plain teaching of the Scriptures, of which they were the custodians, they had unconsciously fulfilled them, though this did not in the least mitigate their guilt.
3. His appeal; vs. 19-26. (1) Repentance demanded; v. 19. Cp. Acts 17:31. (2) Conversion; the effect. Cp. Matt. 18:3. (3) Sins blotted out; the result. V. 19. Cp. Isa. 44:22, 23. (4) The second coming promised; vs. 20, 21. Note "All things." (a) The regeneration of all things; Matt. 19:28. (b) The restitution of all things; Acts 3:21. There is no thought in this that all will be ultimately saved. (c) The restoration of all things; Eph. 1:10. (5) The judgment of the Christ rejecter; v. 23. (6) The summary; v. 26. Note this verse carefully.

328. THE BOLDNESS OF PETER AND JOHN

Acts 4

Golden Text: Acts 4:12

I. The Arrest. Vs. 1-4.

1. Foretold. Cp. Matt. 10:16-22; John 15:20; 16: 2; etc.
2. The reason; v. 2. It interfered with their own ideas; 1 Cor. 1:18, 22-29. Compare the modern reaction to the word of God on the part of the so-called "intelligentsia" because it conflicts with their own conceptions.
3. The effect of the preaching; v. 4. Mark 16:15, 16. 5,000 precious souls saved!

II. The Trial. Vs. 5-20.

1. The question; vs. 5-7. "The power and the Name"—what a theme! Cp. Romans 1:4, 16; Phil. 2:10. The Christians' sufficiency.
2. The reply; vs. 8-12. (1) The Enduement, "Filled with the Spirit." Cp. Luke 12:11, 12. (2) The Answer; vs. 10-12. (a) The Proclamation. "Know all." Cp. Acts 13:38; Isa. 33:13; 45:19; 1:8. (b) The Person—Christ in humility; "Nazareth," crucified, dead, risen, exalted, saving. They had but one theme—Christ crucified, risen and saving. Cp. 1 Cor. 2:2-5; 15:3, 4. How different from the "modernism" of today!
3. The proof; vs. 13, 14. They saw the power of the risen Lord in (1) The Apostles; v. 13. What a testimony! Is it ours? Romans 12: 1, 2; James 1:22; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:2, 7, etc. (2) The healed man; v. 14. They couldn't get around this! The evidence of a born again man cannot be gainsaid. Psalm 40:3; 2 Cor. 3:2.
4. The council; vs. 15-17. And the conclusion; Psalm 2:4.
5. The charge; v. 18. An impossible one.
6. The reply; vs. 19, 20. Here is the believer's warrant for conscientious objection to a command that involves disobedience to the known will of God as found in His word. Cp. Phil. 1:20, 21. "We cannot but speak." Cp. Amos 3:8; Jer. 20:9.
7. The acquittal; vs. 21, 22.

III. The Result.

1. Testimony; v. 23. Note where they went, to "their own company" where Christ was honored, and God's Word believed. Here is assembly fellowship which every believer should enjoy.
2. Prayer; vs. 24-31. (1) Reverent; v. 24. (2) Scriptural; vs. 25, 26. Based on the word of God; vs. 25-27. Note carefully vs. 27, 28 as it answers the question as to responsibility for death of Christ. (3) Simple; v. 29. They spread all their needs before the Lord. (4) Definite; v. 30. They asked for definite things. (5) Believingly; v. 30. They expected an answer. (6) Dependently—in the name of Jesus; v. 30. Cp. John 14:12-14. (7) Answered; v. 31.
3. Unity; vs. 32-35. A description of the early church. There was unity (1) Of mind and heart; v. 32. (2) Of humility and love; v. 32. (3) Of liberality; v. 34. (4) The effect of this unity is great power in witness; v. 33. Does not this explain the powerlessness of many assemblies of believers? See James 3:16; Gal. 5:15.

329. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

Acts 5:1-42

Golden Text: James 1:22

I. The Broken Vow. Acts 3:34; 4:2.

1. The generous believers; Acts 3:34, 35. This community of property, however, was spontaneous. There was no command given regarding it and it was temporary—it soon passed away. Cp. 2 Cor. 8:5, 7, 9.
2. Barnabas' gift; vs. 36, 37. Later the companions of Paul. His name means "Son of consolation."
3. The deceitfulness of sin; Acts 4:1, 2. Cp. Heb. 3:12, 13; Eccles. 5:4, 5. (1) Its cause—unbelief. (2) Its effect. (a) Blindness and hardness of heart. (b) Deceit and open lying. (c) Partial concecration due to coveteousness. Here is the curse of half-heartedness and luke-warmedness. Rev. 3:15, 16. Illust. 1 Sam. 15:20-23.

II. The Swift Judgment. Vs. 3-10.

1. The interrogation; vs. 3, 4. Note the testimony as to the personality and power of Satan Also as to the personality, power, and Deity of the Holy Spirit, called "God;" v. 4.
2. The judgment; v. 5. This does not necessarily mean eternal retribution. Cp. 1 Cor. 11:30-32; 1 John 5:16. God chastens His own children; Heb. 12:5-11.
3. Judgment on Sapphira; vs. 7-10. Cp. Heb. 12:28, 29; 4:13. God looks for reality and reverence.

III. The Salutary Effect. Vs. 11, 13, 14.

1. Fear; v. 11. Heb. 4:1; Psalms 4:4; 119:161; Isa. 2:10; Prov. 1:7; 2:5.
2. Respect; v. 13. "Durst no man join." The church and the world were separated then (Cp. 2 Cor. 6:14-18), and should be now.
3. Testimony; v. 13. "Magnified them." Cp. Acts 4:21; 2:47, etc.
4. Blessing; v. 14. "Multitudes added."

IV. The Bitter Persecution. Vs. 17, 18. Note the cause of this persecution—envy. (See margin). See Prov. 14:30; 27:4; Matt. 27:18; Acts 7:9; Titus 3:3; Psalm 106:16; 1 Peter 2:1.

V. The Wondrous Deliverance. Vs. 19-25.

1. The heavenly messenger; v. 19. Cp. Heb. 1: 13, 14.
2. The heavenly message; v. 20. "The word of this life." What a theme? Cp. Mark 16:15. "This life." John 14:6; 1:4; 1 John 5:9-13; John 4:14; 3:16; 17:3, etc.—"Wonderful words of life!"
3. The obedient disciples; v. 21.
4. The astounded critics; vs. 21-25. Acts 13:41.

VI. The Further Examination. Vs. 26-33.

1. The charge; vs. 26-28. Note what they hated and compare it with the modernist preacher. (1) The Name. (2) The doctrine. (3) The blood.
2. The reply; v. 29. (1) The testimony; v. 29. (2) The charge; v. 30. Ye slew. (3) The theme; v. 31. An exalted Prince and Savior, the Dispenser of repentance and forgiveness. (4) The evidence; v. 32. Note to whom God gives the Holy Spirit.

VII. The Wise Advice. Vs. 33-42.

1. Gamaliel's good counsel; vs. 33-39.
2. The further charge; v. 40.
3. The continued testimony; vs. 41 42. Note this particularly.

330. STEPHEN

Acts 6:1-15; 7:54-60

Golden Text: 2 Corinthians 5:15

I. His Character. Ch. 6. Would that we had more men of the caliber of Stephen today. It is such that move the world for God.

1. A believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. What this entailed. (1) A knowledge of his need. Matt. 9:13; Luke 19:10; Matt. 18:3; John 3:3. (2) A knowledge of the way of salvation. Acts 4:12; Romans 10:14-17, etc. (3) A knowledge of Christ as his personal Savior. Cp. John 17:3; 2 Tim. 1:12.
2. A good and honest life; v. 3. "Good report." Cp. Titus 3:8; 1 Peter 2:12; 1 Tim. 3:7; Matt. 5:14-16.
3. Full of the Holy Spirit; v. 3. Cp. Eph. 5:18, 19. How could they tell? Cp. Gal. 5:22, 23, 16.
4. Full of faith; v. 8. Cp. Romans 15:13; Heb. 11:6; Phil. 4:6-8; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:7.
5. Full of power; v. 18. But not his own power. Cp. 2 Tim. 1:7; Romans 1:16; John 14:12. He was a clean channel for the power of God to work through. 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:21.
6. Wise; v. 10. Cp. James 1:5; 3:17; Col. 2:3; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2:12-14.
7. Active; v. 8. Cp. 1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Cor. 9:22; John 9:4, etc.

II. His Arrest and Defense. Acts 6: 12-7:53.

1. His arrest; 6:11-15. The false witnesses. The history of the church is full of such incidents. The most bitter of all persecutors are religionists whose way of life is condemned by the faithful preaching and living of the word of God. Cp. Mark 14:56; Matt. 5:11.
2. His defense. Cp. 7:1-50. The history of God's dealing with Israel and of their unbelief and hardness of heart through their entire history. They rejected Joseph, v. 9; Moses, vs. 27, 35, 39; the prophets, v. 52 and crowned their rebellion by rejecting Christ and the Holy Spirit.
3. His charge; 7:51-53. What a fearful indictment! (1) Note their character; v. 51. (2) Their conduct, "resist the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit can be resisted and insulted by the unsaved; and grieved, quenched and limited by the believer. (3) Their privileges and crime; vs. 52-54. The enormity of their sin is measured by the greatness of their privilege. See Matt. 11:20-24.

III. His Martyrdom. Acts 7:54-60.

1. Their fury; v. 54. Cp. John 16:8-11; Heb. 4:12; Acts 9:5.
2. His vision; v. 55. An exalted and glorified Christ.
3. His prayer; v. 60. Cp. Luke 23:34; Matt. 5:44-48.
4. His testimony; v. 59. Cp. Luke 23:46.
5. His home call; v. 60. "Asleep." Cp. Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:6, 8; 1 Thess. 4:14. It has been said that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

331. SIMON THE SORCERER

Acts 8:1-24

Golden Text: Romans 6:23

I. The Persecuted Church. Vs. 1-5.

1. The leader of the persecution—Saul. Cp. Acts 7:58; 8:1, 2; 20:29, etc. His blind hate prompted by ignorance and unbelief—two twin foes to truth; 1 Tim. 1:13. Cp. Romans 10:3; 2 Cor. 4:4.
2. The effect of it—increased testimony; v. 4. The church shattered that it might be scattered. The church has ever thrived on persecution. Cp. Psalm 16:10; Matt. 5:14-16; Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:18-20.

II. The Mission of Philip. Vs. 6-8.

1. His character. Cp. Acts 6:3-5. He fulfilled the same exacting test as did Stephen. See 1 Tim. 3:1-7.
2. His message; v. 5. He did not preach a mere creed, denomination, social reform, social service, politics, but a Person—Christ. Christ in humiliation, propitiation, exaltation, and powerful in Salvation. Cp. 1 Cor. 2:1-4; 1:23.
3. The result; v. 6. (1) They gave heed. Cp John 5:24; Isa. 55:3; Matt. 13:9. (2) They saw results; v. 7. Cp. Eph. 2:1-3. (3) There was great joy; v. 8. Cp. Luke 19:6; 15:10, 24.

III. Simon the Sorcerer. Vs. 9-24.

1. His character; vs. 9-11. (1) A spiritist; v. 9. Cp. Lev. 20:6; 19:31; Deut. 18:10-12; Isa. 8:19. (2) A bombastic humbug; v. 9. Self exalting. Cp. Luke 14:11; Isa. 13:11; Psalm 52:1-7, etc.
2. The effect of the gospel preaching; v. 12. He lost his customer's money and his own reputation. (Illust. this by modern examples.)
3. His profession; v. 13. Cp. Matt. 7:21. Doubtless he was occupied with the outward signs and the miracles. Cp. John 6:24-27; 6:66.
4. The visit of the apostles; vs. 14-17. Note their purpose; vs. 14, 15. This is no longer necessary now. This marks the introduction, into the Church of God, of Samaritans, and here we see Peter and John using the "keys." The Spirit now indwells each person the moment he believes. Cp. Acts 10:43-48; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 1 Cor. 3:16. Make this clear.
5. Simon's proposal; vs. 18, 19. (1) To commercialize salvation. (2) To popularize himself. Alas how many today preach only for the money they get out of it. Cp. 1 Peter 5:2; 1 Tim. 3:3; Matt. 10:8.
6. Peter's reply; vs. 20-22. (1) As to his wicked proposal; v. 20. Yet many today tried to obtain the gift of God by good works, ordinances, prayers, resolves, etc. Romans 6:23; 3:24; Eph. 2:8, 9; Romans 11:6, etc. (2) As to his true condition and position; vs. 21, 23. Apply this to unsaved. (3) As to the remedy; v. 22. Cp. Acts 13:38. Salvation for all.

332. THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

Acts 8:25-39

Golden Text: Acts 10:43

I. Philip's Commission. Vs. 25, 26.

1. The occasion--In the midst of good meetings; v. 25. God's ways are not ours. God saw the lonely stranger and knew his need. Cp. John 4:4; Luke 8:22, 27; 19:10; Ezek. 33:11, etc.
2. The commission; v. 26. Arise and go. Cp. Isa. 6:8; Eph. 5:14.
3. The obedient servant; "he went." V. 27. Cp. Acts 26:18, 19.

II. The Needy Stranger. Vs. 27-29.

1. His home—Africa; v. 27. Dark Africa. Picture the condition of the heathen with no Bible, no preacher and no gospel.
2. His purpose in visiting Jerusalem; v. 27. What he had found—Plenty of ceremonies, sacrifices, and laws, but no salvation, no peace, no life, no hope, because he had not Christ. Cp. Matt. 15:8, 3, 6; Heb. 10:11.
3. His treasure—The word of God; v. 28. (1) What it is—God's revelation of Himself, His mind and will, His way of salvation, the doom of sinners and joy of the saved. (2) What it does: (a) Brings responsibility; John 12:47, 48. (b) Produces conviction when applied by the Spirit; Heb. 4:12. (c) Leads to Christ. Luke 24:44, 27; Heb. 10:7. (d) Regenerates. 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:21. (e) Gives assurance; 1 John 5:13; Num. 23:19, etc.
4. His need—A teacher; vs. 30, 31. No one to tell him. Cp. Romans 10:13-17. The responsibility of every believer is to witness for Christ and preach the Gospel to the unsaved. See Romans 1:14-16. Emphasize this.
5. The message. He read Isa. 53:3-12, and "preached unto him Jesus." (1) The despised One; vs. 3, 4. (2) The redeeming One; vs. 5-9. (3) The risen and exalted One; v. 10. (4) The justifying One; v. 11. (5) The coming One; v. 12.
6. His conversion; vs. 32-35. (1) Willing to hear; v. 31. Cp. 1 Sam. 3:10. (2) Desirous to know; v. 34. He asked questions (Ill. Nicodemus). (3) Heard the true way of salvation—"Jesus." John 14:6; Acts 4:12. (4) Received the word and the One of Whom it speaks.
7. The result; vs. 36-39. (1) His confession; v. 37. By mouth. Cp. 1 John 5:1. Romans 10:9, 10. (2) His Baptism; vs. 36-39. (a) Obedience to Christ. Mark 16:16; Matt. 28:19, 20. (b) Identification with Christ symbolically. Cp. Romans 6:4; Col. 2:12. (c) Glorifying Christ—newness of life. Col. 3:1-5; Romans 6:4. Note also the mode suggested by the word used; vs. 38, 39. Undoubtedly immersion. (3) His rejoicing; v. 39. What a happy end to a sad beginning! The desert, to him, had become a paradise! Psalms 40:1-3; 5:11; 149:5; Isa. 61. The Word of God in his hand, and the Spirit of God in his heart. What more could be desired?

333. CONVERSION OF SAUL

Acts 9:1-25

Golden Text: 1 Tim. 1:15

I. His Character.

1. Well educated; Acts 22:3. Under the tuition of one of the great Jewish teachers. Cp. 1 Cor. 1:18-29; Jer. 9:23, 24; Prov. 1:7.
2. A religious zealot. Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:4-6; Acts 26:4. Cp. Romans 10:2.
3. Earnest. Acts 8:3; 9:1; 26:9; 1 Tim. 1:13. He was sincere, but alas, sincerely mistaken!
4. Proud. "A Pharisee." Matt. 23:5-7; Luke 18: 11, 12, etc.
5. Persecutor of Christians and hater of Christ. Acts 22:4, 5. No wonder he called himself, "The chief of sinners." 1 Tim. 1:15.

II. His Vision. Vs. 1-5.

1. The persecuting Pharisee; vs. 1, 2. "Breathing out threatenings and slaughters," like a wild beast on a man hunt.
2. The light from heaven; v. 3. Cp. Matt. 17:2; Rev. 1:16; 2 Cor. 4:6; John 8:12; Rev. 21:23.
3. The voice; v. 4. "Persecutest Me." The Church, His body, was being persecuted on earth and the Head in Heaven protested. Cp. Eph. 1:22, 23; 3:6; 5:30; Matt. 25:40.
4. The question; v. 5. "Who art Thou, Lord?"
5. The answer; v. 5. What a revelation! Note "the pricks." Doubtless, since Stephen's speech and death, Saul had been pricked in heart and conscience (Acts 7:58; 8:1), by what he had heard and seen. Cp. Isa. 55:11; Heb. 4:12, etc.

III. His Conversion. V. 6.

1. Salvation, "Lord." Cp. 1 Cor. 12:3 ;Romans 10: 9, 10. Notice Saul's first question had the word "Lord" at the end. This was what Christ had been to him previously. His second question put the Lord first, and this is where Paul kept the Lord from this time on. Here is the secret of a joyous and useful Christian life—Christ first.
2. Surrender "What . . . do?" No longer his own. Cp. 1 Cor. 6:20; Romans 1:1; Heb. 12:2; Romans 12:1; 2 Cor. 5:15.
3. Service; vs. 7-25. (1) Preparation; vs. 8, 9. Shut out from light for 3 days Shut up to God. What were his thoughts? Note his occupation; v. 11. Cp. Mark 6:31; Matt. 14:13; 1 Thess. 5:17. (2) Commission to Ananias; vs. 10-14. (3) God's purpose for Saul; vs. 15, 16. What an honor! Cp. 2 Cor. 5:19, 20. (4) The result; vs. 17-22. (a) The message; v. 17. Its authority and purpose. (b) Eyes opened; v. 18. Cp. 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 1:18-20; Psalm 119: 130, 18. (c) Baptized; v. 18. Mark 16:16, etc. (d) Food; v. 19. Cp. 1 Peter 2:1, 2, etc. (e) Met with God's people; v. 19. Acts 2:44; 5:13; Heb. 10:25; Matt. 18:20, etc. (f) Witnessed for Christ; v. 20. Note the theme—Christ the Son of God! What a theme! (g) Its effect on the people; vs. 21, 22.

334. THE RAISING OF DORCAS

Acts 9:23-43

Golden Text: Titus 3:8

I. Saul's Deliverance. Vs. 23-31.

1. The plot; v. 23. He was beginning to realize the truth of John 15: 20, and to have a taste of his own medicine; Acts 22:4.
2. The escape; v. 25. Paul never forgot this "let down" he had! From the pinnacle of his profession as a Pharisee to the ignominious descent in a basket! 2 Cor. 11:13. Contrast his journey to Damascus with his journey from it; Acts 9:1, 2. What a change true conversion makes!
3. The service; vs. 26-31. (1) In Jerusalem, the place where he led the persecution; vs. 26-29. (a) The disciples' diffidence; v. 26. (b) Barnabas' fellowship; v. 27. There was no jealousy in Barnabas' composition. He gladly commended Paul to the assembly in Jerusalem. (c) Saul's boldness; v. 29. Cp. Phil 1:20; Romans 1:16; 2 Tim. 1:12. (2) In Tarsus—his home town; Acts 22:3. Cp. Luke 8:39.
4. The result; v 1. The happy state of the Churches. (1) Rest. (2) Edified. (3) Walking in fear of Lord. (4) In the Spirit. (5) Multiplied. This verse marks a division in the Acts of the Apostles. Note similiar expressions which indicate other divisions.

II. Healing of Aeneas. Vs. 32-35.

1. His condition—paralyzed and helpless. A fit subject for the grace of God and the power of the risen Son of God. Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5; Romans 5:7, 8, etc.
2. His cure; v. 34. Its Authority—The Name above every name. Not Peter, nor his faith, but Jesus—the Savior, the anointed of God. Acts 4:12; 3:16; Phil. 2:10.
3. Its effect; v. 35. Cp. Psalm 40:3.

III The Raising of Dorcas. Vs. 36-43.

1. Her character; vs. 36-39. (1) A believer and disciple of Christ; v. 36. John 10:27; 1 Peter 2:25, etc. (2) An active worker for Christ; v. 36. She was "full of good works." It was for this purpose the believer has been saved. See Eph. 2:10; Matt. 5:16. Cp. 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10; Titus 3:8; Col. 3:23, 24, etc. (3) Her service for others; v. 39. 2 Cor. 5:15.
2. Her death; v. 37; and its result—sorrow. She was missed because of her unselfish service for others. Shall we be missed for this cause or would our passing away evoke no comment and leave no gap to be filled?
3. The miracle; vs. 39-41. (1) Prayer; v. 40. Peter was all alone with God, and was thus shut up to omnipotence. Cp. John 14:12-14. Based on the promise of His word; James 5:16. (2) The word of power; v. 40. Cp. John 5:24, 25; Eph. 2:1, etc.
4. The result. "Many believed in the Lord;" v. 42.

335. CORNELIUS

Acts 10

Golden Text: John 10:16

I. The Man—What He Was. 10:1, 2, 22, 23.
1. Religious; v. 2. "Devout." Cp. V. 22; Acts 26:5; Gal. 1:14.
2. Reverent; v. 2. "Feared God." Prov. 1:7; 2: 3-5.
3. Prayerful; v. 2. "Prayed."
4. Benevolent; v. 2. "Alms."
5. Influential; v. 22. "A centurion."
6. Good; v. 22. "Good report."
7. Teachable; v. 33. What a fine character he had.

II. The Need—Salvation. Acts 11:14. He needed someone to tell him words "whereby he might be saved." Though the qualities he had were good, yet he required something more, a saving knowledge of the Son of God. Cp. Nicodemus; John 3:3. Rich young man; Mark 10, etc.

III. The Vision. Vs. 3-8.
1. The vision; v. 3. Cp. Job 33:14, 15. No need of visions now that we have the Bible.
2. The inquiry; v. 4. His willingness to hear and obey.
3. The message; vs. 4-6.
4. The commission; vs. 7, 8.

IV. The Message to Peter. Vs. 9-23.
1. His vision; vs. 9-12. Note his attitude—prayer.
2. His message; vs. 10-17. Cp. Job 34:19; Deut 10:17; Romans 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Romans 3:22, 23. There are only two classes today—saved and unsaved.
3. His obedience; vs. 17-24 .

V. Peter's Address. Vs. 24-43.
1. The preparation; v. 24. God needs to prepare both the sinner to hear and the preacher to proclaim the message.
2. The mistake; vs. 25, 26. Cp. Acts 14:13, 14; Rev. 19:9-10.
3. The conversation; vs. 27-33. The providential guidance of God. Cp. 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4; John 3:17. Note v. 33. (1) An ideal audience—ready to hear all things. (2) An ideal preacher—sent and equipped by God. (3) An ideal theme—The all sufficient Saviour. (4) An ideal result—All saved.
4. Peter's sermon; vs. 34-43. Here is a good pattern for preachers today. Peter preached Christ. Note this very carefully. (1) The introduction; vs. 34, 35. (2) The life of Christ; vs. 36-38. (3) The death of Christ; v. 39. (4) The resurrection of Christ; vs. 40, 41. (5) The proclamation of Christ; v. 42. (6) The Gospel of Christ; v. 43. (7) The condition of salvation, "believeth."

VI. The Result. Vs. 44-48.
1. Belief of the truth. Cp. Acts 11:17.
2. Salvation; v. 45. Cp. Romans 8:9. Note: Eph 1:13; 1 Cor. 12:13. This open manifestation was given to mark the introduction of the Gentiles into the body of Christ; Acts 11:1. There is no such manifestation needed today; Romans 6:3-6.
3. Obedience; vs. 47, 48. Baptism. Acts 1:2; Mark 16:15, 16; Matt. 28:19, etc.

336. THE DISCIPLES CALLED CHRISTIANS

Acts 11:1-30

Golden Text: Acts 11:23

I. The Conference. Vs. 1-18.

1. The contention; vs. 1-3. Traditionalism dies hard. How slow they were to learn that the grace of God was not limited to Jews only!
2. The explanation; vs. 4-17. The recital of God's grace manifested in reaching, saving and indwelling sinners of the Gentiles. Cp. Eph. 2:11-22. Read this carefully.
3. The result; v. 18.

II. The Scattered Testimony. Vs. 19-21. A map should be procured showing the spread of the gospel in these parts.

1. Note who did the preaching. Not the Apostles; Acts 8:1, 4. How different from the modern and unscriptural system of clergy, with its one man priesthood and one man ministry!
2. Note what they preached; v. 20. Not themselves, not some man's ideas, not current topics—but the Lord Jesus.
3. Note the result; v. 21. (a) The cause—the hand of the Lord. Cp. Isa. 53:1; Deut. 5:15; Exod. 33:22; John 10:28-30. (b) The effect "turned to the Lord." Cp. 1 Thess. 1:9, 10. What they turned from—sins, unbelief, fear, sorrow, wrath. What they turned to—The Lord in Whom alone is found forgiveness, faith, peace, joy, security, glory, etc.

III. The Assembled Saints. Vs. 22-30.

1. The visit of Barnabas; vs. 22-24. (1) The cause; v. 22. (2) The character of the man; v. 24. (a) Good. (b) Full of the Holy Spirit. (c) Full of faith. (d) Fruitful. "Much people added." Here is the secret of a happy and useful Christian life. (3) His visit; (a) What he saw—the grace of God. How could he see it? By the fruits of it which were manifested in the lives of those who had professed faith in Christ. Cp. Matt. 7:16-20; Romans 1:8, etc. (b) What he was—"glad." He could joy in the work and blessing of others. Here is a proof of real spirituality. (c) What he did—exhorted them to continuance. Cp. Col. 2:6, 7; 1 Cor. 15:58; John 8:31; 2 Peter 1:5-10.
2. The new name; vs. 25, 26. (1) Saul's ministry; vs. 25, 26. (2) The name—Christians. A Christian is one who belongs to Christ, who is in Christ, who lives for Christ, who serves Christ and who looks for Christ. Compare some of the other names of the believer. "Brethren;" Acts 6:3. "Sons;" Romans 8:4. "Saints;" Acts 9:13. "Servants;" Acts 2:18. "Strangers;" 1 Peter 2:11. "Believers;" Acts 5:14. "Disciples;" Luke 14:26, 27. "Friends;" John 15:15. "Children;" Romans 8:16. "Pilgrims;" 1 Peter 2:11.
3. The Christian's generosity; vs. 27-30. One of the acid tests of true discipleship is the giving of one's substance to the Lord. Every Christian should be a systemic and proportionate giver. It is not for nothing that God devotes two chapters to the grace of giving. See 2 Cor. 8:1-9; 9:5-15, etc.

337. PETER'S IMPRISONMENT AND RELEASE

Acts 12:1-19

Golden Text: Psalm 50:13

I. The Persecution. Vs. 1-3.

1. The instigator—Herod. One of a line of bloody men. There are four Herods of the N. T. (1) Herod the Great who killed the children; Matt. 2:7, 8, 16-19. (2) Herod who killed John the Baptist; Mark 6:17-28. (3) Herod who killed James; Acts 12:2. (4) Herod Agrippa before whom Paul appeared; Acts 26.
2. The martyr, "James." See Matt. 20:20-23. One of the inner circle—Peter, James and John.
3. The prisoner, Peter; v. 3.

II. The Imprisonment. Vs. 3-6.

Peter is here a good illustration of the sinner; his condition, need and deliverance.

1. In the prison. Cp. The prison house of sin in which all are shut up. Cp. Romans 11:32 (margin); Gal. 3:22; Romans 3:23; 5:12. Sin has turned the world into a prison; Luke 4:18.
2. Bound with chains; v. 6. Cp. Prov. 5:22; John 8:34. The chains of habit, lust, pride, religion, legalism, etc.
3. Kept by guards—The world, flesh and the Devil all combine to keep the sinner in his sins.
4. The object of much prayer; v. 5. Cp. James 5:16-18, etc. The prayers of godly parents, Sunday school teachers, Christian friends, etc.

III. The Deliverance. Vs. 7-10.

1. The light; v. 7. This surely speaks of God's word. Cp. Psalm 119:105, 130; John 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:4; John 3:19.
2. Smitten; v. 8. Note where—not on head, hands or feet, but nearest his heart. This illustrates conviction of sin. Cp. Jer. 17:9; Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 2:37; 7:54; John 16:13.
3. The command: "Rise up." Psalm 40:1. Salvation is "up." "Up" from spiritual death. "Up" from the pit of sin. "Up" from one's standing in Adam. Cp. Luke 7:13; 15:18; Eph. 1:3, 20; 2 Sam. 22:17.
4. Freedom: "Chains fell off." His commands are His enablings. Cp. John 8:36; Gal. 5:1; Isa. 61:11; Romans 8:21; 1 Peter 2:16.
5. Girded; v. 8. Equipped for the journey. Cp. Eph. 6:13-18; 1 Peter 1:13.
6. Led, "follow me." Cp. Luke 14:27; Matt. 4:19; John 10:27; Romans 8:14; Heb. 12:2; 4:13.
7. Opened doors; v. 10. Service. God opens the doors. Cp. Rev. 3:8; 1 Cor. 16:9; Acts 14:27; Gen. 18:14; Mark 10:27; Matt. 6:33.
   See Wesley's hymn: "And can it be."

V. The Result. Vs. 11-19.

1. Went to God's people; v. 11. Cp. Psalm 119: 63; Mal. 3:16; Heb. 10:25.

2 The interrupted prayer meeting; vs. 12-16. Note their surprise! What unbelieving believers they were! How often true of us. Isa. 65:24; Psalm 50:13; Jer. 33:3.

3. The testimony; v. 17. Cp. Luke 8:39, etc.

338. THE CALL OF BARNABAS AND SAUL

Acts 12:20—13:4

Golden Text: Isaiah 6:8

I. The Death of Herod. Acts 12:20-23.

1. His wickedness. Acts 12:1-3; Psalms 7:11; 9:17; 37:7-16, 35, 36, etc.
2. His pride; vs. 22, 23. Prov. 6:16-19; Psalms 12:3; 75:5, 6; 101:5; 138:6.
3. His fearful end. Matt. 23:12; Gal. 6:3; Psalm 9:17.

II. The Progress of the word of God. Acts 12:24.

1. The word has life. Heb. 4:12; Acts 7:38.
2. Its begets life. 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18; 1 Thess. 2:13, etc.
3. It develops that life. 1Peter 2:3; Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.
4. It multiplies as it is preached. Illus.: Acts 2:41; 12:24; and by modern missionary movements.

III. The Character of Barnabas and Saul.

1. Barnabas. He was a (1) Happy man; Acts 11:23. (2) Holy man; Acts 11:24. (3) Strong man; Acts 11:24. (4) Gifted exhorter; Acts 11:23. (5) Consecrated; Acts 4:36, 37. (6) Fearless; Acts 15:25, 26. (7) Reliable; Acts 15:35. (8) Beloved brother; Acts 15:25.
2. Saul. (1) A fearless witness; Acts 9:20. (2) Strong in the Lord; Acts 9:22. (3) Powerful in preaching; Acts 9:22.

IV. Their Call. 13:1-4.

1. When? (1) While they were serving the Lord; v. 2. They were busy in the Master's service; not idly waiting. They were already ready for service. It was while Elisha was busy plowing that God called him. (1 Kings 19:19). It was while Simon and Andrew were casting their nets that Christ called them. Mark 1:16. God does not call lazy Christians into whole time service. (2) While they were fasting. They were in the right spiritual condition. By fasting they denied the demands of the flesh that they might live more devotedly unto the Lord. Cp. Matt. 9:37, 38; 28:19; Mark 16:15, 16; John 4:35-37.
2. How? (1) By the Holy Spirit; vs. 2, 4; 16:6, 7, etc. (2) How God leads today. (a) By His word; 2 Tim. 2:15. (b) By the leading of His Spirit. Romans 8:14; Gal. 5:16; John 16:13. (c) By His providences. He brings certain circumstances and events to pass which opens this door of service and shuts that one. (See Acts 16:7-10). (d) By the advice of godly Christians who by age and experience in the things of God are fitted to advise others.
3. The result; vs. 3, 4. (1) Fellowship of the assembly. Their identification and commendation. The laying on of the hands of the assembly simply expressed their approval of God's call, and their fellowship and identification with Paul and Barnabas for the whole time service to which God had called them. (2) Obedience; v. 4. Note Who sent them forth. Not a missionary board, but the Holy Spirit. O for more Spirit-called, Spirit-equipped, and Spirit-sent evangelists!

339. ELYMAS THE SORCERER

Acts 13:4-13

Golden Text: Matthew 18:7

I. The First Missionary Tour. Use a map to illustrate these journeys.

1. The journey; v. 4. Cyprus was Barnabas' own country; Acts 4:36. He was returning to tell of the "great things the Lord had done for him." Cp. Luke 8:39.
2. The message—the word of God; v. 5. Sufficient for every emergency. Efficient for every need. It is a (1) Sword; Heb. 4:12; to cut, discern, defend; Eph. 6:17. (2) A hammer; Jer. 23:29; to break the rock of indifference. unbelief, false hope. (3) A fire; Jer. 23:29. To test, consume and burn the dross. (4) Milk. 1 Peter 2:2; Heb. 5:12; 1 Cor. 3:2; to feed, to nourish, to develop. (5) Meat. Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 3:2; to strengthen and equip for service. (6) Seed; 1 Peter 1:23; Luke 8:11; to sow, reap, and enjoy; John 4:36; Psalm 126:6. (7) A light to guide, reveal and warn; Psalm 119:105. (8) Water to refresh and cleanse. Psalm 119:9; Eph. 5:26.

II. The Sorcerer. Vs. 6-8.

1. His description; v. 6. (1) A false prophet (Ill. Balaam). (2) A spiritist, or "sorcerer." In Scripture spiritism is seen to be (a) A fact. 2 Thess. 2:9-12; Eph. 6:12; Acts 16:6; Lev. 19:31. (b) Condemned by God. Lev. 20:6; 19:31; Deut. 18:10-12; Isa. 8:19. (c) Example. 2 Kings 21:6; 1 Chron. 10:13. It is the devil's territory—beware of any contact with it. (3) A child of the Devil; v. 10. John 8:44. What a fearful description. Cp. Eph. 2:2, 3. (4) An enemy of righteousness; v. 10. 1 John 5:17.
2. His attitude; v. 8. (1) He opposed them and the word of God. Cp. John 5:40; Matt. 23:37: Proverbs 1:24-31. (2) He sought to hinder others. Matt. 23:13; 18:6, 7.

III. The Punishment. Vs. 9-11.

1. Paul's condition; v. 9. Is it ours? Eph. 5:18, 19. Note the change here from Saul to Paul. From this point on he is always referred to as Paul.
2. His rebuke; v. 10. Cp. 2 Tim. 4:1-4. What awful words of denunciation were these! Elymas was not left in any doubt as to his condition after Paul got through with his description of him. There was no mincing of words, or toning down of God's message to him.
3. His authority; v. 11. "The Lord." Cp. 2 Cor. 5:18-20. Cp. the blindness which shall come upon those who refuse the truth of God and prefer the Devil's lie. John 12:37-40; 2 Thess. 2:8-12. He who will not believe will discover he cannot believe.

IV. The Result. V. 12. Note the effect of it on Sergius Paulus.

1. Desired to hear God's word; v. 7.
2. Saw God's power; v. 12.
3. Believed on God's Son; v. 12. **Is this true of you?**

340. PAUL'S SERMON

Acts 13:13-52

Golden Text: Acts 13:38, 39

I. The Place. Vs. 13, 14.

1. Note their journey and trace it by means of a map.
2. The departure of John; v. 13. Cp. Acts 15:37, 38. (Ill. Jonah). Here is the tragedy of a young man who turned back when he should have gone right on. (Col. 4:10). Fortunately he was restored, both to the Lord and Paul Described afterward as "profitable." 2 Tim. 4:11.
3. The synagogue. They went to the people. They didn't wait for the people to come to them. Mark 10:15. As a fisherman goes to the fish, so the preacher must go where the people are.

II. The Address. Vs. 16-41.

1. The invitation. V. 15. They were courteous
2. The history of Israel. A wonderful picture of the salvation of a soul. Vs. 16-22. (1) Their slavery; v. 17. Cp. John 8:34; Romans 6:16. (2) Their redemption (a) by blood; (b) by power. Exod. 12-14. Cp. 1 Peter 1:18; 2:9; Col. 1:13, 14. (3) Their deliverance. V. 17 Cp. Romans 6:13, 14. (4) Their separation—the journey. V. 18. Cp. 1 Peter 2:11, etc. (5) Canaan; v. 19. Cp. Eph. 1:3, etc.
3. The prophecy of the Old Testament; vs. 23 27. All pointing to Christ. 1 Peter 1:10-12, 2 Peter 1:19-21; John 5:39; Luke 24:44.
4. The Gospel; vs. 26-41. (1) Their responsibility. Vs. 26, 27. To hear the word of God (2) The spotless life of Christ. V. 28. (3) The vicarious death; vs. 28, 29. Note "When they had fulfilled." Cp. Luke 24:25-27. (4) The victorious resurrection; vs. 30, 31. Cp Romans 4:24, 25, etc. (a) Witnessed; v. 31. Cp. 1 Cor. 15:1-9. (b) Its significance. Vs. 33-37. Fulfilled scriptures and glad tidings. Vs. 32, 33. (5) The application—salvation. Vs 38-41. (a) Proclaimed. "Be it known." Cp. Mark 16:15; Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17. (b) Individual—"You." Cp. Romans 10:9. "Thou;" John 3:5. "Ye;" Matt. 22:22. "I." Isa. 12:2; Luke 1:47. (c) Personal—"This man," no other name. Acts 4:12. "Way." John 14:6, etc. (d) Precious—"forgiveness of sins"—what a boon, what a treasure! Eph. 1:7; Luke 5:24; Acts 10:43; 1 John 2:12. (e) Present—"are justified." Cp. Eph. 2:8; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 John 4:19; John 3:18. (f) Sufficient—"all that believe." "Whosoever." John 3:16; Rev. 22:17, etc. (g) Plenteous—"all things." Cp. Gal. 2:16; 1 Cor. 3: 21-23; Romans 8:1.
5. The warning; v. 40. "Beware." Cp. Job 36: 18; Prov. 1:24-31. Paul pressed home to them the solemn responsibility of the hearer of the word. The gospel is both glad and solemn news.
6. The result; vs. 42-52. (1) Some desired to hear more; v. 42. (2) Some flatly rejected the message; v. 45. (3) Some believed; v. 43. (4) Some persecuted the messengers; v. 50. The gospel preacher's audience is the same today. All four classes are represented.
7. The disciples' joy; v. 52. Cp. Gal. 22, 23; Romans 15:13.

341. PAUL AT LYSTRA

Acts 14:1-28

Golden Text: Galatians 6:14

I. At Iconium. Vs. 1-6. Locate it on a map.

1 The fruitful work. V. 1. "So spake." What a wealth of meaning lies in these two words! May it be ours to "so speak," "so teach," and "so live," that the same results shall follow. The power of the gospel seen on every hand. Romans 1:16.

2. The enemy's work; v. 2. The Devil gets busy when God's word goes forth in power . See Eph. 6:11-13; 1 Thess. 2:18; 2 Cor. 2:12. His work thrives on unbelief. John 8:44.

3. The Apostle's boldness. V. 3. And God's blessing. 2 Tim. 1:7, 12; Phil. 1:20, 21, 28.

4. The persecution. Vs. 4, 5. The city divided, as all humanity is divided, by Christ the Divider of men. John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19; Matt. 10:34-39. There is no possibility of a neutral position. There are divided families, classes, and audiences, each time the claims of Christ are presented. Press this home to the hearer.

II. At Lystra. Vs. 6-20.

1. Their occupation; v. 7. A simple statement with a wealth of meaning. 1 Cor. 15:1-4.

2. The lame man. Vs. 8-10. (1) His pitiful state—unable to walk straight. Cp. Romans 3:12; Isa. 53:6; Eccles. 7:29. (2) His wonderful privilege—he heard the Gospel. V. 9. His need and God's remedy for the first time. How often have you heard the same story! Romans 10:17, etc. (3) His marvellous cure. Vs. 9, 10. (a) Through faith. V. 9. Romans 5:1; Eph. 2:8. (b) Instantaneous. V. 10. John 5:24, etc. (c) Complete, "leaped and walked." Cp. Eph. 4:1-3.

3. The idolatrous people. Vs. 11-18. (1) Their rash conclusion due to ignorance and blindness of heart. Vs. 11-13. Eph. 4:18; 2:1-3. (2) The apostle's protest. Vs. 14-18. (a) The foolishness of idolatry; v. 15. (b) The witness of the true God. V. 17. Draw particular attention to this. The heathen do not need a Bible to demonstrate the existence, wisdom and power of God. God has witnessed to them by His creative hand and His providence. Cp. Psalm 65:10-13; Matt. 5:45; Romans 1:20.

4. The stoning of Paul. Vs. 19, 20. How soon they changed their minds! The public is very fickle. It exalts one to the stars today and debases him to the stones the next! Cp. Acts 28:3-6. This incident of his stoning is referred to by Paul in 2 Cor. 12:1-4.

III. The Return to Antioch.

1. The visit to Derbe; v. 20.

2. The revisit to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch; vs. 22. 23. Note their purpose. Here is true confirmation. Not the laying on of hands as an ordinance, but the encouragement of God's born again people with the word of God.

3. The return to Antioch; vs. 24-26. W..at a triumphant journey it had been! Think of the thousands of souls saved and what it meant to them and to us as we read the Epistles to these churches.

342. THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

Acts 15:1-35

Golden Text: Romans 3:25

I. The Cause of It. Vs. 1, 5. Judaizing teachers had followed Paul and sought to teach the young converts that obedience to the law of Moses was necessary to salvation as well as faith in Christ, thus mixing law with grace. This pernicious doctrine of legalism still exists in this day, creating bondage, confusion and despair. Cp. Gal. 3:1-14; Romans 2:25-29; 4:9-12; 3:20-26; John 8:36; Eph. 2:8, 9, etc.

II. The Controversy. V. 2. Note Paul's firm stand against this perversion of the doctrine of grace. Cp. Gal. 2:1-5, 11; 1:6-10; Romans 10:1-12. Have we ever thanked God for the Apostle Paul?

III. The Council. Vs. 5-21. The subject—The relation of the law to Gentile believers.

1. The assertion; v. 5. Thus the issue was made clear by this proposition.
2. The evidence. Vs. 6-21. (1) Peter; vs. 7-11. (a) His call; v. 7. Cp. Acts 10:9-18, 34-48; 11:1-18. (b) The seal of it—The Spirit of God. V. 8. This is the new birth. John 3:3-8. (c) The result of it. V. 9. "No difference," the only obvious conclusion. Cp. Romans 10:12, 13; 3:22, 23, etc. (d) A reasonable deduction; v. 10. Cp. Matt. 23:4; Gal. 3:10. (e) A frank statement—salvation by grace. V. 11. Note this particularly. We are saved by grace. Eph. 2:8; Romans 3:25; 11:6, etc. We stand in grace. Romans 5:2; 1 Cor. 15:10. We are to grow in grace. 2 Peter 3:18. (2) Barnabas and Paul. V. 12. Their witness to the triumphs of God's grace and His power through them. (3) James. Vs. 13-21. (a) The appeal to the Scriptures. Vs. 13-18. Cp. Isa. 8:20; 1 Cor. 2:13; Amos 9:11, 12. Note v. 4. This gives key to God's programme for the present age, not the conversion of the world, but a separated people taken out from it. John 17:6-16; 1 Peter 2:9. The church is the "ecclesia"—the called out assembly. (b) The conclusion. Vs. 19-21. The liberty of the Gospel.

IV. The Consequence. Vs. 22-35. The epistle to the Gentiles.

1. The unanimity. Vs. 22.
2. The purpose. Vs. 3, 24. To settle once for all the fact that salvation was of grace and therefore apart from all human merit and works of the law. (1) The law demands absolute obedience for acceptance with God, and declares "Do and thou shalt live." Romans 10:5; Ezek. 20:11, 13, 21. The Gospel proffers to the vilest sinner a free pardon on the ground of absolute grace, on the condition of faith in the finished work of Christ and acceptance of Him as Savior and Lord. Romans 4:5; 3:21-26; 4:24, 25; 5:1, 6-10; 10:6-11, etc., etc. (2) The law brings man under a yoke of bondage. Acts 15:10. The Gospel brings life (John 3:16, 36), light (2 Cor. 4:6), liberty (Gal. 5:1).
3. The content. Vs. 28, 29. Note the superintendency of the Holy Spirit in the assembly. He was not only resident but president in the church. Note also the testimony to Barnabas and Paul. Vs. 25, 26.
4. The consequence. Vs. 30-35. Joy, peace, edification and blessing on the world.

343. THE MACEDONIAN CALL

Acts 15:36 to 16:15

Golden Text: Isaiah 45:22

I. The Proposal. V. 36. Paul had the true pastor heart. He had seen heathen in pagan darkness made "brethren." Heb. 2:11; Acts 15:23. Note the prominence of this word in Acts. Now he desired to see their spiritual condition. Progress and growth should be characteristic of "the brethren." 2 Peter 3:18; Heb. 6:1; Phil. 3:14; Col. 2:6.

II. The Contention Vs. 37-41.

Its cause. John Mark; vs. 3:38. Note his history. (1) Instructed at Jerusalem. Acts 12:12. (2) Trained at Antioch. Acts 12:25. (3) Tried and found wanting at Perga. Acts 13:13. (4) Restored at Antioch; Acts 15:39. (5) Approved at Rome. Col. 4:10, 11; 2 Tim. 4:11. Here is a true history of one who failed but "came back" by the grace of God.

2. Its result—A new worker with Paul—Silas Vs. 39-41. Note their service—confirming the churches. How? By the word of God. This is the only confirmation known in Scripture.

III. The New Worker. 16:1-5. Timothy, the man of God.

1. His ancestry. 2 Tim. 1:5. Who can estimate the value of Godly parentage! Cp. Samuel, Moses, etc.
2. His upbringing—In the nuture and admonition of the Lord; Eph. 6:1-4.
3. His education—The word of God. 2 Tim. 3:14, 15.
4. His conversion. Acts 14:6, 7.
5. His character. Acts 16:2. "A good report." Cp. Phil. 2:15, 16; Col. 4:5, 6; Matt. 5:16.
6. His call. Acts 16:3. This time God uses a human agent.
7. His continuance. 2 Tim. 1:2. Many years later he is a comfort to the aged Paul and still going ahead. O, for more Timothys!

IV. The Macedonian Call. 16:6-15.

1. Divine guidance. Vs. 6-8. The Holy Spirit is the believer's Guide. See John 16:13, 14. Here His guidance is direct and the Apostle was sensitive to His leading. Are we? Eph. 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thess. 5:19; Gal. 5:22-25, etc.
2. Divine call. Vs. 9, 10. (1) Its source—God. God often spake in visions in the Acts. (Acts 9:10; 10:3, 17, 19; 11:5; 12:9; 18:9.) We now have the complete revelation in His word. (2) Its content. "Come and help." This is the inarticulate call of the heathen today. Have we responded? Isa. 6:8; Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19, etc. (3) Its effect. V .10. Prompt obedience based on assurance. Note the "we" of v. 10. Luke now joined them.
3. Divine blessing. Vs. 11-15. (1) The place. V. 13. (2) The method. V. 13. Personal work. (3) The result. Vs. 14-15. Note what she was, moral, intelligent and pious. (b) What she did—She heard, her heart was opened, she gave attention to the word, she believed and was saved. (c) What she became. A Christian. She was baptized and offered hospitality. What a beautiful record of God's dealing with a soul!

344. THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER

Acts 16:16-40

Golden Text: Acts 16:31

I. The Circumstances. Vs. 16-19.

1. Her sad condition V. 16. Controlled by a demon. A spiritistic medium. To a lesser degree true of all by nature. See Eph. 2:1-3; Col. 1-13; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26.
2. The demonic testimony. V. 17. God does not want the testimony of demons, nor their patronage. See Eph. 5:11; Mark 1:24, 25, 34; 3:11, 12; Luke 4:41; 2 Cor. 6:14-17.
3. The wonderful deliverance. V. 18. (1) The command, "come out." (2) The authority, "In the Name." (3) The result. V. 18. "Came out." Cp. Acts 4:12; 3:16; 2:21; 1 John 2:12; Acts 13:38; 10:43.
4. The effect on her masters. V. 19. Cp. 1 Tim. 6:10.

II The Imprisonment. Vs. 22-25.

1. The unjust charge. Vs. 20, 21. The Devil hates the gospel. Its unjustness. How fervent religious people can be when it affects the pocket book! Cp. Matt. 5:10, 11; 2 Tim. 3:12.
2. The cruel imprisonment. Vs. 22-24. (1) The stripping. V. 22. (2) The stripes. V. 23. Cp. 2 Cor. 11:25, etc. Cp. 2 Cor. 4:17, 18! (3) The stocks. V. 24. The dark and filthy prison with the additional torture of the stocks was enough to quell the bravest spirit!
3. The strange result. V. 25. (1) The prayers—Who for? Cp. Matt. 5:44, 45; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60. (2) The praises. What for? Acts 5:41; James 1:2; 2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Thess. 5:18; Phil. 4:4. (3) The prisoners. They heard. Thus was the prison turned into a place of gospel testimony. 2 Tim. 4:2.

III. The Earthquake. V. 26.

1. A revelation of God's power. Job 38:4; 40:9; 1 Kings 19:11, 12; Matt. 27:55. The God Who made the earth can shake it.
2. A token of God's judgment. Heb. 12:25, 26.
3. A type of future judgment. Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:11; Rev. 16:18; Heb. 12:25-27.

IV. The Jailer's Conversion. Vs. 27-34. McLaren describes this scene as "A heathen at sunset, a Christian at sunrise."

1. He heard the word. Doubtless Paul had spoken to him and he had heard their prayers and praises. Cp. Romans 10:17; Heb. 4:12; John 5:24; 1 Peter 2:23; James 1:14.
2. He was awakened. V. 2. The sinner is asleep to his danger. Cp. The sleep of indifference, religiousness, formality, pride, etc. He must be aroused. Jonah 1:6.
3. All earthly hopes gone. V. 2. Good to be brought to an end of oneself.
4. He trembled. V. 29. Here is true conviction. Acts 9:6; Isa. 66:1, 2.
5. He desired salvation. V. 30. A proof of repentance, i. e., change of mind. This question is the universal cry of the sin-convicted soul.
6. He was told the way. V. 31. (1) Simple; "believe." Cp. John 3:16, etc. (2) Personal; "Lord Jesus Christ." (3) Effectual; "saved."
7. He became a Christian, together with his house. Vs. 32-34. (1) He believed. V. 34. (2) Baptism. V. 33. (3) Hospitality and kindness. Vs. 33, 34. (4) Joy. V. 34. Is this experience of regeneration yours?

V. The Sequel. Vs. 36-40.

345. PAUL AT THESSALONICA AND BEREA

Acts 17:1-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Golden Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:8

I. Faithful Proclamation. Vs. 1-4. A pattern for the present day Christian worker. Paul reasoned from the Scriptures; opened the Scriptures and alleged from the Scripture. Here are many methods but one aim—to present Christ.

1. The men. V. 1. Cp. 1 Thess. 2:1-13; 1:5. (1) Men of spiritual power. 1 Thess. 1:5. They came in the power and energy of the Spirit of God. (2) Men with determined purpose. 1 Thess. 2:9. They had one object—to preach Christ. (3) Men of blameless lives. 1 Thess. 2:10. These are the essential conditions for the Christian worker.
2. The method. V. 2. (1) They went to the people. They didn't wait for the people to come to them. "Go where men are." Mark 16:15. Wesley said, "The world is my parish." (2) They reasoned, not scolded. Salvation is a reasonable thing. Isa. 1:18. (3) They stuck to the Scriptures (v. 2) which they knew. 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:2.
3. The message. V. 3. Christ in all the Scriptures Paul had but one message—Christ. Cp. 1 Cor. 2:2; 1:23. (1) His suffering for sin. 2 Cor. 5:21; Isaiah 53:1-6, etc. (2) His death for sin. 1 Cor. 15:1-3. (3) His resurrection. Romans 4:24, 25. Here is the whole Gospel for the whole world.

II. Joyful Acceptation. V. 4. 1 Thess. 1:6, 9-10; 2:13. A pattern for the sinner.

1. Reception. V. 4. Cp. 1 Thess. 2:13. This is essential. Psalm 119:130; John 5:24; Matt. 11:15; Romans 10:17.
2. Regeneration. 1 Thess. 2:13; 1:9; John 1:18; 1 Peter 2:23; John 3:3-5.
3. Result. (1) Work of faith. 1 Thess. 1:3, 9. Cp. Ezek. 33:11. Turned to God from idols. Note the order. Not turned from idols to God. (2) Labor of love—serve living God. Romans 12:1, 2. (3) Patience of hope—wait for His Son. 1 Thess. 1:3, 19; 4:13-18; John 14:1-3, etc.

III. Bitter Opposition. Vs. 5-9.

1. Their attitude. V. 5. Unbelief and envy, a tragic combination. "Light rejected bringeth night." Prov. 14:30; 27:4; Matt. 27:18; Mark 15:10.
2. Their accusation. Vs. 6-9. V. 6 is quite true in a sense. The world has been upset through sin. Man has been upset in his mind, heart and will. See Romans 1. Thus is totally depraved. The gospel is the means God uses to set the world right side up again. The cross is the lever, the empty grave the fulcrum and the Spirit of God the power through the preached word.

IV. Persistent Continuation. Vs. 10-14. Matt. 10:3. "Everlastingly at it," was Paul's motto. Note the description of the Bereans—O for more of them!

1. Sincere. V. 11. "Noble," "open minded." Luke 8:15.
2. Searchers. V. 11. John 5:39. They tested it by the word. 1 Thess. 5:21; Isa. 8:20; Prov. 2:4.
3. Saved. V. 12. The natural result of a sincere search. Isa. 5:6-8; Jer. 29:13.

346. PAUL AT ATHENS

Acts 17:15-34

Golden Text: Acts 17:31

I. An Idolatrous City. Vs. 15, 16. Read up on Athens and all these cities in a good Bible dictionary. The city was full of idols even to one "To the unknown God" lest they should have forgotten any! Athens is picture of the world today which is full of idolatry.

1. What an idol is. Someone has defined it as "That which a man sees with his heart. That to which he makes sacrifice." An idol is forged in a man's mind and reflects his true thought. It is that on which the heart is set, to the usurpation of the living God, whatever its name may be called. Some modern idols. The gods of Pleasure, Popularity, Money, Sport, Fashion at whose shrine millions worship.
2. What idolatry does. (1) Defies God and goes against His express command. Exod. 20:3. (2) Produces likeness to the idol worshipped. Psalm 115:3-8. (3) Brings disaster and judgment to the idolator. All men's idols are dumb. 2 Kings 17:13-19; 1 John 5:21.

II. A Stirred Apostle. Vs. 16, 17. He who would stir others must be stirred himself! Cp. 1 Cor. 9:16; Romans 9:1-3; 10:1; John 2:17; Matt. 9:36; 14:14. The great need for today is a moved heart, a stirred spirit, and a resolute will.

III. An Impassioned Address. Vs. 18-31. This demands the closest study, combating as it does, all the ancient and modern cults.

1. Their request. Vs. 18-21. Prompted by mere curiosity but Paul was quick to seize the slightest opportunity. He was "ready." Romans 1:15; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Tim. 4:2.
2. His response. Vs. 22-31. Subject: "The Unknown God revealed." (1) The protest. Vs. 22, 23. "Too religious." (R. V.). No scarcity of religion then as now. Religion is a natural product of the human heart, but Christianity is a direct revelation from God. (2) The proclamation. God has made himself known. (a) In creation. V. 24. Cp. Romans 1:19, 20; Psalm 19:1-6. In creation God's power and Godhead is displayed so that idolatry is inexcusable. (b) In life. V. 25. The mystery of life is still an enigma to the wisest of men. In life God reveals His wisdom. Psalm 139:14-16. The more one studies the complex and varied forms of life, the greater God's wisdom is appreciated. (c) In human history. V. 26. Here God reveals His sovereignity as the Governor among the nations. Psalms 22:28; 47:8. A study of history unfolds this. (d) In human reason. Vs. 27-29. Man instinctively knows of a Supreme Being and a future life. Eccles. 3:11. "World" should read "Eternity." (e) In Christ. Vs. 30, 31. The supreme revelation of eternal God. God Himself in Man! John 1:18; 14:7-9; 1 Tim. 3:16. Note the conclusion drawn. Repent because of what Christ is, has done, and will yet do.

IV. A Varied Result. Vs. 32-34.

1. Rejecters. V. 32.
2. Neglecters. V. 32.
3. Accepters. V. 34.

How typical of today!

347. PAUL AT CORINTH

Acts 18:1-17; 1 Corinthians2:1-14

Golden Text: 1 Corinthians 3:16

I. His Occupation. Vs. 1-3. A tent maker; his business, to preach the gospel. Paul adopted this means

1. So that the Gospel would be without charge. 1 Cor. 9:18-23; 2 Cor. 11:7-9; 3 John 7; Matt. 10:8; Isa. 55:1, 2; Rev. 21:6, 17.
2. That he might be free from all obligations to the Corinthians. 2 Cor. 12:13-15; 1 Cor. 9:12; 2 Thess. 3:8, 9; 1 Thess. 2:9.

II. His New Associates. V. 2. Aquila and Priscilla.

1. Fellow workers. Acts 18:2.
2. Associate ministers. Acts 18:18.
3. Godly and wise teachers. They kept to their sphere. Acts 18:26.
4. Bold helpers. Romans 16:3, 4. What a testimony!
5. Hospitable brethren—church in house. 1 Cor. 16:19. Plenty of room for more like this!

III. His Message to the Jews Rejected. Vs. 3-6.

1. Its fervency; v. 5. "Pressed." The Divine urge.
2. Its result. V. 6. Open blasphemy and opposition, but Paul had done his duty. 1 Cor. 9:16; Ezek. 33:1-5; Acts 20:26, 27. Note, this only applied to Jews in Corinth, for he preached afterwards to Jews in other towns.

IV. His Encouragement. Vs. 7-10.

1. Divine blessing. Vs. 7-8. Note the order, which hasn't changed. (1) Hearing. V. 8. What did they hear? Cp. 1 Cor. 15:1-5; 2:1-5. The gospel of God concerning the Son of God told in the power of the Spirit of God. An irresistable combination! (2) Believing, i. e., laying hold by faith on the provision God made. (3) Baptized. The open acknowledgment of their union with Christ in death and resurrection. Romans 6:3, 4, etc.
2. Divine encouragement. Vs. 9, 10. One of the many visions given to Paul. Note (1) Comfort. "Not afraid." (2) Command. "Speak." (3) Companionship. "I with thee." (4) Cause. "Much people." Cp. Some other encouragements. Isa. 41:10-20; Psalm 37:1-7, etc.

V. His Long Sojourn. Vs. 11-17. What he taught them during this time can be found, in part, in his two epistles to them.

1. The accusation. Vs. 12, 13. After 18 months of preaching their hearts were harder through continual rejection. Heb. 3:13.
2. The dismissal. Vs. 14-17. Cp. V. 10. The attitude of Gallio reflects a prevelent attitude today. V. 17. Indifference to everything pertaining to spiritual things.

348. PAUL'S LETTER TO CORINTHIANS

1 Corinthians 1:18-31; 13:1-13

Golden Text: 1 Corinthians 13:13

We suggest just three of the many themes treated.

I. Concerning the Preaching of the Cross. 1:18-31.

1. To the lost—foolishness. Because not founded on human wisdom. Vs. 19-21. The cross is an offence. Gal. 5:11. (1) To human wisdom. Its truth revealed to babes. Matt. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:26-28. (2) To human merit, because good works cannot save. Eph. 2:8, 9. (3) To pride, because God chooses the poor, etc. 1 Cor. 1:26-28. (4) To the will, because it calls for humiliation and surrender. (5) To the religious, because it refuses to recognize any difference. Romans 3:23; 10:12.
2. To the saved—wisdom. (1) It reveals God's wisdom—Christ. V. 24. Cp. Prov. 8:1-36; Col. 2:3. (2) It reveals God's love. John 3:16; 1 John 3:16, etc. (3) It reveals God's salvation. Vs. 18, 30. (4) It reveals God's power. V. 24. Romans 1:16, etc.

II. Concerning Christian Liberty. 8:1-13.

1. The right way to approach it. Vs. 1-6. Not by the avenue of knowledge only, but of love. Mere knowledge apart from love results in inflation, and reveals one's ignorance. V. 2. The way of love is the way of true liberty. Vs. 4-6.
2. The right spirit to adopt. Vs. 7-12. (1) Consider the weaker. Vs. 7-9. (2) Forbear with the other. Vs. 7, 10-12.
3. The right way to act. V. 13. Self denial for the other's sake. Cp. 2 Cor. 5:15; Romans 14:7. Liberty governed by love is the rule of the Christian life.

III. Concerning Love. 1 Cor. 13:1-13.

1. Love's contrast. V. 1-3. Love is here contrasted and compared with (1) Oratory. V. 1. (2) Gift of prophecy. V. 2a. (3) Wisdom. V. 2b. (4) Knowledge. V. 2c. (5) Faith. V. 2d. (6) Good works. V. 3a. (7) Martyrdom. V. 3b. Without love their total value is zero! In other words, love is greater than anything we can say, possess or bestow.
2. Love's characteristics. Vs. 4-7. (1) Long-suffering. V. 4. (2) Kind. V. 4. (3) Unenvious. V. 4. (4) Unobtrusive. V. 4. (5) Humble. V. 4. (6) Moderate. V. 5. (7) Unselfish. V. 5. (8) Peaceful. V. 5. (9) Wholesome. V. 6. (10) Truthful. V. 6. (11) Patient. V. 7. (12) Believing. V. 7. (13) Hopeful. V. 7. (14) Enduring. V. 7. Substitute for "love," the words "The Lord Jesus Christ," and you will have a true description of our blessed Lord.
3. Love's continuance. Vs. 8-13. It is the abiding virtue and, as Drummond expressed it: "The greatest thing in the world."

349. PAUL AT EPHESUS

Acts 18:19—19:41

Golden Text: Ephesians 1:7

I. His Return to Jerusalem. 18:18-23.

1. The vow. V. 18. An apparent lapse. Cp. Romans 6:14; 2 Cor. 3:7-14; Gal. 3:23-28. It is good to know that inspiration terminates on the writings, and not on the writers!
2. The return. Vs. 19-23. Apparently a very short stay in Jerusalem. Paul was essentially a pioneer.

II. The Ministry of Apollos. Vs. 24-28.

1. His incomplete ministry. Vs. 24, 25. He only had partial truth; i. e., that Jesus was the promised Messiah and that baptism was unto repentance with a view to faith in Christ. He seems to have known nothing of the distinctive doctrines of grace, justification through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, etc. Zeal must have the balance of knowledge to be truly effective. God neither wants zeal without knowledge, or knowledge without zeal. Both must be balanced in the believer.
2. His faithful tutors. V. 26. The quiet, kindly, unobtrusive correction through the word of God. What a lesson in Godly tact! 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2:24, 25; 2:2.
3. The God-honoring result. Vs. 27, 28.

III. The return to Ephesus. 19:1-20.

1. The disciples of John. Vs. 1-7. (1) The question. V. 2. See R. V. "When." (2) The reply. V. 2. (3) The explanation; 3, 4. Obviously these disciples were not Christians at all, for all Christians are indwelt by the Spirit of God. Romans 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Eph. 1:13; 4:30, etc. They had been baptized unto repentance with a view to faith in Christ's finished work, but had never trusted in the finished work of Christ. (4) The result. Vs. 5-7. A special manifestation of the Spirit accorded them. This is the last time such a manifestation is mentioned in the Acts. Note each occurance and it will be seen that each marks a new beginning.
2. The two years' ministry. Vs. 8-20. (1) In the synagogue. Vs. 8, 9. (2) In the school. Vs. 9, 10. There was no sanctity in places with Paul. Cp. Modern sacerdotalism. Note the various places in which the gospel was preached in the Acts. (3) The miracles. Vs. 11, 12. Note who wrought them—God, not Paul. Paul was but a channel. These miracles were for a certain time and definite purpose. (4) The attempted imitation. Vs. 13-17. And its effect. Here the Devil overreached himself. (5) The costly bonfire. Vs. 18-20. Books of magic, spiritistic incantations, etc. Good riddance to bad but expensive rubbish! They did not hide, sell, or give them away, but destroyed them.

IV. The Great Riot. Vs. 21-41.

1. The Cause. Vs. 21-27. Filthy lucre. 1 Tim. 6:10. Not the first time that the Gospel has interfered with some businesses, such as the brewers and pawnbrokers!
2. The confusion. Vs. 28-34. An interesting example of mob psychology, comparable to some modern demonstrations!
3. The conclusion. Vs. 35-41. The diplomatic town clerk, and Paul's affectionate farewell; 20:1.

350. THE BELIEVER'S BIOGRAPHY

Ephesians 2:1-22

Golden Text: Romans 5:10

Here is a graphic picture of man by nature and man by grace.

I. Past. By Nature. Eph. 2:1-3. Every believer has a black past.

1. Dead in sins. V. 1. Death means separation. Man by nature is separated from God by his sins. Isa. 59:1, 2; Eph. 2:12; Col. 2:13; 1 Tim. 5:6; Therefore is helpless to save himself. He needs life. John 10:10; 3:16, 36, etc. He needs to be born again. John 3:3.
2. Depraved through sin. V. 2a. The way of the world. See 1 John 2:15; 5:19; John 1:10; Romans 1:28-32; 3:10-18; 1 Peter 4:3.
3. Deluded by Satan. V. 2b. Directed and deceived by him. Luke 11:21, 22; Tim. 2:26. We are guided by God or Satan. Luke 16:13.
4. Disobedient to God. V. 2c. To His way, His will and His word. Titus 3:3; Col. 3:6; Eph. 5:6; 1 Peter 2:8.
5. Defiled by sin. V. 3. "Fulfil . . . lust." What a fearful picture! Cp. Jer. 17:9, 10; Psalm 14:2, 3; Job. 15:16; 9:30, 31; 40:4; Isa. 6:5; 64:6.
6. Darkened in mind. Vs. 3c. Cp. Eph. 4:18; 2 Cor. 4:4; Isa. 43:8; Matt. 15:14; Rev. 3:17; 1 John 2:11; John 12:35, 36; Col. 2:13; John 1:5; 3:19, 20.
7. Doomed to eternal wrath. V. 3c. Cp. John 3:36; Romans 1:18; 2 Thess. 1:7, 8; Mark 16:16. In spite of this terrible indictment God loved the sinner! Eph. 2:4; John 3:16; Romans 5:7, 8, etc.

II. Present. By Grace. Vs. 4-6, 8-22. Every believer has a blessed present.

1. Quickened; v. 1; i. e., made alive. The new birth—Life (1) Christ imported it. John 10:10; 2 Tim. 1:10. (2) Word inspires it. John 3:5; 1 Peter 2:23. (3) The Spirit imparts it. Eph. 1:13; John 3:5; Romans 8:2.
2. Raised with Christ. V. 6. Therefore free from condemnation, justified and sanctified. Col. 3:1-3.
3. Seated with Him. V. 6. Beyond the reach of judgment. Accepted in Him. Cp. Eph. 1:6.
4. Saved by Him. Vs. 5, 8, 9. Note (1) The source—By grace—pure, free unmerited favor. Cp. Romans 11:6; 2 Cor. 8:9; John 1:17. (2) The certainty "are;" no doubt about it. Cp. Present tenses of salvation. Acts 13:38; 1 John 2:12; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 John 4:17; John 5:24, etc. (3) The object, "Ye." Note who and what they were. Vs. 2. 3. (4) The content of it. "Saved." From what? To what? For what? (5) The medium, "faith."
5. Service for Him. V. 10. "Good works." Matt. 5:16; Titus 3:8; Col. 3:24; 1 Thess. 1:9.
6. Access to Him. Vs. 13-18. Cp. Romans 5:2; Heb. 10:19-25.
7. Members of Him. Vs. 19-22. Cp. Eph. 1:22, 23. 1 Cor. 1:11-13.

III. Future. V. 7. Cp. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; John 14:1-3; Rev. 21, 22, etc.

351. PAUL'S FAREWELL

Acts 20:1-38

Golden Text: Acts 20:21

I. His Visit to Macedonia and Greece. Vs. 1-5. The first epistle to the Corinthians was written just prior to this. Cp. 1 Cor. 16:5. Note the purpose of this visit. V. 2. It was his last opportunity, for he never returned to them again.

II. The Stay at Troas. Vs. 6-12.

1. The blessed memorial. Vs. 6, 7. (1) The Institutor of it—the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. 11:23; Luke 22:19, 20. (2) The purpose of it. (a) Remembrance. Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:24, 25. (b) Obedience—"This do." 1 Cor. 11:25, 26. (c) Proclamation. 1 Cor. 11:26. "Shew"= proclaim. It proclaims His death to God, and to principalities and powers, etc. (d) Fellowship and communion. 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 John 1:3. (3) The observance of it. (a) Simple. No sacerdotalism, priest-craft, etc. (b) Scriptural. No other guide book but the word of God. (c) Regular. Each first day of week. "As oft." Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:25. (4) The participants should be (a) Disciples only, i. e., born again believers in Christ. Acts 20:7. There should be no mixture. 2 Cor. 6:14-17. (b) Sound in faith. Titus 1:13; 2:2; 2 John 9, 10; 1 Tim. 1:10; Titus 3:10. (c) Sound in life. 1 Cor. 5:11-13.
2. The sad incident Vs. 8, 9.
3. The glad sequel. Vs. 10:12.

III. The Farewell to the Church at Ephesus. Vs. 13-38.

1. The journey to Miletus. Vs. 13-16.
2. His reminder. Vs. 17-21. Of his past ministry. Paul was a model preacher. (1) The manner of it. V. 19. (a) Humility. (b) Sympathy, "Tears." (c) Fortitude, "temptations." (2) The method of it. (a) Profitable. Vs. 20, 26, 27. (b) Public; v. 20. (c) Private; v. 20. (3) The matter in it. V. 21. (a) Repentance toward God. Acts 17:30, 31; Luke 13:3; 2 Peter 3:9. (b) Faith in Christ. Acts 16:31; 1 Cor. 2:1-5; Romans 3:23-26.
3. His resolution. Vs. 22-29. Would that each could say truthfully. V. 24.
4. His revelation. Vs. 25-31. (1) Regarding his own life. Vs. 22. 23, 25. (2) Regarding heresy in the church; vs. 28-30. Coming from without and within. Without. Acts 15:1; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Peter 2:1, 2, etc. Within. 1 Cor. 3:1-4; 1 Tim. 1:20; 3 John 9:10. Here is "apostolic succession!"
5. His benediction. Vs. 32-35. (1) To God for strength and blessing. (2) To the word for knowledge and assurance. (3) To one another for mutual help and edification. V. 35. Cp. Some other benedictions. Romans 16:25-27; 1 Cor. 15:38; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 13:20, 21, etc.
6. The sad farewell. Vs. 36-38. Here is a picture that may well stir the hearts of all. Both groups knew it was the last time they would see each other in the body.

352. THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

Romans 12:1—13:7

Golden Text: Romans 12:2

The Christian life is not only a life of privilege and blessing but also of responsibility and service.

I. In Relation to God. 12:1, 2.

1. To yield to Him. V. 1. (1) The basis of the appeal. "The mercies of God." This refers back to chapter 8. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 are parenthetical. (a) The mercy of no condemnation. Romans 8:1. (b) Of sonship. 14-18. (c) Of future complete redemption. Vs. 19-23. (d) Of the Spirit's work in and for us. Vs. 24-27. (e) Of God's care for His own. V. 28. (f) Of God's purposes for us. Vs. 29-31. (g) Of God's promises. V. 32. (h) Of God's justification. V. 33. (i) Of Christ's intercession. V. 34. (j) Of the saint's eternal security. Vs. 35-39. (2) The content of the appeal—"Present your bodies." He wants our lips to preach. Romans 10:9-17. Hearts to govern. Eph. 3:17; Rev. 3:20. Ears to hear. Rev. 3:13. Hands to work. Matt. 25:34-37. Talents to serve. Exod. 31:3. Feet to walk in His ways. Eph. 2:10; 4:1; 5:2; 5:8, 15; Luke 24:15. Lives to reproduce His own. Gal. 2:20. Wills to decide to do His will. Cp. Romans 6:11-19. (3) The reasonableness of the appeal. V. 1. We are His (a) by choice. Romans 8:28, 29; 1 Peter 1:2; John 17:6, etc. (b) Purchase. 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18; 2:9 (Marg.). (c) Deliverance. Col. 1:13; 1 Cor. 6:11; Romans 6:13-19.
2. To live for Him. V. 2. An unworldly life. Cp Titus 2:11-13; 1 John 2:15-17; John 17:9, 10, 14-18.
3. To prove His perfect will. V. 2. Cp. Heb. 10:7; John 4:34; Mark 3:35 (R. V.); Psalms 143:10; 40:8; 1 John 2:17; 1 Thess. 4:3; John 7:17; 1 John 5:14.

II. In Relation to Fellow Believers. Vs. 3-16.

1. His service to them. Vs. 3-8. Ministering the gift that God has given with humility, simplicity, diligence and cheerfulness.
2. His attitude towards them. Vs. 9-16. Loving. V. 9. Discerning. V. 9. Humble. V. 10. Diligent. V. 11. Rejoicing. V. 12. Patient. V. 12. Prayerful. V. 12. Generous. V. 13. Hospitable. V. 13. Forgiving. V. 14. Sympathetic. V. 15.

III. In Relation to the World. 12:17; 13:7.

1. To our fellowmen. Vs. 17-21. (1) Honesty of life. V. 17. Cp. 2 Cor. 8:21; 1 Thess. 5:22. (2) Peaceableness of character. V. 18. Cp. Phil. 2:15. (3) Forgiving of spirit. Vs. 19-21. Cp. Matt. 6:12-15.
2. To the powers that be. 13:1-7. Cp. 1 Peter 2:13-17. (1) Their origin. Of God. 13:1, 2. (2) Their purpose. Vs. 3, 4. The revenger of evil. God is behind organized government. Exhort the believer to pray for world rulers. 1 Tim. 2:1-4. (3) The conclusion. Vs. 6, 7. The Christian should be obedient to constituted authority, as far as it is possible with a good conscience towards God.

353. PAUL'S LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

Acts 21:1-40

Golden Text: 2 Timothy 1:12

I. The Journey. Vs. 1-16.

1. From Miletus to Tyre. Vs. 1-6. (1) The finding of the disciples; v. 4. The first thing Paul did was to look up the people of God and enjoy the fellowship of his heaven-born, heaven-bound and heaven-bent companions. Do we value Christian fellowship and seek it at all times? Malachi 3:16. (2) The warning through the Spirit; v. 4. The purpose of this journey seems to have been the carrying of a gift to the poor saints at Jerusalem. Romans 15:25-28; Acts 24:17. (3) The farewell; v. 5. Of old it was recorded, "Behold how these Christians love one another."
2. From Tyre to Caesarea; vs. 7-16. (1) The sojourn with Philip; vs. 8-10. Cp. Acts 6:5; 8:5-8, 26-40. After almost 30 years Philip is still going on with God, and God has honored his family; v. 9. We are not told what the sphere of his daughters was, but we may be certain it was not public utterance in the assembly of the saints. The Spirit of God never leads contrary to His inspired word. 1 Cor. 14:34, etc. (2) The prophecy of Agabus; vs. 10, 11. Here prophecy is in the sense of foretelling and was a gift to the early church; 1 Cor. 12:10. Prophecy now is in the sense of forthtelling from God's completed revelation—the Bible. (3) Paul's response; vs. 12-16. A brave avowal. Cp. Acts 20:24; Phil. 1:20. Paul's action has been questioned, but never his courage.

II. The Arrival. Vs. 17-22.

1. Their reception; v. 17.
2. Their recital; vs. 18-20. And its effect on the Jewish brethren.
3. The recommendation; vs. 21-26. A return to the "beggarly elements;" Gal. 4:9. (1) The cause; vs. 20-22. Cp. Romans 10:2-4, etc. (2) The plan; vs 23-25. To take a vow involving a Jewish sacrifice. Cp. Heb. 10:2, 9-12. (3) The acquiescence; v. 26. God not only gives us the record of men's faith and fearlessness, but also of their failures. Undoubtedly this was a backward step of the Apostle Paul's, for this now necessitated a sacrifice which Christ's Sacrifice had negated. However, God saw to it that he was not allowed to complete the purification.

III. The Arrest. Vs. 23-40.

1. The cause. His old enemies, the Jews of Asia; v. 27.
2. The accusation; vs. 28, 29. False, as usual.
3. The riot; vs. 30, 31. The bitter hatred of the Jew at the presentation of the Messiahship of Christ has not died out yet. The modern Jew is taught from childhood to hate the name of Jesus.
4. The arrest; vs. 32-40. God "makes the wrath of His enemies to praise Him" and used this method to keep Paul from his purpose to keep the vow.

354. PAUL'S SPEECH TO THE JEWS

Acts 22

Golden Text: Romans 1:16

I. His Declaration. Vs. 1-21. Concerning

1. His birth and education; vs. 1-3. Cp. Phil. 3:4, 5. He had benefits of birth and breeding that few of his hearers had. (1) Free born; v. 28. (2) Educated at feet of the best teacher; v. 3. Cp. Acts 5:34. (3) Orthodox in the Jewish religion; v. 3.
2. His religious zeal and bigotry against Christianity; vs. 4, 5. Paul was thorough in everything he did. Cp. 1 Tim. 1:13; Romans 10:2, 3; Acts 26:9. Note his reference to "this way." Christianity is a way of life, peace, joy, faith, holiness, privilege, worship and service, etc. All of which came through Christ Who is "the Way;" John 14:6.
3. His wonderful conversion; vs. 6-16. (1) The heavenly light; v. 6. Acts 7:3; 26:13. (2) The heavenly voice; vs. 7-9. (a) The question; v. 7. (b) The answer; v. 8. Here he learned something of the oneness of the body of Christ. He was persecuting the body and the Head objected; Eph. 1:22. 23. (3) The penitent cry; v. 10. All the braggardness and religious self-sufficiency has gone. The proud will is broken. Oh, what a change! Many have sought to explain this as a hallucination, a brain storm, sun stroke and epilipsy! If so. it lasted a long while! John 3:3; 5:24. Note v. 11: "I could not see for the glory of that light." He was blinded, from that moment, to all that detracted from Christ. He was blind to earthly gain, to religious prestige and to selfish ambition. (4) The Divine message; vs. 12-16. (a) His sight received; vs. 12, 13. (b) The Divine purpose revealed; vs. 14, 15. Chosen; v. 14. Cp Eph. 1:4; Romans :29-31. The purpose—to know His will. Cp. Phil. 3:12. The witness and seal. To see His face and hear His voice. Cp. 1 Cor. 9:1. (c) The command; v. 16. "Arise." Baptism. The washing away of sins is by calling on name of the Lord and not by baptism. (5) The further vision. Vs. 17-21. Not before revealed, but one of the many given to Paul. Its content—world witness of Christ to the Gentiles.

II. His Rejection. Vs. 22, 23. As his Master had been before him.

1. The cause of it; v. 22. "This word." i. e., "Gentiles." It hurt their religious pride to think that Gentiles should be included in the favor of God, and the Gospel's proclamation, and there is no hatred like religious hatred; Romans 2:7-29.
2. The vehemence of it; vs. 22. 23.

III. His Expostulation. Vs. 24-30.

1. His question; v. 25
2. The answer; vs. 26-28. Free born, i. e., by right of birth. His father was a Roman citizen.
3. The result: vs. 29. 30.

355. PAUL BEFORE THE COUNCIL AND FELIX

Acts 23-24

Golden Text: Philippians 1:20

I. The Council. 23:1-10.

1. Paul's speech; v. 1. One of his shortest! Would that all could say it in truth! It took a moment to say, and a lifetime to live! Cp. Acts 24:16; 2 Cor. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 13:18; 1 John 3:21.
2. The blow and the word; vs. 2-5. Cp. Deut. 25: 1. Paul was not above taking back his words. Though he spoke truly, he spoke hastily. We never read of Christ taking back any utterance He made.
3. The Council divided; vs. 6-9. Paul's statement here was purposely designed to produce confusion, for the Sadducees denied the truth of the resurrection of the body; Matt. 22:23.

II. The Encouragement. V. 11.

1. How gracious the Lord was to His servant! The Lord stood by him. Cp. Heb. 13:5, 6; Matt. 28:19, 20; 2 Tim. 4:17; Acts 27:23.
2. Note the message—"be of good cheer." Cp. Note: Three other good cheers. (1) Of His pardon; Matt. 9:2. (2) Of His presence; Matt. 14:27. (3) Promise; John 16:33. Here it is of His protection.

III. The Conspiracy and Its Frustration. Vs. 12-35. One with God is a majority! Romans 8:31; Psalm 118:6.

1. The vow; vs. 12. 13. Alas for mere human vows when pitted against God's will.
2. The plot; vs. 14, 15. Cp. John 16:2-4.
3. The discovery; vs. 16-22. Omnipotence has servants everywhere.
4. The escape; vs. 23-33. One wonders whether these people died of starvation—hardly!

IV. Paul Before Felix. 24:1-23.

1. The accusation; vs. 1-9. (1) The introduction; vs. 1-3. Very flowery. (2) The accusation—3 fold; vs. 4-6. Not a very flattering description! Cp. 1 Cor. 4:11-13; Matt. 5:11, 12.
2. The defense; vs. 10-23. (1) A denial of the charge; vs. 10-13. (2) A confession of his faith; vs. 14-16. (a) The Scriptures as his ground; v. 14. They had substituted a mass of tradition for it. Cp. Matt. 15:14, 9; 23:13-33. (b) The resurrection as his hope; v. 15. (c) A good consciene as his possession; v. 16. Truly a good confession. (3) A rehearsal of the events; vs. 17-21.
3. The result; vs. 22, 23. A postponement of the matter.

V. The Interview With Felix. Vs. 24-26.

1. Paul's presentation; vs. 24, 25. What a masterly and powerful presentation it must have been. Note the theme; v. 25. (1) Righteousness of life which he did not possess. (2) Temperance which he did not practice. (3) Judgment to come which he rightly feared. See this in first 3 chapters of Romans.
2. Felix's conviction; v. 25. "Trembled," as well he might. Here the position is reversed and Felix, the judge becomes Felix the prisoner; and Paul, the prisoner, becomes Paul, the judge!
3. Procrastination; vs. 25. 26. Cp. Prov. 9:1; 1:24-31; Heb. 3:13, 15. The perils of indecision. We never read that this "convenient season" ever came. God has only one time. Now! 2 Cor. 6:2.

356. PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

Acts 25-26

Golden Text: Proverbs 27:1

I. **The Long Delay.** 24:27. Doubtless this time was well occupied by earnest prayerful study that prepared him for the strenous time to come.

II. **Paul Before Festus.** 25:1-12.

1. The further plot; vs. 1-6.
2. The accusation; v. 7.
3. Paul's reply; v. 8.
4. The appeal to Caesar; vs. 9-12. The privilege of every Roman. This was to fulfill the Lord's promise to testify in Rome; Acts 23:11. And Paul's desire. Romans 1:8-15; 15:22-33.

III. **Paul Before Agrippa.** 25:13; 26:32.

1. The royal visitor; v. 13. Herod Agrippa II, grandson of the infamous Herod of Matt. 2:1. Look up his history in a good Bible dictionary.
2. The governor's dilemma; vs. 14-21. Note v. 19.
3. The king's request; vs. 22, 23. Cp. The request of his father; Luke 23:7-12. What privileges had been his! See Mark 6:14-27. The greatest prophet and the greatest Man, and now his son was to hear the greatest apostle! Cp. Heb. 12:25; 2:3; Prov. 29:1.
4. The governor's introduction; vs. 24-27.
5. Paul's defense; 26:1-29. What a masterly statement. (1) Introduction; vs. 1-3. He respected authority. Cp. Romans 13:1-7. And exercised courtesy. (2) His testimony to (a) His life prior to his conversion; vs. 4, 5. Cp. Phil. 3:4-7. (b) The folly of the charge against him; vs. 6-8. "The hope of the promise made of God"—Christ. The promised Messiah; Heb. 1:1. Revealed from Genesis to Malachi. (c) His unreasoning blindness, and hatred of Christ and His people; vs. 9-12. Note v. 11. He was never charged with madness till he became spiritually sane! Cp. Vs. 24, 25. (d) His wonderful conversion; vs. 13-15. Note: There are six accounts of Paul's conversion—The historical account; Acts 9. The Hebrew account; Acts 22. The Gentile account; Acts 26. The account that emphasizes God's sovereignty; Gal. 1. Its source was grace excluding human merit; Phil. 3. Its type or pattern; 1 Tim. 1:12-17. (e) His Divine commission; vs. 16-18. The purpose; v. 16. "Minister and witness." The authority—revelation; v. 16. The promise; v. 17. The content; v. 18. Note this very carefully. (f) His prompt obedience; v. 19. (g) His ministry since: vs. 20-23. (3) Festus' interjection; v. 24. It is not the last time that an out and out preacher of the Gospel has been accused of insanity! (4) The fearless reply and question; vs. 25-27. (5) The sad reply; v. 28. Is it yours? "To be almost persuaded is to be almost saved and to be almost saved is to be entirely lost." (6) The noble appeal; v. 29. Would he had given heed to it and been altogether persuaded. (7) The consultation; vs. 31, 32.

357. PAUL SHIPWRECKED

Acts 27

Golden Text: 1 John 5:10

There is much to be learned from this for both saint and sinner.

I. The Prosperous Beginning. Vs. 1-8.

1. The kind centurion; vs. 1-3; Prov. 16:7.
2. Paul's companions; v. 2. Luke (the writer) and Aristarchus. Cp. Col. 4:10; Acts 19:28; Philemon 24.
3. The arrival at Fair Havens; v. 8.

II. The Warning. Vs. 9-13.

1. Revelation; vs. 9:10. Cp. The warnings of the Scriptures to the voyager on the sea of life of the dangers of living and dying in sin. Job 36:18; Ezek. 33:11; Isa. 55:7; John 3:36; Romans 6:23; John 8:21-24; Mark 16:16, etc.; Ezek. 33:7-9; Jer. 12:5.
2. Rejection; vs. 11. 12. The wisdom of the world opposing itself to the wisdom of God. Cp. 1 Cor. 1:18-29; 2:14.
3. Deception; v. 13. The "south wind." Cp. The south winds of this world's pleasures, popularity, etc., that promises so much, but gives so little. They "supposed." Human suppositions versus Divine certainties. Isa. 57:20, 21; Jer. 17:5; 1 Thess. 5:3.

III. The Storm. Vs. 14-20.

1. Its severity; vs. 14-16. Cp. The storms of adversity, trial, temptation, etc., that find the sinner unprepared. Think of the final storm of God's wrath yet to be poured out. Isa. 28:16-18; Rev. 6:12-17; Romans 1:18.
2. The vain efforts; vs. 17-19. How like the sinner's attempt to save himself. Note (1) "Used helps." Cp. Good works, good resolutions, prayers, tears, religious ordinances, etc. (2) "Cast out." Cp. Self denial, asceticism, giving up pleasures, etc., by which many expect to be saved.
3. The hopelessness; v. 20. All dark. No earthly ray of light to lighten the gloom. What a vivid picture of the sinner's helplessness to do anything to save himself. Cp. Eph. 2:12; Romans 5:6. etc.

IV. The Promise. Vs. 21-26. Here is heavenly light. Cp. Psalm 119:130.

1. Its Source—God. Note v. 23. Whose I am—Divine possession. "Whom I serve"—human privilege.
2. Its content—A message of hope, cheer, comfort and salvation. Cp. John 3:16, etc. The gospel.
3. Its certainty. "I believe God." Note Paul did not say, "I believe in God," or "about God;" but "I believe God." Here is Paul's creed. He believed God about his need as a sinner, about Christ as his Savior and about salvation full, free and eternal. Do you believe God? Cp. 1 John 5:9-13; 2 Tim. 1:12; John 5:24.

V. The Shipwreck. Vs. 27-44.

1. Warning; vs. 27-32. The stubbornness of man in resisting God's way of salvation.
2. Encouragement; vs. 33-38. God acknowledged and thanked, and man cheered.
3. Salvation; vs. 39-44. Exactly as God had promised. Joshua 23:14; John 5:24; 10:27-30.

358. THE JOURNEY TO ROME

Acts 28

Golden Text: Romans 10:3

I. The Hospitable Reception. Vs. 1-10.

1. The kind people; vs. 1, 2. How often is this true in heathen lands today where hospitality is given and received by the heralds of the cross.
2. The serpent; vs. 3-6. Note the fluctuation of human opinion. From their idea that he was a murderer, they changed to the opinion he was a god! This miracle fulfilled Christ's promise. Luke 10:19; Mark 16:18.
3. The miracles of healing; vs. 7-10. (1) The father of Publius; v. 8. (2) The inhabitants of Melita; v. 9. Thus did God accompany His word with signs and blessing. (3) The result; v. 10.

II. The Journey to Rome. Vs. 11-13. Uneventful from this point on.

III. The Arrival and Subsequent Ministry. Vs. 14-31.

1. His encouragement; vs. 14, 15. What a cheer to the apostle to see, in far-off Italy, trophies of the grace of God to whom he had sent an epistle some time before! Cp. Romans 1:1-16. Note here (1) His title; v. 1. "A servant of Jesus Christ." (2) His theme—the gospel of God; vs. 2-6. (3) His joy; vs. 8, 9. (4) His desire; vs. 10-13. (5) His object; vs. 14-16. (a) To discharge his debt; v. 14. (b) To preach the gospel; vs. 15, 16.
2. His arrival; v. 16. Here he was allowed partial liberty and doubtless used the time well to both preach the Gospel and write his letters of encouragement and admonition to the saints.
3. His explanation to the Jews; vs. 17-22.
4. His ministry in Rome; vs. 23-31. (1) To the Jews; vs. 23-28. (a) Their desire. Note their reference to Christianity; v. 22. "Spoken against." Cp. Luke 2:34; Acts 24:5. 14; 1 Peter 2:12; 4:14. (b) Paul's theme; v. 23. What a subject, "Christ in all the Scriptures." Cp. Luke 24:26, 27, 44. It might be well to suggest some types out of the Penteteuch, and some prophecies out of the prophets to indicate how full and complete a description is found there of Christ's Person and work. (c) The result; v. 24. The two classes of hearers. Which do you belong to? (d) The solemn charge; vs. 25-27. Light rejected brings night. The fearful sin of unbelief and its consequent results—the dulling of the ears, the blinding of the eyes, the hardening of the heart. Cp. John 12:46, 47; Heb. 3:12, 15. (2) To the Gentiles; vs. 28-31. The two years of blessed ministry in Rome. Note the subject of his ministry; v. 31. Thus did God give Paul the desire of his heart; Romans 1:11, 15. This is the last glimpse we have of the Apostle Paul. By the grace of God and the supply of the Spirit, he had been enabled to go on for God all those years and, as his life draws to a close, he is still busy in the Master's service. May it be ours, like him, to start, continue and finish well.

359. THE CHURCH OF GOD

Ephesians 1:15-23; 2:19-22; 5:23-33
Golden Text: Ephesians 1:22, 23

There is a great deal of misconception as to what the Church of God really is and present-day confusion is the result of this.

I. What It Is Not.

1. The Church is not a building made by man. See Romans 16:5; 1 Cor. 14:23; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2. "The church which is in."
2. It is not any particular sect or denomination. It is possible to belong to these and not belong to the Church of God. Man-made divisions are not according to God's will; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-9.
3. It is not entered by any outward form or ceremony as in the case of secret societies, but is an inward and invisible regeneration; John 3:3; 1 Cor. 12:13.

II. What It Is. God uses many metaphors, or figures, to illustrate what the Church is. We will use three.

1. It is the Body of Christ. Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Eph. 4:14-16; Col. 2:19. (1) The Head is Christ. Col. 2:19; Eph. 1:22, 23. The Church has only one Head and He is in heaven. This eliminates all man-made heads such as Popes, Bishops and Priests. etc. (2) The Body is composed of all born-again persons united to the body by the Spirit of God upon their acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord; 1 Cor. 12:13. This is the Church universal as God sees it. (3) A local church is a company of believers gathered by the Spirit of God in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with Christ in the midst. Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 1:1, 2, etc. (4) Every member of the body of Christ, whether universal or local, is in that body for a distinct purpose. See 1 Cor. 12:13-27; Eph. 4:14-16, etc.
2. It is the Bride of Christ. Eph. 5:28-32; Rev. 19:7, 8; 21:9; 2 Cor. 11:12. (1) The love. Eph. 5:25; 3:17-21. Unmerited, unasked, unsought. 1 John 4:10; Romans 5:7, 8; John 3:16. (2) The Sacrifice, "gave Himself." Eph. 5:25; Gal. 2:20. (3) The purpose; Eph. 5:26, 27. The crowning celebration; Rev. 19:7-9. The practical application. Obedience. Reverence to Him; Eph. 5:22, 32, 33.
3. It is the Building of God. 1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:21, 22; 1 Peter 2:5. (1) The Architect. God. His eternal purpose. Eph. 1:9, 10; 3:11; Romans 11:33-36. (2) The Plans—found in the word of God. (3) The foundation—Christ. Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20; 2 Tim. 2:19; Matt. 7:25. (4) The superstructure—living stones—Believers. Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Peter 2:5. Each living stone is, in turn, a temple of God! 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:20, etc. (5) The purpose. (a) An habitation of God; Eph. 2:20. (b) A demonstration of God's wisdom; Eph. 3:10. (c) A cause for eternal praise and worship on the part of each believer. Eph. 1:7, 12, 14.

360. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 2:1-16; 3:4-14; 4:6, 7

Golden Text: Philippians 2:10, 11

This epistle is distinguished from his other epistles in many ways. Sin is not mentioned, suffering is noticeable, joy is prominent—mentioned over 18 times, liberality is its occasion. Christ is pre-eminent—over 40 times by Name. It was written, by Paul, from prison in Rome. Cp. 1:12, 13.

I. Concerning the Gospel. 1:1-27.

1. The entrance of it. See Acts 16:9-40. Review the circumstances.
2. The effect of it; 1:1, 6. (1) A new standing "in Christ;" v. 1. Cp. Eph. 1:3-13. Born in Adam, born again in Christ. What a change! (2) A new life; v. 6. The work begun by God is the guarantee it will be continued and completed.
3. The furtherance of it; vs. 7-18. In spite of Satanic opposition.
4. The practical teaching of it; vs. 9-11, 27. (1) Abounding love; v. 9. (2) Distinguishing things that differ; vs. 9, 10. Cp. 2 Tim. 2:15. (3) Sincerity of motive; v. 10. (4) Blamelessness of life; v. 10. Cp. 2:15-16. (5) Unity of purpose to preach this Gospel; v. 27.

II. Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. 2:5-11. In this passage is clearly taught—His Deity, pre-existence, equality with the Father, incarnation, perfect Manhood, death on the cross. Steps down; vs. 7, 8. Notice the seven steps down and compare the seven steps up; vs. 9-11.

1. His pathway from home of Father to the manger; vs. 6, 7.
2. From Bethlehem to the cross; vs. 7, 8.
3. From the grave to the highest throne, the greatest name and to universal glory; vs. 9-11.

III. Concerning His Own Desire. 3:4-14, 20, 21.

1. To magnify Christ; 1:20. Paul desired to be a magnifying glass through which Christ would be magnified to the world.
2. To live Christ; 1:21. The Christian life is the outliving of the inliving Christ. See Gal. 2:20, etc.
3. To be with Christ; 1:23, "far better." Cp. 2 Cor. 5:1-6.
4. To know Christ; 3:10. What a wealth of meaning there is here!
5. To win Christ; 3:4-9. Note vs. 4-6. See the 7 things in which he trusted before conversion and what he now had in Christ.
6. To follow Christ; 3:12-14. The Christian race. Cp. Heb. 12:1-4; 1 Cor. 9:24-27.
7. To be like Christ; 3:20, 21. Cp. 1 John 3:1, 2; 1 Thess. 4:13-18, etc.

IV. Concerning God's Desire For Them. 4:1-9, 19.

1. For their likemindedness and yieldedness to each other; 4:1-5.
2. For their freedom from anxiety and possession of the peace of God; vs. 6, 7. Anxious for nothing, prayerful in everything, thankful for anything. Note (1) Peace with God; Romans 5:1. The believers birthright. (2) The peace of God; v. 7. Conditional on v. 6. (3) The God of peace; v. 9, through obedience.
3. For their full and complete supply of all needs; v. 19. "A blank check on the bank of heaven."

361. PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

Titus 1-3

Golden Text: Titus 2:12

Of his early history we know little, save that he was a Greek; Gal. 2:3. He was one of Paul's companions; Gal. 2:1. Was a comfort to him; 2 Cor. 7:6. Was commended by him; 2 Cor. 8:16. Referred to as his partner and fellow-helper; 2 Cor. 8:23. Would that there were many more of the Titus' type!

I. The Introduction. 1:1-4.

1. Note Paul's designation. "Apostle according to the faith." (1) Its distinction. God's elect. Cp. 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Peter 1:10. (2) Its character, "Godliness." Godliness is the hall mark of the faith. 1 Tim. 2:2; 4:8; 6:11; 2 Peter 1:3-6; 3:11. (3) Its issue, "eternal life." V. 2. Cp. John 10:27-30, with 1 Tim. 6:12.
2. Note what God cannot do. He cannot (1) Lie; v. 2. Cp. Num. 23:19. etc. (2) Die—He is eternal. (3) Deny Himself; 2 Tim. 2:13. (4) Look favorably on sin. Habakkuk 1:13, etc. (5) See or remember the sins of those who trust in His Son. He puts their sins out of reach. Micah 7:19; Psalm 103:12. Sight; Isa. 44:22. Mind; Heb. 10:7.

II. Concerning Elders and Their Qualifications. Vs. 5-9.

1. Negatively; vs. 6, 7. Bishop and elder are here used in same sense. The terms are used interchangeably.
2. Positively; vs. 8, 9. They were to be sound men. Note the sound things in Titus 1:9; 1:13; 2:2; 2:8. Cp. Psalm 119:80; Prov. 14:30; 2 Tim. 1:7; Prov. 3:21. How these elders are to be treated. See 1 Peter 5:1-5; Heb. 13:7, 17.

III. Concerning the Believers. 2:1-10. The things that become sound doctrine.

1. To the aged; vs. 1-3.
2. To the young; vs. 4-6.
3. To himself; vs. 7, 8.
4. To servants; vs. 9, 10.

What a wealth of practical instruction is here which, if followed, will cause the doctrine to be adorned.

IV. Concerning the Grace of God. 2:11-14. What the grace of God brings.

1. Salvation; v. 11. Grace is the outward expression of love to those who are utterly undeserving of it. It is everything for nothing when we don't deserve anything. See Romans 11:6; Eph. 2:8, 9; 2 Cor. 8:9. It is therefore entirely and absolutely apart from human merit. It brings salvation from (1) Sin's consequences; eternal death. Romans 8:1; John 5:24, etc. (2) Sin's control; Romans 6:11-14. (3) Sin's committal at His coming.
2. Instruction; v. 12. "Teaching." Cp. 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 John 2:27; Col. 1:28; Psalm 25:9; John 14:26; Luke 12:12.
3. Negation; v. 12. "Denying." Cp. 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Tim. 2:22.
4. Separation; v. 12. "Live soberly," etc. Note the three-fold aspect—Selfward. "soberly;" Worldward, "righteously;" Godward, "godly."
5. Anticipation; vs. 13, 14. Looking—The Christian's hope. Cp. 1 Thess. 4:13-18, etc.

V. Concerning Practical Christian Living. 3:1-8.

1. To the state; v. 1. Cp. Romans 13:1-8.
2. To the world; v. 2. Cp. Matt. 5:16; 1 Peter 1:11-15.
3. A powerful reminder; vs. 3-8. Cp. Isa. 50:1; Eph. 2:11-13; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.

362. THE HEROES OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:1-31

Golden Text: Hebrews 11:1

I. What Faith Is. V. 1. Faith is the belief, confidence and trust in the work, person or promise of another. True faith has three ingredients.

1. Knowledge. We must know, therefore, God gives us facts. The fact of our sinnership; Romans 3:10-19. The fact of His love in the gift of His Son; John 3:16, etc. The fact of salvation purchased and proffered in the gospel. Romans 3:21-26. These facts must be known. See Romans 10:17.
2. Assent to these facts. Belief in them that they are true because of Who has revealed them; Heb. 11:6.
3. Trust or committal to these facts and to the Person revealed in them—Christ the Son of God. One may have the first two without being saved, but when there is a knowledge of the way of salvation, and belief in it and a committal to Christ, salvation ensues.

II. What Faith Does. Vs. 2-31. Faith is evidenced by works; James 2:14-26.

1. Abel the sacrifice of faith; v. 4. Gen. 4:1-8. Abel, being dead, speaketh of (1) Man's need —He realized he had sinned. This consciousness is in all men. Romans 2:14-16.. And plainly revealed in God's word. Romans 3, etc. (2) God's righteousness. Abel realized his sins deserved death at the hands of a holy and just God. Ezek. 18:4; Romans 6:23, etc. (3) The way of propitation—He brought a lamb. God provided the lamb and yet accepted it in his stead. Cp. John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18; Romans 4:24, 25. (4) God's acceptance of the offer. Gen. 4:4. Cp. Eph. 1:6.
2. Enoch the walk of faith; vs. 5, 6. Gen. 5:21-24. To walk with God requires (1) Reconciliation; Amos 3:3. Cp. Isa. 59:1, 2; 55:7; 46:12, 13; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Eph. 2:13. (2) Renunciation. Deut. 23:14; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:17-32; 1 John 1:7. (3) Compensation. What did Enoch have? The presence of God with him. Cp. Phil. 3:8; 2 Cor. 4:17, 18; Romans 8:31; Isa. 41:10; Psalm 23:4. etc. Note the happy conclusion of this walk; Gen. 5:24. Cp. John 14: 1-3.
3. Noah the work of faith; v. 7. Gen. 6:8-8:22. (1) The hearing of faith. "Warned." Gal. 3:2; Matt. 11:15,etc. (2) The moving of faith. "Faith works." It produced fear. Cp. Some warnings of Scripture; Job 36:18, etc. (3) The preparation of faith. Amos 4:12; Prov. 22:3. (4) The result of faith. Salvation of believer, condemnation of unbeliever; Mark 16:15, etc.
4. Abraham the life of faith; vs. 8-19. Three great epochs. (1) His call and obedience. Gen. 12:1-4; Heb. 11:8-10. (2) His promise and belief. Gen. 15:1-6; Heb. 11:11, 12. (3) His test and triumph. Gen. 22:1-14; Heb. 11:17-19.
5. Moses the choice of faith; vs. 23-29. (1) His bold decision; vs. 24-26. Note the reasons for this choice. (a) He preferred the people of God to pleasures of sin; v. 25. (b) He preferred the reproach of Christ more than riches of Egypt; v. 26. (c) He feared not the wrath of a visible king because he feared and obeyed an invisible One; v. 27. (2) His great reward; v. 28. Fellowship with God, leadership of men and reward in Heaven.

363. PAUL'S LAST MESSAGE

2 Timothy 2:1-15; 3:14—4:18

Golden Text: 2 Timothy 4:7

This was probably his last epistle, written from prison in Rome just a few weeks prior to his martyrdom. See 1:8 and 4:6.

I. Concerning the Believer's Life. 2:1-26. Note the analogies of the Christian.

1. A son for affection; v. 1. Cp. Eph. 5:3; John 3:3; 1:12; Gal. 4:4-7.
2. A soldier for endurance; v. 3. Cp. 4:5; Heb. 12:7; 1 Peter 2:19; Heb. 12:2; James 1:12; 2 Tim. 2:10.
3. An athlete for concentration; v. 5. Cp. Heb. 12:1-4; 1 Cor. 9:24-27.
4. A farmer for patience; v. 6. Cp. James 5:7. The ploughing; Hosea 10:12. The sowing. Eccles. 11:6; Mark 16:15. The reaping; Psalm 126:5, 6; 1 Cor. 3:6.
5. A workman for faithfulness; v. 15. A good motto for the Christian. The command—"study." This means hard work. The purpose. "Approved to God." The result, "not . . . ashamed." Cp. Eph. 2:10.
6. A vessel for service; vs. 20, 21. (1) The pit from which clay was taken. Psalm 40:1, 2; Isa. 51:1. (2) The potter Who moulded. Jer. 18:1-4; Romans 9:20. (3) The purpose; v. 20. Some to honor, some to less honor, as it pleaseth Him. Cp. 1 Cor. 12:13-27. (4) The plea; vs. 21, 22. Keep clean and fit for Master' use. Cp. 2 Cor. 7:1.
7. A servant for obedience; v. 24. Cp. 1 Thess. 1:10; Luke 16:13; Romans 14:17, 18; John 12:26; Acts 27:23, etc.

II. Concerning the Believer's Guide. 3:14-17. The word of God.

1. The source of it—The breath of God. "God breathed." Note the scope. "All Scripture." Cp. 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Isa. 55:9-11; 40:5-8; Luke 24:25; Matt. 5:17-19, etc.
2. The purpose of it—To make wise to salvation; v. 15.
3. The profit of it; vs. 16, 17. (1) For doctrine, i.e., teaching. (2) Reproof—warning. (3) Correction—reconstruction. (4) Instruction—to give knowledge. The result—Christian maturity; v. 17.

III. Concerning the Believers Responsibility. 4:1-5.

1. The solemn charge; vs. 1, 2. What he is to preach—"the word." When to preach—"in season and out of season." How to preach—"reprove, rebuke, exhort."
2. The sad condition; vs. 3-5. This day is here. It is a day of apostasy. Cp. 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-5. The verities of the Christian faith are being denied by those who are paid to teach them. This apostasy is world wide, indicating that the end is not far off.

IV. Concerning His Own Life. Vs. 6-8. What a testimony at the close of his life!

1. A good fight fought; v. 7. Paul fought against the Devil, the world and the flesh, and all those who sought to undermine the truth of God by preaching false doctrine.
2. A good race run; v. 7. The race began on the Damascus highway and the finish was in view.
3. A good faith kept; v. 7. He was a trustworthy trustee of the Gospel commended to him.
4. A good reward anticipated; v. 8. Paul knew but two days. "Today," to be packed with loving, loyal and devoted service. "That day," when he should receive his reward at the hands of his Lord.

364. HEAVEN, THE BELIEVER'S HOME

Revelation 2:1-8, 27; 22:1-8, 20, 21

Golden Text: Revelation 21:27

I. What is Heaven?

1. It is a place. John 14:2; 6:33. Not a state or condition, but a place.
2. God's dwelling. Deut. 26:15; 1 Kings 8:39; John 14:2. "The Father's house."
3. The believer's home. It is home because the One we love best is there, and all who love Him will be there. 1 Peter 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:1-8.

II. Where is Heaven?

1. The Bible does not give us its latitude or longitude, but declares it is "up." John 17:1; Acts 1:10, 11, etc. Whenever we think of heaven we think "up."
2. Not far. Only a veil between; Heb. 6:19, 20. To be "absent" here is to be "present" there.
3. Where Jesus is. This is the best answer. He is its Center of attraction. To be with Christ is to be in heaven, for He is there. Heb. 9:24; Luke 24:51; 1 Peter 3:22; 1 Thess. 1:10; Acts 1:10, 11; Phil. 1:23.

III. What Is It Like? It is so glorious and so blessed that God uses negatives to describe it, so that we might know what is not there.

1. No sin; Rev. 21:27. Cp. Romans 5:12. Sin has turned this world into a prison and brought endless woe. Imagine a place with no sin!
2. No curse; Rev. 2:3. Cp. Gen. 3:17; Gal. 3:10-13. God's curse removed because of Christ's work for us.
3. No sorrow; Rev. 21:4. Cp. Gen. 3:16, 17. All tears forever wiped away. Think of the sorrows of this world and of the work of "The Man of sorrows." Isa. 53:3-6; 61:1, 2, etc.
4. No pain; Rev. 21:4. No more sickness but perfect health No more hospitals with pain-racked patients. 1 Cor. 15:53-57; Romans 8:22, 23. Everlasting health—what a prospect! Phil. 3:21; 2 Cor. 5:1-4.
5. No separation; Rev. 22:4, 5. "See His face." To see Him face to face and reign with Him forever. No goodbyes in heaven. Cp. 1 Thess. 4:17.
6. No darkness; Rev. 22:5. The Light of the World is ever there. John 8:12; 1:4, 5. Cp. Acts 26:13.
7. No death; Rev. 21:4. Death is forever dethroned, and life and immortality reign. 2 Tim. 1:10; John 11:25, 26; Romans 6:9, 10; 1 Thess. 5:10.

IV. Who Are In Heaven?

1. The triune God. Matt. 6:9; Acts 2:11; 1 John 5:16.
2. Seraphim and Cherubim and a host of angelic principalities. Matt. 18:10; Luke 15:10; Rev. 5:17.
3. Saved sinners. (1) Redeemed by the blood. Rev. 5:9; 1:6; 1 Peter 1:18. (2) Born again; John 3:3. (3) Converted; Matt. 18:4. (4) In Lamb's Book. Rev. 20:15; Phil. 4:1; Luke 10:20; Heb. 12:23. (5) All nations, tribes and tongues; Rev. 5.

V. Who Are Not There? Rev. 21:9; 20:5.

1. Christ rejecters. Mark 16:16; John 3:18, 36; 8:21; Matt. 8:36; Luke 13:25.
2. Mere empty professors who have never been born again. Will you be there?

365. THE LORD JESUS, THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST

Hebrews 9:1—10:22

Golden Text: Hebrews 10:12

The Lord Jesus is the believer's great high Priest.

I. The Pattern of It. 9:1-10. The Aaronic priesthood and the service of the Tabernacle.

1. The Tabernacle; vs. 1-5. Describe the (1) Purpose of it. Exod. 25:8; 29:43-45. (2) The plan of it. Exod. 25. Draw a sketch. (3) The furniture of it, and show how it all typifies Christ.
2. The priest; vs. 5-7. Ordained of God, chosen. clothed, anointed and consecrated; Exod. 28-29.
3. The offerings; v. 7. Lev. 17:11. Their necessity, variety and significance.
4. The access; vs. 7, 8. Into the very presence of God, but only once a year. See Lev. 23:27-32. The great day of atonement.
5. The antitype of it all—Christ Who fulfilled all the types, shadows and symbols of the O. T. Scriptures; vs. 9-14, 10:1.

II. The Perpetuity of It. Cp. The limitation of the type with the completion of the antitype. Note the word "once."

1. Of limitation; 9:7. The need for continued atonement, or covering, to secure continual access.
2. Of completion ;9:12.
3. Of Incarnation; 9:26. And its purpose—"To put away sin."
4. Of sacrifice; 9:28. The perfect offering of the perfect Son of the eternal God.
5. Of cleansing; 10:2. Satisfying both God and man.
6. Of judgment; 9:27. The great "must" and the certain "afterwards."
7. Of santification; 10:10.

III. The Provision of It. Vs. 15-28. The new covenant.

1. Its Maker—The Son of God at the cost of His life; Heb. 7:22.
2. Its Mediator or Executor—The risen, exalted and ever-living Lord; vs. 15-25.
3. Its beneficeries. All who have received Him as Savior and Lord.
4. Its provision; 9:13—10:18. (1) Eternal redemption; 9:12. (2) Perfect cleansing; v. 14. (3) Promise of eternal inheritance; 9:15. (4) Able representation in heaven; 9:24. (5) Coming glory; 9:28. (6) Absolute sanctification; 10:10. (7) Full and free forgiveness; 10:15-18.

IV. The Privilege of It. 10:19-25. Note what the believer is said to have; vs. 19. 21.

1. Access into the holiest; vs. 19, 20. Cp. Eph. 2:18; Romans 5:2.
2. An high Priest for us; v. 21. He presents the worship of His redeemed people to the Father in all the perfection of what He is and has done. Cp. Heb. 4:15, 16; 2:17, 18; 7:24, 25.
3. An invitation to us; v. 22. The law said: "Come not nigh hither;" but grace brings us near and bids us enter into His presence. Cp. Heb. 4:16; 1 John 2:1, 2.
4. An exhortation; vs. 23-25. Cp. Heb. 4:14; Acts 2:42. (1) To hold fast our confession of these eternal verities; v. 23. (2) To exercise mutual forbearance and encouragement; v. 24. (3) To meet regularly with God's people in assembly fellowship; v. 25.

366. THE GLORIFIED LORD

Revelation 1:10-18; 5:1-14; 22:12-21
Golden Text: Revelation 1:18

I. The Revelation. 1:10-18.

1. The circumstances; vs. 1-3, 9, 10. The Apostle John's banishment to Patmos and its reason. Little did his enemies dream that they were fulfilling God's purposes, even in this; Romans 8:28.
2. The revelation; vs. 10-17. (1) The voice; vs. 10, 11. (2) The Person; vs. 12-16. A vision of the glorified Son of God! What a sight? A sight all one day shall see; 1:7. Some with joy; 1 John 3:1, 2. Others with terror; Rev. 6: 16-17. Note the contrast between Christ as He was and as He now is. (a) He was in the midst of thieves; John 19:18. Now in the midst of churches; 2:1. (b) Was girt with towel on loins to minister; John 13. Now girt on breast in kingly priesthood; 1:13. (c) Was stripped in humiliation; John 19:23. Now clothed in garments of glory; 1:3. (d) Was crowned with thorns; John 19:2. Now with glory; Rev. 19:12. (e) His eyes were closed in death under load of sin; John 19:30. Now as flames of fire to see all things; 1:14. (f) His feet were nailed to cross; Luke 24:39. Now like brass—which speaks of durability and Deity; v. 15. (g) His voice once hushed in death; John 19:33. Now mighty in power; v. 15. (h) His hand once pierced; Psalm 22:16. Now powerful to wield all authority; v. 16. (i) His mouth once closed for us; Isa. 53:7. Now powerful to destroy; v. 16. (j) His face once marred; Isa. 52:14. Now forever glorious; v. 16. (3) The message; vs. 17-19. "Alive for evermore" to quicken; 2 Peter 2:4. Satisfy; John 6:51. Refresh; John 4:10. Keep; Heb. 7: 25. Save; Romans 5:10. Reproduce; Gal. 2: 20. Glorify; Col. 3. 4.

II. The Exaltation. 5:1-14.

1. The question; vs. 1-4. God's book of judgment is to be opened. Who is worthy to open it?
2. The answer; vs. 5-7. Note the two-fold title of Christ. "The Lion;" v. 5. "The Lamb;" v. 6. At His first coming He was the Lamb to sacrifice Himself for our sins; John 1:29. At His second coming He is to be the Lion, mighty and powerful to rule and reign.
3. The song; vs. 8-14. (1) Of the redeemed; vs. 9, 10. Note the (a) Object of their song—The Lord Jesus—Thou are worthy. (b) The theme, His work for them—Redemption by His blood. Can you sing this song now? (2) Of the angels; vs. 11, 12. (3) Of all creation; vs. 13, 14. Cp. Phil. 2:9-11; Isa. 53:11.

III. The Last Proclamation. 22:12-21.

1. As to His eternal Deity; v. 13. The first and last of Creation. John 1:11-13; Heb. 1:1-3. History, Scriptures. John 5:39; Luke 24:44. Salvation; Heb. 12:2. Of the life of the believer. Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:10. And of the Church; 1 Peter 2:6, 7.
2. The Divine imprimatur; v. 16. The Lord Himself verifies the book.
3. The wonderful invitation; v. 17. Note "the comes." Here is the last invitation.
4. The solemn warning; vs. 18, 19. Here is a word for the modernist who would seek to eliminate certain portions of the word of God that do not suit his fancy.
5. The certain promise; vs. 20, 21. "I come quickly."
6. The glad response; v. 20. "Even so, come."
7. The Divine benediction; v. 21.

367. RUNNING THE RACE

Read Hebrews 12: 1, 2; 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27; Philippians 3: 13, 14.

Theme: Obtaining the prize.

Tell a story of a race.

In describing the Christian life, the Apostle Paul uses many similes. Here he likens it to a race, and the Christian to an athlete. This race represents our life and work **after** we have come to Christ and accepted Him as Saviour. The first thing to do when entering a contest is to become enrolled. The Christian race is for those whose names are in the Book of Life (Phil. 4: 3; Rev. 21: 27). We are not in the contest at all if we have not taken this first and most important step.

1. **The Prizewinners.** Who may win the prize? In an earthly race only one receives the reward, and others, who have tried just as hard but unsuccessfully, gain nothing. In the Christian race **all** may become prizewinners, because the prize is given to those who are **faithful,** those who keep on. "So run that **ye** may obtain" (1 Cor. 9: 24).

2. **The Prize.** In the athletic games of Paul's day the coveted prize was a crown of leaves which in a short time faded and withered. The prize which the Christian may obtain is not eternal life. This is a **free gift** to **all** who believe on Christ. The prize has to be **earned** and is given for faithful service. Only those who have run well will receive a prize. There may be nothing spectacular about your race, it may be one unseen by others, perhaps a race confined to your own home, yet if you run well you may receive this incorruptible crown that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5: 4).

3. **The Motive.** The motive for running an earthly race is to gain some material reward, to gain the praise of men, to become popular with the crowd, and to become famous. The Christian's motive in running the race is to gain **God's** approval and praise, and to hear Him say at the end of the race, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

4. **Rules for Winning the Race.**

(a) **Keep under the body** and bring it into subjection (1 Cor. 9: 27). A good athlete will not indulge in anything which would in any way hinder him from keeping fit. While preparing for the race he voluntarily abstains from many things in which the ordinary man would indulge, because his great objective is to win the prize. In running the Christian race, the runner must keep under his body, keep the old self-life in the place of death, and "make no provision for the flesh," the old nature (Rom. 13: 14). This is the negative side, but there is the positive side also.

(b) **Eat good, wholesome, strengthening food.** This builds up the athlete and enables him to endure to the end. This is essential. There are many kinds of food he may like, but if they are not body-building and strength giving, he resolutely turns from them. The food the Christian needs to enable him to run the race, is the Word

of God. Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found and I did eat them (Jer. 15: 16). Job said, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23: 12). We cannot hope to win the prize if we do not regularly eat the food of the Word of God.

(c) **Breathe good air.** This represents prayer, without which no Christian can run well. This will mean sacrifice, for instance, cutting short an interesting game or conversation, in order to get to bed at a reasonable hour so that he may be fresh for his Quiet Time in the morning. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things" (1 Cor. 9: 25).

(d) **Lay aside every weight and sin** (Heb. 12: 1). The athlete reduces his clothing to the absolute minimum and lays aside **everything** that would retard his progress. There is a difference between weights and sins. A weight may be something which would be perfectly legitimate for another to retain, and yet to you it is a weight because it holds you back. Recognise it as a weight and lay it aside. The following, by Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, well describes a weight. "Anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult, is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it. This simple rule may help you to find a safe path for your feet along life's road."

The sin which doth so easily beset us. This may be "anger, wrath, malice. . . blasphemy, filthy communication" (Col. 3: 8). Christ only can give us victory over these besetting sins, but we must co-operate with Him by putting our will alongside His and **laying aside** the sin.

(e) **Run with patience** (Heb. 12: 1). Even though the track may be hard or long, do not give up, but keep on like the heroes of faith in Hebrews, chapter 11. They allowed nothing to put them out of the race. The testing of faith (v. 17), the pleasures of sin (v. 25), the treasures of Egypt (v. 26), the walls of Jericho, the thought of a violent death (v. 37), nothing deterred them. It needs patience to keep on in the race when everything seems to be against us and others are forging ahead of us.

(f) **Keep to the track that is marked out.** "Keep the paths of the righteous" (Prov. 2: 20). There are sometimes attractions on either side of God's track, the "By-path Meadows," that would lure us away from the "race set before us." Let us not swerve from the path thinking there is an easier way or a shorter path to the prize. God Himself has mapped out our course, and there are clear directions given us in His Word. "Turn not to the right hand nor to the left" (Prov. 4: 27).

(g) **Do not lag behind or look at others.** While you are concentrating on the progress of others your own steps lag. Paul was able to say, "Forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward the mark for the prize" (Phil. 3: 13, 14).

(h) **Keeping your eyes on the goal.** "Looking unto Jesus" (Heb. 12: 2). While we are looking at Him, the toils, difficulties and roughness of the track will seem as nothing to us. The Lord Jesus Himself, when on earth, kept His eyes to the goal, "Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12: 2).

Memory Verse.—Hebrews 12: 1, 2.—"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."

368. A GOOD SOLDIER

Read 2 Timothy 2: 3, 4; Ephesians 6: 10-18.

Theme: The Christian Fight.

Tell the story of some great soldier like General Gordon or General Dobbie.

1. **The Captain** is Christ Jesus. He is the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2: 10).

2. **The Fight** is the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6: 12). Every Christian is born a warrior. He will be assaulted, therefore part of his life will be occupied with defensive measures. But there would be no glorious victory for the soldier if he were always to remain on the defensive. He must also go out against his foes and attack them. He must not be content to live in the stronghold, strong though it may be; he must go forth to attack the castles of the enemy, and pull them down.

3. **Our enemies.**

(a) **The world.** It is difficult to define just what is represented by the world against which we are so often warned in God's Word, but it may be safely said that the world, with its attractions, is anything that would draw our hearts away from Christ. Christians, as well as others, need recreation of mind and body in order to keep fit, and it is right that they should enter heartily into these. We must differentiate, however, between recreation and amusements. In the matter of amusements there are no hard and fast rules laid down in the Word of God, and it is sometimes difficult to decide which of these are of the world. Here are some tests given by the late Reginald Wallis to help us in making this decision.

Is it to the glory of God? (1 Cor. 10: 31.)
Can I ask the Divine blessing on it? (Proverbs 10: 22.)
Is it a stumbling block to others? (Rom. 14: 21.)
Has it the appearance of evil? (1 Thess. 5: 22.)
Is it a weight? (Heb. 12: 1.) See lesson No. 11, Point 4 (d).

(b) **The flesh**—the old nature, self. This is perhaps our greatest enemy. The old nature always fights against the new nature which we receive from God when we are born again. The old nature always pulls towards the devil; the new nature pulls towards God. The old nature is at enmity with God (Rom. 8: 7, 8).

(c) **The devil.** He seeks to put us out of action as he tried to do with Christ (Matt. 4). He is called "Our adversary" (1 Pet. 5: 8), "that old serpent. . . which deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12: 9). Like the serpent he is very cunning, and we are told to stand against his wiles (Eph. 6: 11). He will try to convince us that right is wrong and wrong is right. If he cannot cause us to yield to one temptation he will try another as He did when he tempted our Lord (Matt. 4).

4. **A good soldier** (2 Tim. 2: 3, 4).

(a) **He must be willing to endure hardness.** A good soldier is prepared for this when he enlists; he does not look for a "soft job." A good soldier of Jesus Christ needs constantly to offer this prayer of Miss Amy Carmichael:

> "From subtle love of softening things, from easy choices, weakenings (Not thus are spirits fortified, Not this way went the crucified), From all that dims Thy Calvary, O Lamb of God, deliver me."

(b) **He must keep free from the entanglements of this life** (v. 4). How may I know whether a thing is an entanglement or not? This has already been dealt with in Point 3 (a) of this lesson.

(c) **He must strive to obey and please his captain** (v. 4), seeking to win his approval and not obeying his orders only, but his **wishes.** If we are really trying to serve and please Christ, we shall not be content with obeying His specific **orders,** but we shall endeavour to meet His **wishes.** Colossians 1: 10, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," might be rendered, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord to all the meeting of His wishes," to anticipate in everything His sweet beloved will, and Miss Carmichael adds, "a wish is enough for one who loves."

5. **How to be victorious** (Eph. 6: 10-17).

(a) **Be strong in the Lord** and in the power of His might (v. 10). Let us place emphasis on the fact that it is the strength of **the Lord,** and the power of **His** might, in which we are to be strong. There must be no reliance upon our own strength and self-effort. It was because Peter did this that he fell and denied his Lord.

(b) **Put on the armour God gives** (v. 11). There is not space here to go fully into the description of the armour, but we shall briefly mention the parious parts.

The girdle of truth (v. 14). God demands absolute sincerity and truth from His soldiers. Are we always strictly truthful? Can others rely on our word? "Thou desirest truth in the **inward** parts" said David (Ps. 51: 6).

The breastplate of righteousness (v. 14). The Christian is first of all covered with Christ's righteousness, and then he works this out in a holy, righteous life. "Work out your own salvation" (Phil. 2: 12).

The shoes of peace and the shield of faith (vv. 15, 16). Faith, like a shield, protects us against attack. In this verse there is a special reference to the large shield which was sometimes used. It covered the man entirely (Ps. 5: 12). So faith covers us entirely, protecting us from the attacks of Satan. The soldier is told **"above all"** to take the shield of faith, thus showing how important this shield was. We are not to neglect the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shoes of peace, but **above all** we must have the shield of faith, to see that **our faith** is right. This shield will quench **all** the fiery darts of the wicked, at what ever part of the body they are aimed.

The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (v. 17). This was the weapon our Lord used when He was attacked by Satan. Three times He met the devil's temptations by saying "It is written." How important then it is to store the Word of God in our minds and in our hearts, ever ready for use.

These weapons are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10: 4).

(c) **Stand against the enemy** (v. 14). When faced with the enemy do not give way an inch. Stand against him, resist him, and he will flee (James 4: 7). John Bunyan remarks that there is no armour for the back.

(d) **Praying always, and watching** (v. 18). These two, watching and praying, go together. Satan finds out the weak places in our armour, but if we are on the watch, then we are sensitive to his approach, and can call on the Lord to help us. "Watch **and** pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matthew 26: 41). God will do His part, but we must do ours.

Memory Verse.—Ephesians 6: 13.—"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

369. THE COMING AGAIN OF CHRIST

READ I Thessalonians 4: 13-18; Acts 1: 11.

THEME: Watching for His coming.

When Christ ascended to heaven the angels told the disciples that He would return in just the same manner as they had seen Him go into heaven (Acts 1: 11). He himself said, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself" (John 14: 3). So we know that He is coming back again. The Old Testament also, has many prophecies about His coming. When He comes He shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God (I Thess. 4: 16).

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN HE COMES.—

THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST.—"Dead in Christ" means those belonging to Him who have died. Their spirits are already with Christ in heaven, and He will bring them with Him, but their bodies are to rise from the grave and be transformed and glorified; their spirits will unite with them again. We have a beautiful description of the method of the resurrection of the saints in 1 Cor. 15: 35-50. The body "is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power" (v. 42, 43).

LIVING CHRISTIANS WILL BE CAUGHT UP WITH THEM to meet the Lord in the air. What joy that will be! We shall see our Lord face to face, and we shall join our loved ones who have gone before us and unitedly enjoy the full fellowship of Christ and be glorified with Him in His kingdom (Matt. 13: 43; Matt. 10: 32; Luke 12: 8; Rev. 3: 5). How terrible to miss that blessed privilege (Matt. 10: 33; Luke 12: 9). We, "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (v. 13) for we can look forward to the joy of reunion.

WE SHALL BE CHANGED TO BE LIKE THE LORD JESUS.—How wonderful to be like our Lord. The old nature will be gone and we shall be saved from the possibility of sinning (1 Cor. 15: 52). Our bodies, too, will be changed (Phil. 3: 21); sickness, pain and weariness will be done away and we shall be able to serve our Lord perfectly without sin and without the limitations of the body. A little Solomon Island girl was grieving one day because she had a brown body instead of a white one. Nothing seemed to comfort her till the missionary told her that one day she would be just like the Lord Jesus, and this to her, left nothing to be desired.

WE SHALL BE FOR EVER WITH THE LORD (v. 17).—There will be no more wandering from Him, no following afar off, but we shall be close to Him, to remain with Him for ever.

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?—

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CALLING OUT A PEOPLE FOR HIMSELF, calling them from all countries for the Church of Christ. This does not mean a church building. The true Church is composed of all believers of whatever denomination. Everyone who is born again becomes a member of the one, true Church, which is also called "The body of Christ" (Ephes. 1: 22, 23).

WHEN THE NUMBER IS COMPLETE, CHRIST WILL COME.—No one knows when that will be, for no one knows what the number is. Any soul won may be the last to complete the number. How sad it would be if you were not among them.

TILL CHRIST COMES WHAT MUST WE BE DOING?—

WE MUST LOOK FOR THAT HAPPY DAY.—If we belong to Christ it is not something to dread, but something to which to look forward with great joy. It is only those who know that they are not ready to meet Him who think of His return with fear and dread. Christ has promised a crown to all who love His appearing (2 Tim. 4: 8).

WE MUST WATCH, FOR WE KNOW NOT THE HOUR (Matt. 24: 42, 44).—If our Lord had told us the year, and the month when He would return, we should probably grow slack and think there was plenty of time to get ready. But He has not told us when He is coming in order that we might always be ready. The father of a young family went away from home on business. He could not be sure of the time of his return. The children were always expecting him, and as they wanted to look their very best when he did come back, their mother said she had never found it so easy to keep the children's dresses clean. He "that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3: 3). "Abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may . . . not be ashamed . . . at His coming" (1 John 2: 28).

HOLD FAST, SO THAT NO MAN TAKES OUR CROWN (Rev. 3: 11). It would seem as though our Lord had prepared a crown for everyone who receives Him, but it is possible to lose that crown, that reward, and another take it. The souls the Lord meant us to win, the work He had intended that we should have done, has been done by another, and the reward has been lost. It would be very sad if we had no crown to lay at our Lord's feet.

OCCUPY TILL HE COMES (Luke 19: 13). We are not to be idle, merely thinking about His coming and not to be preparing for it. We are to be up and doing. The angel said to the disciples at our Lord's ascension, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" There is work to be done while it is day, while we have the opportunity. We cannot all be teachers and preachers, but we can all speak a word for Jesus and tell others what He has done for us.

MEMORY VERSE.—Matthew 24: 44—"Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

370. REWARDS

READ I Corinthians 3: 11-15.

THEME: The Judgment Seat of Christ TELL THE STORY

Although believers in Christ are accepted and acquitted publicly when Christ comes, because of His merit which is imputed to them, yet they must stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to be examined for the things done in the body (2 Cor. 5: 10). Here believers' works are tried and the faithful receive a special commendation and *reward* for stewardship, whereas the unfaithful get no reward and suffer serious loss. This has nothing to do with salvation from the guilt and condemnation of sin, which depends entirely upon the merit of Jesus Christ imputed to all who trust Him. Many people confuse salvation and rewards, so we shall think about some of the differences between them before we go on to speak of the meaning of I Corinthians 3: 11-15.

SALVATION AND REWARDS.—

• *SALVATION IS OFFERED TO THE LOST.*—"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1: 15). He came "not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9: 13).

REWARDS ARE ONLY FOR GOD'S CHILDREN, those who have received Christ into their hearts as Saviour and are born again.

• *SALVATION IS A FREE GIFT.*—We cannot pay for it, nor can we earn it by good works: "Not of works" but "By grace are ye saved" (Eph. 2: 8, 9). Salvation is the gift of God (Rom. 6: 23). We must come to Christ and take it as a free gift.

REWARDS ARE EARNED by faithful service. Remember our Lord did not commend the *successful* servant, but the faithful one (Matt. 25: 21). This is an encouragement to those who have faithfully served their Lord and yet who do not see much result for their labour.

• *SALVATION WE RECEIVE NOW*, it is a present possession (1 John 5: 11: John 3: 36; 5: 24).

REWARDS ARE FUTURE.—Every verse which speaks of rewards speaks of the future. We do not get them till we reach heaven.

• *SALVATION CANNOT BE LOST* (John 10: 28).—Once children of God we belong to Him for ever, we are *born* of God and nothing can alter that relationship.

REWARDS MAY BE LOST.—Another may take the crown which Christ in the first place had intended for us (Rev. 3: 11). Even the great apostle Paul was afraid that if he did not keep under his body he might become a castaway (become disapproved) (1 Cor. 9: 27). He did not mean by this that he would be lost but that he might be put aside as of no use in Christ's service, disapproved of God. Now we shall study the passage in 1 Corinthians 3.

THE FOUNDATION (1 Cor. 3: 11): This means the foundation of our faith. The foundation of a house is the firm structure on which it is built. The foundation is of supreme importance, otherwise the house will collapse. Our life is like a building and we must have the right foundation before we begin to build. Jesus is the Foundation, the beginning of our Christian life. We must see to it that we are on the Rock, Christ Jesus, and that we are not building our house on the sand (Matt. 7: 24-27).

MATERIALS FOR BUILDING THE HOUSE.—We are building day by day and everything we do is like putting material into the building. Material is of two kinds: (a) Gold, silver, precious stones; (b) Wood, hay, stubble. Some people use one kind, some the other. Wood, hay and stubble may pass for gold and silver in the sight of men, when, in reality, it is wood, hay and stubble. But we cannot deceive God, for He will test it by fire to show of what sort it is.

GOLD, SILVER, PRECIOUS STONES. THIS IS WORK DONE TO PLEASE GOD because we love Him. It is strong, beautiful and lasting; it cannot burn. In the Word of God, great emphasis is placed on faithfulness. It is not so much the *kind* of service as the *quality* which decided whether it is gold or stubble. Work done in the home, at school or in the office can become gold and silver.

GOLD AND SILVER IS WORK DONE IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.—Not all work done for God will be gold and silver, some if done in our strength will be wood, hay and stubble. "Without Me ye can do nothing," Christ said.

IT WILL ABIDE THE FIRE.—It will stand God's test, it cannot burn and it will be rewarded. The fire will show at once what material has been used in the building. Not one thing we have done for Christ will be forgotten. How splendid it would be if all our work were such that it would abide the fire.

WOOD, HAY, STUBBLE. THESE ARE WORTHLESS DEEDS.—They may look fine in the eyes of men. Wood may be a large tree, much admired, but it will burn just as the hay and stubble do. Even work for God may be hay and stubble if done from the wrong motive, done to please ourselves or to gain popularity.

Living to please ourselves, being lazy, never doing anything for Christ — this is building with poor, shoddy materials which will not stand the test. It will all be burned and the builder will suffer loss, for he will receive no reward. He himself shall be saved yet so as by fire, just like a man who is saved from a burning house, but has lost everything in the house — the work of years gone for nothing. What kind of material are you using day by day? How sad you will be in that day when you stand before Christ, if you have no reward.

REWARDS.—We do not know what these rewards will be. Rewards will be given for doing such a small thing as giving a cup of cold water in the Master's name; for enduring temptation; for suffering persecution for His sake; for loving His appearing and for winning souls. These crowns are to lay at our dear Lord's feet. One reward will be to hear Him say, "Well done," and what joy that will be for our Lord and for us.

"Gold, silver, precious stones,
Wood, hay, stubble;
Shall your work bring rich reward,
Or loss and pain and trouble;
When the Master says 'Well done!'
How I shall rejoice;
But what if I must hang my head
When I hear His voice."

MEMORY VERSE.—Revelation 3: 11—"Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

371. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

READ Revelation 20: 10-15.

THEME: The Last Judgment

EXPLAIN THE VERSES.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE. WHAT IT IS.—

IT IS A GREAT WHITE THRONE — great because of the Judge Who sits on it. He is the high and holy One, the Creator of heaven and earth, the One before Whom the angels veil their faces, crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6: 2, 3). It is *great* because of the multitudes who shall stand before it, small and great (v. 12).

IT IS A GREAT WHITE THRONE — white because it stands for God's purity, justice and holiness. "The Lord the *righteous* Judge" (2 Tim. 4: 8). There will be no miscarriage of justice in that day, for He shall judge righteously. Everything will be taken into account. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" said Abraham when he was pleading with God to spare Sodom (Gen. 18: 25).

IT STANDS FOR THE SECOND DEATH (v. 14), which means eternal separation from God. When our Lord Jesus said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John 11: 26), He meant that they should never experience the second death. But those who have not believed in Him, those who have never accepted Him as Saviour, will be separated from God and live with Satan for ever. We have to make our choice now.

WHO WILL BE THERE.—

ALL UNBELIEVERS, the small as well as the great, no matter what their station in life. They will stand before God to be judged for their sins. Each will be judged according to his works, for every sin will be recorded in the books (v. 12). There will be degrees of punishment according to the sins committed (Luke 12: 47, 48). How terrible it will be to be faced with the record of all the sins which have been committed. It will be an awful moment when the books are opened (v. 12).

THERE WILL BE NO HIDING FROM GOD.—People may sometimes be able to evade the law of the land by hiding; they may even escape from prison but none can hide from God when the time comes for him to be judged. "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains . . . and every bondman . . . hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains and said . . . Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 6: 15, 16).

NO EXCUSES WILL BE ACCEPTED.—There will be some who will say they have worked for God, they may even have done many

wonderful works in His Name, but the Lord will say, "I never knew you" (Matt. 7: 22, 23). The Book of Life will be open to show that their names are not written in it (v. 12, 15). It does not matter that they have been church members, that they have taught in Sunday School or done any other work for God — if they have not accepted Christ as Saviour for the forgiveness of sins, then their names are not written in the Book of Life, and Christ will have to say to them. "I never knew you, depart from Me."

WHO WILL BE THE JUDGE.—The Lord Jesus will be the Judge. He is prepared to act as our Advocate now. If we have received Him as Our Saviour, then He is our Advocate with the Father. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2: 1, 2). If He is not our Advocate now, pleading with the Father for us, then He will be our Judge at the Great White Throne. A lady was once to be tried in court for some offence against the law. A barrister offered to take up her case and plead for her, but she refused his offer. When the time came for her to appear in court she sent news to this man saying she had changed her mind and would like him to take up her case and plead for her. This is the reply she received from him: "Madam, it is not now possible for me to plead your case, as I have been appointed judge." The Lord Jesus is calling you now to accept Him as Saviour; if you refuse Him, then He will be your Judge before the Great White Throne. He offers you mercy and forgiveness now: if you refuse Him, He will have to judge you for your sins. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Josh. 24: 15). "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 4: 7).

WHEN IS THE TIME? THE DAY IS APPOINTED.—"Because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained" (Acts 17: 31). When that day comes it will be too late to come to Christ, too late to make a decision, too late to have your sins forgiven; your fate will be sealed. It is Christ or judgment (Heb. 10: 26, 27). "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment."

YOU NEED NOT BE THERE.—God has done everything possible so that we need not stand before the Great White Throne. When there was no other way for a righteous God to forgive sinners, He sent His well-beloved Son to take our punishment, to die for our sins, so that we might never experience the second death. The sins of all who receive Christ as Saviour are forgiven, blotted out, put away for ever (Isaiah 44: 22, 23).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31).

MEMORY VERSE.—Revelation 20: 12—"The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books."

372. THE TWO WAYS

READ Jer. 21:8; Matt. 7: 13, 14; John 10: 9; John 14: 6.

THEME: The Way of Life and the Way of Death.

This lesson applies to all who have reached the age when they "know to refuse the evil, and choose the good" (Isaiah 7: 16).

Some children reach this age earlier than others. It is then that God sets before them the Way of Life and the Way of Death, and they must choose one or the other. The chart on the Two Ways should be copied on a larger scale and held before the class as the lesson is being given.

There are only two Roads, the Way of Life and the Way of death.

THE WAY OF DEATH.—

IT WAS MADE BY SATAN.—He hated God and, in the Garden of Eden, tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God. When Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, this Way of Death was started. (See Lesson 2, The Fall of Man.)

IT IS CALLED THE BROAD WAY (Matt. 7: 13), because many go on it. There are many more walking the Broad Way than the Way of Life. Why? Because "the heart (of man) is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17: 9). They may deceive themselves that they are quite all right while on the Broad Road, or they may prefer to remain on it because they love sin (John 3: 19).

IT IS A CROOKED ROAD.—People on it cannot please God, they cannot overcome sin, they are dead in sins. They must follow the course of the road which twists and turns.

THE END OF THE ROAD CANNOT BE SEEN because Satan blinds the eyes of those who are on it (2 Cor. 4: 4), the end is destruction, this means the place of punishment, the place where Satan will live for ever. When people cannot see the end of the road, they keep going on and do not realise their danger.

IT HAS MANY TRACKS branching off from it, but they all end at the same place. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14: 12). When people are depending on going to church, trying to be good, being kind, saying their prayers, giving money to God's work, etc., they may think they are on the narrow way which leads to heaven, but they are only on one of the small tracks leading out from the Way of Death, and it ends in the same place as the Broad Road because it belongs to it. (See the track coming out from the Broad Road but ending in the darkness below.)

ALL ON THIS ROAD CARRY A LOAD OF SIN, though they may not be conscious of it, nor may they have any desire to get rid of it.

GOD DOES NOT WISH ANYONE TO REMAIN ON THIS ROAD.—He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9). He is a just and holy God and must punish sin; but He has made a way which enables Him to remain just and yet forgive sin. When Christ died, He made a road from earth to heaven.

THE WAY OF LIFE.

THIS ROAD WAS MADE BY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST when He died on the Cross. He Himself is the Door by which we enter and come on to the road of life. "There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin."

ALL ON IT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.—This does not mean merely the life of the body, but the life of the soul. Eternal life or everlasting life is the same kind of life that Christ has. He Himself is the life. When we receive Him as Saviour, we have eternal life.

IT IS A STRAIGHT ROAD.—All on it have the Holy Spirit in their hearts, and He gives them power to live righteously, to overcome sin and to please God.

FEW FIND IT (Matt. 7: 14). Why is it that there are so few on this road in comparison with the Broad Way? Because they are not prepared for the conditions God lays down before they can get on to the Way of Life.

ALL ON IT HAVE THE COMPANIONSHIP OF CHRIST ALL ALONG THE ROAD.—Sometimes the way is difficult, but we do not travel alone, for the Lord Jesus is with us and, "His yoke is easy and His burden is light" (Matt. 11: 30).

HOW TO GET ON TO THE WAY OF LIFE.—

REPENT.—Repentance has been defined as "Halt! right about turn, march!" Point to the Way of Death and show that the one who repents turns to the opposite direction. (See Lesson 13 on Repentance.) The one who repents begins to feel the weight of the load of sin he carries; he was probably unconscious of it before. Repentance brings him close to the door, but the load of sin is still there. Repentance is only the first step. Repentance cannot rid him of the load of sin, but it makes him *want* to get rid of it; he is willing that it should be taken from him.

COME TO THE CROSS OF JESUS.—Let him see himself as a sinner before God, and look to the Lord Jesus hanging there for his sin. He must ask Him to take away his sin. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29).

BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (Acts 16: 31).—This means to receive Him, to trust Him as Saviour. The moment he does that the burden of sin drops from him (see Lesson 13). Now he has entered the door. Jesus said, "I am the Door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved" (John 10: 9). You will notice there is only one door, and no other means of getting on to the Way of Life. "There is none other name under heaven . . . whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12).

THE DOOR IS OPEN NOW, but we do not know when it will be shut. Come to the Lord Jesus now while there is time. Receive Him as Saviour and enter the Door before it is too late.

The Lord sets before *you* the Way of Life and the Way of Death. Which will you choose? "Choose Life" (Deut. 30: 19).

MEMORY VERSE.—Jeremiah 21: 8— Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death."

THE WAY OF LIFE.

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MEMORY VERSE.—Jeremiah 21: 8— Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death."

373. QUIET TIME. Luke 10: 38-42

Called also The Morning Watch, or the Quiet Hour.

What is Quiet Time? First let us think of what Quiet Time is **not.** It is not reading and praying with others; it is not Family Prayer; it is not preparing messages for your Sunday school class and others. What then is it? It is taking time alone with God (Matt. 6: 6); it is sitting at Jesus' feet learning of Him, and talking to Him (Luke 10: 39).

1. **It is absolutely necessary.** Our Lord Himself needed it, and if that were true of Him, how much more of us? He prayed early (Mark 1: 35); He prayed late (Matt. 14: 23); He prayed all night (Luke 6: 12); when about to be transfigured; for His disciples (Luke 22: 32); in Gethsemane (Matt. 26: 39-44); for His murderers (Luke 23. 34); when He became famous (Luke 5: 15, 16). **Let us consider its necessity from our side.**

(a) **That we may be conformed to His image,** grow more like Him (Rom. 8: 29). How do we get to know people? By spending time with them.

(b) **That we may overcome temptation.** "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation (Matt. 26 41).

(c) **In order to get food for our soul** (Jer. 15: 16).

(d) **In order to obtain spiritual power** (Ps. 62: 11).

Its necessity from God's side. God longs for fellowship with us. What a stupendous thought! (Gen. 3: 8; Is. 41: 8; John 4: 23; Deut. 7: 7, 8.) God longs more for our companionship than for our service, yet how often we are so taken up with our service **for** Him, that we spend little time **with** Him. "One thing is needful."

2. **The benefits gained from Quiet Time are lasting.** "That good part which shall not be taken away" (Luke 10: 42). At His feet Mary learned things others did not know. She did not go to His grave. She knew He was to rise again.

3. **Taking Quiet Time involves a deliberate choice.** "Mary hath chosen that good part" (Luke 10: 42). This choice often involves a refusal of other things—legitimate things—sacrificing the good for the better. and the better for the best. The Christian life is a disciplined life. Here are some of the things which may have to be sacrificed: Sitting up late, talking with friends, the fascinating book, the warm bed in the mornings.

4. **How long should I spend at my Quiet Time?** This will depend on individual circumstances, and also on spiritual maturity. A young convert is not likely to spend as long as an older Christian. But have a minimum time and do not give less.

Quiet Time is divided into two sections: **Prayer** when you talk to God, and **Bible Reading** when He talks to you.

In your Prayer time spend some time in—

(a) **Worship.** In worship you think of what God is in Himself, of His love, His mercy, His righteousness, His holiness, etc. Worship

	What verse a blessing? Memorise it.	What do I learn about God?	Any example to follow?	Any command to obey?	Any warning or error?	Anything to turn into a prayer?	What is my best thought?
John 6: 1-14 (Date)	v. 6. He Himself knew what He would do. v. 5.	He is all powerful. Has all knowledge and knows our motives. (v. 2). He tests faith. (v. 6). Works through His own. (v. 11).	The lad giving his all to Christ (v. 9). Christ giving thanks before eating (v. 11). Tell God of your needs as Mary did (v. 3).	Gather up the fragments (v. 12) — of food, time, opportunity.	Against unbelief (v. 7). Against wrong motives (v. 2). Curiosity drew them, not a sense of need.	May my faith not fail when it is tested (1 Peter 1: 7).	Christ did not believe in multiplication unless it was attended by division.
John 2: 1-11 (Date)	Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.	(a) Christ shares our joys (v.2). (b) Before giving a blessing He usually gives a command (v. 7).		"Draw out" in faith and Christ will turn our water into wine (v. 8).		May I give "brimful" obedience to Christ (v. 7).	Filling the waterpots is not enough, for it is still water. The power of Christ is needed to change the water into wine.

differs from thanksgiving. We thank Him for what He does for us and for His gifts; we worship Him for what He is.

(b) **Thanksgiving.** Thank Him for daily benefits, for friends, for fellowship, for daily provision, and for answered prayer (Ps. 95: 2).

(c) **Intercession,** praying for others (Rom. 15: 30; Col. 4: 12; Is. 62: 6, 7). As time is limited, ask God to lay upon your heart certain people, certain work, certain missionaries and mission fields for which you will pray.

(d) **Pray for yourself.** For your needs, your activities, your contacts and all that concerns your life.

Feeding on the Word. Remember that the Bible is different from every other book and only the Author Himself can explain it.

1. **What do I need?** A good print reference Bible; a Cruden's Concordance.

2. **What shall I read?** A Book at a time, preferably beginning with one of the Gospels. Study the great doctrines of the Bible. A Reference Bible will help you to trace any of these subjects right through Scripture.

Here are a few suggestions which may help you to apply your daily reading to your own heart and life. After you have read a portion of Scripture, ask yourself the following questions:

(a) What verse has been a blessing to me?

(b) What do I learn about God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit?

(c) Is there any example for me to follow?

(d) Is there any command for me to obey?

(e) Is there any warning or error for me to watch against?

(f) Is there anything to turn into a prayer?

(g) What is my Best Thought?

3. **Examples of this plan,** followed out from the reading of short passages of Scripture:

Buy a good thick exercise book. Rule it as sample right across the two pages. Write in the headings, and fill it in each day. It will not always be possible to find answers for every question, but fill in as many as you can. This plan was tried out with the Solomon Islanders, and proved to be a great blessing to them. Most of these questions you will find on the Scripture Union Card.

4. **Advantages of this plan.**

(a) It makes you **definite.** You look for some definite help.

(b) It makes you **expectant.** You expect to receive help from God.

(c) It gives you something upon which you can feed during the day.

(d) To those who may be shy it gives opportunity of fellowship, for you can open the conversation by telling what has helped you.

(e) You have something to pass on in letters, for you have it written down.

(f) You conserve the things which have helped you.

374. GOD'S BRIDGE

READ Ephesians 2: 13; I Timothy 2: 5.

"Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."—Eph. 2: 13.

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."—I Timothy 2: 5.

Show the first drawing with a plain sheet of paper pinned up hiding the figures underneath while speaking about THE GULF.

FAR OFF. Those on the right-hand side of the picture represent people who have not accepted Christ as Saviour; they are "far off" from God. In the eyes of men they may appear to differ from each other, because "man looketh on the outward appearance," but in God's sight "there is no difference: For *all* have sinned" (Rom. 3: 22, 23). "The Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16: 7).

THE GULF.—

THERE IS A GREAT GULF BETWEEN. This gap separates the sinner from God. It is too wide for anyone to get across it and to come on to the road which leads to heaven. It is very deep. We may well tremble as we look at it, for it is a gulf of Divine Judgment. Men have tried, by various means, to fill the chasm, but that is impossible.

THE GAP WAS NOT ALWAYS THERE. When God created Adam and Eve (See Book 1, Lesson 1), and put them into the Garden of Eden, there was nothing to separate them from God. He came and walked in the garden in the cool of the day to meet with them (Gen. 3: 8), and they were not afraid to come near to Him. What then made this chasm which put men far off from God?

SIN MADE THIS GULF. In Isaiah 59: 2 we read: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you." When Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God (Gen. 3), this gulf was made. God is a holy God and the sinner cannot approach Him. Sin always separates people from God.

THE BURDEN OF SIN.—

EVERYONE WHO IS FAR OFF FROM GOD CARRIES THIS BURDEN which is sin. It is made up of lies, disobedience, evil thoughts and deeds and many other sins which are the expression of a sinful heart.

THIS BURDEN BECOMES BIGGER AS WE GROW OLDER for sin is added to sin, and the longer we practise sin the easier it is to go on with it.

SOME ARE CONSCIOUS OF THIS BURDEN, others are not but whether they feel it or not, it is there. It is a hopeful sign when we become conscious of sin for then we shall want to get rid of it.

MAN-MADE BRIDGES.—

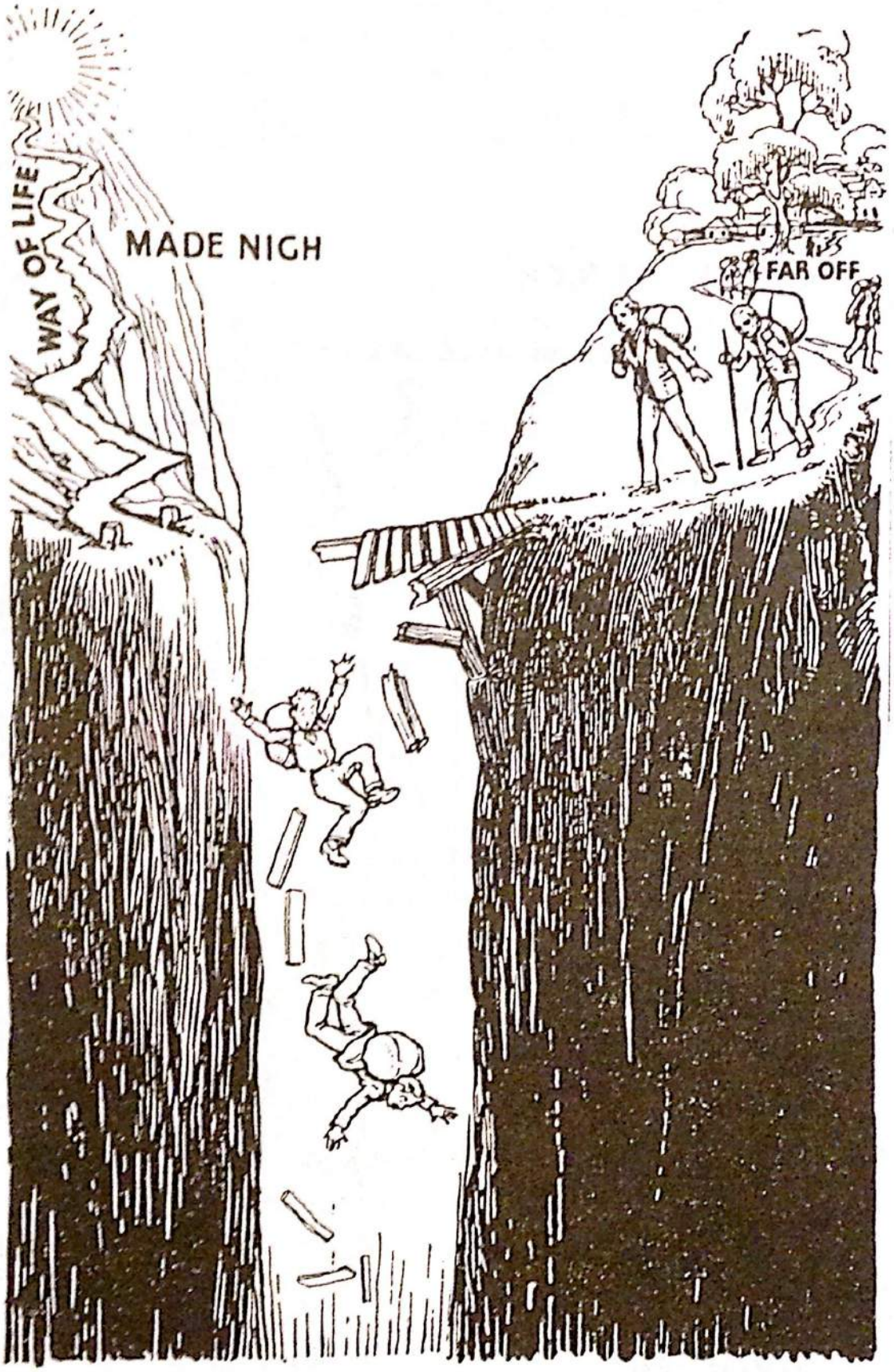
(When the teacher reaches this stage of the lesson remove the plain piece of paper, showing the broken bridge and the falling figures.)

Many people have a desire to get near to God; they want to go to heaven; they realise there is a gap between them and God, and so they think they will try and bridge the gulf themselves. Perhaps they have not heard of *God's* Bridge, or, if they have heard, they have not understood. Here are some of the bridges people make themselves by which they think they will reach the other side.

THE BRIDGE OF REFORMATION. How many times, when questioning young people on how to get on to the Way of Life, one has received the reply, "By trying to be good," "Turning over a new leaf," but that will never get anyone across the chasm to the other side. That bridge is too short; it will fail you. (Show drawing with the plain paper hanging down, and the broken bridge.) You see those people go down and their sins with them.

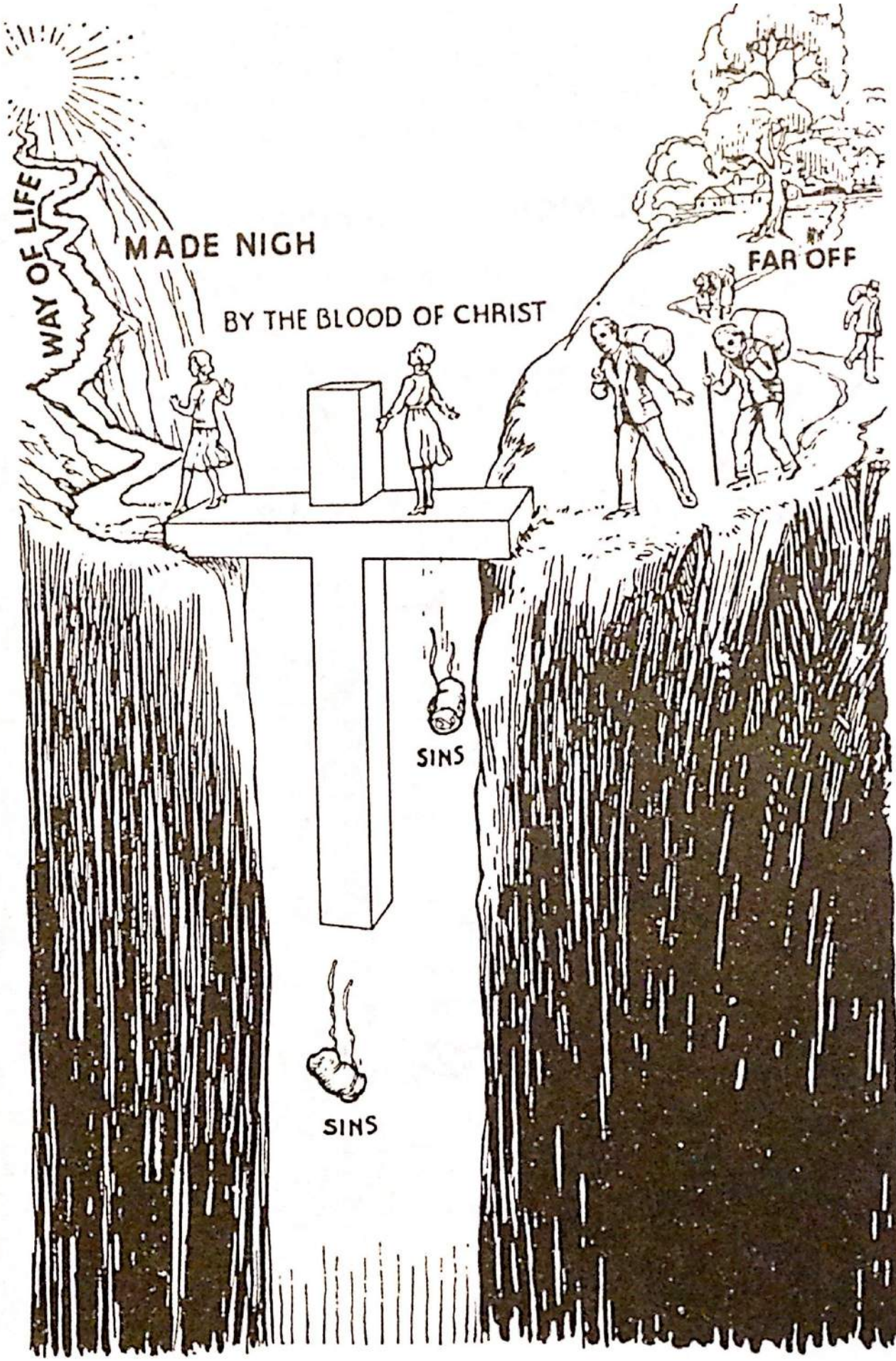
THE BRIDGE OF PROFESSION. When young people reach a certain age, many of them begin to think they had better join the Church, and although they may have never accepted Christ as their Saviour, they think church membership will bridge the chasm for them and bring them near to God. But they, too, will find that this bridge will not hold them. There should be no profession of Christ without possession of Christ. Many may say in that day when they stand before God, "Lord, I am a member of a church; I have worked for You," but the Lord will say to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me" (Matt. 7: 23). How terrible when too late to find that we have trusted in the wrong bridge.

THE BRIDGE OF KNOWLEDGE. You may know the Word of God, you may know perfectly the way of salvation, you may believe all the doctrines of the Christian faith, that Christ died on the cross for sinners, but unless you believe that He died for *your* sin and receive Him as your personal Saviour, then you are trusting to a man-made bridge which is too short.



MAN-MADE BRIDGE

This picture should first be shown with a piece of plain paper covering the broken bridge and falling figures.



GOD'S BRIDGE

GOD'S BRIDGE.—

There *is* a Bridge which reaches to the other side and brings us near to God. St. Paul says, We "*are* made nigh," not, "We *shall be*," or "We hope to be." What does it mean to be "made nigh"? It means that we become not only God's friends, but His children, and that we are in intimate relationship with Him.

(At this stage show the other picture with the cross bridging the gap.)

THE BRIDGE WAS PROVIDED BY GOD HIMSELF in the Person of His Son (John 3: 16). It is true that man-made bridges are all too short, but the Perfect Bridge was made when the Lord Jesus hung upon the cross for our sins. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2: 24).

IT WAS A COSTLY BRIDGE. The Sydney Bridge cost millions of pounds, but God's Bridge cost the Father His well-beloved Son (John 3: 16), and it cost the Son His life. Had it not been for the shedding of Christ's blood this Bridge could never have been made. "We are redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1: 18, 19); we are "made nigh by the blood of Christ." The blood means His life poured out for us, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17: 11).

IT IS A SAFE BRIDGE. All who trust themselves to it will safely reach the other side. This Bridge is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and His work for us on Calvary. He says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall *never perish*" (John 10: 28). "That whosoever believeth in him should *not perish*" (John 3: 16).

ALL ON THE BRIDGE LOSE THE BURDEN OF SIN. There is nothing *we* can do to rid ourselves of this burden, but, like Christian in "Pilgrim's Progress," when we come as sinners to the cross, seeking pardon, the burden rolls away, and we never see it again. When God forgives our sins He remembers them no more (Heb. 10: 17); He blots them out (Isaiah 44: 22); He casts them into the depths of the sea (Micah 7: 19). How much of the burden of sin is forgiven and put away? *All* of it. "Who forgiveth *all* thine iniquities" (Psalm 103: 3); "Having forgiven you *all* trespasses" (Col. 2: 13), not only those which may be upon our consciences, but those which we may have long forgotten.

HOW TO GET ON TO THE BRIDGE.—

Two things are necessary, and they are, "*Repentance* toward God, and *Faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20: 21).

REPENTANCE is a change of mind which leads to action. (Isaiah 55: 7 defines repentance, "Let the wicked *forsake* his way . . . and let him return unto the Lord . . ." Repentance alone does not get us across the chasm and on to the Way of Life. But saving faith is always preceded by true repentance. Let us see then what repentance is:

IT IS A CHANGE OF MIND ABOUT SIN. Before we repented we thought that sin was of no account, that it did not matter. But when we repent we see sin as *God* sees it. Just as it is hateful to Him it becomes so to us.

IT IS A CHANGE OF MIND ABOUT MYSELF. Before I repented I thought I was all right, and that if I tried to be good I would go to heaven. But when I repent I see myself as a sinner needing a Saviour.

IT IS A CHANGE OF MIND ABOUT GOD. When I repent I see Him as the Holy God, the righteous God Who must punish sin. I also see Him as a loving God Who longs that I should come to Him and receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

But repentance only brings us close to the Bridge. The next step is *Faith*, to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16: 31).

FAITH TOWARD OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Faith in Christ is to "believe in Him" (John 3: 16). This means to "receive Him" (John 1: 12), to trust yourself to Him to save you. You may know all *about* the Bridge, you may believe that it has been provided by God for sinners, that it is perfectly safe and reaches the other side, yet if you do not step on to it, trust yourself to it, then you will forever remain "far off" from God and will be lost. Remember, Christ Himself is the Bridge. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31).

MEMORY VERSE—I Timothy 2: 5—"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

375. Servants.

Read Philippians 2.7, 8.

Jesus Christ is our perfect example. The Son of God became a servant and learned obedience.

1. Servants should obey and please their masters in all things; not only kind masters, but cross ones too. Titus 2.9, 10; I Peter 2.18.
2. Not answer back so that they do not bring shame on their Saviour's Name but shine for Him. Titus 2.9, 10.
3. Work faithfully whether the master is looking or not; work to please the Lord. Colossians 3.22; Ephesians 6.6, 7.
4. Work well. Colossians 3.23, 24. And be ready for any kind of work. Lazy people cannot please God or men.
5. Be patient when your master blames you and it is not your fault. I Peter 2.20.
6. Take care of your master's things; do not spoil them or lose them.
7. "Not purloining"—not take his things without asking him. Titus 2.9, 10. Bring back what he lends you; give back what you find, not keep it.
8. God will reward faithful servants. **Verse to learn,** Colossians 3.22.

376. Put away that wicked person.

I Corinthians 5.1, 4, 11, 13; II Corinthians 2.7, 8.

The Temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. I Corinthians 3.17. Holiness becomes (fits) God's house. Psalm 93.5. We must hate sin as God does. Jude 23.

If adultery comes in the Church:

1. Every member should humble himself and grieve over this great sin. v. 2.
2. They must all come together and put away that wicked person. v. 4. This means not only put him away from the Lord's Table, but not eat with him or be friends with him till he repents.
3. He should not be kept away from the daily meetings; but he must not take part and he should sit behind in a humble spirit.
4. Remember he is still our brother. Pray earnestly that he may repent.

Why he must be put away:

1. For his own sake, that he may repent.
2. To make others fear. I Timothy 5.20.
3. That the Church may be clean. 1 Cor. 5.7, 8.

When he truly repents:

1. Forgive him, love him and comfort him. II Corinthians 2.7, 8.
2. All come together to restore him. **Verse to learn,** Jude 23.

377. The Two Natures.

1. Every Christian has two natures. John 3.5. **Romans 7.23-25; Galatians 5.16,**
   The flesh, the sinful nature from Adam.
   The new holy nature, from God. ". . . partakes of the divine nature." II Peter 1.4. These pull different ways.
2. The flesh cannot please God. Romans 8.7, 8.
   In my flesh is no good thing. Romans 7.18.
   The flesh fights against the Spirit. Galatians 5.17.
3. When we are born of the Spirit, we get a **new spirit,** a holy nature. The Spirit comes to live in us so that we hate sin, love God and want to please Him. John 3.5, 6; Romans 7.22.
4. When we ourselves try to win temptation, we find the flesh makes us obey the law (power) of sin. Then the good things we want to do, we are not able to do, and the evil things we do not want to do, we do. Romans 7.19. We want to please God but the law of sin in our body makes us go on sinning. Romans 7.23, 24.
5. No Christian is happy when he sins. He says, I am a wretched man. Who can deliver me from the power of this flesh? Romans 7.23, 24. Then he looks away from himself to Christ and says, "I thank God Christ has power to deliver me from sin." Romans 7.25. Christ overcomes the flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit.

How to be free:

1. The law (power) of the Spirit makes us free from the law (power) of sin. Romans 8.2.
2. The Holy Spirit makes us free when He fills us. Be filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5.18. God says, "Walk in (the power of) the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil (obey) the lusts (tempting) of the flesh. Galatians 5.16. Never feed or listen to the flesh. Reckon the flesh to be dead. Romans 6.11.
3. **How we can be full of the Spirit:** We must be thirsty for Him, Isaiah 41.17, 18. We must give up sin. II Corinthians 7.1. We must give up our own way and yield ourselves to God. Romans 6.13. We must be willing to obey God in everything. Trust Him to fill us, then thank Him.
4. As we obey Him and drink of Him every day we run over and are like rivers of water to others. John 7.37, 39. Then the fruit of the Spirit will grow in us. Galatians 5.22, 23. **Verse to learn,** I Corinthians 15.57.

378. Heathen Medicine.

Read II Kings 1.2-4; II Chronicles 16.12.

When **Ahaziah**, King of Israel, was sick, he turned to the god of Ekron, and God punished him with death. God told Elijah not to be afraid of the King but to speak out against this thing. v. 15, 16. Even though people do not want to hear, we must speak out, too. Isaiah 30.9, 10. **Asa, King of Judah,** did not turn to the Lord in his sickness, but to the doctors, and he died.

1. Medicine is good, God gives it to us. Proverbs 17.22. Isaiah gave medicine to Hezekiah for his boils and he was healed. II Kings 20.7.
2. We should use the medicine God gives and pray for him for healing so that we can give **God** the praise and glory when we get better. Psalm 103.2, 3.
3. But Christians should not get medicine from the witchdoctor like Ahaziah did, or look to man in times of sickness instead of looking to God.

Those who use heathen medicine:

1. Bring shame on God's Name. II Kings 1.3.
2. Lose power and blessing.
3. Sometimes go back to the heathen. **Verse to learn,** Exodus 15.26 (last part).

379. Guidance.

Guidance means showing which way to go. God has promised to guide us. Psalm 32.8; Proverbs 3.5, 6.

If we want God to guide us:

1. We must trust in the Lord with all our heart and not depend on our own wisdom. Proverbs 3.5, 6.
2. We must give up our own way and be ready for God's will. Psalm 32.9.
3. Ask God to teach us His way, and lead us in a plain path. Psalm 27.11; Psalm 143.8, 10.

God guides us in three ways:

1. **By His Word**—He will never lead us to do anything against His Word. Psalm 119.1.
2. **By His Holy Spirit**—when we pray He will bring to our hearts what He wants us to do. Acts 16.6, 7, 10. Ephesians 5.17, 18.
3. **By things He sends to us** which open our way or block our way. When these three fit together, God's Word, His Holy Spirit, and an open way or a blocked way, then we know what is God's will for us. Jonah saw an open way and followed it, but he made a great mistake. That was not God's way for him. Jonah 1.1, 3. **Verse to learn,** Proverbs 3.5, 6.

380. Suffering of God's children.

Read Romans 14.10; Hebrews 12.5, 6, 11; Job 1.7-11, 21.

Verse to learn, Hebrews 12.6.

Why Christians suffer:

1. Sometimes for their own sin. Our Father chastens His children to teach them. John 5.14; Hebrews 12.5.
2. Sometimes God lets sins of others hurt them but turns it to good afterwards as he did for Joseph. Genesis 50.20.
3. To make them more holy like Himself. Psalm 66.10 (silver).
4. To keep them humble. II Corinthians 12.7-9.
5. Sometimes for no sin but for God's glory. John 9.2, 3; Ch. 11.4; Job 1.7-12. So we must not judge our brother and say, You are sick because of sin. Romans 14.10, 13.

When sickness or trouble comes:

1. Let a man examine himself and be exercised, this means, go to God about it. Hebrews 12.11.
2. Be patient, like Job—not cross. Job 2.6, 7, 10; Ch. 13.15.
3. Not get downhearted.
4. Trust God's love to carry you through to fruit and blessing (bluestone).

381. Going to Law

Read I Corinthians 6.1-8.

1. **The Government** is sent by God to punish evil-doers, and help all those who do right, so God says, "Obey them." I Peter 2.13, 14.
2. Pray for them that they may make good laws, and we can live quietly. I Timothy 2.2.
3. If anyone kills a man or steals a woman, or breaks a law like that, we must not hide it from the Government, because it is their work to punish those who do these things.

Christians are not to go to law with Christians:

So we must not summons a man to get back land, money or other things.

Why Christians must not go to law:

1. Because it brings shame on God's Name when we show out our quarrels before the heathen. v. 6.
2. God says to take troubles between Christians to wise men in the Church. Matthew 18.15-17.
3. If no Christian can fix that trouble it is better to suffer loss of land or money than to go to law. **Verse to learn,** Matthew 5.9.

382. Reverence.

1. We know God is our loving Father; He is also the mighty God the Creator.
2. We must not only love Him, but fear Him, because He is holy. Psalm 89.7.
3. Every time we use His Name remember it is holy. Psalm 111.9, 10.
4. Though the place where we come together is not His house, like the Tabernacle or Temple, yet where two or three come to worship, He is in the midst. Matthew 18.20.
5. We should come into His presence quietly to worship Him and hear His Word. Ecclesiastes 5.1.

How to be reverent:

1. The teacher himself ought to be an example to his people.
2. First get everything ready for the meeting, then pray till the meeting begins.
3. Everyone should come early.
4. When inside pray or think quietly about the Lord; do not talk when finding places in books.
5. Women with babies should sit behind.
6. Small children must not run about.
7. The church should be clean and nice to fit God's Holy Name.

Verse to learn. Psalm 89.7.

383. Believers as Priests.

Read I Peter 2.5, 9; Revelation 1.5, 6.

1. When God brought Israel out of Egypt He wanted them to be a "kingdom of priests". Exodus 19.6, 7. But they committed idolatry.
2. So God chose the line of Aaron to be **mediator priests,** to offer animal sacrifices for the sins of the Children of Israel. Exodus 28.1; Leviticus 6.7.
3. These sacrifices did **not take** away their sins, but **covered** them, so that God could **pass them by,** until Jesus paid the wages of them on the cross. Leviticus 6.7; I Peter 2.24.
4. We have no need of mediator priests today, because we have **One Mediator,** who gave His life for us to bring us to God. I Timothy 2.5, 6. and there can be no more sacrifices for sin today, because Jesus has paid all the wages of our sins. Hebrews 10.4.
5. All true believers are priests, and there are no other priests today. Revelation 1.6; I Peter 2.5, 9. But they do not offer animal sacrifices, but spiritual sacrifices. I Peter 2.5. These are:
   (a) Our bodies, a living sacrifice. Romans 12.1.
   (b) Our prayer and praise. Hebrews 13.15.
   (c) Our money and substance. Hebrews 13.16.
   With these sacrifices God is well pleased.

384. Our Great High Priest.

Read Hebrews 3.1; 7.26; 8.1; Hebrews 7.27; 9.11, 12.

1. The Lord Jesus offered His body on the cross as a sacrifice for sin unto the Father **once for all forever.** He has now **sat down** on God's right hand because His work of offering Himself is finished. John 19.30; Hebrews 9.28; 10.10-12. When priests offer sacrifices they must stand. Hebrews 10.11. There is no more offering for sin today because He has put away the punishment of sin. Hebrews 10.18.
2. His priesthood cannot pass away, it cannot pass to another for He ever liveth Hebrews 9.24.
3. We need no other priests today to mediate for us, because "there is **one** Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ." I Timothy 2.5.
4. He **makes intercession** for His people. Romans 8.34; Hebrews 7.25.
5. He **helps** those who are tempted. Hebrews 2.18.
6. He **comforts** those in sorrow through infirmities. Hebrews 4.15.
7. He **is our Advocate** with the Father if we sin. I John 2.1, 2.
8. He **is able to keep** us from falling, able to keep to the uttermost. Jude 24; Hebrews 7.25.
9. He forgives us and cleanses, when we confess our sins. I John 1.9.
10. He is waiting at God's right hand until God puts His enemies under His feet before He comes again. Hebrews 10.13.

385. The Church, the Body of Christ.

Read I Corinthians 12.1, 4, 11-22, 25, 26.

The Holy Spirit shows us in this lesson that Christians are members of one body obeying Christ the Head.

1. Some have a great work, some a small work, but all need one another; the eye cannot hear, or the ear talk. v. 6.16.
2. The Holy Spirit gives the work, we do not choose it; so we must not be proud if we have a big work or get downhearted if we have a small one.
3. If we do not use the gift God gives, He will take it away. Matthew 25.28.
4. Members must all care for one another and help each other. v. 25.
5. They must not despise weak members; or talk against them. v. 21, 22.
6. If one member suffer, all suffer. v. 26. This means if trouble, sickness or temptation come, we must suffer with him, because we are all joined together.
7. If God uses another Christian we should be glad, not jealous.
8. If every member does the work the Holy Spirit gives him then one work does not please God more than another.

Verse to learn, I Corinthians 12.12.

386. Gifts to the Church.

Read I Corinthians 12.28; Ephesians 4.11-14.

God gave to the Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, helps, governments.

1. For building up the saints so that they will grow strong. Eph. 4.12.
2. So that they will be no more children shaken about with false teaching. Eph. 4.14.
3. So that they will all fit together. Eph. 4.15.

1. **Apostles** are not needed in the Church today; they laid the foundations, we go on to build the house.
2. **Prophets**—those who speak to men to build up, exhort and comfort them. Acts 15.32; I Corinthians 14.3, 31.
3. **Evangelists** go out with the Gospel like fishermen to bring men to Christ.
4. **Pastors** care for God's children, help them by love and prayer and try to bring back those who go astray.
5. **Teachers** search the Word of God, give out what they find, give lessons for all needs. Jeremiah 3.15; John 21.15.
6. **Helps**—those ready for any work—teach reading, clean the village and church, care for the sick. All may be **helps.**
7. **Governments**—wise men who are able to settle troubles among Christians, and lead weak ones.

Verse to learn, Ephesians 4.12.

387. Pastors

Read I Peter 5.1-7; Acts 20.28-31.

What kind of a man he must be:

1. A man who is straight and true before men outside, so that he will not fall into Satan's trap, and bring shame on the Lords' Name. I Timothy 3.2-7.
2. Young teachers must be careful, be examples in talk, in life, in love. They should not play with any girl. I Peter 5.3.
3. Not quarrel, but be kind and patient to all, able to give lessons. II Timothy 2.23, 24; I Timothy 3.2.
4. Blameless—true to one wife. I Timothy 3.2. Kind to strangers, not love money. I Peter 5.2, 3; I Timothy 3.2, 3.
5. Not please himself, not quick-tempered, not take sides. Titus 1.7, 8, 9.
6. Ruling his own house and children well. I Timothy 3.4, 5, 12.

What is his work:

1. Feed the flock willingly; not for money, not as head over God's people; but as a good servant. I Peter 4.10; 5.2, 3.
2. Hold fast the true teaching he has received and be able to answer those who are against God's truth. Titus 1.7, 8, 9.
3. Warn the disobedient, comfort the downhearted, hold up the weak. I Thessalonians 5.14. Because by and by he must give account to God. Hebrews 13.17.

Verse to learn, II Timothy 2.15.

388. Confession and Forgiveness.

Read Psalm 32.1-5; 51.1-12; I John 1.9.

1. **The Sins of the Unbeliever:**
The unbeliever is guilty and condemned in God's sight. He must receive Jesus as his Sin-bearer, and He will take away the punishment of all his sins. When Jesus died He knew all who would trust in Him, and He bare all their sins in His body on the cross, and they were forgiven. I Peter 2.24.

2. **The Sins of the Believer:**
When a believer sins he does not lose eternal life, he is still a child of God, but he loses his blessing. Sin has come in between him and God, and the Holy Spirit is grieved. Isaiah 59.1, 2. He may have sinned against **God**, or against God and **man**, or against the **Church.**

   (a) Sin against **God** must be confessed to **God**, only God can forgive this sin. I John 1.9; Psalm 32.5; Mark 2.7, 10, 11; Acts 8.22.

   (b) Sin against **man** must be confessed to man as well as God and he must be willing to put right the wrong he has done. James 5.16; Luke 19.5.

   (c) Sin against **the Church** (I Corinthians 5.11): he must confess before the elders of the church. John 20.23; I Corinthians 5.1, 4, 11, 13; II Corinthians 2.7.

389. Witnessing.

Read Acts 1.8; Mark 16.19, 20.

A witness tells out what he knows. When we are saved we should tell others.

Every Christian should witness. Matthew 20.6, 7; Matthew 4.19; Luke 5.10. "Son" means all who are born again. Matthew 21.28. God wants weak ones, too. I Corinthians 1.27-29. Moses, Exodus 4.10, 12; Jeremiah, Jeremiah 1.6-9; Paul, I Corinthians 2.3, 4, 5, 13.

The Master's command:

Go work, Matthew 21.28; Go speak, Ezekiel 3.1, 4, 10, 11; Go preach, to every man his work, Mark 13.34. God gives work to each one.

Witness today, the time is short. Mattthew 21.28; John 9.4; Colossians 4.5; I Corinthians 7.29.

In my vineyard. Matthew 20.6-7; 9.37; John 4.35, 36. God's garden is very big and workers are few; while we are lazy many souls perish.

Let us remember:

1. Without Christ we can do nothing. Mark 16.20; John 15.5. It is not by might nor by power but by God's Spirit. Zechariah 4.6. God is with us. Haggai 2.4.
2. We sow the good seed but only God makes it grow. I Corinthians 3.6-15.
3. We shall reap if we faint not. Galatians 6.9; I Corinthians 15.58.
4. Winning souls brings joy now, and reward by and by. John 4.35, 36; I Corinthians 3.6-15; Revelation 22.12; Matthew 25.23.

Verse to learn, Acts 1.8.

390. The enemy—Satan.

Read Ephesians 6.11-18.

1. His name was Lucifer (son of the morning). He was beautiful, very wise, sinless, and had a high place in heaven. Ezekiel 28.12-17.
2. Then he became proud; he wanted to change places with God; five times he said, "I will", and God cast him out. Isaiah 14.12-15. Let us watch against the sin of pride. I Timothy 3.6.
3. Then he was against God and man.

Satan's power against men:

1. He blinds men and deceives them. II Corinthians 4.4; Revelation 12.9; II Corinthians 11.14.
2. He takes away the Word from their hearts. Mark 4.15.
3. He tries to spoil them. Luke 22.31, 32.

God's power for men:

1. God is for us, on our side. Romans 8.31.
2. Christ is praying for us. Luke 22.31, 32.
3. He gives power to overcome Satan. Isaiah 59.19; Luke 10.19.
4. God will cast Satan into the lake of fire. Revelation 20.10.

What we must do:

1. Watch and pray. I Peter 5.8, 9.
2. Put on the whole armour of God. Ephesians 6.11-18.
3. Resist the devil, he will run away. James 4.7.

Verse to learn, Luke 10.19.

391. Christian Husbands.

Read Ephesians 5.25-33; Matthew 19.3-9; I Corinthians 7.10-15.

1. Should have only one wife, and keep only to her all her life. Genesis 2.24; I Timothy 3.2-12.
2. Not put her away except for adultery. Matthew 19.9; I Corinthians 7.11.

How to find a wife:

1. Not marry an unbeliever. II Corinthians 6.14.
2. Ask God to find her. Proverbs 19.14.
3. Choose a girl who is good to parents, kind to the sick, and who loves God's work.
4. Wait God's time, not steal her. I Corinthians 6.18, 19.

How to be happy together:

1. **Leave parents,** make a home for her. Colossians 3.19.
2. **Love her** as your own body. Ephesians 5.25, 28.
3. **Trust her**—do not be jealous. Proverbs 31.11.
4. **Pray with her** every day. I Peter 3.7.
5. **Honour her**—talk things over with her, so your prayers be not hindered. I Peter 3.
6. **Help her** with the hard work, remember her body is weaker than yours. I Peter 3.7.
7. **Be patient,** forgive one another, and do not pick up the trouble again. Colossians 3.19; Ephesians 5.2.
8. If a heathen man comes to Jesus, let him win his wife by his new life, not go back to the heathen with her. I Corinthians 7.12, 13.

Verse to learn, Colossians 3.19.

392. A Good Wife.

Read Proverbs 31.10-31; Romans 7.2-3; I Corinthians 7.39.

Proverbs 31.

verse 12. She will do good to her husband and help him, not hinder his blessing.
verse 11. Her husband can always trust her, she never thinks of any other man; she trusts her husband. The sin of jealousy spoils many people.
verse 13. She works willingly and looks well after her house and family. v. 27.
verse 20. She is kind to sick and poor people.
verse 26. She has a kind tongue, does not quarrel or grumble, or talk against others, or talk about other people's business.
27. So her husband praises her.
28. Her children grow up to bless her.
31. She is an example to the village.

1. **God says:** Obey your husband as your head, this is easy if you love each other. I Peter 3.1-4; Ephesians 5.22, 23; Colossians 3.18; Titus 2.4, 5.
2. Let young women marry and bear children; thank God for children, and bring them up for Him. I Timothy 5.14.
3. Help your husband in God's work and if God calls him to teach in another place, you go, too, not holding him back.
4. Do not make girls marry for money. Let God show the right man.

Verse to learn, Proverbs 31.12.

393. Parents.

Read Ephesians 6.4; Colossians 3.21.

Children:

1. They are a gift from God. Psalm 127.3; Genesis 33.5.
2. They should be given back to God, like Samuel and the Lord Jesus.
3. They can love God early. "Suffer little children to come unto Me." Mark 10.14, 16.
4. Take care not to stumble them by a bad example. Matthew 18.10-14.
5. Be an example to them in life, talk and love like Abraham. Never do anything you do not want them to copy.

Parents should train them for God. Proverbs 22.6.

1. Pray **for** them together. I Chronicles 29.19. And when they are old enough to understand, pray **with** them.
2. Father and mother must go one way and speak one way to train their children, so that they do not quarrel before the child.
3. Never lie to a child.
4. If you whip him for some fault, do not trouble when he cries. Proverbs 19.18.
5. Chasten (punish) him in love, not in anger, and pray with him for blessing and victory.
6. Teach him yourself about God, do not leave it all for the teacher. Deuteronomy 6.5-7.

Verse to learn, Proverbs 22.6

394. Never Perish.

THE ONE WHO TRUSTS JESUS IS NEVER LOST.

Read Hebrews 10.17: John 10.27-29.

1. The Lord Jesus said, "I give unto them **eternal life.**" This means life for ever. John 10.28; I John 5.13.
2. He said, "They shall never perish." No man is able to take us out of His hand. We must believe God's Word for He cannot lie.
3. The one who receives Jesus for his Saviour is **born** a child of God, and when a child is born you cannot change it. When we are born again a child of God we belong to Him for ever. John 1.12; John 5.24.
4. If we sin after we take the Lord Jesus for our Saviour we must confess it (quickly) to God, and He will forgive us and cleanse us. I John 1.9.

Verse to learn, John 10.28. "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

395. The Prayer of God's children.

Luke 11.1-13.

LEARNING TO PRAY.

1. **The Lord taught His disciples to pray first by His own example.** They saw Him praying and said, Lord teach US to pray, v. 1. Then He taught them this prayer which is a guide to show us what to ask for. "In everything by prayer." Phil. 4.6.
2. **How to speak to God.** Say, "Our Father," but only those who have been born again can say this. John 1.12 Gal. 3.26.
   Our Father.—This shows that all God's children are members of one family. We are to pray in the Name of Jesus. John 14.13, 14.
3. **The first three things are for God's glory.** v. 2.
   (a) The prayer begins with worship. Hallowed be Thy Name.
   (b) Pray for God's kingdom to come when Christ shall reign on earth, but we should make Him King in our own life now.
   (c) Pray for God's will to be done on earth; but we must be willing for His will in our own life now.
4. **The next things we ask for are for ourselves.**
   (a) Look to Him for the supply of daily bread and needs, v. 3.
   (b) Ask for forgiveness as we forgive others, v. 4.
   (c) Ask Him to deliver us from evil because we cannot keep ourselves. We are kept by **His** power. I Pet. 1.5.
5. **How to pray.**
   (a) Not give up but keep on asking, v. 7, 8.
   (b) God always answers prayer but sometimes He says Yes, sometimes No, and sometimes Wait.

Verse to learn. Luke 11.1.

396. How to care for our bodies.

Read I Corinthians 6.19, 20; Hebrews 10.22; Deuteronomy 23.12-14.

Our bodies belong to God. He has given us laws for our bodies so that we can keep well and strong.

How sickness comes:

1. Some are born with weak bodies.
2. Sickness of babies is often the fault of parents because mothers smoke, give the babies wrong food like taro, and do not keep them clean.
3. Leprosy, luluka, kakame, influenza and consumption come from others.
4. Diarrhoea and dysentery often start from eating wrong food; then it is carried to others by flies.
5. Sore eyes, sores and boils often come because of dirty houses and dirty bodies, and flies carry it from one to another.
6. Pneumonia comes from cold wind.
7. Rheumatism comes from sitting in wet calicoes or lying on damp ground.
8. Fever comes from mosquitoes.

How to keep well:

1. Eat good food that fits you.
2. Work hard and sweat.
3. Wash your body every day. Hebrews 10.22.
4. Make big doors and windows so that plenty of fresh air, light and sun can come into the house.
5. Build on high ground, far from a swamp, where it is free from mosquitoes.
6. Bury, burn or throw away rubbish into the sea every day; rubbish brings flies and flies carry sickness.
7. Clean your village every week and cover up everything no good with earth. Deuteronomy 23.12-14.

Verse to learn, I Corinthians 6.19, 20.

397. Baptism.

CONFESSING CHRIST BEFORE MEN.

Read Matthew 28.19, 20; Acts 2.41; 8.12.

Before the Lord went back to heaven He told His disciples to go and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 28.19, 20.

1. After we trust the Lord Jesus for our Saviour He wants us to be baptised. Baptism is only for those who are born again.
2. Baptism does not save us or wash away our sins. Only believing in Christ saves us and His blood cleanses us.
3. A soldier has a strap to show he belongs to the Government. Baptism is to show that we belong to Christ.
4. When we are baptised, we obey only one command of the Lord Jesus. We must go on to read and obey God's Word so that we may grow strong.

Verse to learn, Acts 8.12. "When they believed . . . they were baptised, both men and women."

398. The Tongue.

Read James 3.3-6, 8, 11. (James 3.3-11.)

Our tongue is like three small things with great power for blessing or trouble.

Like a bit to guide the horse. v. 3.
Like a helm to steer the ship. v. 4.
Like a fire, starts small, grows very big (v. 6), so a small tongue can turn men to Satan or to God; can bring blessing or trouble.
Unruly tongue spoils the whole body with filthy talk and swearing; it is full of poison. v. 8.
Man has power over beasts and serpents, but the tongue can no man tame. v. 7, 8.
Unkind tongue like firewood. Proverbs 26.20. It makes trouble speaking against others; like feathers that fly about, and we cannot pick them up again.

A spring has only fresh water. v. 11.
A tree has only one kind of fruit. v. 12.
So the tongue must not talk two ways.
Four things to remember:

1. God hears every word. Psalm 139.4.
2. We can bring life or death to others by our tongue.
3. God can only use clean lips. Isaiah 6.5-7.
4. God can keep and use our tongue.

Verse to learn, Psalm 141.3.

399. Backsliders.

SOWING (PLANTING) AND REAPING.

Read Jeremiah 2.19, 2.32, 3.1, 3.22; Hosea 2.4, 13.9, 14.1.

1. Backsliding grieves the Lord Who died for us, and brings shame upon His holy Name.
2. Backsliding stumbles the heathen and makes them turn from the Gospel. Backsliding stumbles weak ones who belong to God.
3. Backsliders must eat the bitter fruit of what they plant. Galatians 6.7. God must chasten the backslider in love to bring him back to God. Rev. 3.19. God rebukes him first, then if he will not listen He has to chasten him.
4. If he confesses his sin to God, He will forgive him and cleanse him. I John 1.9. But sin leaves a mark on our lives. God calls the backslider to come back to Him. Jeremiah 3.22.

Verse to learn, Galatians 6.7. "Whatsoever a man soweth (plants), that shall he also reap."

400. An Erring Brother.

Read Matthew 18.15-17, 21-22; Matthew 5.23, 24.

1. **Forgive him not only once,** but many times; because Christ has forgiven us.
2. **Give a soft answer.** Proverbs 15.1. If we are cross, too, we make things worse. But a soft answer turns away anger.
3. **When we sin against our brother:** We must make friends; we cannot have fellowship with God till we confess our fault to our brother. James 5.16.
4. **When our brother sins against us:** We must tell him his fault so that he can get right with God. Tell him by himself; tell him in love so that we may win him.
5. **If he will not listen,** take two or three Christians with you; then if he will not listen, leave him to God. But keep on praying for him.
6. **Restore him.** Galatians 6.1. If a Christian backslides:
   1. Pray for him, go after him and try to win him back.
   2. Go to him in a humble spirit; remember we are weak ourselves.

Verse to learn, Ephesians 4.32.



The closed **Eastern Gate** of Jerusalem that Jesus Christ entered before being crucified. "Then he brought me back the way of the **gate** of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the **east**: and **it was shut**. Then said the LORD unto me; **This gate shall be shut**, and it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the **LORD**, the **God** of Israel, **hath entered in by it**, therefore it shall be **shut**." (Ezekiel 44:1,2).