

# God Revealing His Truth

Through Patriarch and Prophet

By

WALTER ALBION SQUIRES, B. D.

The Westminster Textbooks of Religious Education  
Intermediate Department, First Year, Part I

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God revealing His truth

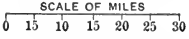




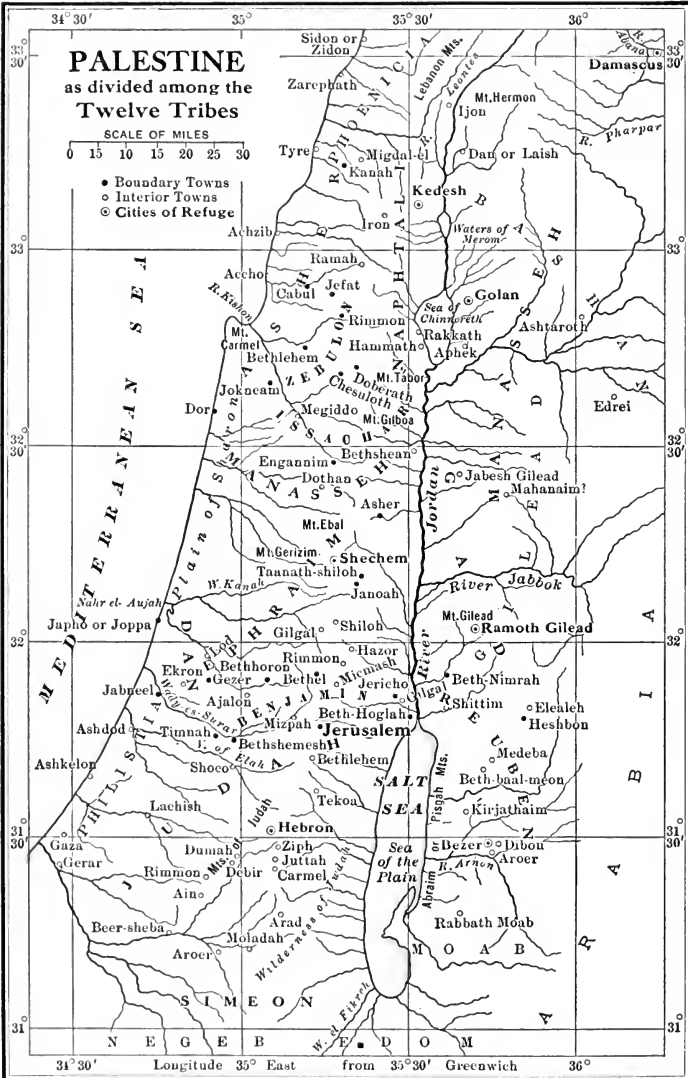


# PALESTINE

## as divided among the Twelve Tribes



- Boundary Towns
- Interior Towns
- ◎ Cities of Refuge



34° 30' Longitude 35° East from 35° 30' Greenwich 36°

# God Revealing His Truth

## I. Through Patriarch and Prophet

Intermediate Department, First Year, Part I

By

WALTER ALBION SQUIRES, B.D.

The Westminster Textbooks of Religious Education  
For Church Schools Having Sunday, Week  
Day, and Expressional Sessions

Edited by JOHN T. FARIS, D.D.



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# Preface

## GENERAL STATEMENT AS TO THE PURPOSES AND PLANS OF THE COURSE

The Westminster Textbooks of Religious Education are planned to meet the needs of churches seeking to unify their educational program. The informational, devotional, and expressional phases of religious education have been, heretofore, to a large extent, independent of one another. This lack of correlation has been detrimental to educational efficiency. Time and effort have been lost through duplication. Valuable information has failed to register itself in conduct because of the lack of suitable opportunities for expression. Many of our churches have been feeling their way toward better educational standards. It is in response to the requests and needs of these churches that this series of lessons have been undertaken.

These textbooks are planned for church schools having a week-day session, a Sunday session, and an expressional session meeting either on Sunday or on a week day. An absolute differentiation of the three phases of the educative process is neither possible nor desirable. The lessons are so arranged, however, that the week-day session is mainly informational, the Sunday session more largely devotional, and the third session of the week largely expressional.

Since the course is a unity, it is not necessarily confined to the plan suggested. It would be equally suited to a week-day church school system having three sessions a week and unrelated to the Sunday-school program of the community. The course could be adjusted to any local condition, provided the sequence of the lessons were maintained.

Forty-two lessons of three sections each are provided for each grade or year. It is thought that this will furnish

material for a church-school program with three sessions per week throughout the public school year. It is also believed that many schools will find the material sufficient for the use of the Sunday session during that part of the year when week-day sessions are discontinued. Much of this summer season might be spent in a rapid review of the work covered during the other part of the year. No exact adjustment to any particular circumstances is attempted because of the fact that church schools differ widely in the matter of their summer sessions. Some are practically closed all summer; some continue on as extensive a basis as during the other parts of the year. The whole matter of adjustment is best left to the local church-school administration. If a church school practically closes at the beginning of summer, it would be well for the authorities of that school to plan for a completion of each year's course at that time. If the school runs on through the summer with undiminished attendance, more time may be taken for the lessons, a part of each book being left for completion in the summer session. Where this is done, the section intended for the week-day lesson may be taken on one Sunday of the summer period, the Sunday lesson related to this week-day lesson the next Sunday, and the expressional lesson on a third Sunday.

The lessons for the Intermediate grades are built on the supposition that the majority of the pupils have become somewhat familiar with the Bible stories, especially those of the Old Testament. Hence the stories are not usually told in their entirety, but the treatment is more largely that of analysis and illustration of the truths suggested by the narratives of the Scripture. If it be found that most of the pupils are not familiar with the Bible stories, the teacher should give more attention to the telling of these stories than is indicated in the lessons as they are here presented.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE TEACHERS OF THE COURSE

It is desirable, wherever possible, that the same teachers have charge of the three sections. Where this is impracticable, there should be one supervisor for the teaching in all sections. A correlated course of study will fail of its purpose unless there is also correlated teaching.

It is believed that detailed suggestions as to the methods to be pursued in each lesson are not needed for trained teachers of Intermediates. A careful study of the lesson will reveal to the trained teacher the objectives which the lesson has in view, even though these objectives are not specifically stated. The lessons are arranged for the topical method of teaching. A teacher who is prepared will have in readiness additional illustrative and story material so as to bring home to every child the intended truths.

No specific suggestions as to memory work are given because it is felt that this is a matter which the teacher must determine. The teacher may use as many of the Scripture passages for memorizing as is found practicable. It is hoped that many of the hymns may also be memorized. These hymns should be carefully studied, interesting facts about their authors should be told, and stories may be introduced to show the power of these hymns over the lives and thoughts of men. Unfamiliar words and phrases of the hymns should be explained by the teacher. If the teacher succeeds in making these great hymns known and beloved by the pupils, she will have accomplished a service of inestimable value. Some memory work should usually be given in connection with every recitation.

The teacher should keep in mind the fact that the Sunday Session is primarily intended for training in worship. If the teacher is herself in the devotional frame of mind and able to impart her spirit to her class, she will

accomplish much during this period. This session ought not to be so much of a recitation as the Week Day Session. It ought to be a service of praise and worship. The teacher should be prepared to give a careful and effective talk on the subject, illustrating it with suitable story material. Some pupils may be able to do this, but only those able to do it well should be chosen for this Sunday period of devotion. The prayers given are only suggestions. The teacher ought to be able to use them, or others of her own, so as to lead the pupils into habits of prayer, both private and public. The service might well close with the study of the lesson hymn and the singing of the hymn by the class.

The Expressional Session is of much importance. It is intended that in this session the pupils shall be given training in self-expression and initiative. Moreover, this is the time for giving the pupils practical suggestions and help in the matter of putting into practice the truths they have learned.

Brief suggestions are given as to the leader's opening address. It is not expected that the leader will read or repeat what is given in the book. What is given there is only a sample of what might be said. The topics ought to be assigned some time before the meeting and pupils should be given suggestions as to where they may find suitable material on the topics assigned.

Committees are to be appointed to take up various enterprises carrying out the teachings received. Thus this session will become a valuable training school for efficient Church membership in addition to helping the pupils by giving them an opportunity to put in practice the teachings they have received.

The Class Code is a matter of much importance. It is aimed to sum up in brief form some main teaching of the lesson. Pupils should feel that they are taking upon themselves a solemn obligation when they vote to make the laws of the code the fundamental rules of the class and of their individual lives. There should be a system of reporting so that the class may know who are keeping the laws conscientiously. The laws may be memorized, or printed in motto form for the wall. The teacher may

occasionally ask some such question as, "How many members of the class read something in the Bible yesterday?" Many of the resolutions of the code may be carried out by the class acting as a body. By buying and distributing Testaments, or by sending an offering to a Bible society, they would be fulfilling their promise to "try to send the Bible and its teachings into all parts of the earth." An ingenious teacher will invent many ways to bring the class laws into the lives of the pupils.

It is recommended that pupils keep a notebook in which they write down material designated by the teacher from day to day. Pictures illustrating the lessons may be secured at a trifling cost and will add greatly to the interest in the notebook work.

It will be noted that the lessons are not tied up to any time schedule. Each book of the course may be taken up at such a time as seems best to the local church-school authorities. Lessons suitable for Christmas, Easter, or other special days, may be omitted temporarily from the course and then taken up at the suitable time.



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## SECTION I

### THE MAJESTIC CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE

CHAPTER I. THE ETERNAL GOD.

CHAPTER II. THE EVER PRESENT GOD.

CHAPTER III. THE RIGHTEOUS GOD.

“Thou art Jehovah, even thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.”—Neh. 9:6.

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”—The Apostles’ Creed.



CHAPTER I  
THE ETERNAL GOD  
WEEK DAY SESSION

GOD BRINGS INTO EXISTENCE A UNIVERSE OF  
LIFE AND ORDER

Gen. 1:1-25

INTRODUCTION

It is always interesting to find out about the beginnings of things. For a thousand years or more, people wondered about the river Nile. They sent out many exploring parties to find where it began, somewhere up in the heart of Africa, under the equator. This first lesson of the Intermediate Department ought to be interesting, for in it we study the story which tells us about the beginning of all things. But before we take up that story let us notice a few things about the book which contains it.

OUR WONDERFUL TEXTBOOK

The Bible is the most wonderful Book in the world. The word "Bible" means "the book" and it is entitled to the name for it is the Book of books. The Bible is to be our textbook in the Intermediate Department. We shall have other books, but they are to be only helps enabling us to understand the Bible better than we otherwise could do. As members of the Intermediate Department you have reached an age when you are able to understand much more of the Bible than you could as pupils in the Primary and Junior grades. Of course, however, you will not expect to understand the most wonderful Book in the world without diligent study.

SOME WONDERS OF THE BIBLE

**Its Wonderful Literature.** The most important thing

about a book is the truth it contains. The way it tells this truth is also important. If the writer of a book uses the right words and forms them into pleasing phrases and beautiful sentences, we find pleasure not only in the thoughts which the book expresses, but also in the way they are expressed. We say that such books are good literature. Now, considered merely as literature, the Bible is the greatest Book in the world. Most people will agree that some parts of the Bible are more sublimely beautiful than anything to be found in all the literature of the world outside the Bible. The words and phrases of the Bible have been copied into the greatest books and the greatest orations of the world and it is this Bible material which makes these books and these orations great pieces of literature.

**Its Wonderful Unity.** When a book has one subject running through it we say that it possesses unity. Sometimes several authors have written parts of a book. Such books nearly always lack unity. The Bible is in sixty-six distinct parts and it was written by probably thirty-six different people. The period during which the Bible was being written covers more than a thousand years. Very different kinds of people took part in the writing of the Bible. Some were kings sitting on thrones; some were shepherds watching their flocks alone in the wilderness; some were fishermen. Would you expect a book written in such a way to have unity? And yet the Bible has a wonderful unity. It deals with one great subject.

**Its Wonderful History.** The Bible is one of the oldest books in the world. During all the centuries of its existence it has made great changes wherever it has gone. A lad in Japan once found a few pages of the Bible floating in a stream near his home. He dried the paper, learned to read the verses, and through the influences of the Bible became a Christian and the founder of a great university in his native land. Could the finding of a few pages from any other book lead to such a result?

**Its Wonderful Subject Matter.** We have said that the most important thing about a book is the truth it contains. The Bible is the Book of Truth and it deals with the most important subjects in the world. It has been said that the subjects with which the Bible deals can be expressed in

four words. These words are "God," "man," "sin," and "redemption."

The Bible tells us about God. Without the Bible we would be like the people of Africa and India who worship wooden idols or bow down to snakes and monkeys, calling them their gods.

The Bible tells us about ourselves. People who have no Bibles are always asking: "What are we? Whence have we come? Whither do we go?" People have given some strange answers to these questions. The Bible helps us to answer them correctly.

The Bible tells us about sin. Without the Bible men have no very reliable guide to show them what is right and what is wrong. If we know our Bibles we know what sin is; we know its dangers and its penalties, for the Bible speaks plainly on the subject.

The Bible tells us about redemption. Redemption is the method by which we gain freedom from sin and enter into right relations with God. Have you heard of the terrible methods used by men and women in India in their efforts to find freedom from sin and peace with God? Some lie down on planks filled with sharp spikes. Some of them go out on a hot day and sit in the blazing sunshine of that tropical country for hours. They often make their sufferings still more acute by building a large fire near which they sit, and the heat of the flames is added to that of the sun. The Bible tells us how we can be reconciled to God through his Son who has been sent as our Saviour and Teacher.

#### FIRST BIBLE MESSAGES ABOUT GOD

Since we have learned that a large part of the subject matter of the Bible is concerned with the truths we are to learn about God, we might expect that the very first words of the Book should tell us something about him. The things which these first verses have to tell us about him are so very great and deep that we can hardly expect to understand them completely. This fact ought not to discourage us, however. The greatest philosophers of the world have never understood all that these verses mean. The fact that we cannot understand all need not make us doubtful as to the truth of what we do understand. We can look down

into a well and we may not be able to see the bottom or to tell how deep it is, yet we are sure it is a well. So we can know some things about God and be very sure about them, even if we can never know all about him.

**The God Who Existed Before the Beginning of Time.** The first verse of the Bible expresses one of the truths about God which we know must be so, and yet cannot understand. It tells us that God is eternal, has existed forever. We cannot grasp the thought of eternal, infinite, or boundless existence. It is like trying to think of boundless space. We look up into the sky at night and see the stars. Some of them are so far away that it takes their light centuries to pass from them to us, yet they do not mark the boundaries of space. We cannot think of space as ending there or anywhere else. God has always been, is now, and ever shall be.

**The Only God.** The majesty and beauty of this Bible story of the Creation places it far above any other story of its kind. Nearly every race of people in the world has had stories about the beginning of things. Some of these are so odd and crude that we are inclined to smile at them. A Chinese picture of the Creation shows us an old man slowly carving out the mountains with mallet and chisel. Other peoples have believed that the earth and the heavens were made by some great dragon or sea monster. Some of the people of India think of a great serpent as the creator and upholder of the universe. They believe that the earth rests on the backs of three elephants, that these elephants stand on the back of an immense turtle, and that this turtle stands upon the folded body of the great serpent which created all things. Looking up into the sky at night they see the Milky Way stretched across the heavens and say that it is the serpent of their story, each star a glistening scale in the serpent's shining body. It is only in the simple and beautiful story of Genesis that we are told of the one great, ever-existing God who created all things by the word of his power.

**The Unformed Earth.** When God called into existence the materials of which the earth is made, his task was only begun. We are told that after God created the heavens and the earth, "The earth was waste and void." It was with-





ONE OF THE SPIRAL NEBULAE



out form, empty, without light or life. If you should look through a large telescope pointed in the direction of the constellation of Andromeda you would see what seemed to be a small, dim cloud in the midst of the stars. It is not really small, however. It is a great bank of fog and fire mist, extending through millions and millions of miles of space. There are many of these nebulae, as they are called, in the sky. Some of them look as if they were whirling like vast pinwheels in space. Many scientists believe that out there in the heavens new suns and worlds are being made. If their beliefs are right and our world was once a nebulous mass floating darkly in the infinite spaces of heaven, we know that God was there. How near our verse comes to saying this very thing when it tells us that the earth was "waste and void."

**The Brooding Spirit.** Have you ever seen a mother bird sitting on her nest up in a tree? How patiently she warms her eggs with her own breast. How carefully she turns them and covers them with her soft feathers. She is warming them into life, or rather warming the life she has given them, into beings like herself. Now, this is the picture the Hebrew word gives us of God and the universe after the first act of creation. It says, "And the Spirit of God was brooding upon the face of the waters."

**The Maker of the Sun.** Sometimes at night we see a wonderful display of northern lights. Great beams of light come up out of the north and stream across the zenith. They move to and fro across the sky like a company of soldiers on parade. Rosy flushes sweep across the heavens like the film of vapor which quickly comes and goes when you blow your breath upon a windowpane in winter. What causes it all? The next morning the sun rises through a hazy sky and some dark specks are visible on its face. Scientists say that the sun spots cause the northern lights. If you know what sun spots are, you will not be surprised to know that they produce such disturbances on the earth. They are vast storms that tear great holes deep into the flaming surface of the sun, holes so large that hundreds of worlds the size of ours could be poured into them. What thunderings and flashings take place in those terrific storms of white hot vapors we do not know. We know only that

though these sun storms are ninety-three millions of miles away from our earth they send out lines of force which touch our world with power. Every telephone and telegraph wire spread across the land or along the bottom of the sea feels the tug of that far-off strife of the elements, and the reflections of its lightnings throw their beams across our sky. When we think about how great and vast the sun is, it helps us to understand the greatness of the One who formed it by his word of power.

**“He Made the Stars Also.”** And yet the sun is, itself, only a speck in the vastness of God’s universe. There are millions upon millions of suns in the sky. We call them the “fixed stars.” Our sun is more than eight hundred thousand miles in diameter, but there are many suns far larger than this sun. These suns are flung forth so far into space that figures fail to express their distance. The number of them all, no man can tell. They are known and numbered only by the One who “made the stars also.”

“Lord of every land and nation,  
Ancient of eternal days,  
Sounded through the wide creation  
Be thy just and lawful praise;  
For the grandeur of thy nature—  
Grand beyond a seraph’s thought;  
For created works of power,  
Works with skill and kindness wrought.”

---

## SUNDAY SESSION

### GOD CREATES MAN AFTER HIS OWN LIKENESS

Gen. 1:26 to 2:3; Psalm 8

All the creative acts of God of which we studied in our last chapter were but preparations for a greater act of creation which was to follow them. A gardener labors long and diligently, spading soil and enriching it; but it is not for the sake of the soil, itself, that he works so hard; it is for the sake of the fruits and flowers which shall sometime grow there. A mother bird builds a nest by adding straw to straw. She does not make the nest for its own sake, but for

the nestlings which are to be cradled there. Your father builds a house, furnishes it, makes it beautiful, without and within. Does he do it for the sake of the house and for himself alone, or is it that he may have a home for you where you and he can live together in fellowship and peace? While God was making the world, he was fitting up a home for man. Ages before man was on the earth, God was working through nature, storing away coal and oil, iron and tin, down beneath the surface of the earth. His water and ice were busy changing rocks into fertile soil for the fields and gardens of men, which were yet to be. When the new home was all ready and beautiful, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

**The Greatest of God's Creations.** The creation of man was a greater act than the creation of the sun, or of the stars, or of the vegetable life of the world, or of all the animal life outside of man. Man only, of all God's creation, is made in the image and likeness of God. By saying that man is made in the image of God, we mean that man is more like God than anything else the Creator has made. Man is enough like God to know him and love him and grow more and more like him, while suns and stars and animals and birds are not enough like God to make any of these things possible.

The creation of man was the most enduring act of God's creation. God made man for a life like his own life which goes on forever. Some verses in one of the psalms speak of this unending life of God and the change which comes to everything else.

"Thy years are throughout all generations.  
Of old didst thou lay the foundation of the earth;  
And the heavens are the work of thy hands.  
They shall perish, but thou shalt endure;  
Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;  
As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be  
changed:  
But thou art the same,  
And thy years shall have no end."

—Ps. 102:24-27.

**Made to Have Dominion.** God made man to be a ruler. He gave him dominion over the other living things he had

made upon the earth, "over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Every man and woman and every boy and girl has part in this dominion over the other creatures of the earth. If we live in a city we may not see much of the cattle or of the fish of the sea, but even in the city "creeping things" come across our paths and under our dominion; the birds come about our doors to pick up crumbs in winter, and to build their homes in summer. What kind of rulers are we to be? Some people are kind and helpful sovereigns over God's creatures; some are selfish tyrants. We should remember that our dominion over the creatures of the world is not ours except as God's gift to us. He created them and has asked us to look after them for him. A king sometimes appoints a certain person to rule a certain part of his dominions, in his stead. Such a person is called a viceroy. In our rulership over the animal life of the world, we are viceroys of God.

**Made to Conquer.** God not only gave man dominion, but also gave him tasks to perform. "Have dominion over the . . . earth," said he, "and subdue it." God wisely put difficulties in man's pathway. If we never grapple with difficulties and conquer them, we never grow as we should. For centuries fierce wild animals contended with man for the dominion of the world. Our far-away ancestors grappled with the tiger and the bear in a hand-to-claw struggle for survival, but that warfare is ended long ago. Great rivers were a barrier to the movements of early man as he pushed out seeking new homes in the unpeopled regions of the earth. In time man learned how to subdue the rivers, how to make them grind his corn and bear his merchandise and water the deserts for the raising of his crops. The ocean was long a dreaded barrier to man, but now it is subdued and has become the highway of the nations. The electric currents of the earth were once regarded by man as mysterious and dreaded enemies of destruction. Now they are subdued; they light our streets, run our trolley cars, and carry our messages in a moment's time across continents and under oceans. The thinness of the air and the tug of gravitation for centuries seemed to meet all man's attempts to

soar above the earth with a stern, "Thou shalt not," but now, even these are subdued and man flies like a bird.

But man has not yet accomplished all his task of subduing the earth. Perhaps he has not accomplished the most important part of it. There are many things in men and among men yet to be subdued. To bring it about that God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven is a greater task than anything man has yet accomplished. In fact, it is so great that man can never hope to accomplish it alone; but God has taught us to believe that with his help, it shall yet be done.

### THE CHILD OF A KING

More than a century ago, a terrible revolution broke out in France. The common people had been cruelly oppressed for centuries and conditions had grown steadily worse in matters of government. Thousands were starving everywhere in France. The young king and queen were not to blame, and they tried to make such changes as would bring justice and relief, but the effort was made too late. The revolution came, and the king, queen, and royal family were thrown into prison. Week by week, the fury of the mob grew stronger in the streets of Paris. The king was dragged from prison to a mock trial, condemned, and executed. Then the queen was seized by the enraged populace and met a like fate.

Then the blind fury of the mobs was turned against the young prince, heir to the throne, who was languishing in prison. The mobs hated him because of what his forefathers had done and because they thought of him as belonging to the system of government which had oppressed them. "Bring him out! Bring him out!" shouted the fierce crowds. In his cell the young prince heard the shouting, but he was not afraid. He knew he was in the keeping of the Father of the righteous.

In the midst of the shouting one of the most notorious leaders of the mob climbed to a place overlooking the crowd and said: "You are seeking to take the life of the young prince, but I have a better plan than that. If you take his life now, his soul will soar away to heaven and be in happiness and peace forever. My plan is that, ere we take his

life, we make him commit such sins that his soul can never enter heaven." And so it was agreed. They chose "Old Meg" a woman of notorious wickedness, and commissioned her to go into the young prince's cell and to make him curse, and become drunken, and break in other ways the laws of God. They had mistaken the temper of the lad, however. He stood fast in his loyalty to right. To every evil suggestion he replied with a firm and final: "I will not do it. I am the child of a king." Such heroic devotion to right so impressed even the wild Paris mobs that they could not help respecting the heroic young prince and ceased tormenting him.

The beautiful story of the first two chapters of Genesis is followed in the third chapter by the dark story of man's fall into sin. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." This, and then a Sabbath rest, and then the serpent's whisper and the coming in of evil to mar the order, peace, and joy of God's plans for the children of his love! The Bible picture is true to life. Sorrow comes to those who do evil, but wisdom and loyalty and truth abide in the hearts of those who turn away from every temptation to evil saying: "I will not do it. I am the child of a King."

"Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth."—Eccl. 12:1a.

"Keep thyself pure."—I Tim. 5:22b.

"He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne."—Rev. 3:21a.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, our Father in heaven, thou hast existed for ever and ever. Thou hast created all things by thy power and thou hast made all things beautiful and good. Help us to be reverent and thankful as we think of thy goodness and thy wisdom and thy love. Help us in our study of thy Book which thou hast given us. May we not only understand its teachings, but also obey its commandments. Help us to think pure thoughts, speak clean words, and do the things that are right. We pray for thy blessings on

our church and on our class. We pray that thou wilt show us what we can do for thee and what we can undertake to make our own community more Christian. So may we all do our Father's bidding day by day and help to build up that beautiful Kingdom where his will is done on earth as it is done in heaven. We ask these things in the name of thy Son, our Saviour. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

“ O worship the King all glorious above,  
 O gratefully sing his power and his love;  
 Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of days,  
 Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.

“ O tell of his might, O sing of his grace,  
 Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.  
 His chariots of wrath the deep thunder clouds form,  
 And dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

“ The earth with its store of wonders untold,  
 Almighty thy power hath founded of old;  
 Hath established it fast by a changeless decree,  
 And round it hath cast, like a mantle the sea.

“ Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?  
 It breathes in the air; it shines in the light;  
 It streams from the hills; it descends from the plain;  
 And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

. . . . .

“ O measureless Might! Ineffable Love!  
 While angels delight to hymn thee above,  
 The humbler creation, though feebler their lays,  
 With true adoration shall lisp to thy praise.”

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EXPRESSONAL SESSION

THE BIBLE AND ITS OPENING CHAPTER

Gen., ch. 1 ; Psalm 8

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

Our church school is now running with three sessions a week, one on a week day, one on a Sunday, and one to be held at the hour we are now coming together and to be

called "an expressional session." In the first two sessions our class teacher will have charge, but in the expressional session we ourselves shall direct things with the help of our teacher. We shall review and discuss the things we have been taught in the other sessions of the school. We shall plan how we can carry out what we have learned so as to live right ourselves and so as to help our companions and our whole community to be Christian. We shall later choose a name for our class and have a regular constitution with appropriate officers, mottoes, badges, and committees. Some of these committees will be appointed to-day but first of all we shall take up the consideration of the topic for the day.

We are to think and talk about "The Bible and Its Opening Chapter." We have been told in our lessons that the Bible is a wonderful Book, and have considered some of the reasons why it is so wonderful. The things we have heard about the Bible may not be just the reasons why we like it. I like the Bible because it tells us about brave men such as David and Daniel and the prophets. Now I have told you why I like the Bible, and after we have repeated the lesson prayer together and closed with The Lord's Prayer, I am going to ask some of you to stand up and tell us why you like the Bible.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. Why I like the Bible.
2. My Favorite Bible Verse.
3. The Most Beautiful Passages of the Old Testament.
4. Common Versions of the English Bible.
5. Great Bible Translators, Wyclif, Tyndale, Jerome.
6. How the Bible Story of Creation Agrees with the Conclusions of Scientists.
7. How the Bible Story of Creation Differs from the Creation Stories in Pagan Literature.
8. Subjects About Which the Bible Teaches Us.
9. Value of the Bible in the Home and in the Nation.

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Josh. 1:8; Ps. 89:11; 90:2; 119:9, 105; 102:25; Isa. 40:21-23; Amos 5:8; II Tim. 3:14-16; Heb. 4:12.



## COMMITTEES TO BE APPOINTED

Committee on a Constitution. Nominating Committee.

## THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

1. Find out about the American Bible Society.
2. Find out about the Gideons.
3. Report on the work of Sunday-school missionaries.
4. Find out how many pupils from twelve to fourteen years of age are enrolled in the public schools of the city or community.
5. Find out how many pupils of the same age are enrolled in Sunday school.
6. Find out about the Pocket Testament League.
7. Find out whether there are any homes in the community where there is no Bible.

## THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Respect for God's Word.** The Bible is the most wonderful and most valuable Book in the world. Therefore:

1. We will study it diligently, making it the rule of our lives to read it every day.
2. We will endeavor to live according to its teachings.
3. We will try to send the Bible and the religion it teaches into all parts of the earth.

CHAPTER II  
THE EVER PRESENT GOD  
WEEK DAY SESSION  
GOD'S PRESENCE IN NATURE

Psalms 104; 139:1-12

In the preceding chapter, we studied about the God who has always existed and who made the universe. We must not think that God made the heavens and the earth and then withdrew to some distant place of abode and left his creation to run itself. The Bible picture of God's relation to his works is exactly opposite to this. Having created man, God held communication with him; having planted a garden, he walked there "in the cool of the day." This is the Old Testament way of saying that the great Creator is everywhere, and always present in all his works.

Long before the Old Testament was written men felt the presence of God in the objects and processes of nature. These early men, as we might expect, did not understand so much about the God revealed in nature as we do to-day. They made many mistakes in their attempts to explain their feelings in the presence of the wonders of the natural world. Sometimes they thought that there must be thousands of gods, for they felt as if there were presences in everything they saw or heard. There must, therefore, be a god in each river, in the clouds that brought the rain, in the wonderful unfolding flower buds that grew into the fruits that made a part of their food. It took man a long time to understand that the presence he felt in nature was not that of many different persons but that of one great Person, everywhere and always present.

**The Oldest Poem in the World.** Some years ago explorers among the ruins of Egypt dug up some clay tablets covered with inscriptions in that strange kind of writing which is called "hieroglyphics." What a puzzle it must have

been to read these pages of the clay tablets made thousands of years ago! But patient men made them out little by little and when they were all translated into our language it was found to be a kind of ancient hymn book containing songs which the people of long ago sang to the sun god. Some of the verses run something like this:

“Hail to thee, O Sun-god, the self-existent!  
 Glorious is thy uprising from the horizon.  
 Both worlds are lighted by thy rays  
 All men rejoice to see thee marching in majesty.  
 Thy splendor is beyond our understanding,  
 And is given to us anew every morning.  
 Hail to thee, who makest glad the lands,  
 And all the towns and temples,  
 With the blessings of thy goodness.  
 Hail to thee, Sun-god, when thou returnest home,  
 Renewed in beauty, crowned, and almighty.”

These ancient Egyptians made some great mistakes, but they learned a good deal of truth about God, by studying about what they could see of him in nature.

**Men Have Everywhere and Always Felt God's Presence in Nature.** At the time that the Egyptians in their sunny land were catching some glimpses of the greatness and majesty of God through his works, far away on the plains of India other people who had never heard of Egypt, were thinking about the same things and coming to like conclusions. Away up north, in the land of ice and snow, the Eskimos were probably watching along their desolate shores for the coming of the herds of seals on which their lives depended. They were sure that Some One, dwelling somewhere far beyond the horizons of floating ice, some unseen and mysterious Power, would not fail them, but would send them food in due season. Down on the other side of the world, in Australia, the little black man of the bush saw the southern lights streaming across the sky, and he believed that they were the flickering reflections of the camp fires in the land where the spirits of his forefathers were dwelling and feasting. Perhaps at that very time the ancestors of the American Indians were listening to the thunder of Niagara and speaking in awed tones of Gitchee Manitou, the mighty.

## THE BIBLE AND THE GOD OF NATURE

**The Bible Gives Clear and Abundant Pictures of the God Who Is Present in Nature.** The little glimpses of God which the Egyptian, the Eskimo, and the Indian caught of God in his works, in the Bible, become clear and true visions of the great Creator. The first people spoken of made many mistakes about God's presence in nature, but the poets and prophets who wrote the Bible were lifted to reliable conclusions concerning him.

**An Old Testament Poem About God.** The Old Testament has many beautiful passages telling about God's presence in all his works. We are to study two such passages from The Psalms. Let us consider a few of the things the natural world told the writers of these ancient poems about the Creator, God.

**Clothed with Light.** "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment." Light is one of the most wonderful things in the universe. It is worthy of the poet's figure of speech which makes it the substance of the garments of God. Every little sunbeam is so small that its waves have to be measured in millionths of an inch. Millions of the stars are so far away that the most powerful telescope can make of them nothing but the faintest points of light. Yet what wonderful messages these faint light rays bring! They are messages from the stars. They tell us something about the size of the stars from which they come, their movements, their distance from our earth, the substances of which they are composed. The next time you see the sunlight sweeping across the fields and woods as the storm clouds break away, or when you see the after-sunset glow thrown on the western sky, think of what the Bible says about light being the garment of God.

**The Caretaker of the Universe.** The winds, clouds, fire, earth, and ocean are the instruments which God uses to care for the world he has created. Through them he gives "drink to every beast of the field." Through them he causes "the grass to grow for the cattle." Through them he gives food to men. He is the home giver to all creatures of the earth. The psalmist thinks of a God who cares for things exceeding small. He made the

great Lebanon cedars for the little birds that build their nests there. He made the beautiful firs for the storks. He made the rugged cliffs of the mountains to be the dwelling places of the wild goats. He made the cracks and crevices among the rocks for the timid little conies, that they might dwell there safely.

**God Always Present.** We can never escape from God's presence. He knows all about us and he sees us every moment of our lives.

“Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?  
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:  
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.  
If I take the wings of the morning,  
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;  
Even there shall thy hand lead me,  
And thy right hand shall hold me.”

—Ps. 139:7-10.

**God's Presence Still Seen in Nature.** It is not alone among the people of long ago and among the writers of the Bible that God's presence has been felt in nature. The greatest men and women of our own times have given the same testimony. “When I lie on my bed at night and listen to the cooling drip of the rain,” said Joseph Parker, “I know that God is, and that he is good.” The poet Tennyson said that the “flower in the crannied wall” carried a message so wonderful that, were he able to read it all, he would “know what God and man is.”

The poet Coleridge has some beautiful verses telling us the message the glaciers, forests, and wild flowers of the Alps gave to him:

Ye ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow  
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—  
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,  
And stopped, at once, amid their maddest plunge!  
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!  
Who made you glorious as the gates of heaven  
Beneath the keen, full moon? Who bade the sun  
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers  
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?—  
“God!” let the torrents, like a shout of nations,  
Answer! and let the ice plains echo “God!”

“God!” sing, ye meadow streams, with gladsome voice!  
 Ye pine groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!  
 And they, too, have a voice, yon piles of snow,  
 And in their perilous fall shall thunder “God!”

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!  
 Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle’s nest!  
 Ye eagles, playmates of the mountain storm!  
 Ye lightnings, dread arrows of the clouds!  
 Ye signs and wonders of the elements!  
 Utter forth, “God!” and fill the hills with praise!

From “Hymn Before Sunrise,” by S. T. COLERIDGE.

### God’s Presence in Nature a Demonstrated Truth.

Since the great majority of mankind has felt something which led them to believe that God was dwelling in all the earth, since this feeling has existed among all classes of people scattered all over the world, and since it has grown stronger and clearer with man’s advance in knowledge and civilization, have we not all the greater reason to feel that the Bible pictures of an ever-present God are true? If we think of God’s presence in all that we see and hear out in the natural world, we shall soon come to have a deeper joy in the fields, in the ocean, or in the mountains. They will be telling us continually something of their great Creator’s abiding presence in them. We shall find ourselves walking “in the light, as he is in the light,” having fellowship one with another.

### GOD’S MESSAGE IN A FLOWER

A certain man by the name of Charney was living in France at the time when that country was ruled by Napoleon Bonaparte. He was a man of great learning, but he did not believe in God. Like a good many other men of his day he had thrown away all belief in religion. With wealth, fame, and many friends he did not feel any great need for God. Of course we know that everyone needs God every moment, but this Frenchman did not know that he needed him.

After a time he fell under the displeasure of Napoleon. All his property was taken from him and he was cast into prison. The cell where he was confined was a dark place with just a little light coming in through one small window, high up on one wall. The window had heavy iron bars

across it, to prevent any prisoner from crawling through. Here the imprisoned man spent all his hours, with nothing to do but think about things. Once a day the keeper of the prison brought him a little coarse food, and once a day he was allowed to go out into a little court and walk about for an hour.

At first Mr. Charney thought that his friends would soon secure his liberation. But day after day, week after week passed. His friends did not come. They were unbelievers, like himself, and people need faith in God to make them true friends. They did not wish to risk offending Napoleon so they didn't say anything to anyone about Charney or even let it be known that they knew him.

The poor prisoner grew very sad, as he saw that he was forsaken by all his former friends and admirers. One day he dug out a little piece of limy plaster from between the stones of his prison and wrote on the wall, "Nobody Cares." With great labor he made little niches in the wall and climbed up to his one small window, hoping for a peep of the outside world, but there was nothing to be seen except another gray wall a few feet away. Oh, for something just a little different, a mouse to come out upon his prison floor, the song of a bird, or one blade of green grass!

One day, as he was walking over the stone pavement of his little walled court, he stopped short, looking down at something near his feet. He dropped on his knees and examined it more closely. It was only a tiny shoot of green pushing up through the earth between the stones of the pavement; but somehow it made him glad. That night he slept more peacefully than for many a month. The next day, as soon as he was released from his cell, he hurried to his plant. Yes, it was still there. Day by day he watched it and watered it from the small bottle of water left for him every day by the keeper of the prison. At last a little flower bud appeared; it grew larger; and one day he found there a lovely flower with a little star in its center, a crown of golden stamens and petals as blue as the sky.

Hope and gladness came into his soul once more. That night he happened to notice for the first time in many months the words he had written on his prison wall, "No-

body Cares." He went up and rubbed them out; then he wrote in their place the words, "God Cares."

—From a story in "Children's Sermons," by H. T. KERR.

## SUNDAY SESSION

### GOD'S PRESENCE IN OUR LIVES

#### Psalm 91

We have seen that the creation of man was the crowning act of God's creative power. We have also considered facts which show that God's presence dwells in objects and processes of nature which are external to man. If God's Spirit is within the ocean, in the animal and vegetable life of the world, is it not reasonable to believe that his Spirit dwells in the creatures which he has made in his own likeness, made so much like himself that he can talk with them and they with him, made so much like him that they can think his thoughts after him, just as you can think thoughts like the thoughts of your parents?

It is not only reasonable to believe that this would be the case, but multitudes of people say that it is true. The men and women who have been most truly great in all history have believed that God was directing them, aiding their efforts, dwelling within their lives constantly.

#### GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE LIVES OF BIBLE HEROES

**Abraham, the Altar Builder.** You have studied many of the Old Testament stories and you will remember about Abraham. You will recall how he left his native land to strike out into the unknown regions of the west, in answer to God's commandment. He dwelt in tents, and moved about from place to place with his flocks, but everywhere he went he felt that God was with him; everywhere he pitched his camp, he built an altar of stone, that he might worship Jehovah. So intimate did Abraham's fellowship with God seem to be that he came to be known as "the Friend of God."

**Jacob Discovers That God Is Near.** You have heard



the story of how Jacob, fleeing from his angry brother lay down at sunset in the valley of Luz, how he had a wonderful dream in which he saw a ladder reaching up to heaven, with angels ascending and descending. In the morning Jacob arose and said, "Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not." Jacob never quite forgot the lesson he learned that night, for he knew after that experience how truly God can be with one wherever he goes. When he was over one hundred and thirty years of age we see him blessing his two grandsons, the children of Joseph, and telling them and their father that God would be with them and bring them back to the land he had promised to Abraham and his descendants forever.

**Other Old Testament Witnesses.** When Joseph made himself known to his brothers he said to them, "God did send me before you to preserve life." Looking back across the years of slavery and imprisonment he could see that God had been with him all the way. After forty years of toil and leadership in the desert wanderings, Moses bade farewell to his people on the borders of Canaan. We are told that on that solemn occasion he made a great oration to the nation, and recited a beautiful poem. The words of Moses show that he was aware of how much he owed to the presence of God with him. It was Jehovah who had guided the people in the wilderness, who had cared for them and watched over them as an eagle watches over her young. And so it was with Joshua, Gideon, David, and the prophets; they all realized that God was present, interested in their undertakings, giving counsel and help.

### GOD PRESENT NOW JUST AS IN BIBLE TIMES

We must not think that as soon as the Bible was completed, God ceased to be present in the lives of men. People have become more conscious than ever of the presence of God in their lives as the centuries have passed. Thousands now living, looking back, can say, "I know God lives and that he has been with me all the days of my life."

**A Great Inventor's Testimony.** Professor Morse labored for years to perfect the telegraph. He was often without food and had to wear the poorest clothing and to live in a garret. No one thought that he would ever make

anything worth while. Many thought that he was half crazy. When the great invention was at last completed and the time came to send the first message, the operator asked Professor Morse what it should be. The message was chosen from a verse of the Bible and it was these words, "What hath God wrought." The great inventor seemed to know that God had been his Helper, and that the credit for the invention belonged to God rather than to himself.

**A Captain's Testimony.** In the naval battle of Santiago, fought during our war with Spain, the battleship Texas was in the thickest of the conflict. Some of the great guns of the largest Spanish ships were trained upon her. Their shrieking stream of shells swept first across the bow of the Texas, then across her stern, then just over her decks. When the battle was over and the sailors and marines gathered on the decks it was found that not one was missing, not one was even seriously hurt. The men began to cheer, but Captain Philip, raising his hand, stilled the shouting and looking across the water where a Spanish warship was foundering, he said, "Don't cheer boys, those poor fellows are dying." Then he added, "I want you men to know that I believe in God. Uncover!" At the command every cap came off, then with bowed heads, while the smoke of battle still hung low over the waters, they repeated together The Lord's Prayer.

#### RED ELK: A TALE OF THE NEZ PERCÉ WAR

Red Elk was a young Nez Percé Indian. He had lived all his life on the prairie highlands and along the clear rushing rivers of what is now northern Idaho and eastern Washington. A few years before our story begins, missionaries had come among the Nez Percés and some members of the tribe had become converts to Christianity. Some of Red Elk's friends were among these converts. His boon companion, Lone Wolf, had accepted the new faith, cut off his long black braids, and assumed the Christian name, Moses Williams. But Red Elk was a pagan Indian still, and proud of it. He held to the traditions of his ancestors; he believed in the spirits, good and evil, that dwelt in river and forest, in animals and birds.

After a while dreadful times came on. Trouble between

the white settlers and the Indians, long brewing, broke out into open war. Then the Christian Indians were sorely tested. Should they take part in the attacks upon the settlements? Moses Williams and others heroically counseled peace at the council fires. They told of the great Teacher who had taught us to love our enemies and to pray for those who use us spitefully. The advice of the Christian Indians was rejected with shouts of derision, and war parties swept all the countryside with fire and destruction.

The Indians were not to have things all their own way for long, however. One day long lines of marching soldiers with horses and cannon began to come across the summit of Craig's Mountain. The Indians retreated to their strongholds in the canyon. They soon found that their ancestral fortress from which they had bidden defiance from time immemorial to their enemies, the Snakes and the Shoshones, was no place of safety against white men with long-range cannon.

The commanding general of the white men had thrown his troops around three sides of the Indian encampment, and on the third side was the rugged wall of the Bitter Root Mountains. He expected to capture the whole tribe, but all at once the Indians were all gone. "Where in the world are those Indians?" said the general to some of his scouts. "What has become of them?" The scout replied that they had probably taken the Lolo trail, leading to the country east of the mountains. Such was, indeed, the case. The whole tribe had escaped over a rugged and tortuous trail which their ancestors had followed on hunting trips for thousands of years.

The American army followed. A portion of it, pushing on in advance, was suddenly attacked by the Indians in the Big Hole and driven back, but with the coming of the main army the Indians were compelled to continue their flight. They turned north and made for the Canadian boundary. Beyond that line lay the land of freedom, where the pursuing army could not follow them. Within half a day's ride of the boundary they were surrounded, and Chief Joseph surrendered his army and his tribe to General Miles.

Many of the Indians, Red Elk among them, were loaded into freight cars and taken away, but not to their former

homes on the Columbian highlands, as they had expected. They traveled many days and were at last dumped down in a flat prairie country, of which they had never heard. They were in a part of the Indian Territory which had been assigned to them. They did not know how to gain a livelihood in such a country where there were no deer and bear to hunt, no rivers full of salmon and trout and whitefish. Summer came on with a heat such as they had never experienced on their cool highlands. Fever broke out in the little band of captives a thousand miles from home. Day by day their numbers dwindled as the dreaded fever did its work. Red Elk was stricken. Day after day he tossed in wild delirium, speaking ever of the cold waters of the Red Rock spring that gushed out of the cliff beside his father's tepee.

Little by little the stricken Indian became conscious of a kind and ministering presence. Some one cooled his fevered brow and smoothed his pillow. It was a young man, a missionary to the imprisoned Nez Percés. As Red Elk grew stronger this young missionary sat beside him and they talked together of the far-away home for which the heart of the young Indian was pining. They did not talk much, for that is not the Indian way. They often sat for long periods at a time and said nothing at all.

One day the young missionary said, "Red Elk, do you know that I have been trying for a long time to get the government to let you people go back home, and I believe I am going to succeed?" The Indian said not a word, but the muscles of his brawny, shrunken cheeks quivered just a little, and there were tears in his eyes. He was weak with fever, you know; an Indian brave ought not to cry.

In due time the tribe went home from "the hot land" where so many of their number had passed to the great beyond. Years afterwards, the missionary visited an Indian village beside the rushing waters of the Kooskooskie in the land of the Nez Percés. He visited the Indian church, and after the service an officer of the church came up and greeted him. "I am Red Elk," said he. "I have become a Christian and am an officer in this church. I have taken the Jesus religion and its God because I saw more of God in you than I have ever seen in any other thing or person."

## THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we are glad that thou art our Friend and Companion. We are glad to know that thou art with us everywhere and all the time. Help us to make right choices. When we are about to choose our life work or about to make other important decisions may we have thy guidance. May we hear thy voice saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Help us to live unselfishly. We ask in the name of thy Son, our Saviour. Amen.

## THE LESSON HYMN

"Lord of all being, throned afar,  
Thy glory flames from sun and star;  
Center and soul of every sphere,  
Yet to each loving heart now near!"

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

WHAT GOD'S PRESENCE IN OUR LIVES MAY MEAN  
FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS. HOW WE CAN  
HELP TO MAKE GOD'S PRESENCE IN NATURE  
SPIRITUALLY UPLIFTING TO OURSELVES  
AND TO OTHERS

Job, chs. 38, 39; Psalm 24

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

We have been studying about God's presence in nature and in our own lives. It is a good thing for us to know these facts, but the most important thing for us is the effect which the learning of these facts has on our lives. For my part, it seems to be true that God is in a person's life just as far as that person permits him to be. He has given us power of choice. If we let him come into our lives, he will come in to guide us and to help us to overcome difficulties. If we refuse to hear his commandments and live as if he did not exist, he cannot be in our lives in so true a sense as he is in the lives of those who love him and obey him.

When I read the story about the young Nez Percé Indian, I think I understood better than I ever had before, how God can reveal himself perfectly only through beings like himself. The Indian learned some things about God in the forests and mountains, but it was not until he met a man who had God's spirit that he became a true believer in God.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. God's Help in Making Important Decisions. Ex. 14:15-20.
2. God's Help in Times of Discouragement. I Kings 19:1-8.
3. Need of God's Presence in Times of Prosperity. I Kings 10:23-29; 11:4-8.
4. A Military Leader Made Strong by a Sense of God's Presence. Judg. 7:1-23.
5. How We Can Help to Make and Keep our City or Community a Beautiful Place in Which to Live.
6. Some Great Nature Poems of the World, and What Their Authors Thought About God.

### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Psalm 29, The Voice of God in the Storm; S. of Sol. 2:11-13; The Coming of Spring, Josh. 1:5, God's Promise to Joshua. Pupils may look up other verses telling of God's presence in nature and with man.

### COMMITTEES TO BE APPOINTED

**An Invitation Committee** to call on all boys and girls of the Intermediate age who were discovered in the surveys made last week and to invite them to become members of the class. **A Flower Committee** to see that the church services are supplied with flowers and greenery, and to take bouquets to hospitals and to people who are sick at home. **An Outing Committee** to consider the feasibility of the class undertaking to give outings to poor children and their mothers during the hot months of summer.

THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE  
CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

1. Find out about the work of the Audubon societies.
2. Find out about the work of the Wild Flower Protection Association.
3. Find out about the National Parks of the United States and their natural wonders.

THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Reverence for God's Works.** God is the Maker of the earth and the Creator of man. Therefore:

1. We will not mar the things of the earth which God has made, neither will we abuse our rulership over them.
2. We will honor all mankind as brothers without regard to race or condition, since one God created us all.
3. We will endeavor to see more of God in the works of nature and to keep his presence with us by doing his will.

CHAPTER III  
THE RIGHTEOUS GOD  
WEEK DAY SESSION

SIN MARS GOD'S WORK AND MENACES HIS PLAN

Gen., ch. 3; 4:1-15

We come now to consider the difference between Jehovah, the God whom the Jews knew and worshiped, and the imaginary deities worshiped by the Gentile nations. The Jews early came to think of their God as eternal in his existence and as the sole Maker and Ruler of the universe. Most of the Gentiles thought of their gods as individuals in a great company of divine beings, and did not usually think of them as having existed always.

But that which sets the Jews' idea of God far above the ideas of pagan peoples is the character which the Jews early attached to their God. They thought of him as perfect in righteousness, a holy Being who could do no evil. Other peoples of that day were blindly feeling after God, but the Hebrews had found him and were learning lessons from him, lessons which they were to give to the world through their prophets and historians and poets.

The third chapter of Genesis tells us about the beginning of sin in the world which God had made and which he, in infinite wisdom, had pronounced "very good." The great value of this chapter lies in its messages concerning the reality, subtlety, and results of sin.

**The Reality of Sin.** It is a dangerous thing for men and women to believe that there is no such thing as sin, that it is only a kind of "mental error." Sin is a terrible reality. We have to take it into account and to be on our guard against it all the time. The Bible gives us a picture of the terrific struggle of mankind with sin. In the beginning sin did not seem very great, just a little act of disobedience, but look at the next chapter and see how it has grown.



Read the story of Cain and Abel. As we go on with our study of the Bible we shall see sin sowing sorrow and disaster. We shall see heroic men like David falling before it. We shall see it wrecking nations. At its high-water mark in the world, we shall see it nailing God's Son to the cross.

**The Subtle Approach of Sin.** The Bible narrative is a true picture of the fall of a soul into evil. There is the turning of the mind away from the multitude of right and good actions to the one forbidden thing, the steadfast seeing of it, the whispered suggestions that it is good and pleasant and desirable, and that evil consequences, which may possibly follow, will in some way be escaped.

**The Results of Sin.** Sin brings guilt which causes us to hide from God. It makes us weak and cowardly, selfish and foolish. How selfish and cowardly of Adam to try to lay the blame on Eve! How weak, selfish, and cowardly for Cain to whimper, in answer to God's mild punishment for his hideous crime: "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me." His thought is all of self. He mentions himself seven times in this brief statement. His guilty fears people the uninhabited wilderness with imaginary dangers. Sin had broken down his manhood; he had become Cain the coward.

**The Nature of Sin.** The Bible tells us that sin is lawlessness. This means something more than that sin is the breaking of law. It means that sin lies outside that universal rule of law through which God rules the universe. It is not natural that a being created in God's image should sin.

The Greeks called sin by a word which means, "missing the mark," because they felt that sin caused a man to do that very thing, miss his mark, miss the high attainments he has set for himself and the high destinies God has prepared for him. The inmates of our prisons and almshouses were many of them bright and promising boys and girls. Most of them owe their missing of life's mark to sin and to sin only.

## MARK TWAIN'S "GOOD LITTLE BOY"

Mark Twain once wrote a foolish little tale about a "good little boy." The story was "made up." Many "made-up" stories are true in the sense that their teaching is true. But this story of Mark Twain's did not teach the truth. It held up the good little boy to ridicule and intimated that he was good because he was too weak to be bad. Now that is not true of one boy in thousands. But many boys, and girls, too, are found doing bad things because they are too weak to do what they know to be right. It takes heroic strength to do right under all circumstances, while it is often very easy to go with a crowd to do evil. If Mark Twain wished to write a story about a "good boy," why didn't he write about little Arthur who was brave enough to do what was right even though Tom Brown and all the other boys laughed at him? Why didn't he choose Daniel or David or Sir Galahad or the young Knight Cedric?

Boys and girls who are willing to stand alone and do the right even when others do wrong and ridicule them for their doing the right grow into heroic men and women who count for righteousness and human progress. Our greatest victories for justice and liberty and progress were won by men and women who had grown strong through thinking right thoughts and doing right deeds as boys and girls.

"Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes—they were souls that  
stood alone,  
While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious  
stone,  
Stood serene and down the future saw the golden beam  
incline,  
To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,  
By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme  
design."

## DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

Robert Louis Stevenson has written a "made-up" story that is true to life. It is true to life because it teaches some great facts which thousands of men and women have seen in their own lives and in the lives of other people. Doctor Jekyll was a kind-hearted physician. He spent a great deal of time caring for people who were too poor to pay him

much for his services, but he felt that their gratitude and their love repaid him better than any money they could have given him. He was especially fond of little children and always had a group of them about him.

One day this physician was experimenting with a new drug. He swallowed the mixture, and a wonderful change came over him. He ceased to be the good Dr. Jekyll and became a low, mean-spirited criminal, named Mr. Hyde. This Mr. Hyde proved to be a thief and a hater of little children. When the effects of the drug wore off Dr. Jekyll became himself again. He was horrified and humiliated when he heard of the wicked things this Mr. Hyde had done and remembered that this wicked and base man was only himself changed over into another person. He resolved that never again should such a thing happen to him. But as time went on, Dr. Jekyll wondered about the thing that had happened more and more. He had evidently discovered some drug of wondrous power. Why not try the experiment just once more?

So the doctor tried the drug again. This time Mr. Hyde appeared even more promptly than before and was more vicious, low, and mean than on his previous visit. Doctor Jekyll again felt shame and remorse at the doings of Mr. Hyde, but he kept saying to himself: "I can rid myself of Mr. Hyde at any time. I will try the experiment this one time more; then I will be through with it forever." But that last time did not seem to come. Indeed, the visits of Mr. Hyde became more and more frequent. The time came when Dr. Jekyll was Mr. Hyde more than half the time. Mr. Hyde was now master. It was no longer necessary for Dr. Jekyll to take the drug to bring on the transformation. Suddenly, whether he wished it or not, he would find that he had been changed into the hideous Hyde, and he could not help himself.

One day the neighbors, who had been more and more puzzled and amazed at the frequent visits of this disreputable-looking person to their friend's house, became convinced that something decidedly wrong had taken place in the Jekyll mansion. They broke into the house and found that Dr. Jekyll was dead, while the mysterious criminal whom they had seen so frequently of late about the place

was in possession of everything that had belonged to the doctor and was claiming it as his own.

Now I have said that this story of Mr. Stevenson's is true. Can you tell in what sense it is true? Of course there never was a drug that could do what the drug described in the story did, at least not in just that way. But there are certain bad habits that are like the drug of which the story tells. There are evil acts which gradually get such a power over us that we become their slaves. They likewise change us gradually until we become very different persons from what we were, or might have been; as different as Mr. Hyde was from Dr. Jekyll.

The Bible and secular history tell us of many people who missed the mark through sin, people who might have been a blessing to the world, but whose lives were worse than wasted through evil actions and base passions. Cain, Herod, Judas, Nero—these were all wrecked through sin. They stepped downward, not upward, away from the light not toward it. They lived Jekyll-Hyde lives in which evil grew to have the mastery and goodness and nobility died.

Once a wise man wrote a warning to those who would conquer evil:

“My son, forget not my law;  
 But let thy heart keep my commandments:  
 For length of days, and years of life,  
 And peace, will they add to thee.  
 Let not kindness and truth forsake thee:  
 Bind them about thy neck;  
 Write them upon the tablet of thy heart:  
 So shalt thou find favor and good understanding  
 In the sight of God and man.”

—Prov. 3:1-4.

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### FIRST GLIMPSES OF REDEEMING GRACE

Gen. 3:9-21

“Thou, O Jehovah, art our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name.”—Isa. 63:16b.

You will remember that God had made man in his own

likeness that there might be fellowship between himself and the highest of his creatures. We have seen how sin came in, marring the character of man and menacing the plans of God. It is not of much use for us to ask why God permitted man to sin. We can be sure that, in order to make man in his own likeness, God made man free to choose between good and evil. The Bible tells us that man made that choice, for himself, and that he chose that which was contrary to God's commandment. What would a God of perfect righteousness do when the highest of his creatures, those whom he had made to have communion with himself, fell into sin? Would he shield men from all consequences of sin because he loved them? Would he leave man to suffer the full consequences of his transgression? That part of the third chapter of Genesis which we study to-day helps us to answer some of these questions.

**God Calls Man to Account for His Sin.** God is not like a weak and overindulgent parent who simply "lets it go" when his children do that which is wrong. Though sin severs our fellowship with him, it does not separate us from his presence, for he is everywhere. We cannot hide from him. Parents who weakly permit their children to go on in evil ways do not love their children so deeply and truly as they ought. Because God's love for man is so great that it cannot be measured he must not let man's sin go unreprieved.

**A King Who Never Abdicates.** Sometimes when the subjects of a king rebel against him, he resigns his office, abdicates, as we say. Now sin is rebellion against God's government; it is the lifting of the standard of revolt against the One who made the earth and the heavens, who made man and breathed into him the breath of life so that he became a living soul. God permits the rebellion to go on, but he is ever watching for the time when the rebellious sinner will come back to him.

**The Result of Sin.** God allows man to suffer some of the consequences of his sin. It would have been a weakness in God if he had allowed his love for man to lead him to shield man from all consequences of sin. God told the first violators of his law that pain and sorrow would come as a result of their acts of disobedience, that thorns and thistles would spring up along the way they would have

to go. God's words are just as true for us as for them. Sin still brings sorrow and loss. For the sinful soul a forbidding and flaming sword still keeps guard over the path which leads to the Eden of happiness.

**Hope for the Future.** God encourages man to hope for a final and complete victory over sin. He will not allow sin to mar his works completely and bring his plans to naught. His infinite love will find a way of rescue which is in perfect harmony with his infinite righteousness. Sin is a scourge and a menace and an injury, but man shall yet, with God's help put it forever beneath his feet. This seems to many the interpretation of the Bible words concerning the serpent whose fangs should wound the heel of man, but whose head should be bruised beneath the heel of one born of woman.

#### A WAYWARD YOUTH RECLAIMED BY A MOTHER'S LOVE

John Vinton was a disobedient and wayward lad. Instead of working on the farm where his widowed mother lived, he used to slip away to town, where he joined a gang of idle young fellows who spent their time learning to gamble and to drink. All the mother's protests and pleadings were in vain; John seemed to have lost all sense of manliness.

One day while John's mother was working in the field, her eye was severely injured. In a little while the other eye became affected and she became almost blind. Even this did not sober the reckless son. After a time they sold their farm and moved to town. The mother could no longer manage the place and she could get no assistance. She became a weaver of rag carpets. By feeling the threads with her hands and putting her eyes down very close to them she could do her work.

One day John asked his mother for his share of the money they had received from the sale of the farm. The mother was afraid to let him have any part of the money, for she knew of his gambling, but he pleaded that he had never had anything of his very own and that he would do better, once he was in business for himself. At last she was persuaded that the responsibility of handling his own money might be helpful to him, and she gave him a half of what

they had received from the sale of the farm. In a few weeks he had lost it all through gambling.

One morning the mother awoke to find that her son was not in the house. Going to his room she found on the stand a brief note from him stating that he was off for the Pacific Coast. With trembling hands she opened the little drawer where her part of the money from the farm was kept. It was empty. She bowed her head and wept, not for the loss of her money, however, but for shame. She said nothing to anyone, but went back to her carpet-weaving, her only means of earning her daily bread.

Two years passed, and then came a telegram telling the mother that her son was desperately ill in a city of the far Northwest. The little she had saved from her weaving was enough to buy her ticket to the place where he was. She found her son and nursed him back to life. The example of her heroic devotion was enough, with God's help, to enable the young man to conquer his bad habits.

As we continue our study of God's plan of redemption, we shall come to see that the loving devotion of a mother to a wayward child is something like the loving devotion of the great Father for his wayward and sinning children.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, our Creator and Father, we know that thou art perfect. We know that when we do wrong we cause thee sorrow and disappointment and bring distress and loss to ourselves. Give us strength to do right that we may enjoy thy fellowship and be glad with thee. We thank thee for thy patient love and thy forgiveness to all who repent. Give us the power to be victors over the things that tempt us to do evil. May thy Kingdom of brotherhood and righteousness be established in our hearts, in our homes, in our community, and throughout the earth. Help us to be worthy citizens of thy Kingdom. May we be kind to all, friendly to strangers, just in our dealings, pure in our thoughts. We ask in the name of Jesus, thy Son. Amen.

## THE LESSON HYMN

“Begin, my tongue, some heavenly theme,  
 And speak some boundless thing,  
 The mighty works, or mightier name,  
 Of our eternal King.

“Tell of his wondrous faithfulness,  
 And sound his power abroad;  
 Sing the sweet promise of his grace,  
 And the performing God.

“His very word of grace is strong  
 As that which built the skies;  
 The voice that rolls the stars along  
 Speaks all the promises.”

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 EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

## OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

I John 1:5-10

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

The Bible teaches us that God is everywhere, that we cannot get away from him. The presence of God is universal, but fellowship with him is not. When we do things that are wrong we lose our sense of fellowship with him, but he does not cease to see us and to know all about us.

We can have fellowship with God in several different ways. We can have fellowship with him in our joys. When a crowd of Intermediates get together they enjoy one another's company. In the same way we can come to have a joy in knowing that God is with us, taking joy in the same things that give enjoyment to us.

We can have fellowship with God in labor. God is interested in everything we undertake that is right and worth while. The farmer is a coworker with God while he is working in the fields to raise grain for our food. The teacher is a coworker with God because she is working for the same things that God is working for, the bringing up of intelligent and righteous citizens of the nation. I have noticed that people who are working at the same kind of work are interested in much the same kind of things and



like to be together. If we are doing God's work we can feel something of this same fellowship with him that we feel with our companions in labor among men.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. Conditions Under Which Fellowship with God Is Possible. Psalm 15.

2. Prayer of One Who Had Lost the Sense of God's Presence. Psalm 51.

3. How the Hebrews' Ideas of Jehovah Differed from the Ideas of Pagan Peoples About Their Gods.

4. Is Badness Due to Weakness or to Strength of Character? Why?

5. Is Real Goodness Ever Due to Weakness of Character? Why?

6. If God Loves Mankind Why Does He Allow Them to Suffer from the Wrong Things They Do?

7. Events of American History Which Show God's Presence.

8. Enterprises in Which We Can Work Together with God.

9. What Should Parents Do When Their Children Persistently Do Wrong?

### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Job 19:25; Ps. 19:14; 78:35; 130:7; Prov. 23:10, 11; Isa. 41:8, 9.

### COMMITTEES TO BE APPOINTED

**Social Committee.** To plan for a class social to which all young people of Intermediate age are to be invited, and through which it is hoped they may be brought into the membership of the class.

**Teacher's Helper Committee.** To offer help to the class teacher in such ways as putting lesson material on the blackboards, cleaning boards and erasers, looking over papers, and in any other way in which the teacher needs help.

THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE  
CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

1. Find the meaning and derivation of the following words: Redemption, regeneration, reconciliation, eternal, infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent.
2. Write sentences using the words given above.
3. Find Bible verses which tell of God's power, his existence everywhere, his love for man, his displeasure with sin.

THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of the Divine Fellowship.** Our happiness, usefulness, and true success depend upon the presence of God in our lives and our fellowship with him. Therefore:

1. We will try to live in purity and speak the truth, for God cannot have fellowship with works of darkness.
2. We will seek God's counsel in all we undertake, for we know that our own wisdom is very limited.
3. We will honor and obey our parents and teachers, for this is God's commandment and when we do his will we have fellowship with him.

SECTION II  
THE HELPER AND FRIEND OF MEN

- CHAPTER IV. ABRAHAM, A DESERT CHIEF, WHO BECAME  
THE FRIEND OF GOD.
- CHAPTER V. JACOB: A WAYWARD YOUTH MADE NOBLE  
THROUGH GOD'S DISCIPLINES OF LIFE.
- CHAPTER VI. JOSEPH: HOW MISFORTUNES BECAME  
BLESSINGS THROUGH THE PROVIDENCE  
OF GOD.
- CHAPTER VII. MOSES: A MIGHTY TASK ACCOMPLISHED  
THROUGH THE GRACE AND POWER OF  
GOD.

“Jehovah will keep thee from all evil ;  
He will keep thy soul.  
Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy coming in  
From this time forth and for evermore.”  
—Ps. 121 :7, 8.



## CHAPTER IV

### ABRAHAM, A DESERT CHIEF, WHO BECAME THE FRIEND OF GOD

#### WEEK DAY SESSION

#### A MAN OF WORTHY AMBITION AND NOBLE VENTURESOMENESS

Gen. 12:1-9

In all our study of the Bible we shall be learning about God's plans for redeeming man from the sin and evil into which he had fallen. In this sublime task God sought to work, so far as he could, through man. He is still depending on men as his helpers. Men could do nothing without him, but with his help they can have a part in the most important task in the world. We can all have a part in it, for the task is not yet completed and will not be until God's will is done on earth "as it is in heaven." In our lesson to-day we are to learn about one of the first men God found who was willing and able to help, in any large way, in this great task.

**The Heroic Pioneer.** Abraham was one of the first of those heroic men who have pushed out, settling the unpeopled portions of the earth; bearing civilization into the midst of savage peoples. The Pilgrims of Plymouth, the early settlers along the Ohio and the Mississippi and on the prairies, and the hardy men of '49 who crossed the plains to California, were followers in the footsteps of Abraham. Not all pioneers, however, have been led by such noble motives as was Abraham; many have gone out seeking lands and gold. Some of them have been rough men who forgot God amidst the hard struggles of their frontier life. We shall see that none of these things was true of Abraham: he did not go seeking wealth for himself, but in answer to God's call, and during all his years of wandering he remained true to him who had commanded him to depart from his father's house.

**The Unselfish Pioneer.** Abraham was a man who did not live selfishly and for the present, but for the good of future generations. He could see beyond his own interests and beyond his own times. That is probably why God chose him as his helper. We call such a man an idealist. God told Abraham to leave his country and his relatives and to go forth into a land he had never seen and about which he knew nothing, but which God would show him. God told Abraham that if he would do this his descendants would some time become a great nation and that his life would be a blessing to the whole world. Don't you think God knew that Abraham would respond to that kind of appeal? Probably other men of that day would not have been willing to leave the rich, irrigated lands of the Euphrates Valley, and the magnificent cities with their splendid temples where the moon god was worshiped, and become wanderers for all their lives in deserts and in strange lands and among savage people, and all this on a dim promise that by doing so their lives would help their fellow men some generations later. Abraham, however, was an idealist; he did not live for selfish pleasures of the passing hour. To secure a blessing to the world he was willing to risk the loss of all things, even to leave his native land and his relatives and the beautiful, rich cities. God had found in Abraham a man who could think God's thoughts and enter enthusiastically into God's plans. He had found a helper and a friend.

**Heroic Venturesomeness.** God is always seeking for people who will risk something for him. He must have soldiers who will not run away at the first sign of danger. He must have friends who will not desert him through fear of losing some of their possessions. He must have helpers who will not give up when the load is heavy and the results seem doubtful. The Hebrew prophets were such men; so were the apostles of Jesus, all save one; so were Martin Luther, and William Carey, and John G. Paton. Can you name any more of the true friends of God?

**The Faithful Altar Builder.** Abraham never owned a foot of land except the rocky cave of Machpelah where he buried his wife Sarah. He lived in tents and moved about from place to place so that his flocks could find pasture.

But everywhere he went he built altars of stone to Jehovah. He left the whole land dotted over with them. He was true to God, and worshiped him wherever he went. He had left the moon-worshipping cities of the Euphrates Valley, but he had come among people of even more degraded forms of worship. All about him were pagan worshipers with ceremonial rites that appealed to the appetites and passions of men. Hundreds of years later some of his descendants were not strong enough to resist the attractions of pagan idolatry; they fell before it again and again. But these things never influenced Abraham in the least. He was a man who could stand alone. He kept close to God, and his fellowship with the Almighty made him strong.

**Worthy Ambition.** People without ambition are of little use in the world. People who have wrong ambitions are sometimes worse than useless; they become a menace and a scourge. The people whose lives count for God and humanity are the people who have great ambitions, but ambitions that are unselfish, noble, and enduring. God will help any man or woman, any boy or girl, to have worthy ambitions. He will say, "Be thou a blessing" to anyone who will hear and obey him. Boys and girls of the Intermediate Department are beginning to form their life ambitions. What are you planning to be and to do? Don't you wish to be idealists as Abraham was? Don't you wish to be a blessing to the generation in which you live and, with God's help, a blessing to generations that are yet to be?

#### FRANK DAVIDSON'S CHOICE

Frank Davidson was born in a part of Ireland where there was not much chance for an ambitious young man. So he came to America as soon as he was old enough to earn the money to pay for his steamship ticket. He was an honest, hard-working lad, and he soon began to prosper. He had been married five years. There were two children in the home, when Frank gradually felt sure that God was calling him to a different occupation; he had a splendid voice and he had come to believe that God wished him to become an evangelistic singer.

God has not stopped calling men as his helpers; he calls

them to-day quite as truly as he called Abraham. Sometimes he lets boys and girls know what he wishes them to become when they have grown to manhood and womanhood. He gives them time to get ready to be his helpers.

Now, Frank Davidson knew that he would have to go to school several years if he was to be the kind of evangelistic singer God wished him to be. What should he do with his family? He had saved a little money, but not enough to last very long. Was it not a big risk for a man at his age to give up a good position and start out into an undertaking of which he knew next to nothing? After finishing school, could he find work which would bring a living to himself and family? Was there not danger that he would come down to old age with nothing to keep him from the poor-house?

Finally Frank told his wife that he felt God was saying to him, "Go, and sing the gospel message." His wife said: "Of course you must do it. If God wishes you to work for him, he will take care of us." When Frank told his friends, however, they were not so confident. "Why, Frank, you're crazy," they said. But he sold his property, gave his wife money on which to live for some months, then went away to school.

He studied hard. He was making good progress. But word came at last that his family had money enough to last only a few weeks more. What should he do? That night when he opened his mail he found a letter from a near-by town asking him if he would become their choir leader. It was a large church, and they offered him a hundred dollars a month for such time as he could spare from his studies. This was a large salary for that time. With it he easily finished his course and kept himself and his family in comfort at the same time.

He had shown a heroic venturesomeness quite as genuine as that shown by Abraham, and the same God who never failed his servant of old was equally true to this twentieth-century servant of his. And he became not only a gospel singer, but a powerful preacher of God's Word. Through him many lives were redeemed from the slavery of evil to the service of the living God.



“Take my life and let it be,  
 Consecrated, Lord, to thee.  
 Take my moments and my days;  
 Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

“Take my hands, and let them move  
 At the impulse of thy love.  
 Take my feet, and let them be  
 Swift and beautiful for thee.

“Take my voice, and let me sing,  
 Always, only, for my King.  
 Take my lips, and let them be  
 Filled with messages from thee.”

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## SUNDAY SESSION

IF A MAN IS A FRIEND OF GOD, WHAT KIND OF  
 MAN IS HE?

Gen. 13:1-13; 14:1-16; 22:1-19

What characteristics might we expect to find in a man who lived in such close fellowship with God that he came to be called God's friend? What would a man become through nearly a hundred years of such fellowship with the infinite Creator? We have already answered these questions, in part, as we studied our week-day lesson. We have seen that Abraham was nobly and unselfishly ambitious, that he wished to make his life a blessing, that he lived and thought with the good of distant generations in view, that he was nobly venturesome for God. In this lesson we shall see some of the other characteristics of Abraham, the friend of God.

**Generous of Heart.** Abraham's nephew, Lot, had accompanied him on the journey from Haran. Both Lot and Abraham had flocks and herdsmen to tend them. After a time the herds of both increased to such an extent that it was hard to find pasture when all the flocks were together. The herdsmen of Abraham and the herdsmen of Lot began quarreling over the pastures

and over the watering places; each side wished the best for themselves. When Abraham heard about this, he said it ought not to be. He wished to settle the matter peaceably. So Lot and Abraham stood together and looked out across the land. On one side was the valley of the Jordan, at that time well-watered and with abundant grass for pasture. On the other side was the rocky Judean highland. Abraham said to his young nephew, "You take your choice, and I will take what is left after you have chosen." Lot took the well-watered valley, leaving the rocky highlands to Abraham. This wasn't a nice thing for the younger man to do, and he didn't gain anything by it in the end, but it was generous of Abraham to give his nephew first choice.

**Courageous in Spirit.** Abraham was a man of peace. He got along with his neighbors without much trouble, as most people do who are reasonable and unselfish. But there was one occasion when Abraham became a man of war. Not very long after Abraham and Lot had divided the land between them and Lot had moved down into the Jordan Valley, five kings with a large army from the Euphrates Valley swept down upon the people living along the Jordan. They defeated the armies which the people of the Jordan Valley sent to meet them. Then they made prisoners of Lot and his family with all his servants. With them and with their flocks the invaders started back toward their homes on the Euphrates. One lone servant of Lot's made his escape, and came and told Abraham. No time was to be lost, since the army which held Lot and his family prisoners was already on the home-ward way. Abraham acted with promptness and courage. He had only a handful of men, but pursued the enemy. Away up in northern Palestine he overtook them. The only hope of victory lay in a surprise attack, so he planned a night assault. He divided his forces. Attacked suddenly on two sides, the great army became panic-stricken and fled. The servants of Abraham pursued the fleeing enemy far up to the neighborhood of Damascus, then returned, gathering up the immense amount of property which the soldiers had abandoned.

All the people of the land flocked together to honor Abraham. The greatest kings and priests were ready to give him

place among them as a leader and ruler. But it was enough for Abraham that he had rescued his nephew and all his property. There were certain brave men, Amorites, who had helped Abraham in his expedition against the five kings from the Euphrates. Abraham would not take any of the spoil for himself, but he said that these helpers of his should be given an opportunity to take their share, if they wished to do so. Abraham, in some way, always appears as a perfect gentleman. There was nothing little, mean, or cowardly about him. Having unsheathed the sword once in a worthy cause, this great man of peace never again engaged in battle, because circumstances justifying such a resort to force never again presented themselves. Bad men sometimes exhibit a sort of reckless bravery, but it is true that good men are most truly courageous.

**Unwavering in Faith.** The faith which prompted Abraham to leave his friends and his native land to strike out into the wilderness never left him. Even a good man's faith is sometimes severely tested. Abraham had the kind of faith which makes a man patient. He could wait without losing faith and hope. God had promised him that his descendants should some day be a great nation and that through his offspring the families of all the earth should be blessed. Yet for many years Abraham had no son. He seems never to have doubted that God would in some way make his promise come true. At last, when he was an old man, his son Isaac was born. There was still one last test in store for Abraham, for we are told that Abraham was asked to show that he was willing to give up his little son, the precious child of the promise. Abraham could meet even this test. But God did not require him to give up the child for whom he had waited and prayed so many years. It was enough that his servant was willing.

#### HOW CEDRIC BECAME A KNIGHT

Many years ago there lived in an English village a father and a mother with their little son who was named Cedric. It was in the days when there were many knights in England. These knights were brave men who fought for the defense of the country. They were solemnly pledged to

speak the truth always, to be courteous to women, and kind to little children. They defended the weak against the strong.

Little Cedric told his mother that when he became a man he would be a knight. He especially admired a noble knight named Sir Roland; if he could be a knight like this splendid man and ride with a spear in his hand upon a horse he thought he would be perfectly happy.

One day Cedric found a lame dog in the road, and he was so intent on helping the animal that he did not notice the approach of a horseman. Looking up he was surprised to see Sir Roland bending over him. "I think, my boy, that you would make a good knight for we are sworn to be kind and just to every living thing in the world."

In time Cedric went to live in Sir Roland's castle that he might become a knight. He did not learn how out of a book, but by living with Sir Roland and being friends with him. He accompanied Sir Roland everywhere. He saw how good and kind he was to everyone he met. One day he was riding along the highway when he saw under a tree a little bird that had fallen from its nest. He was in a hurry and passed on, but after a time he thought to himself, "Sir Roland would not do that." So he retraced his steps, picked up the bird, and restored it to its nest. At last he knelt before the king while the monarch of England touched his shoulder with his sword saying, "Arise, Sir Cedric, I have commissioned you to be a knight of my realm." Cedric had become a knight through his friendship with the noble Sir Roland. We can have fellowship with God something like this, only more ennobling than any fellowship with man can possibly be. We are God's children, and if we love him and obey him we daily become more like him.

"Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if it shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." I John 3:2.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, our Father and Friend, we know that thou dost love us. We know that thou art interested in all we do.

We pray that we may have unselfish and worthy ambitions. We would not live for the selfish enjoyments of the present hour. Help us to be willing to undertake hard tasks for thee. Help us to be generous and courageous and kind. Help us in our study of the great men and women of the Bible. May we learn from them how to honor thee and how to do good. We ask in the name of thy Son. Amen.

### THE LESSON HYMN

“Walk in the light: so shalt thou know  
That fellowship of love,  
His Spirit only can bestow,  
Who reigns in light above.

“Walk in the light: and thou shalt find  
Thy heart made truly his  
Who dwells in cloudless light enshrined,  
In whom no darkness is.”

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### LESSONS FOR INTERMEDIATES FROM THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

Gen., chs. 12 to 14

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

We have been learning many things about Abraham in our class recitations. In this meeting we wish to discuss what lessons from this great man's life are especially suited to us, and how we can carry out these lessons in our lives. The lesson from the life of Abraham which I like best and which I probably need most is found in the story of his dealing with his nephew, Lot. Most of our troubles at home and in school come to us because we are not willing to give up things to others. Abraham was older than Lot, and God had told him that all the land was to be his, yet he gave Lot the first choice. If we could only do as Abraham did, we should have a much happier time together.

## STUDY TOPICS

1. The Lesson from Abraham Which I Like Best.
2. Is It Always Right for Us to Give Up to Others?
3. What Is the Difference Between Heroic Venturesomeness and Foolhardiness?
4. How Can We Be Sure That God Wishes Us to Do a Certain Thing?
5. Name Some Characters of History Who Were Unworthily Ambitious.
6. Name Some Nobly Venturesome Explorers, Missionaries, Inventors.
7. What Opportunities Have Intermediates to Be Nobly Venturesome?
8. What Constitutes a Noble Ambition for One's Life Work?

## VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Ps. 21:1-7; 84:11; Isa. 42:6; John 3:16

## THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

1. Find out about the needs for recruits and the opportunities for service in the following occupations: Social settlement workers, Sunday School Association secretaries, Y. W. C. A. workers, Y. M. C. A. workers, Directors of Religious Education.
2. Find out what preparation is necessary for the callings named.

## THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Worthy Ambition.** The victories and human benefits of the past generations have been won by people who not only lived but lived for something. Therefore:

1. We will have a purpose. We will not drift through life and accomplish nothing because of aimlessness.

2. We will have a noble purpose. We will aim at something that is unselfish and that will be helpful to our fellow men.

3. We will pursue our goals with patient and persistent effort. No great good is ever accomplished without continuous and ardent endeavor.

In all things we will seek the guidance and fellowship of God.

## CHAPTER V

### JACOB: A WAYWARD YOUTH MADE NOBLE THROUGH GOD'S DISCIPLINES OF LIFE

#### WEEK DAY SESSION

##### GOD'S CHOICE OF A FATHER FOR A NATION

Gen. 25 :27-34; 27 :1-45

Abraham's son Isaac grew up to be a peaceable, industrious, and prosperous man. He not only had great flocks of sheep and goats, cattle and camels, as his father Abraham had had, but he was a farmer as well as a herdsman. Some years he sowed grain and reaped a hundredfold. Isaac was a religious man. He walked in the footsteps of his father, Abraham. Like Abraham he cherished the great promise which God had made concerning the blessing to the world through Abraham's descendants. Like Abraham, he built altars to God and worshiped him, and he heard the voice of God saying that he would remember him and bless his descendants according to the promises he had made. There is much for us to admire in Isaac, the quiet, peace-loving farmer, who had ideals and who did his part in God's great plans for redeeming the world from evil.

Isaac had two sons. They were twins, and both of them were unlike their father. It sometimes happens that way in life. Of these two sons, God would choose one to be the father of the nation through which he was planning to work out a part of the problem of redeeming mankind from evil. Why did God choose Jacob rather than Esau for that high office? At first thought we may be surprised at God's choice, but when we study a little we can see the reason more clearly.

**Jacob's Failings.** Jacob had some grievous faults. He was selfish and dishonest. He deceived his old, blind father and cheated his brother. He was not courageous. A guilty



conscience usually makes people cowardly. Jacob was glad to flee from the brother he had wronged and he came before this same brother with fear and trembling after many years had passed since he did his brother the injustice. Esau had apparently long since forgotten about the injury, or at least ceased to be angry about it, but Jacob could not forget. It is one of the punishments of wrongdoing that the memory of such deeds clings to us and makes us weak and fearful in the crises of our lives, when we need to be strong and courageous.

**Esau's Excellent Traits of Character.** In many respects Esau seems to have been superior to his brother. He must have been a courageous youth, for he was a daring hunter. He was generous-hearted. The meat he brought in from hunting was for his old, blind father and doubtless for all the household. It probably would never have occurred to him to sell a kettle of boiled herbs as Jacob did. Esau had a forgiving spirit. He got over his anger quickly. His mother knew that he had this trait, for she said that Jacob should go away for a "few days," until his brother's fury be turned away.

When Jacob came back Esau hurried out to meet him, not to take vengeance as Jacob feared, but to welcome his brother home, for we are told that he ran to him, fell upon his neck, and kissed him.

**The One Thing Needful.** And yet God chose Jacob rather than Esau. Jacob possessed one trait of character which was lacking in Esau. This trait was the one thing most essential in a person to be used of God in his great plan. So far as we know, Esau never prayed or acted as if God had any existence. He was a splendid pagan. He lived to hunt and to eat and to enjoy himself. God's great promise to his ancestors meant little to him. As the eldest son he was head of the tribe and the one on whom God's promise would naturally have rested, but he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Esau had no ideals, or if he ever had had them, he had let them die early. To be a blessing to the world through his descendants in some far-off time, stirred the soul of Abraham, but it had no appeal for Esau.

With all his faults, Jacob had that within him which

caused him to respond, as his grandfather Abraham had done, to thoughts of God and blessings for mankind. His life was one long struggle with besetting sins, but he battled manfully. Jacob had much to learn in God's school of life, before he was fit for the great Builder's use, but he did learn, little by little, and in his latter days he rose to strength and sublimity of character.

Life is like a school. Some people begin to learn its lessons early, and learn them well. Such persons rise to places of usefulness in the service of God and their fellow men. Some fail to heed the lessons, and learn but slowly and imperfectly. In our next lesson we shall see more of Jacob's development in God's school of life.

**The Birthright or the Pottage.** Have you ever thought about the fact that the most important decisions of life are made in youth? Most of the boys and the girls who read these lessons will soon be deciding upon their life work. Perhaps some have already done so. There is probably some one thing which each of us can do better than we can do anything else; some one calling for which God has intended each of us. If we make a wrong choice we shall never accomplish as much as we ought to accomplish in life.

A decision of greater importance than the choice of our life work must be made by each of us and it is usually made early in life. We must all decide whether we are to neglect the one thing needful as Esau did, or are to give it a place in our lives as Jacob did. We must each make our choice between the birthright and the pottage. We are made in God's image, after his likeness. It is possible for us to grow more and more like God. This possibility is a precious birthright, which we possess as children of God. We can take it for our own, or we can barter it away for worthless pottage.

Two boys sat near each other in the same school. One was an earnest, studious lad. He did his work faithfully. Instead of going on the streets at night, he spent most of his evenings at home, and did a good deal of studying there. He thought much of the years that were to come when he should be a man. To be a blessing to the world meant something for him. Of course he liked to play ball and

have some fun as other boys do, but these things did not absorb all his time and thought. His wise father and mother had taught him to attend church and Sunday school. So he was not found among the boys' gangs who played ball all day Sunday, or went on excursions, or roamed the streets.

Sitting near this studious lad was another boy of about the same age. He was bright and naturally gifted in many ways. He could get his lessons without much labor, so he didn't work very hard at them. He did not like to study at home. He wasn't at home very much anyway. His parents let him come and go just about as he pleased. To have a good time came to be the goal of his life. He never went to church or to Sunday school. He dreamed of manhood as an enlarged opportunity for having a good time, when he thought of it at all.

One evening these two boys met on a bridge which spanned the small river that separated the community where they lived from the business part of the town. The studious boy had been in school and had remained late for some special work. He was on his way home to spend the evening there. The other lad, coming in to town to spend the evening idly felt that he ought to remonstrate with the studious lad. "Will," he said "you're a fool. You just study, study, all the time and never have a bit of fun. Why don't you do as the rest of us boys do. We have a fine time every night and you just mope off home. Come on back with me and I will show you a good time for once in your life." The studious boy said he did not care to go back.

These two boys are middle-aged men, now. One of them went on through the grammar school, through high school, through college, and through the university. His name is widely known as a leading educator of the day. He is leaving an impress on his generation for good. He finds joy in intensity of labor and in a sense of service. The other is still a dissatisfied pleasure seeker. He has found out that the things he has sought all his life can never give lasting satisfaction. But the habits formed in youth are now iron-strong about him, and the day of life is far spent. I need not tell you which of these boys is which. I need not tell you which of them treasured his birthright, which of them sold it for a mess of pottage.

“ A charge to keep I have,  
 A God to glorify,  
 A never-dying soul to save,  
 And fit it for the sky.

“ To serve the present age,  
 My calling to fulfill—  
 Oh, may it all my powers engage  
 To do my Master’s will.”

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### JACOB IN GOD’S SCHOOL OF LIFE

Gen. 28:10-22 ; 32:3-21 ; 45:25-28

If we are attentive students God will teach us some valuable lesson every day, so that the longer we live the wiser we shall become. There are certain great truths, however, which we are apt to learn only at certain times. Some disappointment, or sorrow, or joy suddenly brings the truth before us, and we see it in a way which makes it impossible for us to forget it. We shall consider, in this lesson, three such periods in the life of Jacob.

**Alone in the Valley of Luz.** Jacob, fleeing from the wrath of his brother Esau, had spent the first day of his long journey to Haran. He had traveled many miles and had come at sunset into a deep and rocky valley. He had been a quiet, home-loving boy and this was probably his first night away from his father’s fireside. With approaching darkness, fears and loneliness grew upon him. There were real dangers about, for the country abounded in wild animals and fierce robber bands. The young man was anxious about things concerning which he had heretofore thought but little. He had taken food, shelter, and clothing as a matter of course. Now he was asking himself: “Where shall I get something to eat on the long journey? Shall I find some one to give me shelter and a home in the distant Haran? Where am I to get clothes, since my father will not be there with his flocks of sheep, neither will my mother be there with her busy spinning wheel? Shall I ever see the old home tent again by the

springs of Beer-sheba?" How dear to him now were his father whom he had deceived, and his brother whom he had defrauded! He was getting some lessons in appreciation which he could never forget.

Lying down upon the grass of the valley floor he put a stone under his head for a pillow, and, being tired by his long journey, he was soon slipping off into slumber. The last thing on which his eyes rested was the steep cliff before him rising like a giant stairway, with the last rays of the setting sun reflected from its summit crags.

As Jacob slept a wonderful dream came to him. He dreamed that he saw a ladder reaching up to heaven, with angels ascending and descending upon it. He heard the voice of God speaking to him in his dream and saying. "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

With the dawn Jacob awoke. He had learned a great lesson in his dream of the night. He knew now that he was not alone. "Surely God is here," said he, "and I knew it not." Taking the stone which he had used as a pillow he made an altar of it and there in the light of the early morning, he worshiped the God of Abraham and of Isaac. Then he made a vow that he would give one tenth of everything he should ever possess to God.

**Alone by the Fords of the Jabbok.** Years passed away and Jacob was no longer a boy. He was a man in middle life and was on his way back to his father's home at Beer-sheba. He had with him his wives and his children and his flocks. He was afraid, for he was going to meet Esau, the wronged brother, who had threatened to take his life and from whose presence he had fled so many years before. He sent messengers to Esau, but they brought back word which caused him only to fear the more.

Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. He remembered his youthful sins and grieved to think that they were now a menace, not only to him, but to his wives and his children.

He divided his household and his flocks into two bands, so that if one fell into the hands of Esau, the other might escape. He sent these bands across the Jabbok River while he tarried behind alone by the river's brink where he prayed all night to God for the safety of his wives and little ones. Let us listen reverently to the prayer of this strong man in the hour of his anxiety and utmost need.

“O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, O Jehovah, who saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good: I am not worthy of the least of all the loving kindnesses, and of all the truth, which thou hast shown unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two companies. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.”

God heard and answered this all-night prayer. As the sun rose, Jacob crossed the river and went to meet his brother, and he was no longer afraid.

**Mysteries Made Plain.** Jacob was now an old man. He had seen many troubles, but one great sorrow had darkened his declining years. He had never ceased to mourn the loss of his beloved son, Joseph, who, as he believed, had been killed by wild beasts in his early youth. Another of his sons had been held a prisoner in Egypt, and now they had all gone down there again with little Benjamin as one of their number. The heart of the old man trembled for his boys. Would they all return in safety? Would they bring Benjamin with them, or would this son of his beloved Rachel disappear as Joseph had disappeared so long ago? Dark clouds seemed to be gathering around him.

But the sons returned at last; everyone was safe. There

was Simeon who had been absent so long in Egypt as a prisoner of Pharaoh. But the sons had more wonderful news yet for their aged father. They told him of finding Joseph in Egypt where he was ruler over all the land. Jacob could not believe their report at first, but when he saw the great wagons which Joseph had sent to bring him and all his household into Egypt, he believed, and his heart was filled with joy.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we ask thee to teach us, day by day, to do thy will. Help us to appreciate thy goodness and thy gifts. Help us to appreciate all that our parents, teachers, and friends do for us. May we show our gratitude to thee by doing thy will. May we show our gratitude to our parents and friends by being kind to them and helping them. May we find pleasure in our tasks, in our helpfulness to others, in doing something to make the world a better place in which to live. We thank thee for the beautiful stories of the Bible. Help us to understand the lessons they teach. Help us to live according to their teachings. May we honor thee as long as we live, and be useful to thee in thy great task of making all the world good and true. We ask in the name of thy Son, our Saviour. Amen.

#### THE LESSON HYMN

“Nearer, my God, to thee,  
 Nearer to thee!  
 E'en though it be a cross  
 That raiseth me;  
 Still all my song shall be,  
 Nearer, my God, to thee,  
 Nearer to thee!

“Though like the wanderer,  
 The sun gone down,  
 Darkness be over me,  
 My rest a stone;  
 Yet in my dreams I'd be  
 Nearer, my God, to thee,  
 Nearer to thee!

“There let the way appear,  
 Steps unto heaven:  
 All that thou send'st to me  
 In mercy given:  
 Angels to beckon me  
 Nearer, my God, to thee,  
 Nearer to thee!

“Then, with my waking thoughts  
 Bright with thy praise,  
 Out of my stony griefs  
 Bethel I'll raise;  
 So by my woes to be  
 Nearer, my God, to thee,  
 Nearer to thee!”

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### LESSONS FOR INTERMEDIATES FROM THE LIFE OF JACOB

Gen., chs. 28, 32

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

One of the great lessons we can learn from the life of Jacob is that of tithing. When Jacob woke up and found that God was near and going to keep him safe and bring him back to his father's house, he felt as if he owed something to God. He set up an altar and worshiped, but he felt that he ought to do more. So he vowed that he would make it the rule of his life to give a tenth of all he earned to God. The matter of giving is a very important part of a Christian's habits. He cannot grow as he should if he refuses to honor God by giving something for God's work in the world. And the Church cannot grow without the gifts of its members, for without funds the Church cannot send missionaries into foreign countries, nor into the frontier sections of the homeland. If all Christians gave as they should, we could have better Sunday schools, better churches, and the gospel could be carried to all the earth in one generation. I think that Jacob showed that he “meant business”



when he promised to give God a tenth of all the property he should ever possess.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. The Lesson from the Life of Jacob Which Helps Me Most.

2. What Is the Tenth Legion?

3. What Can Intermediates Do to Show Their Appreciation of Their Parents; of Their Teachers; of Their Friends?

4. How Much Time Ought an Intermediate to Give to Such Recreation as Attending the "Movies"?

5. Lessons I Have Learned from the Experiences of Life.

6. Daniel, a Boy Who Would Not Sell His Birthright. Dan., ch. 1.

7. Things for Which Some People Sell Their Birthright.

8. Right Ways to Spend Sunday.

9. Wrong Ways to Spend Sunday.

### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Neh. 13:1-22; Ps. 24:1, 2; Mal. 3:10; II Cor. 8:9; 9:6

### COMMITTEES TO BE APPOINTED

**Tenth Legion Committee.** To consider the advisability of forming a Tenth Legion within the class. (Send for particulars to United Society of Christian Endeavor, Boston.) **A Committee on Benevolences.** To determine to what causes the offerings of the class shall be given. **A Sabbath Observance Committee.** To report on "How the Sabbath Is Observed in Our Community and What We Can Do to Help."

### THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUALS OF THE CLASS

1. Make out a program of "How I Spend a Week Day," showing hours spent in play, sleep, recreation, reading, work, and so on.

2. Make out a program on "How I Spend Sunday," showing time spent in sleep, recreation, worship, Bible study, and so on.

#### THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of the Priceless Birthright.** We are made in God's likeness, and the things which make us like him are worth more than anything else in the world. Therefore:

1. We will try to avoid anything which will make us less like our Father in heaven.

2. We will try to do the things which make us more like God.

3. We will try to lead others to keep their birthright, and not barter it away for useless pottage.

## CHAPTER VI

### JOSEPH: HOW MISFORTUNES BECAME BLESSINGS THROUGH THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

#### WEEK DAY SESSION

#### DREAMS OF YOUTH AND YEARS OF TESTING ERE THE DREAMS CAME TRUE

Gen., ch. 37

When Jacob returned from his sojourn at Haran, he brought back eleven sons with him. One son was born after his return to Canaan making the number of his sons twelve. These twelve sons became the founders of the twelve tribes of the Jewish nation. Joseph and Benjamin were the sons of Rachel and were younger than the other sons of Jacob. The family through which God was planning to bless the world now had a good start with these twelve lusty sons of Jacob. They soon had families of their own and the descendants of Abraham grew rapidly into a numerous race. But God was seeking something more important than strength of numbers. He was seeking character, and to develop that all-important element in this chosen race took many years and many hard experiences.

**A Young Lad's Dream of Future Greatness.** Boys who grow up to be men truly great and girls who grow up to be women truly great are apt to think about their life work even when they are quite young. They have dreams of all they are to be and all they are to do yonder in the years that are ahead. They are worthily ambitious. Boys and girls with such ambitions do not live for the fickle pleasures of the moment. Sometimes they seem to be conscious of a great destiny long before they have left the days of childhood. It is said that when Abraham Lincoln was a boy, he sometimes paused in the midst of his play or his other occupation and said, "I must some day be president of the United States." We call such a feeling regarding the future a premonition.

Columbus is said to have had premonitions as a boy which lead him to believe that he should some day sail far across the oceans to lands unknown. Spurgeon when he was a boy felt sure that he should some time preach in the great churches of England. Perhaps God gives us these dreams of youth to spur us on to great and early effort to accomplish something worthy in life, for a really great life work needs constant devotion and an early start. He leads us to dream of great life tasks early in life because they are then possible. There is time then to get ready for great life undertakings.

Sometimes young people think so much about all they are to be and do that they dream about these things at night. This may have been the case with Joseph. He had some remarkable dreams. He dreamed that he was binding sheaves in the harvest field and that all his brothers' sheaves bowed down to his sheaf as subjects of a king bow before their sovereign. Again he dreamed that one star in the sky was his and other stars belonged to his brothers. All his brothers' stars, however, bowed to his star and even the sun and moon did the same.

**Little Seeds of Evil That Grow Into Great Crimes.** The ten big sons of Jacob were not pleased with Joseph's dreams. Even Joseph's father was displeased and inquired whether he and Joseph's mother, as well as all the other sons, should some day bow down to this one son as their ruler. The older sons began to be jealous of their young brother. Jealousy is a terribly dangerous sin because it grows rapidly and soon causes the one who gives it a lodging place to lose his sense of truth and justice. The big brothers brooded over these dreams and doubtless talked to one another about them. The more they brooded and talked the more they disliked their brother.

Soon another occasion for their dislike of Joseph arose. One day Jacob sent Joseph into the fields to see how his sons were getting along with the flocks. Joseph found them doing something they ought not to have been doing. He reported it to his father. The older brothers were now still more angry at Joseph. They thought of him not only as a dreamer, but as a talebearer.

About this time Jacob presented Joseph with a coat of many colors. This made the older brothers still more jealous and covetous. Perhaps they thought of this coat as marking Joseph as the head of the family, the legal successor of their father, Jacob. Low and mean and envious feelings filled their hearts as their suspicions grew.

It came to pass at the time when this ill feeling was at its height among the sons of Jacob, that Joseph was sent out again by his father to see how the older sons were getting along with the flocks. Joseph came to Shechem but they were not there. A stranger told him that they had gone on farther to Dothan, so Joseph sought them there. His brothers saw him at a distance and all their cruel hatred was aroused at the sight of him. They said among themselves: "Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, An evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams." The little seeds of evil in the hearts of the brothers had grown until they were ready for the committing of great crimes.

**The Brothers Not All Bad.** It is good to know that not all the older sons of Jacob were ready to do this terrible act. Reuben, the eldest son, said: "Let us not take his life. Shed no blood; cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him." This kind-hearted elder brother was planning to come back and take Joseph out of the pit that he might take him back to his father.

There was at least one other son of Jacob who shrank from the terrible deed which had been proposed. After the brothers had stripped Joseph of his coat of many colors they put him in the pit; then they killed a kid and dipped the coat in the blood that they might make their father think some wild beast had devoured his son. As these cruel brothers were sitting down, eating their mid-day meal, a caravan of Ishmaelite traders drew near, and Judah proposed that instead of killing their brother they should sell him as a slave to the Ishmaelites. Judah was evidently not quite so bad as some of the others, though

the fate which he coolly proposed for his young brother would in most cases be almost as bad as the one proposed by the others. To be sold into slavery in those days did mean, indeed, sometimes a fate worse than death.

**Sin's Scourge for the Innocent.** One of the worst things about sin is the fact that it brings sufferings and sorrows to people who are innocent. It brings retribution on those who commit the sin either at once or at some future time, but it also scourges those who are in no way responsible for the transgression. Reuben was certainly less to blame than the other brothers, but he was the first to feel the pangs of sorrow for what had been done. He evidently was not present when Joseph was sold. Coming around to the pit in order to carry out his plan and carry Joseph back to his father he found it empty. In great distress of soul, he tore his garments. As the eldest brother he felt himself responsible for the safety of this younger brother. He was not one of these hard-hearted people who ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Coming to his brothers he cried, "The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?"

The treacherous brothers brought the blood-stained coat to their old father saying, "This have we found; know now whether it is thy son's coat or not." The grief of Jacob must have been terrible to behold. "It is my son's coat," he said. "An evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces." In his grief he tore his garments and clothed himself in sackcloth. All his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he wept and said, "I will go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." What a harvest of sorrow and distress the little seeds of envy and jealousy were beginning to bring forth, but the end was not yet!

**A Slave in Egypt.** The Ishmaelites carried Joseph down into Egypt where he was sold as a slave. In some wonderful way, God can make even the evil-intentioned acts of men result in something valuable and good to those who love and obey him. It proved to be a good thing for everyone that Joseph was sold into Egypt, but that does not make the sin of the brothers any less.

**The Patient Father in Heaven.** You doubtless have

thought that the family God had chosen to bless the world were not doing very well, and, indeed they were not. Most of the sons of the family had brought a great sorrow to their father rather than a blessing. But God is a Father of wondrous patience. He never gives up even though his children disobey his commandments and disappoint his hopes. Out of this disappointing family he would yet bring great good. Of their race should be born the Saviour of the world.

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### DREAMS OF YOUTH MADE TO COME TRUE

Gen., chs. 39 to 48

In Egypt Joseph was sold to an officer of the army. His master's name was Potiphar. This must have been a great change for Joseph. He had been his father's favorite son carefully reared and guarded, a thoughtful boy dreaming of the years of manhood just ahead. Now he was a slave in a country utterly different from his homeland. Instead of the far-stretching Judean hills he saw great palaces and temples and streets and busy market places.

**A Youth Who Could Not Be Kept Down.** In a little while Joseph's new master began to find out that he had made a great bargain in purchasing this young Hebrew slave. He was no common, shirking, lazy, untruthful fellow as so many slaves were. He was honest, industrious, capable. In a short time Potiphar made this new slave overseer of all his other servants and head of his household affairs. Joseph had met his first great misfortune, had conquered it and made it a stepping-stone to usefulness and opportunity.

Then came another great misfortune. The wicked wife of Potiphar accused Joseph falsely. Potiphar believed his wife, and Joseph was sent to prison. Prisons in those days were dreadful places, far more terrible than they are

to-day. Joseph was now not only a slave but a slave cast into prison as a criminal. Even here Joseph showed that he was a youth who could not be kept down. In a little while he won the friendship and confidence of the keeper of the prison to such an extent that he was given charge of all the other prisoners.

Joseph was a young man who could rise in spite of adverse circumstances. As a slave in Potiphar's household he became head of the house; as a slave in prison he became overseer of the whole establishment. He had qualities of character which fitted him for leadership. He was so helpful to others that they could hardly help giving him responsibilities.

**A Lad Who Never Sulked.** Joseph remained in prison for more than two years. It must have seemed a long time to him and possibly he sometimes felt as if he were likely to spend the rest of his life there. Yet he never grew sulky. He never said, "It's no use trying to do anything worth while, for everybody and everything is against me." He never pitied himself and said to himself: "I have tried to do what is right and I suffer for it. What's the use trying to do good to other people; they don't appreciate it and your efforts only get you into trouble." He never lost faith in God and he never lost faith in his fellow men. Joseph had, indeed, been treated very cruelly by his brothers and very unjustly by Potiphar, but these instances of wrongdoing on the part of some of his fellow men did not make him sour toward all mankind.

**A Cheerful Helper of Those in Need.** Joseph seems to have been too busy thinking about other people and trying to help them to have much time for brooding over his own wrongs. He seems to have kept a bright and happy disposition throughout all his misfortunes. One day two officers of the king were cast into the prison. In the night these officers had each a certain dream. Each was troubled by the dream for each felt that his dream meant some event of importance in his life. When Joseph came into the presence of these officers he read perplexity and sorrow in their faces. If Joseph had been sulking over his own wrongs he would



never have noticed the sadness of these imprisoned officers of the king, or if he had noticed it he would not have cared, but Joseph was not sulking. How cheerfully he addresses these officials, "Wherefore look ye so sad to-day?" It was probably this unselfish thoughtfulness for the comfort and happiness of others that made Joseph a young man whom no circumstances could keep down.

**Humble Greatness.** Joseph was a really great young man because he was great in character. He was a slave, but even a slave can have character and be a great man in every way, greater than any man can possibly be without character. And yet Joseph was humble. All truly great people are humble. When Joseph at last stood before Pharaoh and the ruler of the greatest nation of the world spoke kindly to him, there was no unseemly manifestation of pride. "I am told," said Pharaoh, "that you can interpret dreams." Joseph modestly replied, "It is not in me: God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

**A Lad Who Made Good When Opportunity Came.** Joseph was now suddenly exalted from prison to rulership second only to the throne in power and authority. The great opportunity of his life had come. What a tragedy it would have been if he had not been ready. He had been through a hard school but he had learned his lessons well. He had not been found wanting. He had learned to labor on under hard affliction. He had learned to be cheerful under wrongs and discouragement. He had developed the habit of helpfulness. He had learned how to rule a great nation by rising to leadership as a slave and a prisoner. He was a strong man, efficient, wise, capable. He was pure. In the corrupting society of the world's great capital he had lived up to the high standards of morality taught him in his father's tent in the wilderness. He had kept his garments undefiled. He had kept faith with God and faith in God. The lad who lives as Joseph lived will leave his mark for good on the world; he will not be found wanting when his great life opportunity comes.

**Strong but Tender.** Joseph had grown into a strong manhood, but his heart had not lost its tenderness. Some of the greatest and strongest men of history have had

the most tender affection for their friends and relatives and for little children. Joseph was such a man. He could deal sternly with his brothers that he might test them and find out whether or not they were the same kind of brothers who had sold him into slavery, but he wept when he made himself known to them. He kissed his aged father and wept on his neck.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, our Father in heaven, thou hast taught us what is right and good in the lives of the great and good men and women of the Bible and of history. Help us to love those things which make for purity and strength of character. Help us to be worthily ambitious. May we, one and all, live for something greater than selfish pleasure. May we strive to do good and to make our lives a blessing to others. Help us to be true to the lessons of truth we have learned in our homes and in our church school. Help us to be ready for useful labor when we grow to manhood and womanhood and the opportunities for larger usefulness come to us. Help us to get ready for these larger tasks by doing our present tasks well. We would be always cheerful and thoughtful in our homes, thinking not of self but of the comfort and happiness of others. Amen.

#### THE LESSON HYMN

- “How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word!  
What more can he say than to you he hath said—  
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?
- “Fear not, I am with thee, Oh, be not dismayed;  
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.
- “When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;  
For I will be with thee thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

“When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,  
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.”

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### LESSONS FOR INTERMEDIATES FROM THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

We have seen how Joseph grew to be one of the great and strong men of his day. It seems to me that this matter of getting a strong character is a good deal like getting an education. Some young people live under the shadow of our colleges and universities, but never seem to think it worth while to get an education. Other young people have to leave home and work their way through school and yet do so gladly because they desire an education. It seems to me it all depends on ourselves. The experiences of Joseph made him one of the great men of history but if he had not met these experiences in the right way they might have made him selfish, unfriendly, and cruel.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. Tell of Incidents in the Life of Joseph Which Show His Cheerfulness.
2. Tell of Incidents in the Life of Joseph Which Show His Truthfulness.
3. Tell of Incidents in the Life of Joseph Which Show His Loyalty to God.
4. Tell of Incidents in the Life of Joseph Which Show a Forgiving Spirit.
5. Tell of Incidents in the Life of Joseph Which Show That He Was Humble.
6. What Incidents in the Life of Joseph Show That He Was Unselfish?

7. How Does the World War Show That Sin Causes Innocent People to Suffer?

8. What is the Best Way for Young People to Get Ready for the Opportunities of Life?

9. What Is Envy and What Effect Does It Have on One's Character?

10. How Do Great Crimes Usually Begin?

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Prov. 15:13; II Cor. 9:7; John 16:33; Acts 23:11; Ps. 4:7; 45:7; 122:1; Isa. 35:10.

#### COMMITTEES TO BE APPOINTED

**Committee on Child Life in Our Community.** Let this committee report on such matters as, 1. Number of children enrolled in public schools. 2. Children of colored or foreign parentage. 3. Housing conditions. 4. Playgrounds. 5. Kind of moving-picture theatres and other amusement places. 6. What our class can do to help the children of the community.

#### THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

1. Find out about Thomas J. Barnardo and his work for the poor children of England.

2. Find out about Ben Lindsay and his work for boys.

3. What is a Juvenile Court? Is there one in your community? For what offenses are children brought before such courts? What is done with them?

4. Find out about Boy's Aid Organizations.

#### THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Cheerfulness.** Nothing is ever gained by becoming sour and sulky. Therefore:

1. We will not become cross and sulky when we cannot have our own way.

2. We will try to look always on the bright side of every event or circumstance.

3. We will try to help other people to find the road of life which is cheerful and which leads to lasting happiness.

## CHAPTER VII

### MOSES: A MIGHTY TASK ACCOMPLISHED BY THE GRACE AND POWER OF GOD

#### WEEK DAY SESSION

##### GOD PREPARING A MAN FOR A GREAT LIFE TASK

Ex., chs. 1 to 3

It will be remembered that Joseph brought down his father and all his brothers out of Canaan and gave them a home in a part of Egypt called the land of Goshen. In a few generations the descendants of Jacob's twelve sons grew to be a great multitude of people. They filled the land of Goshen which the ruler of Egypt had given them as their home. They were a people physically strong and mentally vigorous. After some centuries there was a change in the ruling family of Egypt. The family of kings descended from the Pharaoh of Joseph's day was driven out and a new ruling family established. These Pharaohs "who knew not Joseph" began to be jealous of the Hebrews. They were afraid that these vigorous people from Canaan might become strong enough to take possession of the whole country. In order to keep the Hebrews down, the Egyptians began to make slaves of them. The peaceable farmers and herdsmen of Goshen were seized and carried away and set to work with brick and mortar building cities for Pharaoh. The Hebrews continued to increase, however. Hard work seemed to make them more vigorous than ever. Luxury and dissipation were rapidly ruining the greater part of the Egyptians and they were more afraid than ever of "Hebrew domination." They resorted to still more cruel measures to keep the Hebrews in check. Their burdens were increased and a law was enacted that every boy born in a Hebrew home should be destroyed.

**Godly Parents and a Goodly Child.** God was planning to deliver his people from the slavery of Egypt.

He had a great work for them to do, a work they could never do if they were to remain as an enslaved people. When God has a great task to be done in the world, he begins to get some person ready for the task. Sometimes he begins a long time before that person is born. He begins by training the parents or grandparents of the person who is to undertake the great task for him. It was so in this case. There was living at the time when Pharaoh's cruel laws were being enforced, a husband and wife who were descendants of Jacob's son, Levi. These people had a little baby boy, but they were courageous enough to risk disobeying the cruel order of Pharaoh. Their little son was an unusually perfect child and when they looked at him they made up their minds they would never destroy him, even if Pharaoh did command them to do so. They hid their baby for three months. You know the story of how the mother of Moses made a little boat of bulrushes and hid the baby in the river Nile and how he was found there by Pharaoh's daughter who took a fancy to him and had him brought up and educated as her own son.

**A Great Renunciation.** When anyone gives up something of great value to himself because, by doing so he can render some great service to God or to humanity, such a person is said to make a renunciation. When John G. Paton left his comfortable home and all the pleasures of a civilized country and went to live on the cannibal islands that he might preach to savages he made a great renunciation. We learn to make great renunciations by beginning with small renunciations. The boy who misses a day's sport on the ice because he stays at home to help his mother makes a renunciation. He is starting out on a path which will lead to a useful life of service.

Moses grew up to manhood in the palace of Pharaoh. He was regarded as a prince of the royal family since he was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. He attended the best schools of the land and became skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians. Every luxury was his. He could give his life to study, to travel, or to the pursuits of a soldier, as he saw fit. With his splendid

ability he could probably have become king, himself, if he had so desired.

Moses could not be satisfied with all these things for himself while all his fellow Hebrews were living in slavery. If he had been a selfish man he would have disowned his poor countrymen and been satisfied with wealth and honor for himself, but Moses was not that kind of man. He was nobly unselfish. He loved his own people. His mother had been his nurse even after his adoption by Pharaoh's daughter and she had taught him to love and honor the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, and to respect the people whom God had chosen.

Moses doubtless thought much about these things and longed to gain liberty for his fellow Hebrews. He was willing to risk any danger which might come to him if he could only win this blessing for his people. He chose to suffer affliction with God's people rather than to enjoy selfish pleasures for a season. He was ready to make a great renunciation when the opportunity came.

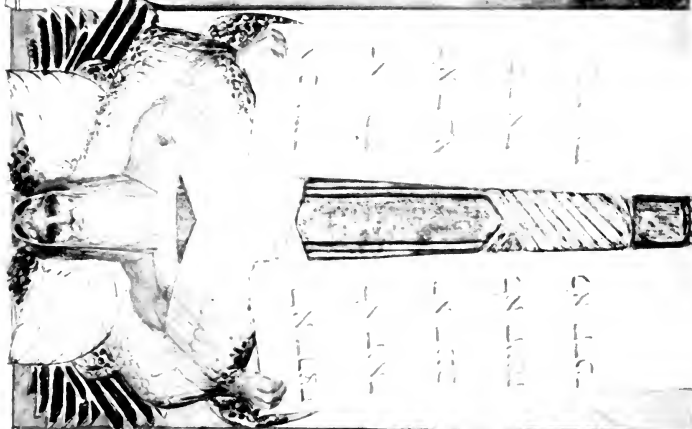
**Blunders of Youthful Enthusiasm.** When we undertake a great task we need to be enthusiastically devoted to it, but we must also be patient and tactful. Great tasks are problems for the years; they cannot be accomplished by one swift stroke. Moses was an impulsive, quick-tempered young man. He had to learn patience and perseverance. He came near to defeating his own plans at the very beginning by his rashness and his hotness of temper. One day he saw an Egyptian slave driver cruelly beating a poor Hebrew slave. Uncontrolled anger seized Moses and he struck the slave master such a blow that he fell down dead. Possibly Moses had no thought of killing the Egyptian, but now that the deed was done he hid the body in the sand. Perhaps Moses had expected the Hebrews to rally to him and help win their freedom by a mighty insurrection against their oppressors, but he was to learn that these brethren of his were for the most part cowardly and mean-spirited. Slavery had left on them marks of degeneration which it would take years to erase. The slave for whose safety Moses had dared to risk so much went away and told others how Moses had killed the Egyptian.







JOSHUA



MOSES



ELIJAH

Moses was now in a situation of deadly peril. His own people were unwilling to follow him. They were ungrateful, and mean-spirited. The royal family would certainly turn against him as soon as they knew about his killing the Egyptian slave master. There was only one thing to do and that was to flee from the country.

**The Discipline of the Desert.** Moses fled far away into the deserts of Arabia. In the wild and desolate region which lies around the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses found a home among the desert tribes. He married a daughter of a priest in one of these tribes, settled down and became a shepherd. For forty years this former prince of Egypt was the keeper of a little band of sheep in the wilderness. These years in the deserts were a part of the education of Moses, a part of the preparation God was giving him for his life task. He was there learning patience, faith in God, and humility. The deserts did something for Moses which the schools of Egypt could not do.

**Ready for the Great Undertaking.** At the end of the forty years in the deserts, Moses was ready for God's use. And yet he had come to feel that he was not at all ready for such a task. He shrank from it. He felt his own shortcomings. He knew that he could never do the task in his own wisdom and his own strength. All these things were a help to Moses because they made him ready to seek God's help, ready to do whatever God should command him to do.

### THE EVER PRESENT HELPER

Around the south pole lies a great continent, ice-covered and snow-bound, a land of endless winter. A few years ago a brave English explorer named Shackleton led an expedition into these south polar regions. One day Shackleton and his two companions were caught in a terrific antarctic blizzard many miles away from their camp. For three days the explorers battled with the fierce winds and the blinding snow. At night they would dig down into the snow, cover themselves with a piece of canvas, and cook a little food over their alcohol stove.

They knew, however, that they must be up and on again early in the morning, for their supply of fuel and food would last only a few hours longer.

Lieutenant Shackleton tells, in his book describing his explorations, of a curious sensation which came over him repeatedly on that terrible three-days' march through the storm. He says that he often felt as though an invisible companion was beside them, that they were not three men struggling through the snow, but four. When they reached camp and were seated around their comfortable fireside, one of Shackleton's companions said to him: "I had a strange feeling all the time we were out in the storm. It seemed to me that there was some one besides ourselves there all the time." The other companion at once spoke up and said that he had experienced the same feeling. It may be that the God who is everywhere and always present helps us to feel that he is near in our hours of great distress and sore need.

“Lead on, O King Eternal,  
 The day of march has come;  
 Henceforth in fields of conquest,  
 Thy tents shall be our home:  
 Through days of preparation,  
 Thy grace has made us strong.  
 And now, O King Eternal,  
 We lift our battle song.

. . . . .

“Lead on, O King Eternal!  
 We follow, not with fears;  
 For gladness breaks the morning  
 Where'er thy face appears;  
 Thy cross is lifted o'er us;  
 We journey in its light:  
 The crown awaits the conquest;  
 Lead on, O God of might.”

**SUNDAY SESSION****GOD HELPING A MAN TO DO A GREAT LIFE TASK**

Num., ch. 14; Deut., ch. 34

A man who labors at a worthy task never labors alone. God is always his Helper and in most cases he finds many helpers among his fellow men. Moses felt that he was not fit to go to Pharaoh and ask that the Hebrews be set at liberty because he was not an eloquent speaker. God gave him his brother Aaron to be his helper. Moses soon found other helpers like Joshua who gave him valuable assistance. The greatest tasks of the world are usually accomplished in just this way. They are not one-man affairs. Some leader takes charge and others rally to his cause, and over all God keeps watch and never suffers the righteous cause to fail.

**In the Name of Jehovah.** Moses was wiser now than he had been at the time of his first attempt to liberate his people. Consequently he was stronger, for wisdom is strength. He began his movement for the liberation of the Hebrews not by a display of force, but by boldly appearing before Pharaoh and asking, in the name of Jehovah, that the Hebrew people be permitted to leave Egypt. If a cause is really God's cause and the leaders of the cause go forth in the name of God and under his guidance, there is no such thing as failure for the cause thus undertaken.

**A Controversy with God.** The Pharaoh to whom Moses addressed his request, in the name of Jehovah, was the ruler of what was then the greatest nation of the earth. He was a despotic ruler whose word was law throughout all his vast realm. He was a conqueror of other nations, a builder of temples and palaces. He may have heard of the God whom his Hebrew slaves worshiped, but he had no fear of him. His answer to Moses and Aaron is full of pride and contempt. "Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice

to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go." Here was a man who deliberately said, "I will not," to God. Let us consider God's dealing with him. We find that God dealt patiently with him as though he were unwilling that any should perish. He enabled Moses to do certain things which ought to have convinced Pharaoh that the command came from One who had power to enforce it. Pharaoh tried to show that his own magicians could do just as wonderful things as could the God of Moses and Aaron. Little by little God dealt more sternly with Pharaoh. The Egyptian king yielded again and again only to break his word as often. Finally when pursuing the fleeing Israelites his hosts came to a sad end in the Red Sea. God had given Pharaoh every opportunity to repent, but he had refused either to repent or obey and thus showed that he deserved his fate.

**Inexhaustible Devotion.** As we read the story of how Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and through the deserts to Canaan, we see that he had come to have an inexhaustible devotion to the great task which God had given him to do. Tasks that are of much importance usually require that kind of devotion. If Moses had not possessed a faith in God and a love for the work God had given him, he would have given up the undertaking long before the Hebrews came in sight of Canaan. The people did not appreciate him. They found all sorts of fault with him. They said that he had led them out into the wilderness in order that they and their children might die of starvation. They kept talking about the good old days in Egypt when they had plenty of onions, melons, and cucumbers to eat. More than once they were ready to stone the man who had given up so much for their sakes and who was really doing his best to gain liberty and happiness for all of them. The great heart of Moses could not hold ill will against his countrymen, even when they treated him so unjustly. He loved them and was ready to die for them, if need be. Heroes are made of that kind of stuff. Men who accomplish great life tasks have the kind of devotion which Moses had.

**The Finished Task and the End of the Day.** Moses saw his task through. The Israelites, after forty years of wanderings in the deserts, camped at last on the highlands just east of the Jordan Valley. The task which God had assigned to Moses was done. The bringing of the Hebrews across the river into the Promised Land was the task of another than Moses. Moses was now an old man. He had reached the end of his life trail. He was not to go across into Canaan though he was to be given a sublime vision of the future home of the people he had loved and for whom he had labored. He went alone out upon Mount Pisgah, one of the bold headlands which jut from the eastern highlands out into the great trough of the Jordan Valley. There he looked upon the length and breadth of the land promised to his forefathers and there his earthly life ended. His life task had been one of the most difficult and most important ever given to a man, but he had accomplished it through the grace and power of God.

#### CONTENDERS WITH GOD

It was Christmas Eve and near midnight. Happy groups of children had gathered with their relatives and friends in the churches of a mid-western city. They had sung songs of the Christ-child and had shouted in glee at the beautiful Christmas trees and the presents which they had received. But now these children were at home and in bed as, indeed, were most of the grown people of the town.

Now, near the center of this particular city there was a strange-looking structure with high walls of gray stone. On the tops of these walls could be seen even at this hour of the night men walking with guns in their hands. It was a penitentiary, a great prison where criminals from all parts of the state were confined behind iron gates and bars of steel. Within those grim walls were men who had defied the laws of man; contenders with God who like Pharaoh had answered God's commandments with a stubborn, "I will not."

At the hour of midnight, the chimes in the church steeples began to play a Christmas hymn.

“ Silent night! Holy night!  
 All is dark, save the light  
 Yonder, where they sweet vigils keep,  
 O'er the Babe who in silent sleep,  
 Rests in heavenly peace,  
 Rests in heavenly peace.”

Fathers and mothers in many a home heard the sweet note of the bells and lifted a prayer of thanksgiving to God for his unspeakable Gift. Little children heard the music in their dreams and smiled as they slept. But down in that grim stone inclosure the response to the Christmas hymn was of another kind. A frightful din arose. Hoarse voices from behind prison bars shouted defiance to the world. Grimy hands shook the grated doors and window guards until their rattling rose in a harsh uproar which drowned out the music of the chimes.

The din within the prison, however, died away as suddenly as it began, and then the church bells were heard again pealing out over the city the final stanza of the hymn.

“ Silent night! Holiest night!  
 Wondrous Star, lend thy light!  
 With the angels let us sing  
 Alleluia to our King!  
 Christ the Saviour is born,  
 Christ the Saviour is born!”

The inmates of the prison had become silent. Let us hope that they all finally ceased to be contenders with God and found peace and purity in that redeeming grace of which the Christmas angels sang.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we would honor thee and love thee every day of our lives. We would have thy presence with us wherever we go and would be guided by thee in all that we do. Help us to be faithful in our study of the Bible for we know that it is thy Book. Help us to be kind and helpful to everyone for we know that all are thy children. Give us perseverance and patience so that we may do the tasks that thou hast given unto us. Help



us to find the life work which thou hast for us and may we accomplish thy plans with the help which thou dost give to those that ask thee. Amen.

### THE LESSON HYMN

“The Lord’s my Shepherd, I’ll not want;  
He makes me down to lie  
In pastures green, he leadeth me  
The quiet waters by.

“My soul he doth restore again;  
And me to walk doth make  
Within the paths of righteousness,  
E’en for his own name’s sake.

“Yea, though I walk in death’s dark vale,  
Yet will I fear none ill;  
For thou art with me, and thy rod  
And staff me comfort still.

“My table thou hast furnished  
In presence of my foes;  
My head thou dost with oil anoint,  
And my cup overflows.

“Goodness and mercy all my life  
Shall surely follow me;  
And in God’s house for evermore  
My dwelling place shall be.”

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### AN UNSELFISH CHOICE OF A LIFE TASK

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER’S OPENING ADDRESS

We have seen in our lesson studies that Moses made a choice of a life task which cost him a great many things which most people consider very valuable. He made an unselfish choice. And yet I wonder whether the choice he made was not, after all, the best for himself, too. If he had chosen to be an Egyptian prince all his life, we, in all probability, never should have heard of him. As a selfish prince he never could have become the great-souled man that he was. I think the importance of mak-

ing an unselfish choice of a life work is shown in the life of George Washington. When he was a young lad he made up his mind that he was going to join the navy. When his mother saw him all dressed up in his navy uniform, she told him she would never consent to his becoming a naval officer. Young Washington told her that this was one instance where he must choose for himself and, much as he regretted to do so, he must choose this calling even though she refused her consent. But when his mother burst into tears, the tender-hearted youth could not resist his mother's wishes and sadly took back his fine uniform and asked to be excused from his place in the navy. If Washington had remained on shipboard, he would not have become a surveyor; he would never have gone to Fort Duquesne with Braddock; he would never have commanded the Continental Army. By giving up a selfish life choice, he found the highest way of usefulness.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. What Influence Should Special Abilities Have in Determining One's Choice of a Life Work?
2. Is a Liking for a Certain Occupation Always an Indication That One Should Choose That Occupation for a Life Work?
3. What Weight Should the Advice of Friends and Relatives Have in Determining One's Choice of a Life Work?
4. How Can we Know What God Would Have Us Do With Our Lives?
5. Why is it Important for One to Find the Right Life Work?

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Isa. 10:17; Mark 10:28-30; Matt. 10:38, 39; Isa. 30:21; Prov. 3:5, 6.

#### THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

Report on the qualifications needed in the following occupations and the opportunities offered by each: For-

oreign Missions, Home Missions, Religious Education, Nursing, Teaching, Business, the Ministry, Authorship.

### THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of the Life Task.** The choice of an occupation is one of the most important decisions one ever makes. Therefore:

1. We will consider the matter of a life occupation seriously and carefully and will seek to know God's will for us.

2. We will strive to choose cheerfully and enthusiastically that occupation which seems to be God's task for us.

3. We will endeavor to be patient and faithful and diligent in our chosen occupations so that we may do well that which we have been given to do.



### SECTION III

## THE GUIDE AND JUDGE OF NATIONS

- CHAPTER VIII. GOD CREATES A NATION TO BE A BLESSING  
TO THE WORLD.
- CHAPTER IX. THE LAND GOD GAVE TO ISRAEL.
- CHAPTER X. THE LAWS GOD GAVE TO ISRAEL.
- CHAPTER XI. THE HEBREW NATION MISSES THE MARK.
- CHAPTER XII. GOD PUNISHING A NATION'S SINS.
- CHAPTER XIII. THE HEBREW NATION'S SECOND CHANCE.

“Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah.”  
—Ps. 33:12.

“Righteousness exalteth a nation ;  
But sin is a reproach to any people.”  
—Prov. 14:34.



CHAPTER VIII  
GOD CREATES A NATION TO BE A BLESSING  
TO THE WORLD

WEEK DAY SESSION

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE HEBREW NATION

Ex., chs. 18, 20

God had promised Abraham that his descendants should one day be like the dust of the earth in number. He had also promised that through these descendants all the nations of the earth should be blessed. In the early books of the Bible we have the story of how this nation which was composed of Abraham's descendants came into existence. God creates nations quite as truly as he creates worlds and suns. Some parts of his great plan for the uplift of humanity cannot be done by individual men and women, they must be done by groups of individuals working together as communities, cities, states, and nations. As we study the history of the world, we see that nearly every nation that has ever existed has been used in some way by God to help his plans for blessing the world. Some nations have hindered his plans, too. The Hebrew nation was the first to understand that it was an instrument in the hands of the Almighty. In our day, all nations which have at all the Christian view of things are gradually coming to think of themselves as under the guidance of God for some great purpose of his.

**A Nation with a Sublime Mission.** It is a wonderful help to a man when he comes to feel that he is doing God's work in the world. It gives him perseverance and diligence to know that his task is one which the Creator has given him to do. A great life work lifts the one who pursues it into greatness of character. The same thing is true of nations. If a nation believes it is doing God's work in the world it becomes a

nation great in character. The Hebrew nation, however, was not always conscious of its great mission, the bringing of a knowledge of the true God to all the nations of the world. There were times when many of the Hebrews saw this task rather clearly and these were times when the nation grew strong and pure. But there were other times when the God-given mission of the nation was forgotten. These were times when the nation grew selfish, when it grew weak through injustice and violence within its own borders, when it failed to maintain its place as a nation among the nations.

**Getting the Israelites Out of Egypt and Egypt Out of the Israelites.** The Israelites had learned many evil practices while they were slaves in Egypt. They were always falling into idolatry for many years after they had left the land of their servitude. Slavery is apt to have a bad effect both on those who are masters and on those who are slaves. The masters become proud, cruel, and pleasure-loving. The slaves become deceitful, cowardly, and lacking in ambition. It took a long time to change the slaves of Egypt into the heroic warriors who conquered Canaan. Indeed, it was only when most of the slaves of Egypt had passed away and a new race of freemen had come on that the Hebrews could enter Canaan with any hope of victory. It has been said that "it took only one night to get the Israelites out of Egypt, while it took forty years to get Egypt out of the Israelites." God cannot make a nation a blessing unless the people of the nation are brave, pure, and strong.

**Giving a System of Government to the Nation.** As we read the story of Israel's wanderings in the deserts we see how God was gradually giving them a system of government. Laws were being enacted. Courts were being established. No nation can be strong and useful without a government that secures justice and opportunity for all. God was trying to build up that kind of government for his chosen people. In another chapter we will study more thoroughly the laws which God gave to the Hebrews.

**Giving a Church to the Nation.** No nation can be a blessing to the world if it does not recognize God and



honor him. If it honors God it will have churches where God is worshiped and where the people are taught about God. The Jewish Church began as soon as the Jewish nation began. God led his people to build a place of worship, a wonderful tabernacle, where the people gathered to thank God and to offer sacrifices to him. He set apart ministers of religion, Aaron and his sons and all the Levites. He gave to the church certain great truths which it was to teach to all the people. He set apart one day in seven that the people might have time for rest and worship. He told the people how to worship him with offerings and sacrifices. Thus God's Church was established to be at the very center of the national life of the people God had chosen to bless the world.

**What God Has Done for the World Through His Church.** Some very foolish or dishonest people talk as if the Church were a useless institution, asking people to give money for its support and giving nothing in return. That such people are insincere is indicated by the fact that they choose to live in a land where there are churches. It is true that the Church has sometimes been selfish and forgotten its mission of helpfulness, but on the whole, it has been a great blessing to the world. Let us consider a few of the blessings which God has given to the world through his Church.

**The Church Has Given Education to the World.** The Church established the first schools. Where there are no churches, there are no schools open to all the people and few schools of any kind. Many of our greatest universities were started by the Church.

**The Church Has Given Hospitals to the World.** There were no hospitals in India, or China, or Africa until the Church began to send missionaries to these countries. Many hospitals are now owned and operated by cities and by the government of counties, states, and nations, but it is well to remember that it was the Christian Church that began this work of mercy and helpfulness and that all our modern organizations for the care of the sick are due primarily to the Church.

**The Church Has Given Orphanages to the World.** What is true of hospitals is true in an equal degree of

organizations for the care of poor and fatherless children. There are no orphanages in lands where the influence of the Church has not been felt, and every agency in Christian lands which has for its aim the care of helpless children exists because of the influence of the Christian Church in past centuries and at the present time.

**The Church Has Helped to Lift Woman to a Place Where She Is the Equal and the Helper of Man.** In lands where the Christian Church is not found, women are little better than slaves. They are not given any education and have hardly any place of honor in the community. The Christian Church changes all this and gives to woman an honored place in the home, the community, and the nation.

#### LITTLE SLAVE GIRLS OF CHINA

If we wish to know what the lives of our women and children would be without the Christian religion and the Christian Church we need only consider what the lives of women and children are like in a country where there is no Christian religion and Christian Church. China is being slowly changed by its contact with Christian nations, but it is still an illustration of what life is without the religion of Jesus and without his Church. When a little baby comes into a Chinese home it is a time of rejoicing, if the baby is a boy; but if the baby is a girl, it is apt to be a time of mourning. Sometimes the little baby girls are destroyed, if there seem to be too many girls already in the family. Sometimes the parents take them down into some dark alley of the city and pass them through a "hole in the wall" into the hands of evil men who make a business of raising these little baby girls and selling them as slaves.

Sometimes these little slaves are sent across the ocean to America and bought by Chinese men in San Francisco, or Seattle. In San Francisco lives a brave woman who has given her life to finding and saving these little Chinese slaves. She has a home where she takes them and educates them. Nearly all become Christians and many go back to China as missionaries to their people.

Once this brave woman heard that a little Chinese slave girl was being held by a group of Chinamen in the city of Sacramento. She went to the courts in that city and obtained permission to take the child to her Chinese Children's Home in San Francisco. But she had first to get possession of the child. She knew that if once the Chinamen knew that she was trying to get possession of the little slave, they would send her away to some hiding place and she could never hope to find her again. So this woman determined to follow a bold plan. She learned where the house was in which the little slave was kept. Then she hired an automobile and drove to the house. Leaving the driver with the car she went to the dwelling, opened the door and went in. Half a dozen Chinamen were seated about a table in the center of the room. They were playing cards and smoking cigarettes. They were so surprised at seeing a white woman enter that they just sat still and stared. Over in one corner seated on a pile of old matting was the little slave. The brave woman rushed over, seized the child in her arms, and darted out of the room. The Chinamen followed shouting and waving their arms in wild excitement. Leaping into the automobile the woman told the driver to make all haste. Some of the Chinamen were at the automobile before it got under way. They caught hold of it, but as it gained speed they had to let go. Then shots began to ring out, and bullets ripped through the top of the automobile. Some of the Chinamen had run back to the house for their guns and revolvers and were firing on the retreating automobile. In a little while, however, the car was out of range and the little Chinese slave was saved from a life of suffering and shame.

“The Church's one Foundation  
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
She is his new creation  
By water and the word;  
From heaven he came and sought her  
To be his holy bride;  
With his own blood he bought her,  
And for her life he died.”

## SUNDAY SESSION

IF A NATION IS TO BE A HELPER OF GOD, WHAT  
KIND OF NATION MUST IT BE?

Deut., chs. 5, 6

In a recent lesson, we considered the question as to what kind of person one must be if he would be a helper and a friend of God. We have seen that God not only chooses people but nations to be his helpers. If a nation is to be a helper of God, what kind of nation must it be? This is the question we wish to consider in this lesson.

**A Religious Nation.** No man can be a helper of God if he does not believe that there is a God and act as if he believed it. He must know and honor God and obey him or he will not be of any great service to the Almighty. In short, a man who would be God's helper must be deeply and truly religious. The same is true of a nation. The nation must recognize God in its laws, in its methods of government, in its attitude toward the other nations of the world. "Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah."

**A Just Nation.** If a nation is to be God's helper it must be built on a foundation of justice for all. It must have a tender conscience. It must have a fine sense of right and wrong. The poorest and weakest of its citizens must feel that their nation is their protector and friend. The weakest of neighboring nations must feel that they are safe in being neighbors to this nation which is strong and also just. We ought to be glad that our own great nation is dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created free and equal." We ought to strive to keep it "one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

**An Unselfish Nation.** A selfish person cannot be God's helper in any large way, neither can a selfish nation. God planned to make the Hebrew nation a missionary nation. He wished through the Hebrew nation to bless all the other nations of the world. We shall see in the lessons which follow, how the prophets and some other heroic people tried to hold the Jewish nation up to this high

ideal of service. We shall also see how some shortsighted and selfish Jews tried to defeat God's plans by making the Jewish nation live for itself alone.

**A Pure Nation.** God will not have helpers who are impure in their thoughts, words, and deeds. They couldn't help him anyway. If we walk in the light as God is in the light we have fellowship with him and become his helpers. The worshipers of idols did all sorts of wicked things. Their gods were only wood and stone, but from the first Jehovah would have no helpers who walked in uncleanness and drunkenness. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well."

### THE PROMISED LAND

Some years ago there lived in a little Russian village on the Volga River a Jewish family consisting of the father, mother, and several small children. The father was an industrious man, a tailor. He was able to feed and clothe his family and have a very well-furnished home, but he was not altogether happy. He knew that he and his family were never safe. He knew that the more money he made and the better home he had the greater was the danger. For the people of that part of Russia hated the Jews. They made them live in one small suburb of the village where they were crowded together. They would not allow them to enjoy many of the rights and privileges that other people enjoyed.

The Jews could never forget how at certain times they had been driven from their homes, their property carried away, and many of their people killed. They could not tell when they should suffer again in the same way. The father of this Jewish household sometimes gathered his children about him and told them of a country far across the seas where all men were free, equal, and safe. He told them that the people of that land never came in great mobs to kill the Jews and burn their houses. He said that he was working hard and saving money to go to that land some day.

The children talked a great deal among themselves about that distant country where they could live free

from fear and do as other children did. They came to call it the "Promised Land." One day the father brought home a little package and gave it to his children. When they unwrapped it they found a little flag inside. It had a blue square in the corner with white stars in it and the rest of the flag was composed of red and white stripes. The father told his children that this was the flag of the country to which he hoped to take them, that it stood for liberty and justice for all. The children came to love it. They called it "the flag of the Promised Land."

At last the father had money enough saved to make the journey. After a journey of several days they reached the seaport where they were to set sail. The little family did not have a fine cabin and the children could not run around on the decks. They were too poor to travel that way. They were "steerage passengers" and had to stay away down in the great vessel. There was one little round porthole, however, where the children could look out and see the great rolling ocean stretching away to the horizon.

At last they came in sight of land and sailed up the channel leading to the harbor of New York. They came in sight of a tall structure of some kind standing out through the mist. It looked like the form of a gigantic woman standing on the top of a high tower. The children wondered what it was and their father told them that it was the "Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World" and that it meant that all who came to live in America were to be forever, "free and equal." Just then the children caught sight of bright colors flying from a tall flag-pole near the statue. They clapped their hands and shouted, "'The flag of the Promised Land,' 'The flag of the Promised Land.'" Don't you think we ought to be proud to live in such a country, and don't you think we ought to do all we can to keep it a land of freedom and opportunity for all the peoples of the earth?

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, we thank thee for our country and for all the privileges which we enjoy. We thank thee for the many

opportunities which thou hast given to us. We pray that we may not be selfish in the use of thy gifts. Help us to be kind and friendly to people who come to our country from other lands. May we be willing to share with them the blessings and the privileges of our own great land. May we love these people who come from other countries and look on them as our brothers and sisters in thy great family. Amen.

### THE LESSON HYMN

- “O God, beneath thy guiding hand  
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea;  
And when they trod the wintry strand,  
With prayer and psalm they worshiped thee.
- “Thou heardest, well pleased, the song, the prayer:  
Thy blessing came; and still its power  
Shall onward, through all ages, bear  
The memory of that holy hour.
- “Laws, freedom, truth, and faith in God  
Came with those exiles o'er the waves;  
And, where their pilgrim feet have trod,  
The God they trusted guards their graves.
- “And here thy name, O God of love,  
Their children's children shall adore,  
Till these eternal hills remove,  
And spring adorns the earth no more.”

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### A RIGHTEOUS NATION

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

Whether or not a nation is righteous depends upon the people who make up the nation. If the people of a nation live according to the teachings of Jesus they will naturally bring it to pass that their nation will act according to the same principles. If our nation has sometimes acted in a way contrary to Christian standards it is because the people of the nation who are Christians were either not

numerous enough or not bold enough to make their influence felt. In some cases it may have been due to lack of a right understanding of what the Christian teaching regarding the life of a nation is. I think our country has usually acted in a Christian way toward other nations. Even our wars against other nations have in most cases been wars for humanity rather than wars for our own safety and advantage.

If we are to keep our nation righteous we must be faithful and diligent. We must seek to make the Church strong. We must take an interest in politics and see that the right kind of men are elected to office. We must see that just laws are enacted and enforced. We must guard against any part of our people acting selfishly and unjustly. We must be willing to help support the schools and libraries which give the people an education and fit them for citizenship. We must make the other nations of the earth feel that our nation is just and helpful. If there is hunger and distress in any part of the world while we have abundance, we must not keep everything for ourselves, but share our blessings with those in need.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. What the Christian Church Has Done for America.
2. Why We Should Give to Organizations for the Relief of Sufferers from Famine, Plague, or Disaster?
3. Qualities of Character Which Make a Nation Great.
4. What Can Our Nation Do for the Nations of South America?
5. What Can Our Nation Do for Mexico?

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Ex. 22:21; Matt. 25:35; Heb. 13:2; Ps. 33:12; Prov. 14:34; Isa. 26:2; Zech. 2:11.

#### COMMITTEE TO BE APPOINTED

**Social Service Committee.** Let this committee report on the question, "People in Our Community Whom We Can Help."



THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE  
CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

1. Find out about the return of the Boxer Indemnity to China.
2. Find out what our country has done for Cuba, San Domingo, the Central American Republics.
3. Find out what Americanization work is.
4. Find out about Social Settlements, and Community Service.
5. Find out what countries of Europe are sending immigrants to the United States in largest numbers.
6. What can our country do for Negroes, Chinese, Japanese, Indians?
7. Find out what our denomination is doing for the peoples named.

THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Patriotism.** Love of country is one of the noblest traits of character. Therefore:

1. We will honor our country by obeying its laws and respecting its flag.
2. We will love our country and will try to be worthy children of those who gave to us this land of the free.
3. We will try to make and keep our country a land of liberty and opportunity for all who may come to our shores.

**Salute to the Flag.** "I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the Republic for which it stands: one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice to all."

CHAPTER IX  
THE LAND GOD GAVE TO ISRAEL  
WEEK DAY SESSION

A VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT EBAL

Deut. 11:8-12; Psalm 104

Palestine is a comparatively small country. It is less than two hundred miles long and only about seventy miles wide in its broadest portion. Yet within this limited area is gathered a wonderful variety of soil, vegetation, animal life, and surface features. On its mountain tops where snow lies throughout the year, are found plants and animals belonging to the far-away Arctic regions. In the deep trough of the Jordan, palms and other forms of tropical vegetation flourish and birds and animals belonging to Africa and India are found. Some parts of this little country are very fertile, while other parts are desert wastes. This is the land through which Abraham herded his flocks and which God promised to him and his descendants forever, the land of the prophets, the land of our Saviour's birth, of his labors, and of his death. It has long been called the Holy Land because of its connection with the great events of the Bible and the men and women of whom the Bible tells us. Perhaps we can get a good idea of what it is like by describing what may be seen from the summit of Mount Ebal, one of the high mountains of north central Palestine.

**The Distant Sea.** If you should climb to the top of Mount Ebal and look westward you would see rolling green hills (if the season were spring or early summer) sloping down to a long strip of yellow sandy beach, with a narrow line of white breakers, and, beyond, the blue waters of the Mediterranean. The borders of the Jewish nation hardly reached the sea at any time in the history of the nation, but the highland homes of the people were

always in sight of it. Perhaps this is why the sea made a peculiarly deep impression on the minds of the Jewish race. It spoke to them of mystery and vastness. They knew that it stretched away to the ends of the earth. Its passing ships told them of the traffic of a world with which they had little to do. Its storm-lashed waves and the distant murmur of its surf seemed to speak to them of the power and majesty of God.

“Yonder is the sea, great and wide,  
Wherein are things creeping innumerable,  
Both small and great beasts.  
There go the ships;  
There is leviathan, whom thou hast formed to play therein.  
These wait all for thee,  
That thou mayest give them their food in due season.”  
—Ps. 104:25-27.

**The Plain of Sharon.** Near the sea stands the bold headland of Mount Carmel. South of this promontory a strip of comparatively level land borders the sea. It grows constantly wider to the southward. This is the Plain of Sharon. It is a fertile region noted for its abundant wild flowers. When the Hebrews looked down on this flowery land beside the blue sea they could hardly help thinking of it as an expression of God's blessing upon the earth. Their prophets illustrated God's willingness and his power to bless his people by saying that the awful wilderness of Judea should become under God's blessing like the Plain of Sharon.

“The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of Jehovah, the excellency of our God.”—Isa. 35:1, 2.

**The Highlands of Judea.** Away to the southward from Mount Ebal stretch the barren limestone ridges of Judea. The whole region is in striking contrast to the flowery plain below. This land of sterile sheep pastures and small rocky fields has produced some of the noblest people of history. The mountains of the world have been cradles

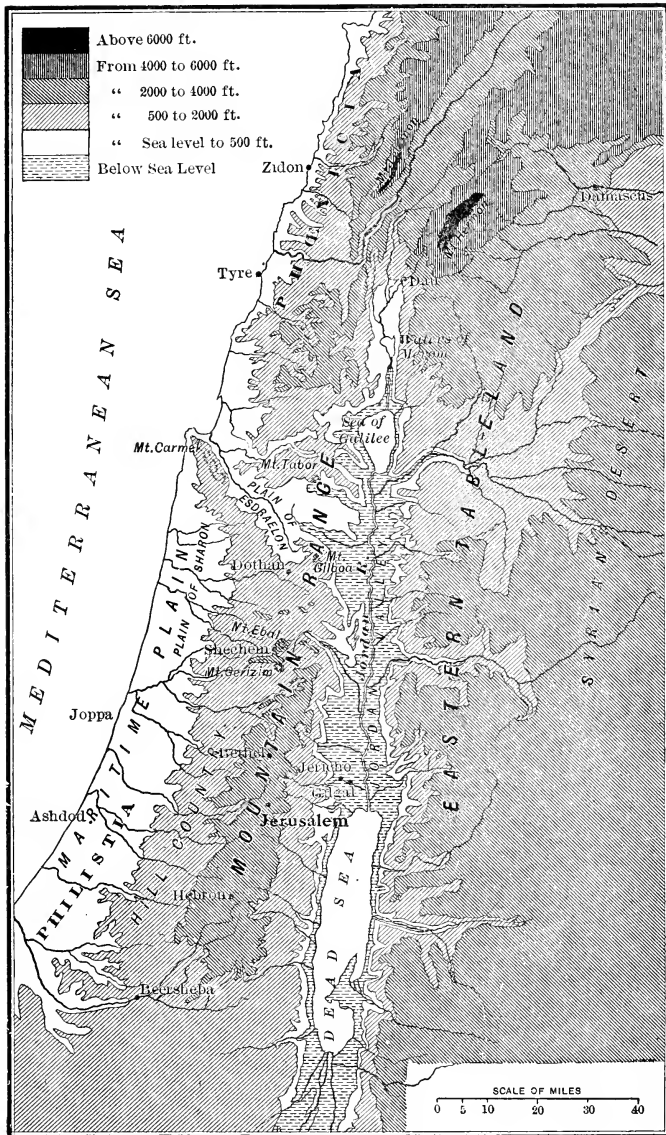
of liberty and bulwarks of freedom. Standing on Mount Ebal one can see almost to Jerusalem. A little farther south is Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, and still beyond but on the range of highlands is Hebron, where Abraham made his home and where the dust of his body lies in the cave of Machpelah.

**The Deserts of the South.** Beyond Hebron the highland region begins to let itself down to the desert tracts which stretch away toward Egypt. Beer-sheba, the home of Isaac, is located here. These deserts come right up to the shore of the sea, so that the caravan routes which have been traversing the pleasant vales of western Palestine here reach a stretch of hot and sandy wastes almost destitute of water, the barrier of barrenness which has always lain between Palestine and Egypt.

**The Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea.** Standing on Mount Ebal and facing southward you would have on your left one of the most remarkable depressions on the land surface of the earth. The name "Jordan" means the "descender." It is so named because of its rapid descent from the high slopes of Mount Hermon into the depression of the Dead Sea. At the Lake of the Huleh, the ancient Waters of Merom, the Jordan has practically reached sea level. At the Sea of Galilee, it is several hundred feet below the sea. When at last it pours its muddy tide into the Dead Sea, it is nearly thirteen hundred feet below the surface of the Mediterranean.

The Jordan River is deeply woven into the literature of both the Old and the New Testament. Across this river the invading Hebrews followed Joshua in their campaign of conquest. So vividly did it impress itself upon the minds of the Hebrews as the boundary line between their old mode of life in the deserts and their new mode of life in the land of Canaan that it has remained to this day a symbol of the dividing line between this life and that which is to come. It was in the Jordan that Jesus was baptized; near it he preached and did many of his miracles.

The lake into which the Jordan empties is altogether remarkable. It is well called the Dead Sea for its waters are so full of salt and other chemicals that organic life



MAP OF PALESTINE

scarcely exists in them. Even its shores are almost wholly devoid of vegetation save for the hardy saltwort which thrives in the briny spray cast up by the waves. Glimpses of the Dead Sea may be had from many parts of the highlands of Palestine. From the Mount of Olives, its waters are seen dark, misty, and solemn, against the purple background of the hills of Moab. This desolate sea without fish or fisherman made a deep impression on the minds of the Hebrews. It was to them a symbol of physical and spiritual death. One of the most striking passages in the Old Testament is that in which the prophet Ezekiel tells of his vision in which he saw a stream of water breaking forth from beneath the altar in the Temple at Jerusalem and widening into a mighty and life-giving river as it flowed onward through the wilderness of Judea toward the Dead Sea.

“And it shall come to pass, that every living creature which swarmeth, in every place whither the rivers come, shall live; and there shall be a very great multitude of fish; for these waters are come thither, and the waters of the sea shall be healed, and everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh.”—Ezek. 47:9.

The vision of the prophet was a true picture of the religious truth which has gone out from Jerusalem to give spiritual life to every place where it has gone.

**The Wilderness of Judea.** To the west of the Dead Sea and coming up almost to Bethlehem is a region of desolation which is called in the Bible the wilderness of Judea, or simply “the wilderness.” Most of the region is bare rock with only the scantiest of vegetation appearing here and there for a few weeks in spring. The surface is gashed with great chasms which run down to the Dead Sea with constantly deepening trenches. It was in this barren region that John the Baptist made his home before he began to preach. It was of this place, so typical of desolation, that the prophet spoke when he said, “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” Isa. 35:1.

**The Highlands East of Jordan.** East of the Jordan

Valley, the country rises into a vast wall of hills which form the western edge of the high plateau of ancient Moab, Gilead, and Bashan. These highlands are fertile and forests of oak are found there. In this land some of the tribes of Israel selected their homes. Out of these highlands came some of the great prophets like Elijah who rebuked the wickedness of kings and the sins of the nation.

**The Eastern Deserts.** On the east, as on the south, Palestine fades off into the desert. The eastern highlands sink down into sandy wastes which stretch away for vast distances, the home, in Bible times as to-day, of the hyena, the wild ostrich, and equally wild tribes of men.

**The Plain of Esdraelon.** Almost at the foot of Mount Carmel lies the fertile Plain of Esdraelon, the wheat field of Palestine. Esdraelon is also one of the world's greatest battle fields. Here Israelites and Canaanites, Franks and Saracens, have contended with one another.

**Mount Hermon and the Lebanons.** Looking north from the summit of Mount Ebal you would see the snowy summit of Mount Hermon on the horizon. This mountain has an important influence over the climate of Palestine. Its cold summit pierces the high moisture-laden air currents from the sea and condenses their vapors into rain, snow, and dew. The dews of Palestine are often exceedingly heavy on account of the nearness of this mountain. They are a great blessing in the hot, dry harvest times. One of the psalms speaks of the blessing which comes from brotherliness as being

“Like the dew of Hermon,  
That cometh down upon the mountains of Zion.”—Ps. 133:3.

On the slopes of the Lebanon Mountains are still found a few of the cedars of Lebanon. They are the last survivors of a wonderful forest which in Bible times covered the mountains of northern Palestine. These wonderful trees made a deep impression on the minds of the Hebrews. They had known only the desert shrubs before, and these great cedars seemed to them a wonderful

creation of God. They called them "the glory of Lebanon" and "the trees of Jehovah."

This is the wonderful and interesting land which God had chosen as the home of the nation through which he was to bless the world. It lay apart from the other nations. Its mountains were a wall of defense where the little nation might have kept itself free from foreign domination if it had not become divided and morally corrupt. And yet it was not a land which would keep the little nation isolated from the world. No hermit nation could live in that land. The world's great highways ran along its borders and through its valleys. It was an admirable home for a nation which was to give to the world the blessing of spiritual truth.

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### HOW THE HOLY LAND HELPED THE HEBREWS TO KNOW GOD

Psalms 8; 19:1-6; 147:7-20

God kept his promise to Abraham, for through the Hebrews who were Abraham's descendants, he gave to all the people of the world some great truths about himself. Part of this message from God came through prophets and other good men who were close enough to God in fellowship to hear his voice, and courageous enough to make the message known. Part of it came through men whose spiritual eyesight was keen enough to read God's messages in the things he had created in the world, whose ears were attuned to hear the voice that speaks from out the silent stars at night. It is probable that the great men of the Old Testament learned to know God in both of the ways named. The influence of nature is plainly seen in many of the psalms and in the words of most of the prophets. The wonderful land which God had given to the Hebrews helped some of them to know God. No other land of equal size is so well fitted to reveal the Creator. Its wonderful variety of surface features, vegetable life, and animal forms, helped the He-



brews to know the wisdom of the God who has fitted each of his creatures for its own habitation. He made the high cliffs for the wild goats and the rocks for the conies. Travelers in western Palestine speak of a peculiar sensation of exaltation. They feel lifted up from the general surface of the earth. They look down on the sea and the lakes of the Jordan Valley. They look down on the tops of mountains. The prophet Joel speaks of "dawn spread upon the mountains." The marked uncertainties of the climate helped the Hebrews to feel a dependence upon the God of nature who sent the early and the latter rain, who caused droughts to come to punish the unfaithfulness of the nation, and whose hand was seen in the storm when the fierce siroccos "threw dust across the sun." When we read the words of the prophet Amos, it is not hard for us to believe that the following story, which shows how God speaks through nature, is probably a true picture of his boyhood and youth.

#### AMOS, SHEPHERD OF TEKOA AND FEARLESS PROPHET OF JEHOVAH

Some miles south of the village of Bethlehem one comes to a heap of ruins and scattered stones covering several acres. No one lives there now, and this is all that is left of the village of Tekoa. In this village, many years ago, a humble shepherd lived with his family. The village stood on the edge of the desolate wilderness of Judea, and not much could be raised there because of the rocky soil and the lack of water. The shepherd had a little garden where some water flowed out from a spring in the hillside. In it were cucumber vines and a few other vegetables and several large trees of the sycomore fig. This shepherd had a little son named Amos, who, since the family was large, had to work hard almost from his babyhood. He climbed the tall fig trees and gathered the fruit for his father; he watched the sheep out on the desolate and stony hills. Although his parents were poor, they were worshipers of the true God, whom many of the richer people of that time were beginning to forget. They taught their little boy that God is the Creator of

the world, and he came to think of all the things which he saw as God's workmanship.

When the winter rains poured their torrents down upon the roof of their humble dwelling, little Amos would snuggle close to his mother's side and say, "Mother, where does all the rain come from?" Then his mother would tell him of the great Jehovah God, who "calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth."

There were many wild animals in the country where Amos lived, lions, leopards, and the Syrian bear. Lions would often come up from the thick brush of the Jordan Valley and break into the sheepfolds. Amos would hear their roars resounding through the darkness. Then his father and the other men would seize their weapons and rush out to defend the flocks. Sometimes they would bring back fragments of some sheep the lions had torn to pieces, "two legs, or a piece of an ear," enough to prove to the owners of the sheep that a lion had devoured it.

One day Amos heard his father and the neighbors talking about some calamity which was impending. The little boy did not know what the danger was, but he noticed that his parents kept looking up at the sky. After a time his keen young eyes detected something which looked like a thin cloud coming across the face of the sun. He called his father's attention to it and his father looked grave. After watching that moving cloud for a time, his father said, "Yes, they're coming; the locusts are coming." In a little while large insects began to come down here and there like the first big flakes of a snowstorm. They came thicker and faster until the air was full of them. They ate up the cucumber vines; they ate all the figs on the trees; they ate all the leaves on the trees and gnawed the bark: they devoured all the grass and the sheep were left without food.

That night little Amos said to his father, "Why does Jehovah God let the locusts come and eat up all our garden, our fruit trees, and all the grass for our sheep?" His father answered: "My son, Israel has sinned. They have rejected the law of Jehovah and have not kept his statutes; therefore are these calamities come upon us."

When Amos grew older he often watched the sheep alone in the fields at night. He saw the sun go down in red fire behind the Judean hills and watched all the night until it appeared again above the far-away blue mountain wall of Moab. He still thought of God as the One controlling all he saw and heard, who "turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night." He learned to know the stars, the Pleiades with many dim stars close together, and the great constellation of Orion with many bright stars scattered over a considerable portion of the sky. In these things he was learning to know God and how to communicate with him in the deep meditation of solitude and prayer.

By the time Amos became a man, conditions had reached a fearful state in the country about his home; especially was there great wickedness in the cities. People of different parts of the country were waging cruel warfare against one another, destroying even women and children and selling them into slavery. The rich people of the cities were making slaves of the poor. Some were starving while others lolled in luxury. Many were so anxious to get rich that they did not like to take time to keep the Sabbath Day. They said to one another, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" They cheated one another with short measures and light weights and it was one great scramble to see which could get the advantage over the other. Now Amos had grown up honoring God and seeing him in all the works of nature. He thought much on the evils of his day and longed to see justice established among men and righteousness toward God.

God was seeking for a man whom he could send as a messenger to the wicked cities to warn them that destruction was coming if they did not repent and mend their ways. Such a messenger must be able to hear God's voice. He must be able to look on the life of that day as God looked on it. He must not be afraid of any man. There was no such man in any of the cities. Perhaps there was only one in all the land, and that was the shepherd boy, Amos. He heard God speaking to him, bidding

him leave his sheep, and go into the great cities and preach to the sinful people. Amos, the shepherd boy who learned about God in the fields and under the sky at night, had become a prophet of Jehovah.

### KEEPING GOD'S MESSAGES UNSPOILED

If God has a message to mankind in the mountains, forests, birds, wild animals, and flowers, ought we not to treasure these things in their natural abundance and beauty so far as we can? Within the past few years movements for saving the natural beauties of our country and for saving its wild life have sprung up in America. We see now—at least some of us do—that these natural beauties are not for us alone; they belong also to the generations of people that are yet to be. If we destroy them, we shall rob the thousands of generations that are to come. If we exterminate a species of bird or flower, it can never be produced again. In destroying it we bid it an everlasting farewell.

### THE LESSON PRAYER

Our heavenly Father, thou hast made the whole world beautiful and good. The land and the sea are full of evidences of thee. Help us to know thee as thou hast revealed thyself in the things which thou hast made. Grant that we may not selfishly mar and destroy thy good works, but keep them unspoiled for the delight and uplift of thy children that are yet to be upon the earth. Keep us from all selfishness for the sake of Jesus Christ, thy Son. Amen.

### THE LESSON HYMN

“O beautiful for spacious skies,  
 For amber waves of grain,  
 For purple mountain majesties  
 Above the fruited plain!  
 America! America! God shed his grace on thee  
 And crown thy good with brotherhood  
 From sea to shining sea!

“ O beautiful for pilgrim feet,  
 Whose stern, impassioned stress  
 A thoroughfare for freedom beat  
 Across the wilderness!  
 America! America! God mend thine every flaw,  
 Confirm thy soul in self-control,  
 Thy liberty in law!

“ O beautiful for heroes proved  
 In liberating strife,  
 Who more than self their country loved,  
 And mercy more than life!  
 America! America! May God thy gold refine,  
 Till all success be nobleness,  
 And every gain divine!

“ O beautiful for patriot dream  
 That sees beyond the years  
 Thine alabaster cities gleam  
 Undimmed by human tears!  
 America! America! God shed his grace on thee  
 And crown thy good with brotherhood  
 From sea to shining sea!”

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### CHRISTIAN CONSERVATION

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

The World War taught us the sin of waste. It showed us how much food, how much fuel, how much time, we were wasting. It showed the need for a nation-wide program of conservation. Conservation means the act of conserving, preserving, saving. We are wasting some things in our country which are of more value than food or fuel. We waste lives. Thousands of babies die every summer because they are not properly cared for. Tens of thousands of men are shut up in jails and prisons who might be doing the tasks of the country and earning an honest living for themselves and their families. We are spending more for wars past and prospective than we are spending for everything else put together. When we think of these things, we see that conservation is just

another word for the Christian program which has for its aim the saving of all that is good in life.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. The Story of the Passenger Pigeon. ("Our Vanishing Wild Life," Hornaday.)
2. The Story of the Great Auk. ("Our Vanishing Wild Life," Hornaday.)
3. American Birds in Danger of Extermination. ("Our Vanishing Wild Life," Hornaday.)
4. American Wild Animals in Danger of Extermination. ("Our Vanishing Wild Life," Hornaday.)
5. The Need for Conserving the Forests of America.
6. The Need for Conserving the Beauty Spots of America.
7. Efforts to Save the Lives of Babies in Our Great Cities During the Summer Months.
8. Child-Saving Organizations.
9. The Work of Rescue Missions in Our Great Cities.
10. The Work of the Salvation Army.
11. What Customs and Ideals of Our Puritan Forefathers Should We Try to Conserve?

### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Ps. 72:4; Isa. 55:2; Luke 9:56; 19:10; John 6:12.

### COMMITTEES TO BE APPOINTED

**Conservation Committee**, to report as to whether there is any matter concerning the conservation of our national resources, either spiritual or material, in which our class can give assistance.

### THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

1. Make a list of the national parks of America and tell about the wonders of nature in each.

2. Make a collection of photographs of beautiful scenes in our country.

3. Report on the greatest poems describing natural beauties in our country.

4. Find out what is being done for the conservation of the Sabbath Day in our country.

#### THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Conservation.** Everything we possess is given to us by God and most of these gifts are ours for only a little while. They belong also to the people who shall live on the earth after we are gone and whose rights we ought to respect. Therefore:

1. We will work for the conservation of our national resources, for the saving of our forests and the preservation of the beauty spots of our country.

2. We will work for the preservation of our wild birds and animals from destruction.

3. We will work for the conservation of our American ideals as to equality and brotherhood and for the preservation of such American customs as the keeping of the Sabbath Day.

CHAPTER X  
THE LAWS GOD GAVE TO ISRAEL  
WEEK DAY SESSION

LAWS INTENDED TO ESTABLISH EQUALITY, JUSTICE,  
AND BROTHERHOOD AMONG MEN

Ex., chs. 21 to 23; Deut., ch. 22

The laws of a nation are a very important part of its civilization. If the laws secure liberty, opportunity, and justice for all, they help the nation to become truly great. If the laws are unjust, securing special privileges for some at the expense of the others, they prevent the nation from becoming truly great and strong. God wished the Hebrew nation to be pure and strong, so he gave to them laws which were fitted to secure equality, justice, and brotherhood.

**Laws Concerning Widows, Orphans, and the Poor.** The civilization of a nation may be determined by its attitude toward women and children, especially toward those who are widows and orphans. A nation which allows these helpless ones to be mistreated cannot be a nation well-pleasing to God. The commandment of God concerning this matter was very plain: "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them at all, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry."—Ex. 22 :22, 23.

God's commandments were equally plain concerning the poor. If a wealthy Hebrew lent money to a poor countryman he must not charge any interest. If a poor man left his garments as security for a debt, they could not be held after sunset. God mercifully provided that the poor man who had no other covering than his clothing should not be left without protection during the cold of the night.

**Laws Concerning Foreigners.** Even people who are respectable in every other way are sometimes cruel to



foreign people who happen to dwell in the community with themselves. They call them names and refuse to have anything to do with them simply because they speak a different language and have different customs from those with which they themselves are familiar. Such conduct must be displeasing to God who is the Father of all the people of the earth and who loves them all with a love that cannot be measured. Here is God's law covering the matter:

“And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself.”—Lev. 19:33, 34.

**Laws Concerning Servants.** Slaves were not thought of as having any rights at all, but God would have no such inhuman customs among his people. He gave the Hebrews laws which practically did away with slavery. No Hebrew could be held as a slave for more than six years, unless he wished to stay longer with his master. If a master was cruel and struck a servant and injured him in such a way as by knocking out a tooth, that master had to let the servant go free.

**Laws Concerning Thieves.** Even thieves were not thought of as being entirely outside the protection of the Law. They were punished for their crimes, but the punishment must not be inhuman. If a thief should be caught breaking into a house at night, the owner of the property had a right to defend it, and if he killed the thief in doing so he was not held to be blameworthy. But if the owner of a house killed a thief who was breaking into his house in daylight, he was held to have done wrong unless he was compelled to take the thief's life in self-defense.

**Laws Concerning Aged Persons.** One who habitually shows respect for aged people and concern for their comfort manifests one of the very finest traits of character. Because God wished his people to have this respect for aged persons, he gave this commandment to the whole nation:

“Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and thou shalt fear thy God: I am Jehovah.”—Lev. 19:32.

**Laws Concerning Animals and Birds.** God saw fit to give his people laws protecting the dumb creatures. He would have his people know that animals and birds have rights which man ought to respect. The ox was not to be muzzled while treading out grain on the threshing floor. He must be allowed to feed on the straw and grain as a right to which his labor gave him a clear title. The mother bird must not be taken when on her nest, or with her young.

**Laws Concerning the Home.** It is impossible for a nation to be great and strong unless it has within it happy and well-governed homes. Therefore God gave the Hebrew people commandments concerning their home life. He commanded children to honor and obey their parents and some of the severest penalties in the Hebrew Law were those imposed on children who were disobedient and disrespectful to their parents. Moreover, parents were required to look carefully to the spiritual and intellectual training of their children. God's commandments to parents aimed to establish religious nurture at the very center of the family life. “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Deut. 6:6, 7.

**Laws Concerning the Holding of Land.** Many nations have failed because the wealth of the nation became the possession of a very few people while the multitudes were reduced to poverty. Especially is this a great evil when a few people come to own all the land. God sought to guard his people from this danger. After the Israelites had conquered most of Canaan, the land was divided among the various tribes. Then each tribe divided its portion between the different families. The land belonging to a certain family was to remain the possession of that family forever. The head of the family might sell

it but for only a limited time. Every fifty years there was to be a "year of jubilee" when all the land went back to the family which originally owned it. If this law had been carried out, the land of the nation never could have become the possession of a few people.

The establishment of right industrial relationships is even to-day one of our greatest problems. The Bible has much to teach us on the matter and it is only as we solve these problems in God's way of justice and brotherhood that we shall really solve them at all.

### THE GOLDEN RULE IN BUSINESS

In the city of Cincinnati lives a man who has for several years been applying the Golden Rule to all matters of business. He was a prosperous business man before the World War began, but he had not thought much about doing to others as he would have others do to him in business matters. He tried to do that in his home life and with his friends, but when it came to buying and selling goods and meeting the competition of others engaged in the same business that he was, well, he simply did not believe that the Golden Rule would work in such matters.

The Great War came on and his two young sons joined the army. Both were sent overseas. While his sons were in the trenches of France, this business man did some hard thinking. When his sons at last came home again, both were suffering from shell shock. For months they had to keep very quiet at home until their nerves should get over the awful shock of battle. The business man was doing some more thinking all this time. He was asking himself why it was that such things as wars come; why it was necessary for a father to send his sons to battle. At last he decided that it was because people did not live according to the teachings of Jesus; that it was because they did not apply the Golden Rule to all the relationships of life. He decided that he, for one, would do it: that he would apply the Golden Rule not only in his home and in his social relationships, but likewise in his business. He determined to treat his competitors and his employees exactly as he would wish them to treat him.

At about this time an Austrian Jew who had a business in Cincinnati called on him. He said that he had a family in Austria and that he had not heard from them for three years. He had lost all trace of them during the Great War. Now that the war was ended he wished to go back and search for his family. But he had a business in the city which he must sell if he were to make the journey. The business man thought the matter over and decided that if he were in this Austrian's place, he would like to have some one help him out by buying his business, so he paid the man ten thousand dollars for his manufacturing plant.

When the business man came to investigate he found that he had bought a "sweat shop." A "sweat shop" is a manufacturing concern where clothing is made and where the laborers are paid very low wages and made to work very long hours. This business man found that one poor old woman in his shop was being paid only four dollars a week for sewing on buttons. The highest wages paid was that of the cutters, skilled workmen, who received seventeen dollars a week. One morning the new proprietor went into his shop and tried to call his employees together, but they would not come. They were suspicious and hung back in the corners. So the business man went from one to another and talked with them. He came to the old woman sewing on buttons and said, "How much are you paid a week?" She answered, "Four dollars," and went on with her work. "Your wages from this time will be twelve dollars a week," said the proprietor and went on. He came to a young girl and found that she was receiving seven dollars and fifty cents a week. He told her that her wages were to be fifteen dollars a week. Even the cutters had their wages raised to twenty-seven dollars a week. Then the business man went home and told his wife that he expected his business to fail within a month and that he was going away to look for a little farm where they could make a living for the rest of their days. He was gone six weeks. When he came back he found that his business was wonderfully prosperous and that large profits were being made in spite of the increased wages.

This is what happened, after the owner of the business went out that morning when he had told of the increased wages: A certain Italian named Tony, with whom the former owner had experienced some trouble, came forward, called all the workers together, and said something like this: "Fellow workmen, we have all heard people talk about brotherhood and fair dealing without doing anything to back up their words, but I'll be hanged if I don't believe the boss means it. Now if he is going to treat us as he has said, we must do our part. We must show him that we appreciate his fairness." So they all fell to work with a will. They had been changed from "skilled shirkers" into "skilled workers."

In a little while, it was found that the business had gained large profits, more than forty thousand dollars. "Now," said the owner, "I don't see how I can keep all this money for myself if I am to live according to the Golden Rule. I will keep only a fair percentage on my investment and divide the remainder among the workers of the shop." When the workers heard what was to be done they decided that the right way would be to divide the money equally among themselves, so each received the same portion of the profits. The old woman who sewed on buttons received as much as the higher-paid cutters.

Then the owner of the business and his employees decided that they were making larger profits than was just to the people who bought the goods so they decided to lower the price of the suits they were making. Harder times came on afterward and the workers decided that their wages were too high and they voted to reduce them. Thus it was found that the Golden Rule would work in business.

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### SUNDAY SESSION

LAWS INTENDED TO ESTABLISH RIGHTEOUSNESS  
TOWARD GOD

Ex., ch. 20; Lev. 27:30-33

No one can love his fellow men and help them as he ought unless he knows and honors God and receives

God's help. This is why we find that the Hebrews were given laws intended to lead them to honor, love, and obey Jehovah.

**God's Place in the Life of the Individual.** If the Hebrew nation was to be a blessing to the world, it must be made up of individuals who knew and loved and honored God. Should they forget Jehovah and become worshipers of the idols of their pagan neighbors, they would become pagans themselves and the nation would fail. So God gave them as his First Commandment this solemn admonition: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." They were not to make images of things in the heavens, on the earth, or in the sea, and worship them as gods. They were to honor the name of Jehovah and not speak that name in jesting and profanity. Profane swearing is one of the worst and most foolish of sins. It casts ridicule on the name of the great and good Creator and when anyone is willing to do that, it is difficult to see what is to keep him from other awful sins.

**God's Day.** One day in seven was to be set apart by the Hebrew people as belonging to God in a peculiar way. On that day they were to refrain from all labor and give themselves to meditation on the spiritual truths which God had given to them and their forefathers. It was to be a day of prayer and praise. None of the pagan nations had such a day and the keeping of the Sabbath was to be a mark which distinguished the Israelites from the peoples who knew not God.

**God's Portion.** The earth and everything in it belonged to God because he is the Creator of all things. He has made man to be a steward or overseer of all that he has made. He does not expect that his stewards will get as much as they can for themselves and say, "It is mine! it is mine! I will keep it all for myself." He expects them to use all that they hold in such a way as to help God and their fellow men. He also wishes them to give a definite part to God. God gave his people very clear rules for their guidance in these matters. One tenth of all the increase of their flocks every year and one tenth of all the product of their fields was to be given to God. In addition there were other gifts which God re-

quired. The first fruits of their gardens and fields and the first lambs and calves of their flocks were to be given to God.

This rule extended even to their children. The first-born son of every family was to be thought of as belonging peculiarly to God. If he did not become a priest or prophet, he must be redeemed by the parents. It must have been a beautiful service, fitted to impress upon parents the debt which they owed to God, when parents brought their first-born son to the tabernacle or Temple and there offered sacrifices and gifts for him.

**God's House.** Even while the Hebrews were wanderers in the wilderness God showed them how to make a place for worship. It was a wonderful tabernacle, so constructed that it could be taken down and put up quickly. Within the tabernacle were the altars where sacrifices were made, the sacred vessels, and the Ark of the Covenant, which was a kind of golden box containing the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written, Aaron's rod, and a pot of the manna.

When the Hebrews were settled in Canaan, God led David to plan for a beautiful Temple which was completed under King Solomon. This Temple was the largest and most beautiful building in all the nation. It is a good sign when a nation builds such places for worship. It shows that God has a place in the life of the nation and in the thought of the people.

### A CHASE AFTER WEALTH

God did not wish his people to spend their lives chasing after wealth for wealth's sake. Some people are anxious to make money in order that they may do good with it. Others spend all their lives making money that they may keep it for themselves. The latter make one of the greatest mistakes possible for people to make. Wealth kept for selfish purposes can never make anyone really happy.

It has been said that a young man once lived in the realm of a certain king of the long ago. This young man was poor but he had a great desire to become rich. He

was unhappy because he did not possess lands and houses as did other young men of his acquaintance. The king heard of the sadness of this young subject of his and one day he called him into his presence and said: "I hear that you are always sad because you do not own houses and lands. I wish all my subjects to be happy, so I am going to make you a very remarkable offer. I will give to you all the land you can run over in one day from sunrise to sunset. You must start from one point at sunrise and be back at that same point at sunset or you will not win the prize I offer." The young man gladly accepted the challenge and was at the appointed place before the rising of the sun the following morning. As the first beams of the sun came over the horizon the youth sprang away. He passed swiftly by beautiful fields where wild flowers bloomed and rippling waters shone brightly in the morning light. He could stop neither to admire the flowers nor even to cool his thirst in the water of the brook. He could only give a glance and murmur, "It's mine, all mine," and rush on his way. He passed through forests but could not tarry to enjoy their shade, along orchards burdened with fruit but could not stop to taste their offered food. He could neither tarry to enjoy things for himself nor to do any helpful thing for others. He must run, run, run. Looking up he saw that it was already past noon. He must turn back. Ahead were inviting fields but he must turn and reach his starting place ere sunset or he would lose all. He reached the place of beginning just as the sun touched the western horizon. "It's mine," he gasped, "all mine." But even as he spoke his cheeks grew white, he reeled and fell to the earth, and his life went out.

This story is true in a very important sense. Men do not make such races in one day, but they sometimes make such races for forty or fifty years, or more. Their day of life is one long race for something which they themselves cannot enjoy and which does not help their fellow men.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father, thou hast given us all things for our enjoyment and our use. We know that we cannot enjoy



thy gifts if we use them selfishly. Help us so to love thee and our fellow men that we shall be glad to use all that we have and all that we are for thy glory and the good of humanity. We pray that we may think of ourselves as thy stewards and of all that we have as belonging to thee. Help us to be compassionate toward all who are in need. May we not refuse them sympathy and help and thus become ourselves hard of heart. We ask these things in the name of thy perfect Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

### THE LESSON HYMN

“We give thee but thine own,  
Whate’er the gift may be:  
All that we have is thine alone,  
A trust, O Lord, from thee.

“May we thy bounties thus  
As stewards true receive,  
And gladly, as thou blessest us,  
To thee our first fruits give.

. . . . .

“To comfort and to bless,  
To find a balm for woe,  
To tend the lone and fatherless,  
Is angels’ work below.

. . . . .

“And we believe thy word,  
Though dim our faith may be,  
Whate’er for thine we do, O Lord,  
We do it unto thee.”

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER’S OPENING ADDRESS

There is a little book entitled, “Money the Acid Test” which contains some good lessons on Christian giving. Giving according to the New Testament is one of the Christian graces. It ranks with prayer, reading of the

Bible, and service. Paul speaks of the "grace" of liberal giving. Just as a person cannot become a strong Christian without prayer and without reading the Bible, so he cannot become spiritually strong unless he knows how to give for the support of the Christian Church and for the relief of his fellow men who are in distress.

You can usually depend upon it that any person who grumbles about giving to the Christian cause is not a large giver. Generous givers enjoy giving. They give cheerfully. I think it is taught in the Bible that we should give a definite and proportionate part of our income to the Lord's work. The Jews gave one tenth and a good many gifts in addition, and it seems to me that Christians ought to do at least as well.

God has promised to bless those who honor him by liberal giving and there are thousands who testify to the fact that he keeps his promise. If we bring the whole tithe into the storehouse he will open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. What Is the "Tenth Legion"?
2. What Part of One's Income Ought to Be Given to Benevolences?
3. Causes Which a Christian Should Help to Support.
4. What Is the Effect of Generous Giving Upon the Giver?
5. What Is the Effect of Refusal to Give Liberally Upon the One Who Makes the Refusal?

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Mal. 3:10; Matt. 5:42; 10:8; Mark 10:21; Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; II Cor. 9:7; I John 3:17.

#### COMMITTEES TO BE APPOINTED

**Committee on Benevolences**, to encourage generous giving on the part of the members of the class, to enroll those who are proportionate givers, and to determine what good causes ought to be helped by the class.

## THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Liberal Giving.** Liberal giving is an important part of the life of a Christian citizen. Therefore:

1. We will think of all that we possess as belonging to God and of ourselves as God's stewards.

2. We will set apart a definite part of our income for the support of the Church and other worthy causes.

3. We will endeavor to give wisely as well as liberally so that our gifts may accomplish as much as possible for God and humanity.

CHAPTER XI  
THE HEBREW NATION MISSES THE MARK  
**WEEK DAY SESSION**  
JUSTICE IS FORGOTTEN AND BROTHERHOOD  
VIOLATED

Isa., ch. 1 ; Micah, ch. 2

We have seen with what care God planted the Hebrew people within the Promised Land and how he gave them laws which were to help them carry out their high destiny as God's helpers. The people who came across the Jordan under the leadership of Joshua were a race of heroes. They were lovers of liberty and worshipers of the true God. They were brothers in a commonwealth where all were free and equal. None had great wealth and none were in abject poverty. They had much yet to learn, but they seemed ready to begin that period of growth through which they might become a nation which should be as a light to the world.

The land into which the Hebrews entered was, in comparison with the deserts out of which they had come, a region flowing with milk and honey. It had houses already built, vineyards and fields already planted, cities awaiting the coming of the conquerors. In comparison with their former condition the Hebrews, by the conquest of Canaan, had entered suddenly into great wealth.

The life of an individual is a conflict between good and evil; so is the life of a nation. The Hebrews were scarcely settled in their new homes when that conflict began. Some of the people were selfish, caring only for wealth and power and honor; others remembered the promise made to Abraham and tried to keep the nation true to the high purposes of their forefathers. The struggle between good and evil lasted for more than five hundred years before the Hebrew nation finally fell before invading armies. It was largely a losing battle for the

idealists, but we shall see that even out of the seeming failure of the nation God was gathering up the fragments of good and bringing about the fulfillment of his promises.

#### **The Development of Wrong Ideals for the Nation.**

What a man lives for determines his acts and his character. Likewise a nation must live for some high and worthy end, if it is to be great and pure in character. We have seen that the goal which God had in mind for the Hebrew nation was the greatest in all the world, but gradually the nation lost sight of this. The leaders of the nation began to be ambitious for their country to be powerful and rich like other nations of the world. They wished to have a vast region of the earth brought under the rule of the nation. They wished a magnificent capital and a splendid court and a strong standing army. Through the prophets God told the leaders of the nation that in desiring these things they were rejecting the leadership of Jehovah, but the warnings of the prophets went unheeded. In seeking to be powerful and great according to worldly standards the nation began to be incapable of greatness according to the standards of God.

#### **Concentration of Wealth and Oppression of the Poor.**

Ways were found for avoiding the wise laws which God had given guard against the gathering of the wealth of the nation into the hands of a few people. Gradually it came about that nearly all the land was owned by a few families and nearly all the other forms of wealth belonged to them, too. The masses of the people became very poor. They were dependent on their rich countrymen for everything. They had to borrow money for food and clothing and if a man owed for only a pair of shoes he could be sold as a slave and must remain in slavery until he paid the debt.

God's gracious laws made to defend widows and orphans were disregarded. So greedy for gain were the money makers that they would defraud a widow as quickly as they would anyone else. God had said, "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child," but these men of greed scoffed at all such laws which hindered their "business." God is wondrously patient but he never suffers his words to fail. He knows when one sparrow

falls; how much more when those who are made in his image suffer wrong! God made a big world full of food, air, and sunshine and he was displeased when these greedy people crowded families into narrow, dark, and unhealthful quarters in the cities of Palestine; when they joined house to house until there was no room in the midst of the land, when the women of God's people were "cast out of their pleasant houses, and God's glory was taken away from little children forever, God took account of it." Micah 2:9.

**Corruption of the Government.** Governments exist for the purpose of securing justice and opportunity for all. When they fail in this regard they fail in their highest duty and become the instruments of tyranny. The time came when in the courts of the Hebrew nation the judges accepted bribes. They gave their decisions not in accordance with the facts but in favor of the party which could pay the highest bribe. Here is a scathing rebuke which a brave prophet uttered against the bribe takers of his day:

"Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel, that abhor justice and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet they lean upon Jehovah, and say, Is not Jehovah in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us."—Micah 3:9-11.

**Division and Weakness.** These evils soon began to bear fruit in the nation. One of the first effects of the attempt of the nation to maintain a magnificent court and a great standing army was a discontent so wide and deep that it rent the nation in two under Solomon's unwise son. Henceforth any large place for the nation among the nations of the earth was impossible. It was divided and weak. There were now two Hebrew nations: the northern part was known as the Kingdom of Israel, or the Kingdom of Ephraim; the southern section was called the Kingdom of Judah. The history of the Northern Kingdom is one dreadful tale of usurpations and assassinations down to the time when an invading army of

Assyrians entered the country, besieged its capital, and carried away the ten northern tribes into a captivity from which they never returned.

**The Drunkards of Ephraim.** Another great evil grew up among the Hebrew people. When they entered Canaan they found it a land of vineyards. They made wine and drank it after it had undergone a process of fermentation. Before the final downfall of the Northern Kingdom, it had degenerated into a drunken nation. Even the leaders of the Jewish Church were drunken revelers:

“And even these reel with wine, and stagger with strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they stagger with strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean. . . . Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flower of his glorious beauty.”—Isa. 28:7, 8, 1.

**Haughty Pride Instead of Humble Service.** The more the Hebrew people departed from their God-given task, the more proud and cold they became. Instead of seeking to lead other nations to know the true God they despised them. They thought of themselves as superior to other peoples of the earth. They were God's chosen people and were too good to associate with the people of other nations. They forgot that none are great in God's sight except as they are great in service, that Jehovah had chosen them not because of their superior excellence but because he wished through them to bless all the nations of the earth.

**The Protest of the Prophets.** We must not think that all this change for the worse went on without protest from any of the Hebrews. On the contrary, there were brave men in every generation who dared to speak out in condemnation of the evils which they saw thickening around them. These men were the Hebrew prophets, a group of men so remarkably heroic that we are to give them a more thorough study in some of the succeeding chapters of this book.

## THE AGE LONG BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL

That struggle which went on for so many centuries in the Hebrew nation is going on in every nation of the earth to-day. It is going on in our own country. It must go on until the right triumphs and the Kingdom of God is set upon earth. We are all soldiers on one side or the other. Our country has won a victory over the evil liquor forces. We have begun to make our nation safe from becoming like that shameful nation of long ago, the nation of the drunkards of Ephraim. But we have other battles that are not yet won and we shall need all our forces trained and well-equipped if we are to hold our nation for God and his coming Kingdom. We must strive to be true to the high ideals for which our forefathers lived and for which some of them gave up their lives. We must be true to those who call to us across the years:

“Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
 To you, from failing hands we throw  
 The torch; be yours to lift it high.  
 If you break faith with us who die  
 We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
 In Flanders fields.”

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**SUNDAY SESSION**
**THE HEBREW NATION FORGETS GOD**

Isa., ch. 1; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8

At the time when the Hebrews were forgetting justice and brotherhood they were losing their knowledge of God and their fellowship with him. It is always so in life. God will have no people for his own when they despise and mistreat their fellow men. There is no righteousness toward God where there is no brotherhood with men.

**Empty Worship.** Many of the Hebrews still kept up the outward forms of worship. They still brought sacrifices to God's altars; they burned incense to Jehovah;



they held solemn meetings; they spread forth their hands to God in prayer. These acts were all good and right in themselves, but when they were the acts of people who were guilty of heartless cruelty toward their fellow men, they became empty, hypocritical, offensive to the great and loving God whom we can never deceive with flattery and empty praise. With majestic indignation the Almighty rebuked such acts of empty worship by speaking through prophets who were brave enough to say what God told them to say.

“What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah: I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies,—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”—Isa. 1:11-17.

**Idolatry.** Others of the Hebrews turned away from the worship of Jehovah and became worshipers of idols like Baal and Molech. These apostates from the faith of their fathers were at least consistent. They worshiped pagan gods which laid no such moral restrictions on their worshipers as Jehovah has laid upon all who worship him, but in forsaking the God of light these deserters from Jehovah quickly sank into all the moral degradation and superstition of paganism.

**No Time for God's Sabbath.** So absorbed did some of the people become in money-making that they found the keeping of the Sabbath a bore. They cheated one another in weights and measures and sold useless and adulterated foods. Here is a sample conversation of these ancient profiteers as given to us by one of the prophets:

“When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit; that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat?”—Amos 8:5, 6.

**God's House Filled with Rubbish.** As the ebb and flow of the battle between good and evil swept back and forth over the land, at one time one side seemed to be gaining, at another time the opposite side seemed to be gaining. At one time the worship of God was so far abandoned that the great Temple of Solomon stood idle for years and became a dumping place for rubbish. Then a reforming king gained the throne, cleaned out the Temple, restored the worship of Jehovah, and smashed the idols through all the land. A few years after such a reformation idolatry would be found creeping in again and the reformation would have to be made anew.

**Sick Lambs for God's Altar.** As the people wandered farther away from God, they ceased to give a tenth of their harvests to God. Many of them gave nothing at all. Others manifested an even meaner spirit than these who refused to give anything to God. It was the law of the land that if a man brought a lamb to offer as a burnt sacrifice to God, he should choose an animal that was without blemish. Some people were mean enough to choose as an offering to God a lamb that was lame and could not follow the flock or an animal that was sick and about to die. We may be sure that God was more displeased with this economical religion than he was with none at all.

#### EVILS WHICH MENACE OUR NATIONAL DESTINY

We believe that our nation, like the Hebrew nation, has a God-given mission to all the nations of the earth. It has already been used by God to teach the principles of liberty, equality, and brotherhood to other nations of the world. If our nation is to carry out God's plans, it must be kept true to God's ideals. It must be guarded from the dangers discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Materialism.** By materialism is meant the overemphasis

of property and places of power and leadership and the underemphasis of such values as goodness and purity of life and the service of one's fellow men. Americans are in great danger of looking too much at the material things which are seen, too little at the spiritual things which are not seen.

**Race Hatred.** Our country is "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Yet we have not always lived up to this high standard. If all men are free and equal, all men have certain claims on our help and fellowship which we cannot consistently deny. If we are consistent American Christians, there will be no place in our lives for race prejudices. There will be for us neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, but all will be brethren in the fellowship of the nation and the fatherhood of God.

**Irreligion.** There are in America more than twenty million children and youth growing up without receiving any religious training worthy of the name. There is another vast army of grown people who are not members of any church. This second army is more than fifty million strong. Some of this number are very excellent persons, but their interest in religion must be small or they would be members of some church. Can our nation be a real helper of God if less than half of its citizens are professed believers in God and open followers of Christ?

### THE FAITH WHICH MAKES ALL MEN BROTHERS

A young man who was a theological student once took ship from Seattle, Washington, for San Francisco, California. Like many other young men who are studying for the ministry he did not have much money and wished to go as cheaply as he could, so he bought a ten dollar steerage ticket. He had to occupy a small cabin with six other men. He found that the people who take steerage passage on ocean liners are not always desirable traveling companions. Before he had been on his way many hours he was thoroughly sick of the profanity, obscene jesting, and lewd stories of his roommates. He wondered whether he was the only Christian in the steerage cabins. He spent a good deal of time out on that part of the deck

which was open to passengers of his class. There, at least the pure ocean breezes fanned his cheeks and the great billowy sea stretched far away.

Perhaps he ought to have sought an acquaintance with his rough traveling companions, but he shrank from the effort. He was homesick and lonely for fellowship with some one who felt and thought as he did about life and its duties, responsibilities, and meaning. He was homesick for that which the Christian Church has named the "fellowship of believers."

Looking across the waters to the westward the student watched the sun sink like a great red ball of fire into the Pacific. There was just a little ripple on the waters now, just enough to make a pathway of golden glory running from the ship along the rippling surface of the sea away out to the setting sun. The scene filled his mind with thoughts of the eternal God who made the sea and all things that are therein. He wondered how his traveling companions could look on the glory of such a scene with eyes utterly unseeing. He became conscious that some one else, however, was taking in the glories of the sunset. A young Japanese stood at the rail and was looking away toward the western horizon. Perhaps he was only homesick and thinking of his native land somewhere there beyond the ocean sky line. But, no, he was humming a tune. It was a familiar air and he sang the words in broken English:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

Suddenly the young Japanese turned to the student and said: "That is a Christian song. I am a Christian, are you?" The young student felt in that moment that the fellowship of believers is a very real thing and that it wipes out all distinctions of race and condition and makes all who believe in Jesus one great family under the fatherhood of God.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father, we thank thee for our fellowship with others who believe in thee and in thy Son, our Lord. Help us to be like our Master in the wideness of our sympathy for all classes of people and in our deep love for them. Deliver us from the narrowness and meanness of social prejudices and race hatreds. We ask in the name of thy Son. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

“Blest be the tie that binds  
 Our hearts in Christian love:  
 The fellowship of kindred minds  
 Is like to that above.

. . . . .

“We share our mutual woes,  
 Our mutual burdens bear,  
 And often for each other flows  
 The sympathizing tear.

. . . . .

“From sorrow, toil, and pain,  
 And sin we shall be free;  
 And perfect love and friendship reign  
 Through all eternity.”



EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD IN CHRIST

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

Paul said that there could be neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, in Christ. The Jews and Greeks were about as different in language, customs, and race as we can well imagine. The difference between a free man and a man who is held as a slave is as great a social difference as we can conceive. So Paul must have meant that Christianity wipes out all racial and social distinctions. He meant that if we are Christians we will not take into consideration whether or not a person is of the same race

as ourselves. We will welcome as brothers in the Christian family people who speak a different language from ourselves, people who have a different color to their skins and different customs from those to which we are accustomed. Christianity is far above any other religion in this respect and one of the reasons why it has been such a blessing to the world is found in this same principle. Because it disregards racial and social distinctions, it has laid foundations for liberty, equality, and justice on which the great republics of modern times are built.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. What Should Be the Attitude of a White Christian Toward Colored People?
2. Is It Right to Forbid the Chinese and Japanese to Own Property in Our Country When This Right Is Granted to All Other Peoples of the World?
3. Is It Right to Call Foreign People Contemptuous Nicknames?
4. Can You Name Some Ways in Which Foreign-Speaking People Are Ahead of Our Own People, and Some Things We Might Learn from Them?

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Matt. 28:19; Luke 10:25-37; Rom. 1:14, 16; Philemon 16.

#### COMMITTEE TO BE APPOINTED

**Committee on Social Fellowship with young people of foreign parentage**, to find out about young people of this type living in the community and to report plans for interesting them in our church school.

#### THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Christian Brotherhood and Universal Good Will.** One who becomes a Christian enters into a brotherhood of believers where all social and racial distinctions are done away with; moreover, the Christian recog-

nizes a broader brotherhood which includes all mankind. Therefore:

1. We will do good to all men, especially to those "that are of the household of the faith."

2. We will endeavor to free our lives from all forms of racial or social prejudice.

3. We will strive to bring others into the fellowship of believers where the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God are recognized.

CHAPTER XII  
GOD PUNISHING A NATION'S SINS  
WEEK DAY SESSION

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE KINGDOM  
OF ISRAEL

I Kings 12:25-30; 14:1-16; II Kings 17:7-24

We have seen how the Jewish nation was divided under the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. The northern portion became known as the Kingdom of Israel. It was composed of ten tribes and had by far the better part of the land, but it was first to fall. As we read the story of the destruction of the Hebrew nation one lesson stands out clearly above all others and that is the fact that the nation fell because it transgressed the commandments of God.

**Retributive Punishment.** When a punishment is not arbitrarily imposed, but grows naturally out of the offense as one of its inevitable consequences, we say that the punishment is retributive. A boy who is selfish and mean to his playmates will be punished by becoming disliked and by having no friends. His punishment is a retribution. It grows out of his own acts and attitudes. God's punishments are usually of this kind. They come as a natural consequence of the evil deeds of men and nations. The punishments which the Hebrew people underwent were retributions brought upon them by their own sins.

**A Government in Which God Had No Share.** The revolt which led to the division of the Hebrew kingdom was led by a young man named Jereboam. He became the first king of the Kingdom of Israel. Fearing that the people would return to their allegiance to the house of David if they continued to go to Jerusalem to worship, Jeroboam schemed to avoid this danger by establishing a religion of his own. He "made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, the people, It is too much for you to



go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan." The crafty king then proceeded to organize a priesthood for his idolatrous religion. He appointed feast days to take the place of the feasts which God had ordained for the Jewish people. This whole procedure was a shrewd political move on the part of the young king, but, like other shrewd moves which leave God out of account, it brought certain far-reaching and disastrous results. When the people of the Northern Kingdom turned from the worship of the true God to bow down to golden calves which they had made themselves, they soon lost sight of the high moral standards of Jehovah. The whole spiritual life of the people underwent a swift process of degeneration. They became, like other idol worshipers, immoral, cruel, deceitful, and selfish. What the short-sighted king thought would be for the safety of his throne soon undermined it, for a people who do not honor God never really honor the king. The house of Jeroboam was soon overthrown and from that time until the final destruction of the kingdom the story of the different kings who sat on the throne of Israel is that of a typical Oriental despotism. There were continuous plottings, insurrections, and assassinations. There was that instability and insecurity which is one of the solemn retributions which overtake the nation which dishonors God.

**An Apostate King Feels His Need of God in an Hour of Great Distress.** A pathetic incident occurred in the closing days of King Jeroboam, who caused Israel to sin. We have seen how he deliberately led his people away from the worship of the true God and caused them to become idolators. We have suggested that this was only a political measure. An incident in the life of Jeroboam seems to indicate that he had no real faith in his own golden-calf gods. Down deep in his heart he knew that Jehovah was the only God. Jeroboam had a young son named Abijah. This son became very ill and Jeroboam was in great distress. He wished to find out what the end would be. Would his son die or would he live? Did Jeroboam go to the priests and prophets of the golden

calves when he was in soul distress? No, he knew that over at Shiloh was a prophet of Jehovah and he told his wife to disguise herself and to go to Shiloh and inquire of this prophet of the true God. The prophet recognized the wife of Jeroboam and told her of the impending doom of the whole household of the king.

**The Gathering Storm.** During the years when the little Hebrew nation was undergoing the process of division and during the years when the fragments of the sundered nation were quarreling and fighting with one another, a great world power was rising in the Euphrates Valley. This power is known in history as the Assyrian monarchy. The Assyrians were among the most cruel conquerors of history. As they spread their dominion westward one small nation after another went down before them. Terror stirred in the hearts of nations as yet far from the line of conquest, because they could see that the menace was constantly drawing nearer to their borders.

It happened that at the time when the Assyrian armies were drawing near the borders of Palestine a petty war was in progress between the Kingdom of Judah on the one side and the kingdoms of Israel and Syria on the other. The king of Judah thought he saw in the situation an opportunity to get the better of his foes. He sent word to the Assyrians inviting them to come to his help against his two enemies. The Assyrians did not need a second invitation. They came and conquered Damascus, the capital of Syria, carrying the inhabitants far away into Mesopotamia. The king of Israel, seeing the fate of his ally, submitted to the Assyrian and his nation became a tribute-paying dependency of the Assyrian empire.

**The Siege and Capture of Samaria.** A few years later the king of Israel tried to throw off the yoke of Assyrian dominion. He sought to form an alliance with the king of Egypt, but the Assyrians came with a vast army and overran all the land. The Israelites fled to their capital, Samaria, behind whose walls they hoped to be able to defend themselves until an army should come out from Egypt and deliver them. But the army from Egypt never came. The besieged city held out for three years

and then the Assyrians captured the place by assault. Famine and war had reduced the inhabitants of the land to a pitiful handful. These last remnants of the nation were gathered together and driven like sheep far across the deserts and scattered among the Assyrian provinces of the Euphrates Valley.

**The Lost Tribes of Israel.** The ten tribes which composed the nation of Israel disappeared from history. They are known as "The Lost Tribes." Scattered among many provinces of the vast Assyrian Empire, they were absorbed into other races and ceased to exist as a nation. If they had possessed a high degree of devotion to Jehovah, their God, they could doubtless have lived as a race and a nation even under the appalling hardships of deportation, even as the rest of the Jews lived at a later time and have lived for thousands of years. But these ten tribes had turned away from the worship of the true God to the worship of golden calves. The faith in Jehovah which their forefathers manifested could have saved them, but their faith in the golden calves was of no avail.

#### THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION DEPENDENT UPON ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD

If we are loyal American citizens we rejoice in the great past of our nation. We are proud of our country. We like to let it be known that we are Americans. If we are right-minded American citizens we have great hopes for the future of our land. We hope to see every flaw in our national life mended. We strive for a better America for to-morrow. We see across the years its "alabaster cities gleam undimmed by human tears." If we are wise American citizens we know that our national greatness is not due to our material resources, our stores of coal and oil, our broad and fertile prairies. We know if we are not spiritually blind, that "righteousness exalteth a nation" and that America is great only in so far as she has walked in righteousness before God. We believe that the place of America among the nations of the earth in centuries to come may be sublimely great if only our nation will honor God and walk with him.

- “ God of our fathers, known of old,  
 Lord of our far-flung battle line,  
 Beneath whose awful hand we hold  
 Dominion over palm and pine:  
 Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,  
 Lest we forget—lest we forget.
- “ The tumult and the shouting dies;  
 The captains and the kings depart;  
 Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,  
 An humble and a contrite heart:  
 Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,  
 Lest we forget—lest we forget.
- “ Far called our navies melt away;  
 On dune and headland sinks the fire;  
 Lo, all our pomp of yesterday  
 Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!  
 Judge of the nations, spare us yet,  
 Lest we forget—lest we forget.
- “ If, drunk with sight of power, we loose  
 Wild tongues that have not thee in awe,  
 Such boastings as the Gentiles use,  
 Or lesser breeds without the law:  
 Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,  
 Lest we forget—lest we forget.
- “ For heathen heart that puts her trust  
 In reeking tube and iron shard;  
 All valiant dust that builds on dust,  
 And, guarding, calls not thee to guard;  
 For frantic boast and foolish word,  
 Thy mercy on thy people, Lord.”

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### DECLINE AND FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

#### II Kings, chs. 24, 25

The record of the Kingdom of Judah is less shameful than that of the Kingdom of Israel. The house of David continued to the end of the kingdom. There were not the wholesale assassinations and the violence which makes the history of the Northern Kingdom so tragic, though governmental conditions were at times very bad even in the Kingdom of Judah. The struggle for righteousness in the Southern Kingdom was more prolonged and more

determined than it was in the Northern Kingdom. The Kingdom of Judah went on for more than a hundred years after its northern neighbor had been destroyed. As we read the account of these last years of the Hebrew nation we are impressed with the evidence that God was seeking to give his people every chance to succeed. He is long-suffering and full of compassion, not desiring that any should perish.

**Brass for Gold.** An incident significant of the decay of national greatness which results from transgression occurred in the reign of Rehoboam. Having foolishly alienated the northern tribes and thus lost them forever from his realm, King Rehoboam was soon to feel the disastrous results of his folly. An army came out of Egypt and invaded his kingdom. Without the strong northern tribes to help him, Rehoboam made only a feeble defense. The Egyptians took Jerusalem and plundered the Temple. They carried away the magnificent shields of gold which Solomon had placed in the Temple. After the Egyptians had gone the king made shields of brass to take the place of the golden shields the Egyptians had taken. The event was significant of the departing glory of the once magnificent kingdom which might have gone on to the accomplishment of great things for God and humanity, had its greatness been built on justice for all and righteousness toward God.

**Kings Who Were Heroic Reformers.** We have seen how the Kingdom of Israel went steadily downward to destruction as soon as it cut loose from the Kingdom of Judah. On the other hand, the struggle between good and evil in the Kingdom of Judah ebbed and flowed through many years. There were heroic kings like Josiah and Hezekiah who did a great deal to bring the nation back to righteousness and to the worship of Jehovah. There were other wicked kings who did a great deal to tear down what the good kings had built up and to lead the people still farther astray. Meager and intermittent righteousness is a poor ideal for a nation, and with so much effort to keep herself only partially right with God, the Hebrew nation never found much time for the sublime mission which the Almighty had in store for her.

If a person is to be useful to God he must win, early in life, a substantial victory over evil, the more complete the victory the better. He must not live on at a "poor dying rate." He must be thrilled with the consciousness of God's presence and with the opportunities which God bestows for service. The same principles hold in the life of a nation.

**Judgment Long Delayed.** God was wonderfully patient with this remnant of his people. One would think that Jerusalem would have fallen soon after Samaria, but such was not the case. The Assyrians had its capture in view, but they never attained their purpose. A huge army of Assyrians besieged it at one time, but some dire calamity befell them. The Bible says that the "angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp." The Assyrian army withdrew. Before another army of Assyrians could be gathered, the Assyrian monarchy itself went down before the new Babylonian monarchy.

The Jewish people rightly believed that God had delivered them. But they did not interpret the event in terms of personal and national righteousness. They came to believe that Jerusalem was inviolable, that God would never allow his city and his Temple to be taken by foreign foes. We may well believe that God never would have allowed it if his people had been true to him and true to the great task he had given them. The Hebrews failed to recognize this condition of the divine protection. They failed to see that God could not and would not continue to protect them forever unless they were true to him as their God.

**Judgment Draws Near.** The Babylonians continued the conquests of the Assyrians. Their armies invaded Palestine and Jerusalem was compelled to capitulate. God had shown the Hebrews that the holy city was not inviolable unless it should be holy in character as well as in name. The Jewish nation was allowed to govern its own affairs and to have its own king, but it must henceforth pay tribute to Babylon. Even now all might have been well, had the nation turned away from her evil ways. But there was no improvement. The last two or three kings were among the worst the nation ever had. They

persecuted the prophets who tried to make God's message known and refused to hear their advice. At last one of them raised the standard of revolt against the Babylonians. It was the mistake of Samaria over again. The Hebrews were hoping for aid out of Egypt, but it never came.

**The Siege of Jerusalem; Destruction of the City and the Temple.** After a fearful siege of two years, the battering-rams of the Babylonian armies made breaches in the walls of Jerusalem. The king and some of his officers fled from the city by a secret passageway, but were overtaken and captured. The Babylonians then tore down the walls of the city and burned the beautiful Temple of Solomon after plundering it of all its gold and silver vessels and ornaments. They likewise burned the palace of the king and all the houses of the city. The people who were left alive after the siege and the destruction of the city were carried away to the cities of Babylon.

Only a very few of the poorest people were left to take care of some of the fields and vineyards. A few foreign peoples were brought in to take possession of the ruined country. The beautiful land which God had given to Israel now lay ravaged and desolate. Its cities rose on hill and in valley, shattered ruins without inhabitant. Among the ruins the wild owls hooted and the jackals found a home. The fields and vineyards grew up to weeds and briars. The Hebrew nation had perished; the Hebrew race was all but gone. Far away in Mesopotamia the scattered fragments of the people God had chosen to bless the world were toiling as slaves and mourning for the nation which had ceased to be.

“By the rivers of Babylon,  
There we sat down, yea, we wept,  
When we remembered Zion.  
Upon the willows in the midst thereof  
We hanged up our harps.”

—Ps. 137:1, 2.

GOD THE HELPER AND DEFENDER OF RIGHTEOUS NATIONS

“Would not the result have been the same,” perhaps some one will ask, “no matter what the Hebrews might

have been? Would not the little nation of the Jews inevitably have fallen before the world empires of the East?" We have no reason to believe that such would have been the case. If the Hebrews had maintained justice and unity, it is altogether probable that they could have maintained their independence for an indefinite term of centuries instead of going down as they did to national disaster.

History is full of illustrations of national triumphs more striking than would have been a triumph of the Hebrews over their enemies. In the sixteenth century Spain was one of the greatest and strongest nations in the world. A little handful of Dutch people living along the delta of the Rhine in defense of their faith dared to revolt against the rule of Spain. Under the leadership of their great prince, William the Silent, the Dutch people entered upon the hopeless-seeming task of winning their freedom. They believed that God was with them and their faith made them strong. They won, and out of the long contest they waged with Spain there arose the Dutch Republic.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, our Father, we thank thee for thy goodness to our nation. Thou hast given us freedom and opportunity. Thou hast guided our country through all the years of our history. Keep our country from forgetting thee. Enable us to put away every national sin which would cause us to lose fellowship with thee. Help us to love our country and respect its flag. Grant that our country may be used in thy own way to bless the nations of the earth. We ask in the name of thy Son, our Saviour. Amen.

#### THE LESSON HYMN

"My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing;  
Land where my fathers died  
Land of the pilgrim's pride,  
From every mountain side  
Let freedom ring.



“ My native country, thee,  
 Land of the noble free,  
     Thy name I love;  
 I love thy rocks and rills,  
 Thy woods and templed hills;  
 My heart with rapture thrills  
     Like that above.

“ Let music swell the breeze,  
 And ring from all the trees  
     Sweet freedom's song:  
 Let mortal tongues awake;  
 Let all that breathe partake;  
 Let rocks their silence break,  
     The sound prolong.

“ Our father's God, to thee,  
 Author of liberty,  
     To thee we sing:  
 Long may our land be bright  
 With freedom's holy light;  
 Protect us by thy might,  
     Great God, our King.”

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### WHAT OUR NATION MUST DO TO KEEP RIGHT WITH GOD

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

We have seen how the Hebrew nation failed because it did not keep right with God. The history of Israel is an object lesson to the nations of the earth. We believe that God has a mission for every nation in the world and that he is seeking patiently to have each nation fulfill its part of his great plan. If the nations of the earth obey God and honor him, they will be strong and they will be a blessing to the world. If they disobey God's laws and set at nought his commandments, they will bring great loss to themselves and perhaps to other nations. If they persistently disobey God's will they will fail as the Hebrew nation failed.

Since this is true it is of great importance that our

nation should keep right with God. If our nation is to keep right with God, there are certain things which must be done. In the first place, we must keep the Church strong. If the Church is allowed to languish, it will not be able to teach the people the truth about God and about brotherhood and our country will begin to go astray. All the activities of the Church must be kept up to a high standard. The Church must be given time and means for the teaching of the Bible and there must be teachers trained for the work and buildings suitable for such instruction.

In the second place, our nation must keep a Christian attitude toward the other nations of the world. We must treat them justly and show them that we are an unselfish nation. We must build our international policies on the principles of brotherhood taught by Jesus Christ.

In the third place, we must maintain perfect justice and large opportunity for all our own people. If any large part of the people of the nation suffer injustice the nation will begin to decay within.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. Name Some Incidents in Our National History Where God Seems to Have Helped Our Country in a Special Way.
2. Has Our Nation a Responsibility for the Welfare of the Nations of South America?
3. What Can Our Nation Do for China?
4. Is It Possible to Practice the Golden Rule in International Matters?
5. Do Great Standing Armies and Great Navies Lead to Permanent Peace or Do They Tend to Lead the Nations Into War?
6. Is Universal Peace Possible at This Period in Human Development?

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Isa. 2:4; 9:7; 11:1-10; Dan. 7:14; Rev. 11:15.

THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE  
CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

1. Find out the cost of a modern first-class battleship and compare its cost with that of maintaining a great university.
2. Find out whether there are great forts guarding the boundary line between the United States and Canada.
3. Find Scripture passages which predict universal peace.
4. Find out what states allow the reading of the Bible in public schools, what states command it to be read, and what states forbid it to be read.

THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of the Higher Patriotism.** The highest loyalty to our flag and the truest love of our country is expressed in our desires and our efforts to keep our nation obedient to God's laws and true to his purposes. Therefore:

1. We will, both now and throughout all our lives, try to know what God's will is for us as a nation.
2. We will, when we become voters, try to elect to office persons who honor God and keep his commandments.
3. We will do all we can to lead our nation to maintain an unselfish attitude toward the other nations of the world.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE HEBREW NATION'S SECOND CHANCE

#### WEEK DAY SESSION

#### NEHEMIAH REBUILDS THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM

Neh., chs. 1 to 5; 13:15-22

For fifty years the land of the Hebrews lay waste. The few Hebrews who had been left in the land with the foreigners who had been brought in by the Babylonians were the only inhabitants. The country lay open to the inroads of desert wanderers and its population did not increase. Some of the Hebrews rose to places of power and responsibility in the land of their captivity. With increasing prosperity, many of the Jewish people became contented and settled down in their new homes. There were others, however, who remembered Zion. These were the idealists who could not be satisfied with mere personal honor and prosperity. They longed for the restoration of their nation to its homeland. They still had hopes that their nation might become a blessing to all the nations of the earth.

**A True Patriot.** Among these Jews who had climbed up to positions of responsibility through their own individual worth, was a certain man named Nehemiah. He had become cupbearer to the Persian king in the palace at Shushan. Nehemiah was an honored official in a great empire. He was not, however, one of those selfish people who are satisfied with honor and position for themselves and who have no very great concern for other matters. Nehemiah was intensely patriotic. He longed for the restoration of the Hebrew people to their former home in Palestine. He longed for a rebuilt Jerusalem and another Temple where Jehovah should be worshiped as of old. He hoped and prayed for a second chance for the Hebrew nation.

One of Nehemiah's friends returned to Shushan from a visit to Palestine and told of the miserable condition of the few poverty-stricken Jews who still dwelt there. He told of the ruins of Jerusalem and the desolate fields. Nehemiah was so much saddened by the report that he "sat down and wept, and mourned certain days." His prayer for the restoration of Israel is one of the noblest examples of prayer to be found in the Old Testament. Read it for yourself in the first chapter of The Book of Nehemiah.

The king noted the sadness of his officer and on learning its cause gave him leave of absence to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls. Gathering a company of people who, like himself were eager to see the nation restored, Nehemiah led them across the deserts to Palestine. Going out alone at night Nehemiah looked over the ruined walls and laid his plans. The next day everyone—citizens, priests, and government officials—were at work rebuilding the walls.

**Doing a Great Work.** There were certain enemies of the Jews who were not at all pleased to see the walls of Jerusalem restored. They tried in many different ways to stop the work. They ridiculed the efforts of the little handful of Hebrews. "What are these feeble Jews doing?" said one of these opponents of the Hebrews. Another said that even a fox could tear down the kind of wall the Jews were putting up. Nevertheless these enemies grew more and more uneasy as the work went on. They tried to entice Nehemiah away for a conference, but he refused to go saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." Then they sought to stop the work by sending to the king of Persia slanderous reports concerning the intentions of Nehemiah. Finally they gathered together and prepared to go up and stop the work by force, but the Jews labored with their swords and spears ready and they were not molested.

Most of the people who have done great things in the world have had experiences like those of Nehemiah and his friends. They have had to stick to their great and difficult tasks in spite of persistent efforts on the part of other people to hinder them. They have had to respond

to many suggestions intended to hinder and delay with a firm and final, "I am doing a great work, so I cannot come down."

**Checking Selfishness and Greed.** Nehemiah was a man of great wisdom. He knew that something besides the rebuilding of Jerusalem was necessary if the nation was to make good in this second chance which God was graciously opening up before his people. He knew that certain sins had led to Israel's downfall and that these same sins must be eliminated from the national life or they would bring ruin upon the nation just as they had done before. He knew that one of the chief causes for the failure of the Hebrew nation lay in the sinful selfishness which had dared to defy God's merciful laws and to plunder even widows and children.

It was not long before Nehemiah discovered that the old evils were beginning to show themselves again. There had been light crops and some of the poorer people had to borrow money to buy food and to pay their taxes. There were certain selfish Jews who had money to lend, but they demanded high interest and they required mortgages on the fields of their poorer brethren. When these poor people were unable to pay, they lost their lands and even had their children taken from them and sold into slavery. Thus the rich nobles were bringing about the very conditions which had contributed so largely to the failure of the nation in the days preceding the Captivity.

Nehemiah was no person to truckle to the oppressors because they were rich and powerful. He tells us that he was very angry when he heard the cry of the poor and that he went to the nobles and rebuked them in no uncertain terms for disobeying God's laws and demanding interest for money lent to their fellow countrymen. He said to them:

"The thing that ye do is not good: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the nations our enemies? . . . I pray you, let us leave off this usury. Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their fields, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the grain, the new wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them."—Neh. 5:9-11.

The wealthy money lenders were quick to see the kind of man they were dealing with and they consented to follow out the suggestions which he had made. Nehemiah was determined that each one of these money lenders should keep the promise he had made. He stood up before the assembled people and shaking out the lap of his garment said, "So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labor, that performeth not this promise; even thus be he shaken out, and emptied." "And all the assembly said, Amen, and praised Jehovah."

**Defending the Sabbath and Restoring Public Worship.** Nehemiah was wise enough to know that if the Hebrew nation was to be restored the Hebrew Church must be restored at the same time. After the Temple had been rebuilt, Nehemiah set himself to the task of restoring the services. He found that while he had been absent a certain man named Tobiah had taken possession of a part of the Temple as a dwelling place. Nehemiah was sore grieved when he discovered this desecration of the house of God and he had all the "household stuff" of Tobiah cast out and the chambers cleansed.

It was not long before Nehemiah ran against another difficulty in his efforts to reestablish the national worship. He found that the Hebrew Church was bankrupt. The people were not paying their church dues. They had not brought their tithes. Consequently the Levites who had charge of the Temple services had left their post and had gone out to earn a livelihood in the fields as farm laborers. The Temple singers had been compelled to do the same. Nehemiah demanded of the rulers and the people that they do their duty. "Why," said he, "is the house of God forsaken?" Under his vigorous leadership the people rallied to the support of the Temple service and brought in their tithes.

Nehemiah was to carry on one other work of reform. He found that people were paying little heed to the keeping of the Sabbath Day. He saw men treading wine presses, bringing in sheaves, and loading their beasts of burden with merchandise on the Sabbath. Besides the Hebrews, there were men from Tyre who made the Sab-

bath a market day on which they sold fish and all manner of wares. Nehemiah again rebuked the rulers for this laxness and caused the gates of Jerusalem to be closed at sunset on Friday evening, the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath. The merchants who had been carrying on such a lucrative Sabbath trade came and lodged outside of Jerusalem for a time or two. Then Nehemiah told them that if they came again he would lay hands on them, and they came no more.

**The Prayer Life of a Great and Busy Man.** Nehemiah is a good example of strong, farseeing, and purposeful personality. His life is an illustration of the power of prayer. As he tells us of his experiences in rebuilding the Jewish nation he records here and there little prayers of his which throw a good deal of light on his character. Learning of the great distress in his native land, he responded first with fasting and prayer. He gave vigorous action to the cause, in due time, but first he prayed. Wise and vigorous and sustained effort in a noble cause is nearly always the result of prayer.

Nehemiah prayed at all sorts of times. When he stood before the king and the king asked him to name his request, Nehemiah says of himself: "So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king." It is little wonder that Nehemiah seemed always to say the right word at the right time, if he made it his habit to seek God's guidance before opening his lips on matters of importance. When ridiculed by his enemies, he did not stop to answer them. He went on with his work and sent up a brief petition to God asking him to hear the reproaches of the enemy and to answer in his own way. God was evidently a very real presence to Nehemiah. After telling us of his experiences with the Sabbath breakers he adds, "Remember unto me, O my God, this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy lovingkindness." He ends his book with the words, "Remember me, O my God, for good."



## SUNDAY SESSION

## THE SECOND TEMPLE

Ezra 3:8-13; 6:16-22; Neh., ch. 8

As soon as the Hebrews had rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, they began to clear away the rubbish which marked the spot where Solomon's Temple had stood. The Temple was very important in the Jewish religion. All the people of the nation who could do so gathered there on the great feast days. The Hebrews believed that within the Holy of Holies, which was a part of the Temple, God dwelt in a peculiar way. So as soon as the little band of returned Hebrews had secured a measure of safety by rebuilding the walls of their city, they turned next to the reconstruction of the Temple.

**Laying the Foundations.** As soon as the ground was cleared of the burned débris of the former Temple, the foundations of the new structure were laid. It was made an occasion of solemn worship. The priests were there in their robes of office with their trumpets and the Levites with cymbals.

"And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah, saying, For he is good, for his lovingkindness endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised Jehovah, because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid."—Ezra 3:11.

The ceremony was not unmingled with sorrow, however, for there were present a good many old people who remembered the magnificent Temple of Solomon and to whom this second Temple seemed small and poor in comparison. The beginning of this second Temple brought to the minds of these aged people that dreadful day fifty years before when Solomon's great Temple had been sacked and burned by the Babylonian army, and their weeping and lamentations were mingled with the joyful shouts of the younger generation who had been born in Babylon and to whom Solomon's Temple was known only in the stories they had heard their parents tell.

**Overcoming Hindrances.** The building of the Temple, like the building of the walls, was not to be accomplished without the overcoming of many hindrances. Certain of the people of the land who were the descendants of the settlers brought in by the Babylonians offered their services to the Jews in the building of the Temple, but the Jews refused their aid. Then these people wrote to the king of Persia that the Jews were rebuilding their city and were planning to revolt against the government of the king. The statement was entirely without foundation but it accomplished its purpose. The king caused a search of the historical records to be made and it was found that Jerusalem had, indeed, once been a strong city and that it had fought valiantly against the armies which came to put it under tribute to the empires of the East. So the Persian king ordered that the building of the Temple and the strengthening of the walls should cease. After a long delay the Hebrews succeeded in getting their side of the matter before the king of Persia. They told him of the decree which Cyrus had made, permitting the rebuilding of the city and the Temple. The Persian king again searched his records and found that this was true, so he gave permission for the work to continue.

**The Temple Dedicated.** So the work of building the Temple was resumed and when the structure was completed a dedicatory service was held. It was not in any way such a magnificent affair as was the dedication of the first Temple, but the people were nevertheless filled with joy to think that at last they had a city and a Temple of their own. Through the prophet Haggai God spoke messages of encouragement to Zerubbabel, the governor of Jerusalem, to Joshua, the high priest, and to all the people.

“Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith Jehovah; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith Jehovah, and work: for I am with you, saith Jehovah of hosts.”—Hag. 2:4.

**Ezra's Bible School.** Nehemiah had a very capable helper named Ezra. Ezra was a scribe, a man whose occupation was writing. Not many of the books of the

Bible had been written at that time. Probably most of Ezra's work was the making of copies of the Bible as it then existed. One day after the returned Hebrews were settled in their new homes in the old land of their fathers, a great crowd of people gathered together at one of the gates of Jerusalem. They had come to ask Ezra to read the Bible to them. They constructed a pulpit of wood and Ezra stood upon this pulpit while he read. The language which the people spoke in the time of Ezra had become somewhat different from the language in which the Bible had been written, so that it was necessary to have the Levites and others act as teachers and interpreters. These people explained the words of the Bible, sentence by sentence, as Ezra read. It was a great Bible school and there was service and praise as well as Bible study for we are told that

“Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with the lifting up of their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped Jehovah with their faces to the ground.”—Neh. 8:6.

As they read on through the Bible they found that Moses had commanded the people of Israel to dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month, so they proceeded to carry out the commandment forthwith. The festival lasted eight days and much of the time was spent in the study of the Bible. This great eight-day service of Bible study was a very hopeful sign. If the people could be kept as eager for Bible truth as they seemed to be under Ezra's leadership, the danger of their falling away into idolatry and worldliness would be very greatly reduced.

#### WHAT THE SUNDAY SCHOOL DID FOR POOR VALLEY

Away up in one of the roughest mountain sections of our southern states is a little valley among the rocky hills. Here settled more than a century ago some sturdy people from the north of Ireland. The pioneers who came into this little valley were intelligent and God-fearing folk as most of the Scotch-Irish people are. They

had a hard struggle in the wilderness. The soil was poor and it was miles and miles to the nearest railroad. The settlers kept hoping and expecting that a railroad would be built into their part of the country, but none came. They toiled on year after year and cleared away the trees and rocks from their little fields. They were not able to have much school, only a very few weeks in winter. They had no church or preaching service or Sunday school. Their children grew up without knowing much about the Bible. Some could not even read or write. After a good many years all the pioneers were gone. The number of people who could read grew less and less.

Under such conditions the moral and spiritual life of any people is bound to deteriorate. This little valley became a place of lawlessness. There were bad men back in the hills who made liquor and brought it into the valley to trade for corn and vegetables. As a result many of the men and boys of the valley became drunkards. The Sabbath was hardly kept at all in that mountain valley. The people made it a day for horse racing and carousing. Sunday night there was a free-for-all dance which often ended in a free-for-all fight. Dreadful feuds, or family wars, broke out and terrible crimes were committed in the spirit of revengeful hatred. Without the Bible, without schools, and without any knowledge of God, Poor Valley became a place of iniquity and violence in which it was almost impossible for a boy or a girl to grow up into worthy manhood or womanhood. The fame of the place spread far and wide. It was known as one of the worst places in the southern mountains.

One day a stranger made his way into the mountain valley. He was seen along the rocky lanes talking with the ragged and barefooted children. He gave them little cards on which were Bible pictures and Bible verses. He invited them to come to the little tumble-down school-house the following Sunday. He asked them to tell their parents that there was going to be a Sunday school.

On Sunday morning the little shack was packed. The missionary conducted Sunday school and held a religious service. It was the first meeting many of the people had ever attended. They sat in perfect silence while the

young man told them some of the simple truths of the gospel of Jesus. A Sunday school was organized and the missionary was invited to remain for a two-weeks' series of meetings.

That visit of the Sunday-school missionary was the beginning of a new age for Poor Valley. The people responded to the gospel message as if they were hungry for the spiritual truths their fathers had known so long ago but to which they themselves had so long been strangers. A church was organized and in time a neat little church building was erected. The old school-house disappeared and a better building took its place. Boys and girls began to get a new view of life and its possibilities. They found in the Sunday-school missionary a counselor and friend. Many of them became ambitious to secure an education. The missionary found places for them in the great outside world where they could work their way through high school and college. Poor Valley, which had sent many boys and some girls to prison, began to send young men into the ministry and young women into college professorships. Poor Valley lost its reputation as the worst community in the state and gained a reputation as a progressive and God-fearing community. The reformation had been rapid, far-reaching, and permanent. It had been accomplished through the earnest life and steadfast efforts of one of God's humble workmen together with the power of the Word, whose entrance "giveth light."

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

We thank thee, O Father, for the Bible with its lessons of truth. We thank thee that there have been men and women in every century who have given themselves to the teaching ministry of the Church. We thank thee for the Sunday school and the other services of the Church. Help us to be diligent in our study of the Bible that we may know more perfectly thy will and thy nature. As we come to know thy Word more perfectly, we would be of use to thee in making it known, in turn, to others. Amen.

## THE LESSON HYMN

- “By cool Siloam’s shady rill  
 How sweet the lily grows!  
 How sweet the breath beneath the hill  
 Of Sharon’s dewy rose!
- “Lo, such the child whose early feet  
 The paths of peace have trod;  
 Whose secret heart, with influence sweet,  
 Is upward drawn to God.
- . . . . .
- “O thou, whose infant feet were found  
 Within thy Father’s shrine,  
 Whose years with changeless virtue crowned,  
 Were all alike divine;
- “Dependent on thy bounteous breath,  
 We seek thy grace alone  
 In childhood, manhood, age, and death,  
 To keep us still thine own.”

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 EXPRESSSIONAL SESSION

## EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES OF THE CHURCH

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER’S OPENING ADDRESS

We live in a time when the Church is giving more attention to religious education than has been the case for many years. New agencies are being created for the educational task of the Church. We shall learn in this meeting about some of these new undertakings in religious education. It is a good thing that the Church is becoming aware of the great importance of her teaching task. Most of the people who join the Church are members of the Sunday school before they join the Church. It has been estimated that this is true of eighty-seven per cent of the people who join the Church. It seems fair to conclude that many of these people were brought to the decision for Christ and the Church through the work of the Sunday school. The most permanent additions to the Church come through the educational activities, Sunday school,

Christian Endeavor society, and pastor's communicant class. It seems also true that the most valuable additions to the Church are brought in through the agencies above named.

### STUDY TOPICS

1. What Are Vacation Bible Schools?
2. What Are Week-Day Church Schools?
3. Why Is There Need for the Two Types of Church Schools Just Mentioned?
4. How Many Children and Young People in America Are in Sunday School?
5. How Many Are Not Receiving Any Religious Instruction?
6. What Recent Improvements Have Been Made in Sunday Schools?
7. What Courses of Study Are Used in Presbyterian Sunday Schools?
8. What Educational Value Has the Work of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts?

### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Deut. 6:6, 7; Prov. 22:6; John 3:2; Acts 5:42; Col. 3:16; I Tim. 4:11.

### COMMITTEE TO BE APPOINTED

**Religious Education Committee**, to consider ways in which religious education may be made more adequate in our community (how to secure more time, better equipment, more regular attendance).

### THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

1. Find out about the "North Dakota Plan" of religious education.
2. Find out about the "Colorado Plan."
3. Find out about the "Gary Plan."

4. What is a standard Sunday school in the Presbyterian Church?
5. What are some good books on Sunday-school methods and organization?

#### THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Church School Loyalty.** We believe that the teaching of the Bible is one of the most important tasks of the Christian Church and that we ought to respect the school of the Church. Therefore:

1. We will be loyal to our church-school classmates and to our church-school teachers.
2. We will be loyal to our church school and our church-school class.
3. We will be loyal to our own denomination and to the great universal Church of which it is a part.



## SECTION IV

### THE GOD THE HEBREW PROPHETS KNEW

- CHAPTER XIV. ELIJAH PROCLAIMS THE JUSTICE OF  
JEHOVAH.
- CHAPTER XV. THE SHEPHERD OF TEKOA FORETELLS  
THE COMING WRATH OF GOD.
- CHAPTER XVI. MICAH'S MESSAGE CONCERNING SOCIAL  
RIGHTEOUSNESS.
- CHAPTER XVII. HOSEA PREACHES GOD'S COMPASSIONATE  
LOVE.
- CHAPTER XVIII. JEREMIAH, HEROIC PROPHET OF DE-  
CLINING JUDAH.
- CHAPTER XIX. PREVISIONS OF THE GOLDEN AGE.
- CHAPTER XX. THE COMING SAVIOUR.
- CHAPTER XXI. THE INVINCIBLE PURPOSES OF GOD.

“ Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am Jehovah thy God, who teacheth thee to profit, who leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.”—Isa. 48:17, 18.

“ How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboiim? my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath.”—Hos. 11:8, 9.



CHAPTER XIV  
ELIJAH PROCLAIMS THE JUSTICE OF  
JEHOVAH

WEEK DAY SESSION

THE KINGLY MAN BEFORE THE UNMANLY KING

I Kings, chs. 17, 18, 21

In the midst of the stirring events of Jewish history appeared a remarkable group of men who are known as the Hebrew prophets. They were men who were able with God's help to read aright the conditions of the times, who could see into the future and thus foretell the inevitable results of the conflict between good and evil going on all about them. They were men who lived in close fellowship with God and through whom God could speak to the world. Heroically courageous and profoundly unselfish, they battled to maintain justice in the midst of the spiritually decadent nation. History nowhere presents another such group of heroes, hence they are well worth our careful study. We shall not be able to study the lives and teachings of all the Hebrew prophets, but turning back a little from our story of the Hebrew nation, we shall consider a few of these great men who battled for God and truth in the midst of evil times.

**Naboth's Vineyard.** Some years after the division of the Hebrew kingdom, a certain man named Ahab became king of Israel. He had married a princess of Sidon named Jezebel, who was a worshiper of Baal. Ahab had a palace at Jezreel. Near this palace was a vineyard belonging to an old-fashioned country gentleman named Naboth. Ahab was anxious to secure Naboth's vineyard that he might attach the grounds to his palace and make it a garden of flowers and shrubs, so he went to Naboth and offered to buy the vineyard, or to give him a better

vineyard in some other place. Naboth refused either to sell or to exchange. He had a sentimental attachment to that bit of ground which had been in his family for generations, perhaps ever since the land was divided under Joshua. He probably felt that it would be disobeying God's commandments to sell the vineyard to Ahab forever since God had given the Hebrews a law forbidding the selling of their lands for more than fifty years. This law had evidently become a dead letter; nevertheless Naboth evidently believed that he was still bound by it, no matter what others might do. To sell the vineyard would mean that it should pass out of the hands of the Naboth family forever, and this loyal Hebrew refused thus to make God's laws of no effect and to take from his descendants that which under God's commandments belonged to them. So Naboth answered Ahab with a firm, but final, "Jehovah forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

Ahab was very angry at Naboth's answer. He went home and sulked like a spoiled child. He lay down on his bed, turned his face to the wall, and refused to eat. Jezebel came in and asked her husband what was the matter with him and he told her about Naboth and the vineyard. This pagan queen came from a despotic family whose will was law in Sidon. With haughty scorn she said to Ahab, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise and eat bread, and let thy heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth."

Then the wicked queen wrote letters and signed them with Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal. She sent the letters to the elders and nobles of the city. In these letters she told these officers of the Jewish Church and nation to charge Naboth with treason and blasphemy. They were to hire two witnesses to swear that Naboth had cursed God and the king, then they were to take him out and stone him to death. The vineyard would then belong to Ahab since the property of people executed for treason came into the possession of the crown.

The program was carried out according to the queen's commands. Naboth was brought before a court of the people and rulers. Two hired witnesses swore that he

had cursed God and the king. Then he was dragged out of the city and stoned to death.

Then the cowardly and wicked nobles and elders sent word to the queen saying, "Naboth is stoned, and is dead." Much as we may despise this weak king and his cruel wife, we must despise still more those craven-hearted elders and nobles whose duty it was to establish justice in the land, but who, for their own safety and that they might hold their offices and keep in favor with the king and his evil wife, so shamefully wronged their fellow townsman. One of the worst effects of tyranny is the fact that it raises up just such people as these nobles and elders of Jezreel: people who truckle and crawl to the tyrants in power and who are more cruel toward their fellow countrymen than the tyrants themselves.

On receiving word from her cowardly accomplices in the murder of Naboth, Jezebel came to Ahab and said, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead." And Ahab arose and went down to take possession of the vineyard.

**Elijah, the Tishbite, Goes to Meet Ahab.** Was there no one in all the land of Israel to raise a protest against such high-handed violence? Were all the thousands of God's people so cowardly that not one dared to face the wicked king and denounce the crime? No, there was one. He was a rough-clad man from the highlands of Gilead. He did not dress in the silken garments and the latest styles of the time. He was a brave-souled highlander, a backwoodsman who dared to do what God told him to do. God told Elijah to go down and meet Ahab in the vineyard of Naboth and to tell the king of the punishment which was coming on him and his queen and all his house. Elijah went. He came face to face with Ahab in the vineyard. The unmanly king and the kingly man faced one another. Back of the king lay all the power of the nation, but his guilty heart made him afraid. Elijah was only a lone citizen of the nation, with no following at all, but righteous indignation and a good conscience made him as bold as a lion. The king quailed and could not meet the prophet's steady gaze. He stammered out a

confused query, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" "I have found thee," the prophet calmly replied, then he proceeded to declare the awful doom which God had spoken against Ahab and his house. Ahab fled from the vineyard to rend his clothes and to fast and to lay in sackcloth before the God of his fathers whom he had so grievously offended. Because of Ahab's repentance, God lightened somewhat the punishment of his sins.

**The Reformation of the Nation Under Elijah's Leadership.** Elijah's sudden appearance to rebuke Ahab for taking the vineyard of Naboth was not the prophet's first appearance in Israel. He was known as the champion of Jehovah, and he had no less purpose than the banishment of Baal worship and idolatry and the winning of the nation back to the service of the true God. Sometime before the incident of Naboth's vineyard a terrible three-years' drought had come upon the country. Elijah had foretold its coming and he told the people that it was a punishment which God had sent because they had forsaken Jehovah and had turned to the worship of idols. A great gathering of the Hebrews was held on the summit of Mount Carmel to determine whether Jehovah, or the idol Baal, should be the God of Israel. The God which answered by fire was to be the God of the nation. You have heard the story of how the prophets of Baal called upon their god but received no answer and how Elijah's prayer was answered by the fire from heaven which consumed his offering. The people, at the sight of the miraculous fire from heaven, fell on their faces and cried, "Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God." Under the leadership of Elijah the people seized the prophets of Baal, brought them down to the brook Kishon and slew them there.

That very day as Elijah bowed down in prayer on the summit of Mount Carmel, a cloud the size of a man's hand rose out of the Mediterranean Sea. It grew until the heavens became black with clouds and wind and there was a great rain. The long drought was ended. It also seemed that the long rule of idolatry in Israel was about to pass away. The spirit of Elijah seemed to be exalted with a sense of triumph. As King Ahab fled before the

advancing storm and drove to his palace in Jezreel, Elijah, swift-footed mountaineer that he was, girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. The prophet was soon to learn, however, that great spiritual reforms are not accomplished in a moment of time and that force has only a minor part in their ultimate triumph.

### THE GOD OF ELIJAH AND THE GOD OF JEZEBEL

The name "Elijah" means "My God is Jehovah." It must have been a godly father and mother who decided upon that name for their baby boy up there on the highlands of Gilead some hundreds of years before the beginning of the Christian era. Parents who would choose such a name were the kind of parents to bring up their child to honor God. How well Elijah fulfilled the prophecy of his name! It was because of the fact that his God was Jehovah that he dared to stand alone against the wickedness of his day. The life of such a man reveals God. Elijah proclaimed Jehovah to be a God of righteousness and justice.

Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal which means "with Baal." Jezebel grew up to be a cruel and wicked woman because the god she worshiped was no God, but a creation of the minds of evil people. Those who worshiped Baal thought of him as a cruel, immoral, and characterless deity, and they became like the god they worshiped.

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### THE VALLEY OF DESPOND AND THE "STILL SMALL VOICE"

I Kings, ch. 19

As we continue the story of Elijah we are conscious of a feeling of surprise. We find him saying and doing things very unlike the things he said and did in our

previous acquaintance with him. The story is entirely true to human nature, however. Elijah was a man of great intensity of feeling and action. Such people are apt to have exactly such experiences as we find recorded of Elijah. Consumed by the fire of their enthusiasm they wear themselves out and sink into the depths of despondency.

**Jezebel's Threat and Elijah's Flight.** When word reached Jezebel that the prophets of Baal had been slain, she sent word to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time." Whether Jezebel could or could not have made her threat good, we do not know. That she should have made the threat, in any case, is not surprising. But it is surprising to be told that the heroic prophet who had defied Ahab arose and fled. He ran away from his unfinished task because of a woman's threat. It is probable that Elijah was overcome by a sudden fit of despondency. He must have been tired physically almost to the verge of collapse. The days had been full of strenuousness. He had been under terrific strain. Only a few hours before he had run all the way from Carmel to Jezreel, twenty miles or more. When we are in such an exhausted condition as Elijah must have been in, molehills look like mountains to us. Sudden despair seized the great prophet. Perhaps the peril was very real and deadly; we have no means of knowing. Perhaps he realized that the reformation had not really reached the hearts of the people. At all events, he ran. He went far into the wilderness and lay down under a juniper tree and wished that he might die. He said, "It is enough; now, O Jehovah, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." God did not take away the life of his tired and discouraged servant, but gave him instead the blessing of refreshing sleep. Elijah awoke from prolonged slumber to eat and drink and to lie down to sleep again.

Continuing his flight through the deserts, Elijah came to Mount Horeb, the great mountain where God had given the Law to the children of Israel. Here he found a hiding place in a cave. After living in the cave of Horeb



for some time Elijah became conscious that God was speaking to him as he had done of old. He was saying, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It was as if God would inquire why the prophet was away out here dwelling in the caves of a desert mountain; why was he not in the Kingdom of Israel attending to the task God had given him to do?

God told Elijah to go out and stand upon the mountain side. A great storm of wind arose and roared across the hills and valleys. So violent was the wind that even the rocks were moved out of their places and broken in their fall, but Elijah did not feel that God was in the wind. An earthquake followed the wind, and after the earthquake was a fire, but Elijah did not feel God's presence in either of these. After the fire there seemed to come a "still small voice," or, as the Hebrew language has it "a voice of gentle stillness." The moment he heard this voiceless speech, Elijah knew that he was in God's presence and he wrapped his face in his mantle.

**Going Back to the Unfinished Task.** Elijah told God that he alone was left among the people of the land who were true to the worship of Jehovah, but God reminded him that there were seven thousand others who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Elijah was told to return again to the land of Israel, there to take up the unfinished task from which he had so recently fled. He was to anoint a king to succeed Ahab in Israel and also to anoint a king over Syria. Having performed this Elijah was to anoint Elisha as his successor. Elijah had doubtless come to see in this experience at Horeb that the work in which he was engaged was a more vast undertaking than he had understood before. He was to do only a part of the task; then he was to hand the uncompleted work over to others. Even great men sometimes find it hard to learn this lesson. They find it difficult to understand that they can give only a little help in an age-long task which has been carried on by many others before them and which will be taken up by those who will come after them. Perhaps Elijah had learned, too, that God has other ways of accomplishing his purposes besides those of revolution and violent assaults against evil; that God is sometimes in the

“still small voice” which speaks in the innermost consciousness of men rather than in the storm, the earthquake, and the fire.

**Choosing a Successor.** God's choice of a successor to the great prophet who was soon to pass off the stage of the world's action fell upon a young farmer. Elisha was plowing in the field with a yoke of oxen when Elijah came to him and cast his mantle upon him as a sign that he was to be his successor. Elisha understood the significance of the act and accepted the responsibility. Possibly he had long been connected with the schools of the prophets and had been awaiting some definite summons to enter upon a prophet's mission. He asked only for time to take leave of his friends and relatives. This being done, he offered sacrifices to God and gave a farewell dinner to his friends. “Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.”

#### CYRUS W. FIELD AND THE ATLANTIC CABLE

The story of Elijah shows us how important it is for anyone who undertakes a great task of reform to have that persistency of purpose which never gives up. This is one of the reasons why faith is such an essential quality of Christian character. It takes faith in oneself, faith in the ultimate triumph of righteousness, and faith in God, to make a character heroically devoted to the task of establishing God's Kingdom in the world.

The task of the Christian Church does not differ so very much from other great tasks in this respect. All great enterprises demand the same kind of faith and devotion. A task like that involved in laying the Atlantic cable never could have been accomplished without faith and unconquerable devotion. Cyrus W. Field put all the money into the enterprise and it looked many times as if he had lost it all. His friends became discouraged and said that the scheme was the wild dream of an impractical man. They withdrew their financial and moral support. But Mr. Field kept right on experimenting with different types of cables, learning a little here and a little there. He never lost faith in the ultimate

success of the undertaking. He labored far into the night perfecting different types of instruments for sending and receiving the electric message. He waded through Newfoundland swamps seeking a good landing place for his cable.

At last the more than a thousand-mile-long rope of gutta-percha and steel wire was completed and stored away in the hold of the Great Eastern. It began to slip over the side of the ship and sink into the ocean depths. In mid-ocean it parted and the work had to be done over again. This time it was laid successfully, but only a few words had been sent on its subocean strands when the cable ceased to work. It had broken again. Months of toil intervened, but at last Mr. Field was ready for another attempt with an entirely new cable. This time success was complete. Moreover, the ship returned to mid-ocean and found the ends of the cable which had parted after the sending of the first few messages. It was spliced and continued to work successfully for many years after. The great tasks of the world require this "with-you-till-death" kind of devotion, and it is not strange that it should be necessary in the establishing of the Christian program in the life of an individual or in the world.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

Lord, we who have undertaken to be followers of thy Son need thy help that we may carry out our purposes. Teach us day by day more of the fidelity and patience which marked the life of our Master. Deliver us from all moral cowardice which would keep us from speaking the truth at all times and under all circumstances. Give a sense of universal brotherhood and good will. We pray that justice and righteousness may prevail throughout all our land. Help those who have been elected to office. Teach them how to be thy servants in the task to which they have been called. Teach us to believe in the establishment of thy Kingdom of truth in the world and show us how to work for it. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

## THE LESSON HYMN

“Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
 Ye soldiers of the cross;  
 Lift high his royal banner,  
 It must not suffer loss:  
 From victory unto victory  
 His army he shall lead,  
 Till every foe is vanquished,  
 And Christ is Lord indeed.

“Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
 Stand in his strength alone;  
 The arm of flesh will fail you,  
 Ye dare not trust your own:  
 Put on your gospel armor,  
 Each piece put on with prayer;  
 Where duty calls, or danger,  
 Be never wanting there.”

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 EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

 HEROIC DEVOTION TO TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND  
 RIGHTEOUSNESS

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

The great characteristic which distinguished the prophets from other people of their day was their passion for truth, justice, and righteousness. They had a horror of religious ceremonies carried on by people who were living in impurity and acting unjustly. They hated all hypocrisy because hypocrisy is a constant denial of the truth. It is an acted lie carried on until it becomes habitual. The prophets, like the Great Prophet who was to succeed them, rebelled at the fastidiousness that concerned itself with keeping the outside of the cup clean while the inside was full of filthiness. They denounced the whited sepulchers that were outwardly fair, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. They believed in letting the truth be seen in all its details. They could not bear a civilization and a religion which was not built on justice toward men and truth toward God.

## STUDY TOPICS

1. Is a Boy or Girl Who "Copies" in an Examination at School Loyal to the Truth?
2. A Boy Whose Parents Are Really Quite Generous, Wishes Money to Buy a Bicycle, but His Parents Refuse. Then the Boy Says: "That's Always the Way. I Can Never Have Anything Like Other Boys." Does Such a Boy Violate the Laws of Truth and Justice?
3. If We Are Friendly Only with People Who Are Well-Dressed and Who Live in Fine Houses, Are We Living Up to Christian Ideals of Truth and Brotherhood?
4. Can You Tell What the Chief Differences Were Between Elijah and the Elders and Nobles Who Stoned Naboth?
5. Why Is It Important That We Think of God as a Being of Truth, Justice, and Righteousness?

## VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

I Sam. 16:7; Ps. 4:5; 15:1, 2; Ps. 51:6; 82:3; Prov. 16:31; Isa. 9:7; Jer. 9:2; John 8:32.

## THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

1. Look up the meaning of the following words and use them in sentences: prophet, courageous, reformation, ethical, enthusiasm, loyalty, hypocrisy, devotion.
2. Report on the subject, "A Prophet Reproves a King for His Lapse from Truth, Justice, and Righteousness." II Sam. 12:1-15.
3. Report on the subject, "Micaiah, a True Prophet of Jehovah." I Kings 22:5-28.
4. Report on the subject, "Jonah, a Prophet Who Tried to Run Away from God."

## THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Devotion to Truth, Justice, and Righteousness.** A high regard for truth, a deep sense of justice, and

a profound love of righteousness has characterized the noblest characters of history. Therefore:

1. We will try to think, speak, and act in harmony with the truth.

2. We will make it the rule of our lives to be just to all.

3. We will try to live lives that are truly righteous before God.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE SHEPHERD OF TEKOA FORETELLS THE COMING WRATH OF GOD

#### WEEK DAY SESSION

#### THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE

Amos, chs. 1 to 4

We have but meager information concerning the lives of the Hebrew prophets. They were too much absorbed in their tasks to think much about themselves or to speak much about themselves. It is only incidentally and here and there that they give us any definite statements about the events of their lives. We can learn a good deal, however, from a careful study of their writings. The words they use and their illustrations of spiritual truths by the use of incidents in the daily life of their times help us to form plausible conjectures as to their lives. An observant person can sometimes tell from a few minutes' conversation with a man, or by reading one of his letters, whether that man is country-bred, or city-bred. In the same way the writings of the prophets help us to know the prophets themselves.

**A Man of Lowly Origin.** Amos sprang from the lowliest of the common people. He was a shepherd and a gatherer of sycomore fruits, both humble occupations. We might have guessed as much, even if he had said nothing on the subject. Many of his illustrations are plainly drawn from the life and experience of a shepherd. Nearly every paragraph in his writings shows him to have been a man of the out of doors. He knew about the wild animal life of the country. He was familiar with the methods of the hunter and the trapper of birds. He knew the names of the stars and their constellations. He understood the work of the gardener and the small farmer; sowing, plowing, reaping, and winnowing.

**A Learned Man.** Yet Amos was a man of no mean learning. He knew a good deal of geography. He could locate foreign countries and was familiar with their history. He knew about such facts as the annual rise and fall of the Nile. He knew what was going on in the great cities of his native land and in foreign nations. This shepherd prophet was a thinker and a philosopher.

**His Home.** Amos lived in Tekoa, a village five miles south of Bethlehem and on the edge of the desolate wilderness of Judea. It was located on a hill and was probably never a very large place as the ruins now found there do not cover more than four or five acres. It is a remarkable fact of secular history, as well as a fact of Bible history, that God has often chosen people for his greatest tasks from just such humble places as Tekoa. The boys or girls who live in backwoods communities need not feel that there is no chance for them to give great service to God and humanity. Those who do the great tasks have usually begun by doing humble tasks well.

**His Ideas About God.** The importance of a person's ideas about God has been mentioned a number of times in these lessons. We have seen that people who love justice, mercy, and righteousness are, almost without exception, worshipers of a God of justice, mercy, and righteousness. The writings of Amos are full of the consciousness of God's presence in the world and in the affairs of the nations. Amos had a high conception of the power and majesty of Jehovah. He was the majestic Creator who made the Pleiades and Orion. He was the power which touched the hills and made them smoke. He ruled the storm and the earthquake and his power was seen in every dawning day. Amos thought of God as the Ruler of all nations. He was just as much the Ruler of the Gentile nations as he was of the Hebrews. It was Jehovah who had "brought up . . . the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir." When a man has such a consciousness of God's place and power in the affairs of men as Amos had, it helps that man to become a mighty force for righteousness in his day. Such a man never becomes a cowardly and selfish flatterer of



those who are in power. Such a man is never a Pharisee who makes clean the outside of the cup and leaves the inside full of uncleanness. As we read the history of the nations we can pick out here and there individuals and groups of people whose characters were built on such a consciousness of God as Amos had. The Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth were such people. Cromwell's "Ironsides" who "bowed in the dust before their God but put their heels on the necks of kings" were such men. They have been the champions of justice and of right and of liberty.

**The Breadth of His Message.** The prophecies of Amos were not concerned with the Hebrew people alone. The sweep of his vision took in all the nations of the world as known in his day. Jehovah was, in his view, the sovereign God calling all nations to account for their transgressions. Damascus, Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Tyre were all warned of the punishment awaiting them if they did not repent. The sins for which these pagan nations were sternly called to account were chiefly the cruelties of war. They had been guilty of selling whole nations into slavery; they had pursued a ruthless warfare of extermination; they had not spared women and children; they had violated solemn treaties. The prophet evidently considered that such acts were inexcusable, even in pagan countries, even among peoples who had never known the God of Israel. The sin for which the prophet denounced Judah was the sin of apostasy. They had not kept the statutes of Jehovah and had rejected his Law. The sin for which he condemned the people of the Kingdom of Israel was their injustice and their greed for gain, their cruelty to the poor, and their luxurious idleness.

### THE HIGHEST CALLING

The highest qualities of any person are those soul capacities which are given to man because he is created in God's image. Man has certain bodily powers and capacities. It is a high and important office to help our fellow men to be physically strong. Man has certain mental powers and capacities and it is a worthy life task

to help our fellow men to grow strong in mental power. But man has also certain powers that are neither those of the body nor those of the mind. They are soul powers and capacities. It is the highest task that God has ever given to help one's fellow men grow into soul strength and purity. This is the highest calling. The one who has been called of God to minister to the souls of his fellow men is of the brotherhood of the prophets. There is a sense in which everyone can have a part in this prophetic office. Everyone can have a part in this ministry to his fellow men. This is what Protestants mean by the universal priesthood of believers. Every soul can help other souls to find God and to know him. But there are some whom God calls to give all their time to helping their fellow men in spiritual matters. Every Christian young person should consider carefully and prayerfully the problem of a life work. Some will hear God's call to give all their time to Christian service; others will hear God's call to some other occupation. But even these latter will do their life tasks better because they feel that they are God-given tasks, and they, too, may have a part in the ministry to the souls of their fellows. The highest calling includes other forms of Christian service besides preaching. It includes the various forms of missionary activity at home and abroad. It includes religious teaching. It may be well to point out here some of the reasons why these occupations are of great importance.

**The Minister.** The minister is the present-day prophet. He must do for our day what the Hebrew prophets did for their day. He must be the spiritual guide for individuals and for communities and for nations. He is the man of spiritual vision for his community and he and his brethren are the spiritual eyes for the nation. The Bible says, "Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint," and there are many communities in our country where this statement is shown to be true.

**The Missionary.** Missionaries are messengers of religious truth sent out to foreign nations and to the neglected places of our own land. Missionaries are people who have heard, like Abraham, God's voice saying, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred,

and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: . . . and be thou a blessing." Missionaries have a good many hardships, but they are generally the happiest people we meet in the world to-day. A great and useful life task gives a happiness that is both deep and lasting. Missionaries feel something of the gladness of soul which rings in such words of the prophets as the following:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"—Isa. 52:7.

**The Teacher of Religion.** The early Christian Church had teachers who made the instruction of children and older persons a life work. This teaching ministry is just now being restored to the Church. It is becoming possible for young people to prepare themselves for the teaching of religion as their calling. Many churches are employing directors of religious education who give all their time to the organizing and supervising of the teaching activities of the church. No greater opportunity for a life service could be found than that of teaching to children and youth the great religious truths of the Bible.

#### GRENFELL OF THE LABRADOR

A good many years ago a young man named Wilfred Grenfell attended one of Mr. Moody's preaching services in England. He was deeply impressed by Mr. Moody's plea to young people to give their lives to Christian service. He resolved that his life should be spent in the service of Christ and his fellow men. He studied medicine and later became a medical missionary on the coast of Labrador. Along the thousands of miles of Labrador coast are hundreds of villages of poor fisher folk. Before the fishing was poor they almost starved.

Grenfell came they were almost wholly without medical care. When the fishing proved to be good they could make a living, but in the frequently recurring years when

Doctor Grenfell is physician, preacher, and teacher. He makes long journeys up and down the coast in his

boat in summer and with his sled and team of dogs in winter. Often he goes hundreds of miles to attend some one who is sick or who has met with an accident. Frequently he is caught in the dreadful northern blizzards while on his journey, but he has learned how to dig down into the snow and nestle there with his faithful dogs until the storm abates. Once he was journeying down the coast on the ice when a strong wind from off the land set the ice in motion and before he knew it he was far from land on the floating ice fields. The wind was terrifically cold and it looked as though he would certainly be driven far out to sea and perish there. With the resourcefulness and promptness of the experienced frontiersman he decided what must be done. He killed his three dogs and wrapped himself in their warm skins. Then taking their frozen legs, he made a flagpole to which he fastened his shirt. Through the long hours of the night he drifted down the coast and gradually got farther out to sea. The dog skins kept him from freezing to death. At last some one on shore saw the tiny speck of his flag and a boat came to his rescue.

Thus the doctor works on, summer and winter, night and day, far away from the comforts and luxuries of his native land, but he is happy and contented. If anyone speaks to him about the sacrifices he has made, he says that he does not know anything about sacrifices, that he is having a great time, that his work is fun. It is nearly always so with those who throw themselves into the service of Christ and their fellow men. Such people find such rewards of joy that what they give up seems as nothing in comparison.

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### THE PREACHING OF A PROPHET

Amos, chs. 5 to 9

We have only fragments of the sermons which the prophet Amos preached to the people of his day. Yet these fragments are enough to convince us that he was a





AMOS

NAHUM

EZEKIEL

DANIEL

preacher of power. Perhaps his sermons were committed to writing and these written extracts were sent into various parts of the two sections of the Hebrew nation and thus many more people were reached than could have been reached by the prophet's spoken messages alone.

**Sermons Not Aimed to Please but to Convince.** Amos was too great and earnest a man to compose sermons for their own sake, or that he might through his preaching make a name for himself and a reputation for rhetoric and oratory. No really great preacher ever does preach with such ends in view. Amos was tremendously in earnest. He believed that a dreadful fate for both the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah was just at hand. The Hebrew people must hear quickly, repent forthwith, and turn from their evil ways, or destruction was certain.

**Sermons Full of Reproof.** There is not a word of flattery, or anything suggesting flattery, in all the utterances of the prophet; on the other hand, they are burdened with reproof. He upbraids the Hebrews for greed and cruelty, for ingratitude, for dishonesty in business, for Sabbath desecration, for empty and hypocritical worship, for luxurious idleness, for bribery, and for the wholesale perversion of justice. Such preaching will either lead transgressors to repent or it will awaken within them a spirit of hatred and opposition which makes the position of the one denouncing these transgressions a position not to be desired.

**Sermons Full of Warning.** The warning note runs through all the utterances of Amos: the lion has roared and is even now at the door of the sheepfold; foreign armies will come; the land will be invaded; its cities will sink in fire; its people will be destroyed by the sword, or led away captive; the whole land will be left with only a meager handful of people; the fields will be desolate; cities will be without inhabitant. Did the people believe that these calamities would come? Evidently most of them did not, but they had reason to believe that they would come. The great world power of Assyria was coming closer, year by year. Nation after nation had

gone down, but the Hebrews seem to have thought that in some way they would escape.

**Sermons Which Contained Messages of Hope.** The preaching of Amos was not one continuous recital of coming disasters. There was an encouragement to hope if only the nation should repent and turn away from its unrighteous ways.

“Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate: it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.”—Amos 5:14, 15.

Moreover the vision of the prophet could pierce beyond the clouds of coming disaster and see the time of restoration and righteousness and peace.

“And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God.”—Amos 9:14, 15.

Such preaching as that of Amos has often been criticised as destructive, and the preachers of such sermons have been called “troublers of Israel,” but neither the criticism of the sermons nor the term applied to the preachers is just. Amos and preachers of his kind in times like his are not destructive, but constructive; not those who denounce transgressions but those who commit transgressions are the true “troublers of Israel.”

**Priest and Prophet.** Of course the preaching of Amos aroused opposition. There was a certain priest attached to the shrine at Bethel who charged Amos with conspiracy because he predicted the overthrow of the Kingdom of Israel and the carrying away of the people into captivity. This has ever been the way of tyrants and evildoers. They have sought to revenge themselves on those who reproved them for their evil ways. They have charged those who have pointed out the evils resulting from transgression with being responsible for the evils



which they foresaw. They have "tried to stop the dawn by wringing the neck of the crowing cock."

Mark the haughty scorn in the words of the proud priest of Bethel to the shepherd prophet of Tekoa: "O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house." Amos 7:12, 13.

But Amos was not a man to be frightened from his task by false charges of conspiracy, neither was he one to be awed into silence by royal pomp and kingly pride. He said to Amaziah, the priest, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycomore-trees: and Jehovah . . . said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." Then the prophet proceeded to tell the proud priest the disasters which were in store for the nation and for him and his family, and the prediction was such as must have made the haughty priest quake with fear.

#### PREACHING WHICH CHANGES THE DESTINIES OF NATIONS

We cannot tell how great the effect of the preaching of Amos may have been. We do not know how many individuals heard his warnings and his call to righteousness and turned to the way of repentance and life. We may be sure that the preaching of Amos and the other prophets saved the Hebrew people from utter disaster. There were those who heard and believed and these became the seed of the new Israel. These believers and their descendants kept the faith in Jehovah alive during the trying days of the Captivity of Judah, and they were first to return to rebuild the ruined cities and reestablish the worship of Jehovah in his Temple at Jerusalem. If it had not been for men like Amos, the fate of Judah would have been the same as the fate of Israel. Instead of ten lost tribes there would have been twelve, and what then would have become of God's plans for blessing humanity through the Hebrews? But God never suffers his plans utterly to fail. He raises up men like Amos who stand in the breach in the hour of peril and save the day for God and righteousness.

Do you know why Scotland is a stronghold of the Protestant faith? It is largely because of the preaching of one man, a sixteenth-century prophet named John Knox. A determined queen of England was resolved to turn away her whole realm and all the British Isles from the Protestant faith. She said that she feared John Knox more than all the armies of her enemies. And had it not been for John Knox and a few others like him, who stemmed the tide of spiritual reaction with the power of prophetic preaching, the queen might have succeeded.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

We are grateful to thee, our Father in heaven, for the truth and righteousness which thou hast saved for our own day through the heroism of thy servants in past ages. These men of old were strong because they knew that they stood for the right and because they felt thy presence with them. We have not the same difficulties in our way that they had, and yet we sometimes find it hard to do thy will perfectly. Give us strength to overcome our little difficulties and may we do our tasks in a spirit of love and faithfulness. We ask in the name of Jesus, thy Son. Amen.

#### THE LESSON HYMN

“ O Word of God incarnate,  
 O Wisdom from on high,  
 O Truth unchanged, unchanging,  
 O Light of our dark sky;  
 We praise thee for the radiance  
 That from the hallowed page,  
 A lantern to our footsteps,  
 Shines on from age to age.

“ The Church from her dear Master  
 Received the gift divine,  
 And still that light she lifteth  
 O'er all the world to shine.  
 It is the golden casket,  
 Where gems of truth are stored;  
 It is the heaven-drawn picture  
 Of Christ, the living Word.

“ It floateth like a banner  
 Before God's host unfurled;  
 It shineth like a beacon  
 Above the darkling world,  
 It is the chart and compass  
 That o'er life's surging sea,  
 'Mid mists and rocks and quicksands,  
 Still guides, O Christ, to thee.

“ O make thy Church, dear Saviour,  
 A lamp of purest gold,  
 To bear before the nations  
 Thy true light, as of old,  
 O teach thy wandering pilgrims  
 By this their path to trace,  
 Till, clouds and darkness ended,  
 They see thee face to face.”

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### CHRISTIAN WORK AS A LIFE OCCUPATION

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

Most of the members of this class are at the time of life when we begin to think seriously of our choice of a life occupation. As we have seen in a previous lesson, this is a matter of importance since it is apt to determine to a considerable degree our usefulness in the world and our happiness in our life tasks. We cannot all make Christian work our life occupation, but some of the young people of to-day must do so, if the work of the Church is to go on. Some of us must become the ministers, missionaries, and religious teachers of the years that are just ahead of us.

If a young person does not feel that God calls to Christian work as a life occupation, there should at least be the resolve of such young people to do some definite Christian work. They should also look upon whatever life work they undertake as a God-given task and should do their work in such a way as to bring comfort and help to their fellow men. We need more young people who have a spirit like that of Wilfred Grenfell, who are willing to go anywhere and do anything provided they can

thus serve Christ and humanity. We need that kind of people, too, in all lines of business and in all our professions, people who put service of others above profits for self. When this spirit of service fills the business and professional life of the world, we shall have gone a long way toward making it possible for God's Kingdom to be set up upon earth.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. Tell of the Life and Work of the Following Great Preachers: Beecher, Moody, Guthrie, John Wesley, Whitefield, John Knox, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards.

2. Tell of the Life and Work of the Following Missionaries: Judson, Livingstone, Morrison, Crawford, Paton, Mackay, and Others Whose Names You Know.

3. Find Verses in Amos Which Express Reproof of Greed, Cruelty, Ingratitude, Dishonesty in Business, Sabbath-Breaking, Idleness, Cruelty in War.

4. Find Verses in Amos Which Are Warnings.

5. Locate Moab, Ekron, Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Damascus, Ancient Assyria, Samaria, Jerusalem, Tyre, Sidon, Gilead, Tekoa.

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Isa. 6:8; 61:1; Matt. 4:17; 9:36-38; Luke 9:2; Rom. 10:15; I Cor. 1:23; II Tim. 4:2.

#### COMMITTEE TO BE APPOINTED

**Missionary Information Committee**, to report on the general topic, "Presbyterian Foreign Mission Stations Throughout the World, Their Location and Their Work."

#### THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Respect for Christian Work.** We believe that God calls some of his servants to give their whole time to Christian work and that such a task is one of the greatest in the world. Therefore:

1. We will each of us consider earnestly and prayerfully whether God may not desire us for this kind of service.

2. If we are convinced that such is God's will, we will endeavor to follow his guidance.

3. We will ever honor and support those who have been called of God into this kind of service.

CHAPTER XVI  
MICAHA'S MESSAGE CONCERNING SOCIAL  
RIGHTEOUSNESS

WEEK DAY SESSION

THE FALSE PROPHETS

Micah 2:11; 3:5-12; Isa. 28:7, 8; I Kings 22:1-28;  
Jer. 29:8-23

Times like those we have been considering, in which good and evil are locked in fierce combat, are times of testing. They are like a refiner's fire. They reveal the gold and the dross of men's characters. Not all those who claimed to be prophets were able to stand these times of testing. There were some who proved untrue to their sublime office as revealers of God's truth to their fellow countrymen. These false prophets became the most determined of all the opponents of the prophets who remained true to their mission. The number of those who misrepresented God and his truth may have been large, for in one instance we find a lone prophet of God pitted against four hundred false prophets.

**Lying Messages.** In these lessons the prophetic office has been spoken of as "the highest calling." The higher the task to which God calls a man the greater is a man's sin and shame if he prove untrue to his task. The awfulness of the sin of the false prophets lay in the fact that they not only spoke lying words, but that they declared that the words they spoke were messages from God. When the true prophets declared that unless the nation should repent and reestablish justice and righteousness the nation would perish, and emphasized their messages with a solemn, "Thus saith Jehovah," the false prophets replied that nothing of the kind would take place and they also declared, "Thus saith Jehovah." If the false prophets were, indeed, far more numerous than the true

prophets, it is little wonder that many of the people were confused and believed the false rather than the true messengers of God.

**False Patriotism.** The false prophets doubtless deceived many because, on the surface, they seemed to be patriotic. They were always saying: "Jehovah is the God of our nation. He will never allow his holy city and his holy Temple to be trampled under the feet of the Gentiles." They doubtless had much to say of the greatness of the Hebrew people and their heroes of old who conquered the kings of Bashan and Canaan. People who did not think clearly or deeply would say: "Why, these men are true patriots. They honor Jehovah and his people. Surely we can believe that they speak true messages from God."

On the other hand, the true prophets seemed to these shallow-thinking folk unpatriotic. It seemed to them that if the true prophets were patriotic, they would not always be predicting such dire calamities for their native land. They could not see that the highest love a man can have for his nation is that love which prompts him to tell his nation of its sins and to point out the consequences of its transgressions.

**Dodgers of Moral Issues.** The injustice of the times cried aloud to heaven, but the false prophets kept discreetly silent. They thought best not to take part in such matters. They were the ministers of religion, and religion, they believed, had to do with people's relations to God. It had not much to do with relations existing between man and man. So the false prophets showed no concern about such matters as the perversion of justice through bribery, the selling of people for indebtedness, and the evils of drunkenness. They were popular with the people of prominence and power, whereas the words of the true prophets often got these brave men into trouble and sometimes into prison.

**Men of Low Character.** At least some of these false prophets were men of low character. Micah tells us that they were greedy for gain and prophesied for money. Isaiah tells us that some of them reeled with strong drink. Jeremiah denounced some who were addicted to the low-

est vices. This is not surprising, for if they would speak untrue messages and declare that their words came from God, it is altogether to be expected that they would commit other sins.

**The Results of False Prophecy.** The false prophets were blind leaders of the blind, and men like Amos and Micah saw that if the nation followed false teaching, it would come to disaster. But these clear-sighted men saw something even more serious than the difficulties and losses which would come to the nation through following false spiritual guides. It is the office of the prophet to stand between God and the rest of men and to speak God's messages. What if all the prophets should become false prophets? If no man could be found faithful enough to speak God's messages, how were the people to know God's will? This is what Amos means when he speaks in Jehovah's name saying:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of Jehovah, and shall not find it."—Amos 8:11, 12.

Micah speaking of the same danger says:

"Thus saith Jehovah concerning the prophets that make my people to err; that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and whoso putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him: Therefore it shall be night unto you, that ye shall have no vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down upon the prophets, and the day shall be black over them. And the seers shall be put to shame, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God."—Micah 3:5-7.

#### KEEPING THE LIGHT OF GOD IN THE WORLD

Mary Leighton was the ten-year-old daughter of a lighthouse keeper. The lighthouse of which her father was the keeper stood on a little rocky islet a mile from the coast. The keeper's family lived in a house on the mainland, and the keeper was with them whenever he was



not on duty at the light. Mary often stayed with her father in the lighthouse. She learned to care for the lights quite as well as her father, and she often helped him polish the great reflectors which had to be always bright in order to send the rays of light far out to sea. There were usually two keepers for the light, so that one could watch while the other slept, and thus the light might be kept burning all the night.

One day the partner of Mr. Leighton wished to make a trip to the village several miles inland. He expected to spend the night in the village so Mr. Leighton would have to keep the light alone that night. After taking his partner to the shore the keeper stopped a little while with his family. His little daughter begged to go back to the lighthouse with him and to spend the night there. The father finally consented. She would be company for him and there was no real danger as there was a comfortable bed in a little room in the tower where the child could sleep when she became tired. As a storm seemed to be gathering they left for the light early in the afternoon. Their little boat put out from shore and crept across the billowy surface of the sea toward the lighthouse.

The storm came on and developed rapidly. By the time the boat reached the island, the waves were running high and the winds blowing a gale. While making a landing in the storm the father slipped on the wet rocks and twisted his knee so violently that he could not take a step. He crawled to the lighthouse and got upon the bed in the little room, but could do no more. What should be done? The storm had increased to such a violence that a return to the shore was impossible even had the keeper been uninjured. Could he ever climb the hundreds of steps in the little spiral stair that led up to the light? The keeper knew that he could not. He was less concerned about his own injury than he was about the light; if that failed to shine out brightly on a night so wild, ships were sure to be driven in and wrecked upon the rocky coast.

The brave little daughter read her father's thoughts and said, "You needn't worry father; I will keep the lights to-night for you." But the father answered,

“There is hardly any oil in the lamp, my dear; I had intended to fill it with the oil we brought over in that big can which is out in the boat.” The heart of the keeper sank as he remembered that there was oil enough in the lamp to burn only an hour or so. The little girl said that she would carry up oil and fill the lamp, and then she proceeded to do what she could for her father, dressing his wounded knee and tucking him in bed.

Going out to the boathouse she found a small pail and filled it with oil. Then she climbed the long stair to the light. Darkness was already falling because it was in the time of short winter days and the clouds were heavy. She lighted the lamp, trimmed the wicks, and saw that it was burning properly. Opening a little hole at one side of the reservoir which contained the oil she found a small stick and put it down into the reservoir. Drawing it forth she saw that there was about three inches of oil in the bottom of the tank. She poured in her pail of oil and it raised the surface slightly. Then hastening down she went for more oil.

The night grew wild with snow and the strong winds made even the huge stone tower tremble in their blast. Still the brave little girl kept at her tasks. She was up in the tower tending the light, down looking after her father, and out after more oil, all in rapid succession. As the hours wore on the child found the climbing of the stairs increasingly painful. She was ready to drop from weariness, but she knew that she must not fail. Measuring the oil in the tank of the lantern from time to time she could tell whether she was keeping up her race with the lamps. It was all that she could do to keep the oil from falling farther and farther down in the tank and she knew that she must not pause for long or the lamps would go out. Day broke at last and the lights of the beacon were still shining brightly when daylight came. The little heroine had won; she had kept the lights all through the long, dark night.

Perhaps this story will help us to understand a little better the heroism of the brave prophets who kept the light of God's truth in the world at a time when the sun had almost gone down upon the prophets. Can you im-





MICAH

HAGGAI

MALACHI

ZECHARIAH

agine what would be the condition of the world if there were no prophets of God in it; if there were no churches with their ministers to teach people and communities and nations what God's will is; if there were no Sunday schools where children are taught about the Creator of the world who is our Father in heaven; if there were no parents to bring up their children in the fear of God? All these people, ministers, teachers, and parents, are God's prophets. What kind of world would it be in which the sun had gone down upon the prophets? It was from a world like this that the Hebrew prophets saved their country and their descendants.

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### SOME EXCERPTS FROM THE SERMONS OF MICAH

Micah, chs. 2 to 5

As is the case with Amos, we have only fragments from the sermons which the prophet Micah preached to the people of his day. We know even less about the life of Micah than we do about Amos, but his messages are no less valuable because we know little of their author. We are now to study a few of the lessons which Micah tried to teach the people of his day.

**Arrested Development.** Micah evidently felt that a part of the trouble with the Hebrews was due to the fact that they had ceased to make progress. Coming into Palestine, they had found it a goodly land. They had settled down and after a time they began to live for material things, for houses, lands, vineyards, and fields. The nation had not gone forward in the way God had chosen, and when a nation or an individual ceases to go forward, that nation or individual usually begins to go backward. The nation on which God was depending for help in his plans for blessing humanity had come to a halt. The prophet's ringing challenge was intended to reawaken the lost ideals of the people. "Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your resting-place; because of uncleanness

that destroyeth, even with a grievous destruction." Micah 2:10.

"New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;  
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth;  
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must Pilgrims be,  
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,  
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key."

**God Not a Defender of Evildoers.** In Micah's day there was a good deal of pious talk about God as the Defender of Israel. It was maintained that the Almighty would never allow his city and his Temple to be destroyed. Micah tried to show the people who were thus claiming God's protection that God could not consistently continue forever to protect those who had rejected his commandments and were continually wronging their fellow men. Mankind has often fallen into the mistake of believing God an arbitrary kind of despotic ruler flattered by empty praises and gorgeous ceremonials and formal worship, and caring little about the attitude of his worshipers toward their fellow men so long as they perform these religious rites. Micah saw this fallacy clearly and spoke in no uncertain tones, and in the name of Jehovah, the great truth that God requires of all who would worship him right attitudes toward humanity.

"Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—Micah 6:6-8.

**Better Days to Come.** It is a remarkable fact that notwithstanding the stern denunciations of sin which all the prophets uttered, the messages of all contain words of

hope and cheer for the faithful few who had maintained their spiritual integrity and who were true to the God of their fathers. Like the others, Micah ends his written message with the assurance that God will not suffer his cause to fail:

“He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the lovingkindness to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from days of old.”—Micah 7:19, 20.

**True Optimism.** An optimist is a person who takes a hopeful view of present conditions and their outcome in the future. A pessimist is one who looks on the dark side of things. The prophets were regarded as pessimists by many of the people of their day, but they were really optimists. They were true optimists whose faith that right would ultimately triumph was well founded. Many of their opponents were false optimists who refused to see the evil results which must come as a result of the nation's sin.

**A Divine Helper Comes Within the Prophet's Vision.** Micah, like nearly all of the prophets, wrote certain things which are regarded as predictions of the coming Saviour of the world. These great men lived in such close fellowship with God and were so ardently devoted to the doing of his will that God could reveal to them something of his great plans for saving humanity from its sin and failure. Of course even these good men could not understand all of the plans of God. They could not fully think God's thoughts after him, but they did understand enough to believe that God would come to man's rescue in a way he had not yet employed. They foresaw that a divine Deliverer and Helper would come to bring complete and everlasting victory to the righteous cause in its conflict with evil. These prophets were familiar with David's ardent wish that his descendants should sit on his throne forever. They also knew that God had promised his servant that such should be the case, that a Son of David should arise who should be the perfect king and ideal ruler. In a later lesson we expect to study

in detail these Messianic utterances of the prophets. Not only Micah, but most of the other prophets also, were strengthened by this assurance of a Coming One, who should "stand, and . . . feed his flock in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God" and who should "be great unto the ends of the earth."

#### SHELL MOUND INDIANS

Within the city limits of the town of Berkeley on the eastern border of San Francisco Bay, is a curious mound. It covers an acre or more and is twenty-five feet high. It is composed of several kinds of shells in various stages of disintegration, therefore it is known as "Shell Mound." A party of scientists some years ago made a study of this mound. They cut a trench through it from center to circumference and dug several other deep pits into it. These scientists tell us that the mound was built by the Indians. It was not built intentionally and as a monument as the remarkable mounds in Ohio and elsewhere were built. Shell Mound was built up unintentionally because it was the camping site of a group of Indians for thousands and thousands of years. The Indians of the San Francisco Bay region used various shellfish as food. They threw out the shells around their camp sites and if they camped long enough in one place the surface of the earth was raised by the deposit of shells in and about the camp. How many thousands of years it took the Indians thus to build up Shell Mound to a height of twenty-five feet no one can say, but the period must have been one of many, many centuries.

As the scientists cut through the mound they found many interesting things which helped them to read the history of the far-off days when the little Indian village stood there by the sea. They found flint arrowheads, and little stones with holes in them which the Indians had used as sinkers on their fishlines. They found human skeletons, the bones of which were in most cases covered with a red clay. The scientists believed that the clay was there because the Indians had covered the bodies of their dead with red clay before burial. They say that the custom was probably a religious ceremonial of



some sort, that it had to do with the spirit world to which the Indians believed their dead began their journey when they departed from this life. From the Berkeley shore, the sun sinking in red fire beyond the Golden Gate is now a common sight and it was doubtless the same in the days of the Shell Mound Indians. In some dim way the Indians felt that the red clay was a fitting garment for their dead as they journeyed to the Sunset Land somewhere beyond the mysterious bounds of the western ocean.

Shell Mound bears striking proof of the lack of progress in the people who built it out of the refuse of their kitchens. The layers at the base of the mound are separated from those at the top by twenty-five feet or so of space; but in time they are separated by at least as many centuries, and yet there is no sign of progress in all that vast stretch of time. There are chipped stone implements at the bottom and similar chipped stone implements at the top. Whatever else these people may have been, they certainly were not progressive.

Standing on Shell Mound you look off across the bay of San Francisco where ships from all the world now lie at anchor. Beyond the shipping rises the city on the hills of the Peninsula. Around you lies a great modern metropolis. And yet all that you see from Shell Mound is the product of a very few years of modern progress. Compared with the ages represented in the shell layers of the mound, the time since the coming of the white man to these shores is brief indeed. And yet the changes wrought in that time are incomparably greater than all the previous changes of man's long past on the same coast. Progress is a part of God's plan for human life, but it is not possible in any large way without the help of the divine Creator. Man has made true progress only as he has found God and has learned to love and obey him.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father, we thank thee for the incentives which lead us to the efforts needed for spiritual growth. We thank thee for tasks that are difficult enough to drive us to thee

for council and help. Grant that we may never fall into a state of arrested spiritual development. We would be ever moving onward toward the goal of perfect life and perfect fellowship with thee. Give us victory over every evil which would hinder our spiritual growth. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

### THE LESSON HYMN

"Jesus, thy boundless love to me  
 No thought can reach, no tongue declare;  
 O knit my thankful heart to thee,  
 And reign without a rival there:  
 Thine wholly, thine alone, I am,  
 Be thou alone my constant flame.

"O grant that nothing in my soul  
 May dwell, but thy pure love alone;  
 O may thy love possess me whole,  
 My joy, my treasure, and my crown:  
 Strange fires far from my soul remove;  
 My every act, word, thought, be love."

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### PROGRESS THE LAW OF LIFE

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

It is a very lamentable fact that many people who undertake to lead a Christian life fail to make much progress. The author of The Epistle to the Hebrews was writing to this kind of people. He told them that they had been professed followers of Christ long enough to be teachers, but that they were still babes in need of milk. We have too many people who remain perpetual babes of the faith. They are born again, but they never grow up. Micah was writing to people who had failed to make spiritual progress. They had fallen into the mistake of living upon the past. They were proud to be called Abraham's children but they had nothing of Abraham's noble venturesomeness for God.

Growth is the law of normal life. There is a time when

our bodies must grow or everything goes wrong. Parents are very uneasy when the scales show, week after week, that their baby is not becoming heavier. They are still more alarmed if they discover that their child is making no intellectual progress. But we are not always so concerned as we should be about spiritual growth, and yet this is the most important of all. Physical growth has very definite limits. Some of us grow faster and for a longer time than others and thus become larger, but there are certain definite limits as to size and as to time, beyond which it is safe to predict that none of us will go in matters of physical growth. Intellectual growth is set about by far less limited and far less definite bounds. We can grow intellectually for a long time, almost as long as we live. We do not learn perhaps so fast in old age as in youth, but we can still learn. There are absolutely no limits as to spiritual growth. The longer we live the deeper may be our love, the more perfect our purity, and the greater our strength of character.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. Name Some Hindrances to Spiritual Growth in the Individual.
2. Name Some Helps to Spiritual Growth in the Individual.
3. How Does the Christian Church Help a Nation to Be Progressive?
4. How Can We Know What Is True Progress?
5. Name Some Things in Which Every Christian Ought to Be Making Progress.

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Ps. 92:12; Hos. 14:5, 6; Matt. 6:28; Mark 4:26-29; Eph. 2:21; I Peter 2:2.

#### COMMITTEE TO BE APPOINTED

**Committee on Community Progress**, to report on the present moral and spiritual condition of the community as compared with former times. Is our community im-

proving in such matters as: (1) The keeping of the Sabbath; (2) the enforcement of the prohibition law; (3) the kind of public amusements; (4) church attendance?

#### THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Spiritual Progress.** Progress is a law of all life. Therefore:

1. We will strive for physical progress. We will seek to become strong in body that we may do our work in the world faithfully and efficiently.

2. We will strive after intellectual progress. We will seek to know more and more of God's truth that we may serve him and our fellow men better than we otherwise could.

3. We will strive after spiritual progress. We will seek to become more and more what God would have us become as his children created in his likeness.

## CHAPTER XVII

### HOSEA PREACHES GOD'S COMPASSIONATE LOVE

#### WEEK DAY SESSION

##### HOW HOSEA LEARNED THE COMPASSIONATE LOVE OF GOD

Hos., chs. 6 to 8

On the walls of the Boston public library, there is a series of remarkable pictures by the great painter, Sargent. The pictures are the artist's conception of the Hebrew prophets. In them he has sought to bring out their several distinguishing characteristics. There is Elijah with strong, clear, and courageous countenance, just the kind of man to face a wicked Ahab and rebuke him for his sin. There is Amos, leaning on his shepherd's crook. One of the most striking pictures is that of Hosea. He is dressed in pure white from head to foot. Only his face and one hand are visible, yet the author has in some skillful way made the face and the hand tell a wonderful story of purity, sorrow, and lofty religious emotion, all blended into one personality of strength and heroism.

Hosea's home was probably in the Northern Kingdom and he lived about the same time as the prophet Amos, though his preaching was somewhat later than that of the great prophet of Tekoa. In the opening chapters of the prophecy of Hosea we are given what seems to be a picture of his own life, some bitter experiences through which he came to know the compassionate love of God better than any of the other prophets knew it, better perhaps than any other man of Old Testament times.

**An Unfaithful Wife and a Ruined Home.** If we are to think of the first chapters of the prophecy of Hosea as being an account of his personal experiences, something

like the following facts seem to be indicated: He had married a certain woman named Gomer. This woman turned out to be entirely unworthy of such a husband. She lived a sinful, shameful life. Dreadful years they must have been to Hosea when the woman he loved was bringing him so much of shame and sorrow! The time came when Hosea seems to have given up hope that his wife could ever be won back from the evil way she had chosen. He said of her, "She is not my wife, neither am I her husband."

Just such an experience as this has been the ruin of multitudes of men. The inmates of our prisons and penitentiaries and the hopeless tramps who wander up and down our land are in many cases the product of some such domestic tragedy as Hosea seems to have experienced. Faith in Jehovah saved the prophet from this sad fate and turned all his sorrows into a great blessing to him and to the world. The Bible speaks a great truth when it tells us that "all things work together for good" to those who love God.

**A Love That Could Not Die.** Perhaps Hosea thought that he was through with this bad woman when he disowned her. Hot indignation burned within him at the immeasurable wrong she had committed. But Hosea was one of that type of men in whom the love instinct once alive can never die. He could not forget her. He could not keep his anger against her forever. His anger burned itself out in time and left behind a compassionate love which lived on though all hope of a reformation, for his wandering wife seems to have forsaken him.

**Bought Back as a Slave.** Gomer was long absent from the household of Hosea. She found, as so many before her time had found and as so many since her day have found, that "the way of the transgressor is hard." She sank from one station to another. At last she became a slave and was offered for sale in the market place. There her former husband saw her, wretched, poor, hopeless, a miserable being shipwrecked in mind and soul. All the resentment faded away from the heart of Hosea and he was filled with a great compassion. The love with which he had loved her in the days of her girlhood was still

alive. There was no word of reproof, but the great-souled prophet bought back his former wife. He paid for her with fifteen pieces of silver and a homer and a half of barley. He rescued her from the miserable condition into which she had sunk. He did not restore her, however, to the sacred place from which she had so wickedly turned away; at least, he did not do this at once. He announced his intention to keep her many days as no man's wife, and not as his own. Whether his great-souled kindness and forgiveness finally led her to repentance and to a full restoration, we do not know. The prophet does not say. We only know that through this tragic experience the prophet came to know more fully than any man of his day the compassionate love of Jehovah for his people. It helped him to understand how God felt toward the Hebrew people whom he had loved and blessed but who had turned away from him to walk in wickedness and to worship the vile idols of their pagan neighbors. It helped him to know how great and enduring the love of God is; how it lives on through all the transgressions of men and ever seeks to bring the wanderers home to the Father's house.

#### THE LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET US GO

The prophet Hosea is not the only person of history who has learned about God's love through some deep disappointment and sorrow. About the middle of the last century a young theological student was living in Scotland. He was engaged to be married to a young Scotch woman as soon as he should complete his studies in the theological school. Young Matheson began to have serious difficulty with his eyes during his last year at school and finally went to consult a specialist. He was surprised and saddened when he was told by the specialist that in a few weeks he would in all probability be entirely blind. He thought the situation over. Could he expect to earn a living for himself and his wife if he were only a poor, blind preacher? He felt that he ought to tell the woman who was to become his wife just what the situation was and then give her a chance to break off the engagement. Because the man she expected to marry

was threatened with blindness this young woman accepted his offer to have the engagement broken. It must have been that she did not love the young student in any real way, or perhaps she was of the shallow type incapable of deep and true affection; for if her love had been deep and genuine the threatened disaster to the one she loved would have made her love for him only the greater. George Matheson, like the prophet of whom we have been studying, learned to know the abiding love of God more perfectly through this painful experience. Young people have not usually met these experiences of deep disappointment which help the soul to understand more perfectly the goodness and the constancy of God, but most people meet such experiences some time in life and it is a good thing to learn about them, even when we are young, that we may know how to interpret them when they come to us. Unless we meet these experiences with faith and trust, they are apt to be, not a blessing, but an injury to us. The truths we have been considering are beautifully expressed in the hymn which George Matheson wrote after his engagement was broken.

“ O Love that wilt not let me go,  
 I rest my weary soul in thee;  
 I give thee back the life I owe,  
 That in thine ocean depths its flow  
 May richer, fuller be.

“ O Light that followest all my way,  
 I yield my flickering torch to thee;  
 My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
 That in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
 May brighter, fairer be.”

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### THE GOSPEL OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Hos., chs. 11 to 14

The prophecy of Hosea has been called “The Gospel of the Old Testament.” It is given this name because the ideas as to the fatherhood of God which are found in this prophecy are more like the teachings of Jesus than





this compassion of God for his children who deserve his wrath and punishment. These words have been called the utterances of "a God in tears" and indeed there is the sound of weeping in them to all who catch their true import:

"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboiim? my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath."—Hos. 11:8, 9.

**A Father's Pleading.** A tone of earnest pleading may be heard in many passages of Hosea. When we read such passages as the following we feel that God is infinitely concerned in the welfare and happiness of his children. He does not say: "Evil and good are before you; take your choice. If ye choose good ye shall live; if ye choose evil ye shall die." He is infinitely anxious that his children choose the good. He pleads with earnest words and kind:

"O Israel, return unto Jehovah thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and return unto Jehovah: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and accept that which is good: so will we render as bullocks the offering of our lips. Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods; for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; and they shall revive as the grain, and blossom as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?"—Hos. 14:1-8.

Had the people of Israel but heeded the prophet's message from God and come with the earnest words on their lips which God suggested to them as a fitting prayer, how different their history might have been! Surely we

cannot read these words of the prophet without coming to know more perfectly the greatness and the beauty of the love of God for his people!

**Sin as Seen in the Light of God's Love.** The other prophets denounce the sins of the Israelites in no uncertain terms, but it is in the writings of Hosea that we feel the supreme awfulness of sin. This is because in these prophecies sin is seen against the background of God's compassionate, pleading love. What more could God do to save his children? He had bestowed great blessings but they had used these gifts selfishly and made of them a hindrance rather than a help to spiritual progress. He had sent warnings and made clear the terrible consequences of transgression, but they had heeded his warnings not at all. He had pleaded with an infinite yearning and a compassionate love speaking through every word, but they would not hear. They must go on and suffer some of the consequences of their transgressions, but God's resources were not yet exhausted. The love of God would yet find a way. When we take up the study of the New Testament we shall see how God kept on with his plans for saving his chosen people and all the people of the earth.

**The Downfall of the Hebrew Nation Due to the Disintegration of the Home.** It is probable that poor Gomer, the unfaithful wife of Hosea, was only following the fashion of the times when she left her faithful husband for a gay but evil life. The downfall of the Hebrew nation was due to the failure of the home life of the Hebrews. The people forgot to carry the precepts of Jehovah in their hearts and to teach them diligently to their children. God had sought to make the home life of the people righteous and pure. He had sought to set up a just and efficient government in the homes. He had commanded that obedience and discipline should abide there.

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee." Ex. 20:12. This is not only a commandment with a promise of long life for the individual who honors father and mother, but a commandment with a promise of long

life for any nation made up of such individuals. Where fathers and mothers are honored, the nation has a stability which nothing else can give. Disobedience to God and to the State begins with disobedience to parents. If the Hebrews had kept the Fifth Commandment faithfully, it would have saved them from many of the sins which ultimately wrecked the nation.

#### TIED TO HIS MOTHER'S APRON STRINGS

In the early days of Ohio a certain family moved into the great woods some miles south of Lake Erie. It took a good many months of hard work to build the little cabin and make a clearing large enough to see a small circle of the sky. In a few years they had quite a field cleared of the trees and stumps. Then a great sorrow came to the little home. One day a great fire was sweeping through the forests and the father of this family went with other settlers to fight the flames away from their fields and dwellings. They worked hard all night in the fierce heat. When the fires were well down, the father returned home and sat wearily by the open door of his cabin while the cool breezes fanned his fevered cheeks. He contracted a severe cold and sore throat and in a few hours he was dead.

The mother was left with a family of four little children, but she was a heroic woman and she resolved to keep the farm and to hold the family together. One of the children, whom we shall call Jimmie, was hardly more than a baby when his father died. He grew up knowing what hard work was almost from his infancy. His mother was a wise, strong woman and she taught her children to honor her and obey her. She used to take Jimmie on her knee every night and tell him Bible stories. She used to say to him, "Jimmie you must never tell a lie to any person, because it's wrong, Jimmie." She told him that she hoped that when he grew to be a man he would never drink, or swear, or use tobacco. She did not tell him that these things would get him into trouble, but she emphasized the fact that they are wrong. So Jimmie grew up with a wholesome reverence for all right things and a deep antipathy toward things that are wrong.

After a time Jimmie went away to school. He was an ambitious lad and hoped to make a name for himself in the world. He had dreams, too, of being able to give his hard-working little mother a home of comfort in her old age. Not all the boys of this school had been blessed with mothers like Jimmie's. Some of the boys liked to disobey the rules of the school and to engage in other things that were wrong. They soon found that Jimmie was no boy to be easily led into evil. He would say, "My mother taught me not to do that." The boys laughed at him a great deal. They called him a "sissy" and said that he was "tied to his mother's apron strings." After a while they would say, whenever some questionable project was being considered, "Oh, there's no use to ask Jim; his mother has told him not to do it."

Jimmie was always good-natured and the boys could not help liking him. He was respected even by the boys who were foremost in teasing him about his sensitive conscience. One day a large number of the boys of the school were spending a night camping in the woods. They had played games and told stories and were sitting around the blazing camp fire. There came a pause in the conversation and Jimmie pulled a little Testament out of his pocket. He said: "Fellows, I have long been accustomed to read a few verses from the Bible and to pray before going to bed. If you don't mind, I will do so now and I would be glad to have you join with me in this reading and prayer." A deep silence came over the company and Jimmie read a part of a chapter, then offered a brief prayer, and all went quietly to bed.

Was Jimmy a sissy? Not a bit of it. A few months later he was teaching school where he had half a dozen pupils older than he was. It was considered a very hard school to teach, but Jimmie made a success of it. When the Civil War came on, Jimmie was one of the first to enlist. After the battle of Chickamauga, he received word that he had been elected to Congress. He hesitated to leave the army, but finally decided that he could do more for his country in Congress than he could as an officer in the army.

Jimmie was promoted from one position of responsi-

bility to another. The time came when he stood on the steps of the Capitol at Washington to take the oath as President of the United States. Having taken the solemn oath to support the Constitution and the laws, he stooped and kissed the open Bible, then turned to receive the congratulations of the waiting throngs. There were senators and governors of states and foreign ambassadors waiting to grasp the new President's hand and bid him Godspeed, but passing these by, for the time, the President stooped to kiss the cheeks of a little old woman who had been seated near him all the while. In the hour of his triumph and responsibility his first greetings were for his mother. Great and good men like James A. Garfield have usually been boys who were "tied to their mother's apron strings."

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, our Father, we thank thee for our homes and our loved ones. Help us to make our homes all that they should be. Help us to be thoughtful of the comfort and happiness of all the inmates of our homes. Help those of us who have parents to honor them, in all things, and to obey them cheerfully. Forgive us for our failure to do thy will perfectly and help us to grow strong in self-control and in service. Amen.

#### THE LESSON HYMN

"Now thank we all our God  
 With heart and hands and voices,  
 Who wondrous things hath done,  
 In whom his world rejoices;  
 Who, from our mothers' arms,  
 Hath blessed us on our way  
 With countless gifts of love,  
 And still is ours to-day.

"O may this bounteous God  
 Through all our life be near us,  
 With ever joyful hearts  
 And blessed peace to cheer us;  
 And keep us in his grace,  
 And guide us when perplexed,  
 And free us from all ills  
 In this world and the next.

“ All praise and thanks to God,  
 The Father, now be given,  
 The Son, and him who reigns  
 With them in highest heaven,  
 The One Eternal God  
 Whom earth and heaven adore;  
 For thus it was, is now,  
 And shall be evermore.”

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### HONORING FATHER AND MOTHER

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS

The Bible commands children to honor their fathers and mothers. This is a more far-reaching commandment than Paul's commandment to children to obey their parents. It is possible to have obedience without honor. If a child obeys from fear, and is all the time filled with feelings of resentment, there is only external obedience. On the other hand, if a child honors a parent, he will have the spirit of obedience. Jesus is our pattern for obedience to parents, quite as truly as he is our pattern in other virtues. We are told that after his experience at Jerusalem when he was twelve years old, he went down to Nazareth and "was subject unto" his parents.

The Chinese nation is one of the oldest in the world. The civilization of the Chinese has many defects but it has one great virtue, namely, respect for parents. This virtue has given a stability to the Chinese character which is very marked. Our nation has much to learn in this matter. We must seek to have well-governed homes if we are to be a strong and well-governed nation.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. Different Ways of Carrying on Family Worship.
2. Books Suitable for the Home Library.
3. Songs Suitable for the Fireside.
4. My Favorite Pictures for the Home.

5. Recreations in Which the Family May Unite.
6. Home Life in Palestine in the Days of Jesus.
7. Forces of Our Times Which Tend to Destroy Home Life and How to Overcome Them.
8. "The Cotter's Saturday Night" as a Picture of Scottish Home Life.
9. How We Can Help Our Parents.
10. The Home Life of Great Americans.

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:6, 7; Ps. 128:3; Luke 2:51; Eph. 6:1; I Tim. 5:4; II Tim. 1:5.

#### COMMITTEES TO BE APPOINTED

**Parents' Committee**, to plan for holding a class social to which parents are to be invited. **Family Altar Committee**, to find out how many pupils of the class have family prayers at home and to encourage family worship in all homes coming under the influence of the class.

#### THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Respect for Parents.** Children owe to their parents a debt of gratitude which they can never pay; moreover, God has commanded children to honor and obey their parents. Therefore:

1. We will endeavor to render prompt and cheerful obedience to our parents.
2. We will honor our parents by always addressing them kindly and courteously and by being thoughtful for their welfare and comfort.
3. We will love our parents, knowing that they love us more than we can understand. We will try to keep our affection for them pure, deep, and expressive.







JEREMIAH

JONAH

ISAIAH

HABAKKUK

## CHAPTER XVIII

### JEREMIAH: HEROIC PROPHET OF DECLINING JUDAH

#### WEEK DAY SESSION

#### THE PERSECUTIONS OF A PROPHET

Jer., chs. 37 to 39

Other prophets had foreseen the ultimate fate of the Jewish nation from afar, but it was the lot of the prophet Jeremiah to live during the last fearful months when the Babylonian armies were battering the walls of Jerusalem and the doomed city was tottering to its fall. The period of his prophesying covers more than forty years. He saw five different kings on the throne of Judah and he saw the end of the kingdom and the destruction of the city and Temple.

**A Priest Who Became a Prophet.** The Jewish priests were generally more concerned about the forms of religion than they were about its spirit. They took care that the sacrifices should be duly offered in the Temple and that the religious festivals should be observed, but they took little interest in the maintenance of justice and moral uprightness in the nation. It is good to know that there was at least one exception. Jeremiah was a priest. He lived in Anathoth, a town set aside for the priests and located three miles north of Jerusalem. The call of God came to him to be a prophet when he was still quite young. He was a humble man and pleaded to be excused from the solemn obligations of the prophetic office, but God told him that he had long been chosen to be a prophet of the Most High, that even before he was born, the Almighty had chosen him to be his spokesman in the strenuous times which were drawing near.

**A Lonely Man with a Great Heart of Love.** As we glean bits of the biography of this great man from the passages in his writings where incidentally he mentions

himself, we are impressed with his loneliness. During the awful years just before the final overthrow of Jerusalem, he stood alone. No brother prophets stood by his side and shared his persecutions. He had neither wife nor child for he had foreseen the times of disaster just ahead and had never married. This childless man had a father's love and compassion for other people's children. He was within the walls of Jerusalem when famine and pestilence rested like a consuming blight on the childhood of the city.

"Mine eyes do fail with tears, my heart is troubled; . . .  
 Because the young children and the sucklings swoon in the  
 streets of the city.  
 They say to their mothers, Where is grain and wine?  
 When they swoon as the wounded in the streets of the city,  
 When their soul is poured out into their mothers' bosom."  
 —Lam. 2:11, 12.

"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"—Jer. 9:1.

The age of Jeremiah stands forever condemned before the world because it had for this tender-hearted and weeping prophet only revilings and persecutions. Declining Judah was not worthy of him.

**Persecutions Begin.** Jeremiah began to preach in his own town. He spoke plainly against the sins of the times and said that destruction for the city and the nation would surely come unless the people should repent. Instead of repenting, the people of the town were filled with rage against the man who had dared to tell them of their sins and to predict the destruction of the nation. They plotted against their fellow townsman and told him that they would kill him if he talked in this way any more. Jeremiah left the country town. But he had not been frightened away. He went where opposition would be more serious, and would not satisfy itself with empty threats. He went into Jerusalem and preached there as he had done in Anathoth. It was not many days before he found himself in the stocks. With feet and hands held between great beams of wood, he sat all day and received the jeers of the passing crowds. His enemies

thought that humiliation would stop his mouth, but it did not. He kept right on preaching.

**Jerusalem Besieged.** It was not long before Nebuchadnezzar's army was at the gates of Jerusalem. The terrified inhabitants of the country and smaller towns had fled, panic-stricken, before the advancing army of Babylon and had come pouring into Jerusalem, thus greatly increasing its population. The Babylonians encircled the city and raised great mounds of earth against it. From the summits of these mounds they could shoot their spears and arrows into the city, since their mounds overtopped the city walls. They brought their battering-rams up to the walls, and day and night the thunderous beating of the great iron-headed rams could be heard crushing their way through the masonry.

**The True Prophets and the False Prophets Face Each Other.** The king of Judah was troubled. He wondered what the end would be. He had not honored God, but he felt the need of him in this hour of peril. He called together those who professed to be prophets of Jehovah and asked them what the end would be. Would the Babylonians take the city or would Jehovah intervene and save his Temple as he had done in the case of Sennacherib? With one exception the prophets said: "Keep on fighting against the king of Babylon, for he shall not be able to take the city. Our God will come and save us." One lone prophet said: "Make terms of peace with the king of Babylon. If you surrender now, the city and the Temple will be saved. If you do not surrender now, the city will be taken and burned with fire." It was the voice of one man against the voice of a multitude, for the false prophets were many. The king hesitated; perhaps he knew some of these false prophets only too well, and felt they were not trustworthy, while he recognized the deep sincerity and heroic courage of the lone prophet, Jeremiah. While the king hesitated, an event occurred which seemed to prove that the false prophets were right.

**The Siege Raised.** The people of Judah were hoping for help from Egypt. That country was the natural rival of Babylon and the king of Egypt was viewing with apprehension the steady westward growth of the Baby-

lonian Empire. An immense army came marching out of Egypt to aid the Hebrews. The Babylonians were too wise to be caught between two fires. They raised the siege of Jerusalem and went to meet the Egyptians. The false prophets said, "We told you so." Jeremiah said, "The Babylonians will return and burn this city with fire." This persistency of Jeremiah angered his enemies beyond measure. They resolved to get rid of him. One day Jeremiah was leaving Jerusalem to attend to some business matters in Anathoth. His enemies laid hold of him as he was going out of the gate. They said that he was going away to join the Babylonians. Jeremiah denied the charge, but he was carried back into the city and put into a horrible dungeon. It was a kind of cistern, bottle-shaped, with no water, but deep mud in the bottom, and of course utterly dark when the lid was fastened down. The enemies of Jeremiah let him down into this cistern with ropes and he sank deep into the mire. Then they covered the cistern and went away, leaving their enemy to die. If it had not been for a kind-hearted Negro slave, Jeremiah would have died in the cistern dungeon.

**The Babylonians Return.** The great army that had come out of Egypt returned without having offered battle in behalf of the Hebrews and the Babylonian army came back to Jerusalem and resumed the siege. This time there was no respite. The walls began to totter. The desperate Hebrews built new walls within the old, so that when the Babylonians broke through one wall they saw another confronting them. For two years the struggle went on, but the beleaguered city could not hold out forever. The king was greatly distressed. He longed for some word of council from Jehovah. He knew now that the words of the false prophets were not reliable. Where was the brave prophet who had said that the Babylonians would return? It was certain that he would speak the truth. He made inquiry and found that he was in prison. He sent and had him brought secretly into the palace. He did not wish it to be known that he was consulting Jeremiah.

**King and Prophet.** In the royal palace the two, king and prophet, stood face to face. The troubled monarch

leaned forward looking earnestly into the face of the prophet. He asked in an awed whisper, "Is there any word from Jehovah?" Mud-bespattered and famished, hardly able to stand, knowing that the words he spoke might be his last, the prophet was nevertheless true to his high office. He would say what Jehovah had told him to say and nothing else. Meeting the king's gaze with a steady eye, he replied: "There is. Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon."

**The Destruction of the City and Temple.** The Babylonians ultimately made a breach in the walls and took the city by assault. The Temple and the royal palace were sacked and burned. The walls were torn down. Hardly a house was left standing. The king and some of his supporters fled through a secret passageway, but were overtaken and carried away to Babylon for punishment. The population had been greatly reduced by famine and pestilence. Many of the people perished in the fall of the city. The remnant of the Hebrews were driven away before the Babylonian army into the distant Euphrates Valley.

**Last Days of Jeremiah.** The Babylonians treated Jeremiah kindly. They told him that he could either go with the remnant of the Jews into the country about Babylon, or remain in Jerusalem. He chose to remain in the desolated city. It was not long before the little band of Jews which had been left in the city determined to flee, in a body, into Egypt, that they might escape from the rule of Babylon. Jeremiah resisted the move, but was compelled to go with them. In Egypt we lose sight of the heroic prophet, and we do not know what the end of his life may have been. We know, however, that for more than forty years he had borne heroic testimony for God and truth. The influence of such a life can never die.

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### HOW JEREMIAH DELIVERED HIS MESSAGES

Jer., chs. 13, 19, 22

In the preceding lesson we have sketched briefly some of the outstanding events in the life of Jeremiah. It is

worth our while to consider also the ways in which Jeremiah sought to make God's messages known. He did not merely utter these messages which God had sent him in sermons preached to the few who might come to hear him. He was tremendously intent on his task of making the mind of God known to the people of his day.

**A Sermon for the King.** On a certain occasion God told Jeremiah to go down to the house of the king and speak such words to the monarch as he should be given to speak. Jeremiah went. He preached a great sermon, but it was not the kind usually preached to royalty. It did not have any compliments in it, but much of reproof, many solemn warnings, and earnest admonitions. As you read these extracts of the prophet's sermon, remember that they were spoken to a king, one who had power and authority and who might do the speaker great service if his sermon were pleasing, great injury if the sermon gave offense. The king was Jehoiakim, the degenerate son of good king Josiah. He had forsaken the worship of Jehovah and had become an idolater. He was cruel and tyrannical toward his own people.

Some of the things the prophet said to the king and his officers are as follows:

"Hear the word of Jehovah, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates. Thus saith Jehovah: Execute ye justice and righteousness, and deliver him that is robbed out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence, to the sojourner, the fatherless, nor the widow; neither shed innocent blood in this place. For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people. But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith Jehovah, that this house shall become a desolation."—Jer. 22:2-5.

Looking about the spacious halls of the royal palace, with its ceilings of Lebanon cedar and its vermilion-tinted walls, the prophet said:

"Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by injustice; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not his hire; that saith, I will



build me a wide house and spacious chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign, because thou strivest to excel in cedar? Did not thy father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness? then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; and then it was well. . . . But thine eyes and thy heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for shedding innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it. Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or Ah sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem."—Jer. 22:13-19.

It is little wonder that such fearless preaching made a great stir and that the preacher was persecuted. Those who are guilty like Jehoiakim, on hearing such preaching, either repent or persecute.

**Some Object Lessons.** Jeremiah was so tremendously in earnest that he was not satisfied to preach merely in words. He knew that people are usually impressed by seeing things more than by only hearing about them. Jeremiah was evidently a great believer in the value of object lessons.

The prophet bought himself a beautiful linen girdle. It was probably more like a fine white vest than any other article of clothing with which we are familiar. The prophet wore it for a time, until the people became accustomed to seeing him with it. Then he took it and hid it in a lonely place among the rocks. A long time afterward he went and took it from its hiding place. It was all mildewed and rotten. Nevertheless the prophet put it on and went about the city with it. When people stared at the old ragged girdle, the prophet cried out to them, "Thus saith Jehovah, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem."

On another occasion the prophet persuaded the priests and elders to go with him down into the valley of the son of Hinnom. It was in this valley that the awful fire god, Molech, was worshiped and here the perverted Israelites even offered their children in sacrifice to the hideous idol. Jeremiah wished to persuade these unfaithful officers of

the Jewish nation that Jehovah would punish such dreadful violation of his laws. The prophet carried a large earthen water jar. When he had reached the spot where the terrible crimes were done in the name of religion, he paused and addressed the elders and priests in words eloquent with earnestness and lofty emotion. Suddenly pausing in his address, the prophet raised the earthen jar high above his head, then he dashed it upon the stones when it flew into a thousand rattling fragments. In the astonished silence which followed, the voice of the prophet rang out clear and penetrating: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury in Topheth, till there be no place to bury." Jer. 19:10, 11.

In those days it was customary for prisoners of war to be fastened together in long lines by wooden yokes which were fastened to the necks of the captives. Jeremiah made one of these yokes, which everyone could recognize, and wore it about the streets of Jerusalem. Wherever he went with the yoke, he told the people that unless they repented they would be led far away into a foreign land as prisoners of war. An enraged false prophet at last took the yoke off Jeremiah's neck and broke it in pieces.

There was in Judah a kind of society called the Rechabites. These people had taken a solemn oath that they would never taste wine and that they would do certain other things such as living in tents rather than in houses. They sought to maintain the old simple life of the wilderness, believing that it was only in this way that the ancient virtues of their race could be preserved. Jeremiah knew the fidelity with which the Rechabites kept their vows and he conceived a plan by which he hoped to teach a lesson to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He induced the Rechabites to come into the Temple. There was probably a great crowd there. The Rechabites were probably in view of the multitude for it was in a kind of elevated chamber that they were gathered. Jeremiah had bowls of wine brought in and set before every one of the Rechabites. Then he said to them, "Drink ye wine,"

but not one of them raised his cup to his mouth, or even touched it. Instead, they courteously said to Jeremiah, "We will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons, for ever."

The moment had come for which Jeremiah had planned. Turning to the multitudes he said: "Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith Jehovah. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; and unto this day they drink none, for they obey their father's commandment. But I have spoken unto you, rising up early and speaking; and ye have not hearkened unto me." Jer. 35:13, 14.

**The Writings of Jeremiah.** Jeremiah was an industrious writer. When he was shut up in prison, he could still write his messages. We have more material from his pen than from the pen of any other prophet. Besides the prophecies which bear his name, he wrote the book of Lamentations, a pathetic poem which recounts the events connected with the decline and fall of the nation. It is thought that also some of the Psalms were written by him. We see how industriously the prophet labored that he might make God's messages known to his people. He was not able to save the kingdom and the holy city, but his efforts did help to keep the light of God's truth in the world. When the Hebrews of Shushan turned their faces westward and came into their land to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and to restore the Temple, it was a manifestation that the seed which Jeremiah and others like him had sown in tears was beginning to bear fruit.

#### WITHOUT WAX

Do you know the meaning of our word "sincere"? It comes from two Latin words which mean "without wax." The term grew up in this way: In the days of the Roman Empire there were workmen who made beautiful vases and other forms of earthenware. Sometimes there would be some little flaw in the object after it had been completed and burned in the kiln. It might be just a little

crack of a spot where the enamel was chipped off. Dishonest workmen were very skillful in covering up these defects with wax. They could make the wax look exactly like the material of the vessel. But after a time the defect would begin to show and the vessel would be seen to be defective.

So it came to pass that honest dealers guaranteed their goods. They did so by inscribing somewhere on the vessel, two words which claimed that the article was genuine, *sine cera*, "without wax." We have given the word a wider range of meaning. We apply it not only to articles of merchandise but to persons. Some people are genuine; they ring true; they endure close and long-continued acquaintance and their value is constantly seen more clearly. There are other people who have hidden flaws. They are not genuine. They fail you in the hour of need. Perhaps one of the very greatest characteristics of Jeremiah was his sincerity, his genuineness.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, our Father, we thank thee for the Bible with its wonderful stories of the heroic men and women of the olden times. We thank thee for the example of perseverance and fidelity which these servants of thine have left to us. Help us to know thee in that intimate and personal way in which they knew thee. We, too, would hear thy voice speaking to us and guiding us through the pathway of duty and effort. Help us to have a deep and abiding love for thee, so that all that we say and do may be said and done in such a way as to build up thy Kingdom. Amen.

#### THE LESSON HYMN

"Where cross the crowded ways of life,  
Where sound the cries of race and clan,  
Above the noise of selfish strife,  
We hear thy voice, O Son of Man.

"In haunts of wretchedness and need,  
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,  
From paths where hide the lures of greed,  
We catch the vision of thy tears.

“ From tender childhood’s helplessness,  
 From woman’s grief, man’s burdened toil,  
 From famished souls, from sorrow’s stress,  
 Thy heart has never known recoil.

“ O Master, from the mountain side,  
 Make haste to heal these hearts of pain;  
 Among these restless throngs abide,  
 O tread the city’s streets again;

“ Till sons of men shall learn thy love,  
 And follow where thy feet have trod;  
 Till glorious from the heaven above,  
 Shall come the City of our God.”

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## EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

### CHRISTIAN GENUINENESS

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER’S OPENING ADDRESS

Hypocrisy was the one bad trait which Jesus could not tolerate. He wished people to be genuine. Hypocrisy is the attempt to appear something which we are not. The temptation to be hypocritical, in some degree, is a very subtle temptation. We all like to have people think well of us and are apt to let it go if they by chance overestimate our worth and goodness, whereas if they underestimate us in these respects we soon make a fuss about it.

One of the fine things in the character of Jeremiah was his entire genuineness. It shows in many of the acts of his life. He had fits of despondency and was honest enough to tell us just how he felt when he wished that he had never been born. His tears for the suffering women and children were genuine tears of pity. It was his own inner loyalty to the truth which made the false prophets so despicable in his eyes.

We young people ought to be cultivating this spirit of genuineness. We ought to be absolutely sincere in all our conversations and all our relationships. The young people whose parents and teachers cannot depend on them are not genuine. The girl or boy who talks in a friendly way to you when in your presence, but says

mean things about you when you are absent, is not genuine. Such boys or girls have a streak of wax in their personality and some day people will discover it and they will be put into the discredited group of people who are defective in character.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. Tell Some Events in the Life of Jeremiah Which Showed That He Was Sincere.
2. Do the Same for Elijah, for Amos, for Hosea.
3. Name Some Ways in Which Boys and Girls Can Cultivate Genuineness of Character.
4. Can You Think of Any Really Great Men or Women of History of Whom It Can Be Truthfully Said That They Were Insincere?
5. In What Ways Are Young People Tempted to Pretend That They Are Something Which They Really Are Not?

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

I Sam. 16:7; Matt. 23:27; John 7:24; James 3:17; I Peter 2:1.

#### COMMITTEE TO BE APPOINTED

**Committee on Schoolroom Decorations**, to secure suitable pictures for the schoolroom such as copies of Sargent's Hebrew Prophets; also to secure plants for the windows and the like.

#### THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Genuineness.** Hypocrisy and deceit are displeasing to God and destructive to character. Therefore:

1. We will not say by word or action anything which we do not believe to be true.
2. We will not pretend to feel either friendship or any other emotion if the feeling does not exist in us, but we

will try to cultivate friendship and good will, so that we can make our actions a genuine expression of such emotions.

3. We will strive to have a genuine religion which reverences God sincerely and which makes us devoted to the welfare of all our brothers and sisters in God's great family.

CHAPTER XIX  
PREVISIONS OF THE GOLDEN AGE  
WEEK DAY SESSION

THE GOLDEN AGE WHICH THE PROPHETS FORESAW

Isa. 2:2-4; 11:1-9; 56:6-8; Zech. 8:20-23

We have seen how the message of practically every prophet ended with words of encouragement and hope. Beyond the evils which surrounded the people and beyond the disasters which they foresaw in the nearer future, they saw a more distant future, in which God's plans would be worked out and where justice and righteousness would be established forever. They were not given all the details of God's plans, nor was the exact time of these future events revealed to them, but God's inspiration did give them assurance of the coming of a day of full and everlasting triumph for the cause to which they were giving their lives. It will be helpful to us to consider a few of the ideas which the prophets had concerning the great day of triumph for God's plans on the earth.

**A Time of Universal Peace.** Practically all the prophets wrote during war times. They were familiar with the sight of marching troops. They saw the flashing of swords and spears. They witnessed the havoc of war: broken and maimed men, suffering widows, and homeless children. These kind-hearted men who knew the heart of God and who loved humanity did not believe that war could last forever. They were sure that God's plans provided for its elimination from the world. The messages which God gave them to speak to the people confirmed them in their faith that war was to be done away. More than one of the prophets declares that the nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up



the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

**A Time of Universal Justice.** The prophets were all familiar with the gross injustice which characterized the times in which they lived. They were none of them men to shut their eyes to such things as the oppression of the poor and the perversion justice in the courts. Their religion was not of the "other-worldly" kind which refuses to battle for justice and righteousness in the world in which we are living now. It was their attempt to apply the principles of their religion to the evils of their day that got them into trouble. If they had been willing to overlook the wrongs that were so prevalent and to preach only general religious truth, they would have escaped persecution. But they were very specific in their utterances; they said, "This is sin," and "Thou art a sinner." Perhaps they were champions of justice because they knew the God of justice better than others of their time. They proclaimed that the day of Jehovah's triumph would be a day of triumph for justice.

Here is Isaiah's sublime picture of the reign of the righteous prince who is to set up the everlasting Kingdom of justice and righteousness:

"And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit: and the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah; and his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins."—Isa. 11:1-5.

**A Time of Universal Religion.** The prophets were fully convinced that the day would come when Jehovah their God would be worshiped by all the nations of the earth. We have in facts like this proof that the Hebrews through their great spiritual leaders and, indeed, through

even the humblest believers, were in contact with the eternal God. How else could they have come to believe that their God would go forward to universal dominion over the hearts of all mankind? It must have been that God himself had taught them that he was the only God and that the gods of the nations were nothing but wood and stone, the works of men's hands. The prophets were conscious that as the descendants of Abraham they were to bring a blessing to all the nations of the earth by teaching them to know and honor the only God. The following quotation from Zechariah is typical of these prophetic utterances which foretell the spread of knowledge concerning Jehovah the God of the Jews and of all the earth:

"Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come peoples, and the inhabitants of many cities; and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to entreat the favor of Jehovah, and to seek Jehovah of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, they shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."—Zech. 8:20-23.

**A Religion of the Heart.** Some of the prophets came to see that religion must take deeper hold on the life of those who profess to be religious, than had been the case with many of their fellow countrymen. They realized that religion was not a matter of forms such as the offering of sacrifices, the attending of festivals, and the saying of prayers. It was not conformity to outward rules, but an inner motive determining all the acts and attitudes of life. No prophet has expressed this more clearly than Jeremiah:

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying,

Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."—Jer. 31:33, 34.

**A Universal and Everlasting Kingdom.** The prophets foresaw the downfall of the Hebrew nation, but their faith would not allow them to believe that this was the end of the matter. They believed that God would ultimately overcome every obstacle, erase every failure, and bring his plans to a glorious realization. They looked for the establishment of a Kingdom on earth where God's will would be known and obeyed, a Kingdom that should be world-wide and that should stand forever. They believed this, not as a mere possibility, but as the assured result of God's dealings with men. They believed it in a way which made them ready to live for the coming of the Kingdom, or, if need be, to die for it. This sublime goal is still God's program for the world. Like the prophets, we can be coworkers with God in the great task of setting up his Kingdom in the world.

#### A BOY SCOUT AND A SELFISH RICH MAN

James Leighton was a Boy Scout in a small town of an eastern state. When the World War was going on he sought to help his country in every way he could. Every time there was a bond sale, he offered his services and was very successful in his efforts to induce people to buy bonds. There was hardly a person in the town who sold so many bonds as James did. Toward the close of the war, there was a campaign for raising money for a number of such organizations as the Y. M. C. A., the Salvation Army, and the War Camp Community Service. The people in charge of this campaign had heard of the large success of James Leighton in the bond sales and they sought his help in their own undertaking. James readily consented to give his assistance. He was a lad who did thoroughly anything he undertook, so he made preparation for this new task. He made himself familiar with the work of the different organizations that were asking for help. He learned not only what the Y. M. C. A. had done in the trenches, but also about their plans for a great

educational campaign in the army, so that the soldiers would go back to civil life better fitted to become good and efficient citizens than they had been when they joined the army.

Because James was enthusiastic and knew his subject well, he made an excellent solicitor. There was hardly any question about the work of the various organizations which he could not answer. Because he was so successful, the managers sent this Boy Scout to interview the wealthiest man in the town, to whom solicitors for philanthropic causes dreaded to go. James was not afraid to tackle any such job. He was glad to go. He was admitted to the splendid home of the man of wealth and launched at once upon the subject of his mission. He told of the great services the several organizations had already rendered during the War and of their plans for the future. His auditor seemed interested. He even asked a question or two as if he wished to understand more fully the plans of these organizations. James was sure that he was making good progress and he waxed enthusiastic in the recital of all that was being planned. His auditor heard him through; then he dashed all the lad's hopes to the ground by saying in a sarcastic tone:

"Oh, yes, I understand, young man. When you get all your plans in operation you will have a Utopia here on earth. I want to tell you that I have no money to give for the promotion of such air-castle building. While the War was going on, I was ready to do my part. I bought bonds and I paid my taxes, but the War is about over now. Let the soldiers go back to work. We had better save our money for the next war, for this talk about getting rid of war is all nonsense. People have always made war against one another occasionally and they always will."

The scout was repulsed. He turned and went down the lane toward his home; his heart was a little heavy, for the time being, with a sense of failure. The man of wealth watched him go until he turned a corner in the lane and went out of sight; then he went into his house muttering something about "crack-brained fanatics who fill even the children's heads with their nonsense."

God's plans have been much delayed by just such men who have called the visions of the prophets the dreams of fanatics.

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH AS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE HOPES AND VISIONS OF THE PROPHETS

#### Psalm 72

We must not think of these stories of the prophets as a recital of far-off events which have nothing to do with the times in which we live. They have a great deal to do with our own times and with the lives of each one of us. The very same task at which Elijah and Amos and Jeremiah labored is the task of all God's people to-day. Through the religion of the Hebrews God prepared for the coming of the Christian religion. Christianity took up the unfinished task which the patriarchs and prophets began. In the next book of this course we shall learn how God has brought the coming of his Kingdom near by sending his Son to be a perfect pattern for our lives and to be the infinite Helper and Saviour.

#### THE TWOFOLD TASK OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

The Christian religion has been given to the world for a great purpose. In the first place its mission is to fit individuals for an eternal life with God. The time we spend in this life is but a moment compared with that immeasurable time we shall spend after we leave this world. We must not forget that religion is concerned with life in a world beyond and with the sublime possibilities of such a life for growth and service. We shall make a great mistake if we do not keep this supremely important significance of religion uppermost in our minds.

Nevertheless we make a mistake when we come to think of religion as having to do only with the world to come. The Christian religion has another goal and that goal is the establishment of God's Kingdom upon earth. The things for which the prophets contended, namely

justice and peace and universal brotherhood, must be the goals of the Christian Church, for the Church has taken up the task of the prophets.

These two phases are not wholly distinct, however. They must develop together. Neither can be complete without the other. They are different sides of one process. The Kingdom of God can be established upon earth, only as the people of the earth are made fit for a kingdom on earth like the Kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, by setting up God's Kingdom in the world, as far as we can and as rapidly as we can, we make it more and more possible to reach individuals and to bring them into that spiritual condition where they are fit for God's Kingdom either in this world or the next.

#### THE SPREAD OF GOD'S TRUTH THROUGH ALL THE EARTH

If God's Kingdom is to be set up all over the world, all the world must know about God. Every idol-worshipping nation must learn about the one God and must turn to him and worship him. The Christian Church is working at this great task. It has certain enterprises which look toward this end. Some of them may be named as follows:

**The Foreign Missions Enterprise.** Thousands of missionaries of the Christian Church are spending their lives in Africa, China, Japan, and India. They are there to teach the people about God, the God the prophets knew. They wish the people to know him that they may be ready for the eternal life of the world to come, also that they may be citizens of God's Kingdom here in this world. All the nations of the earth will have to know God, before his Kingdom can be established upon the earth.

**The Home Missions Enterprise.** There are also sections in our own country where missionaries must be sent by the Christian Church, places where the people are too few and too poor to keep up a Christian church, or where they do not care enough about religion to try to do so. These communities are found in some of our mountain sections, on our frontiers, and in our great cities. You see, we must not only make every nation

Christian, but every part of every nation must likewise be made Christian.

**The Religious Education Enterprise.** The teaching of any nation about God is not a task which can be done once for all. It is a task which must go on continually. Children are born and grow up to maturity and people grow old and pass away to the other life beyond. Each generation must teach religious truth to the succeeding generation. The time may come when the task of the missionary is over but the task of the religious teacher of children will go on as long as the life of the world will last.

### THE APPLICATION OF GOD'S TRUTH TO THE WHOLE OF LIFE

One reason why God's Kingdom is not yet set upon the earth is because the whole world has not yet learned about the true God. Another reason is because those portions of the earth that have heard about him have not come to know him very well and have failed to apply even the truth they have received to all the problems of their lives. Therefore the work of the Church must go on at home and abroad. Every relationship of life must be brought under the law of God, the law the great Creator intended for us from the beginning.

**Domestic Relationships.** All the relationships of the family must be brought under the laws of God before his Kingdom can be fully established on earth. Husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents and children, must live together as "heirs of the grace of life." Love and unselfishness must abound in the homes which are truly homes of the Kingdom.

**Community Relationships.** When God's Kingdom comes, the whole community will be like a large Christian family. Each member of this larger family will be considerate of the happiness and welfare of all the other members. No member of the community will seek to gain something for self at the expense of some other member of the family. There will be no sellers of dissipation who get gain for themselves through the weaknesses of their fellows.

**Industrial Relationships.** The conflicts between labor and capital will cease when the principles of the gospel of Christ are applied to the business interests of the world. These problems which are receiving so much attention in our day, will be solved in the light of that truth which God has been shedding abroad through prophets and through the teachings and the life of his Son. They will never be rightly and finally solved in any other way.

**International Relationships.** The World War came because the nations of the earth did not deal with one another on a Christian basis. The relationships among them were determined by pagan standards. The same principles of unselfishness, love, and service that determine the acts of a Christian gentleman must come to rule the actions of nations. When that day comes war will be impossible. When nations have learned this great lesson, we shall have taken a long step toward establishing God's Kingdom in the world.

All of these relationships must be Christianized before individuals can be fully Christian. Individuals find it exceedingly hard to live up to Christian standards when so many of the relationships of the life in the midst of which they exist are not Christianized. Take this illustration: Two nations are drawn into war. They are nominally Christian, that is, they have many Christian citizens, but their relations to one another, as nations, are not on a Christian basis; therefore they go to war. What shall the Christian citizens do? Shall the Christian citizens of one nation fight to the death with the Christian citizens of another nation? That is usually the case. This tragedy is necessary because the relationships of the two nations are not based on the teachings of Christ. If a citizen says, "I do not believe in war; I will not fight," he is, nevertheless, a party to the combat. Whenever he buys a postage stamp he is giving his money to buy arms and ammunition to destroy the enemies of his nation. Thus we see that the making of the life of any one individual wholly Christian while he is a part of a community and a nation which are not wholly Christian, is a difficult task.



## THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we thank thee that thou hast given us a part in the sublime task of bringing in thy Kingdom. We thank thee that we can have in this labor fellowship with the great men and women of the past. Give us something of their devotion to this great undertaking. Help us to live as good citizens of thy Kingdom. Help us to love righteousness and justice and truth. Enable us to do something every day that will help some one else to be happy and useful. We ask in the name of our Saviour and King. Amen.

## THE LESSON HYMN

- “ ‘Thy kingdom come,’ on bended knee  
 The passing ages pray;  
 And faithful souls have yearned to see  
 On earth that Kingdom’s day.
- “ But the slow watches of the night  
 Not less to God belong;  
 And for the everlasting right  
 The silent stars are strong.
- “ And lo! already on the hills  
 The flags of dawn appear;  
 Gird up your loins, ye prophet souls,  
 Proclaim the day is near:
- “ The day in whose clear-shining light  
 All wrongs shall stand revealed,  
 When justice shall be throned in might,  
 And every hurt be healed;
- “ When knowledge, hand in hand with peace,  
 Shall walk the earth abroad—  
 The day of perfect righteousness,  
 The promised day of God.”

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 EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

## GOD’S KINGDOM THAT IS TO BE

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER’S OPENING ADDRESS

The first petition of the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples is a request for the establishing of God’s King-

dom on the earth. The same prayer gives us our best definition of the Kingdom of God. It is that form of earthly society where God's will is done as perfectly as it is in heaven. It must be possible to have this kind of society on earth or Jesus would not have taught his disciples to pray for it. He would not have taught his disciples to expect and to pray for impossibilities. We know that there is no such kingdom on the earth to-day. In none of the kingdoms of the world is God's will done perfectly. It is not in the Church either, for even in the Church God's will is not done "as it is in heaven." This Kingdom of which Jesus spoke must be a kingdom that is yet to be.

In another place we are told that Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you." Did he mean another kingdom from that for which he taught his disciples to pray? I think not. The Kingdom of God must be in the hearts of people before it can begin to be in the world. It is based on that inner law of which we have heard in our study of the prophet Jeremiah. It is because of this that every one of us may have a part in bringing in God's Kingdom. We can cooperate with God in setting it up in our own hearts. If the Kingdom is really in our own hearts, we shall be useful to God in setting it up in the hearts of other people and in the world.

#### STUDY TOPICS

1. What Can Young People Do to Help to Establish the Kingdom of God in Their Own Communities?
2. What Can the Church Do Toward Establishing God's Kingdom in the World?
3. What Can Our Nation Do Toward Establishing God's Kingdom in the World?
4. Why Is the Bringing in of God's Kingdom the Greatest of All Undertakings?
5. What Are Some of the Qualities of Character Necessary for Citizenship in God's Kingdom?

#### VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING

Psalms 2, 110; Isa. 11:6-9; 56:6-8; Matt. 6:33; Rev. 12:10.

THINGS TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE  
CLASS OR BY COMMITTEES

1. Find out about our denomination's work for poor children in the great cities.
2. Find out about the Hague Tribunal.
3. Find out about the League of Nations.
4. Find out about labor unions and employers' organizations.
5. Find out about what the Church is doing for laboring people.

THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Loyalty to the Kingdom That Is to Be.**  
We believe that it is God's plan to banish evil from the earth and to set up an everlasting Kingdom of righteousness and brotherhood. Therefore:

1. We will try to be worthy to be citizens in such a Kingdom.
2. We will try to lead others to become citizens in it.
3. We will work for its establishment in our community, in our nation, and in the world.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE COMING SAVIOUR

#### WEEK DAY SESSION

##### THE PRINCE OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID

II Sam. 7: 1-17; Isa. 9: 6, 7; 33: 20-22

During all the years when good and evil were contending for the supremacy among the Hebrew people, a great hope was constantly growing in the hearts of those in the nation who were true to Jehovah. These godly Hebrews believed that their God would send them a Helper and Deliverer. They called the expected deliverer the Messiah, which means the Anointed of Jehovah, therefore the passages of Scripture which speak of the coming deliverer are called Messianic prophecies. It is interesting to note the growth of the Messianic hope among the Hebrew people.

**The Earliest Gospel.** No one can say just when the Messianic hope began, though we are sure that it began to be felt in a vague way far back among the ancestors of the Hebrew race. The first reference to it in the Bible is found in the third chapter of Genesis in the passage which says that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Hence it is probably true that with the first consciousness of guilt, God led man to hope for a final deliverance from sin. In this first gospel there is no hint of an individual deliverer though there is nothing to exclude such an idea. The promise is that victory over evil shall be wrought through the "seed" of woman, which might mean through the combined efforts of all mankind or through one person who was born of woman. Gen. 3:15.

**World-Wide Blessing Promised Through the Family of Abraham.** We have seen how God promised Abraham that, if he would leave his father's country and go into a

land which God would show him, his descendants should become a great nation. The promise was made that this nation should be a blessing to all the families of the earth. It was Esau's disregard for this promise which made him sell his birthright for a mess of pottage, thus demonstrating his unfitness to be used of God. It was Jacob's evident care for this promise that made him of service to God. The Hebrews never entirely lost the belief in this high destiny for their race. At some times it was more clearly seen than at other times, but there were always some faithful souls who cherished it and preserved its spiritual meaning.

**Great David's Greater Son.** The story of David's rise from a herder of sheep to become king over united Israel is one of the most interesting in the Bible. During most of his life David lived righteously before God. Under his leadership the kingdom grew strong and its territories were widely extended. It was one of the deepest hopes of David's heart that his house should continue to rule over the kingdom of Israel forever. One day the prophet Nathan came to David and told him that God had granted the desire of his heart. The words of the prophet were as follows:

"Moreover Jehovah telleth thee that Jehovah will make thee a house. When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."—II Sam. 7:11-16.

We know how this promise of God was fulfilled in Jesus. David was of course unable to understand all of God's plans, but he was comforted by the assurance that his descendants were to establish an everlasting kingdom under the care of Jehovah. This belief that a descendant of David was to reestablish the kingdom of the Hebrews

became widely spread. It lasted and grew constantly stronger through a good many centuries. We shall find it mentioned repeatedly when we come to study the life of Christ.

**A Human Helper and Deliverer.** The Messianic hope grew rapidly during the troublous times following the division of the Hebrew nation. All realized that the ideal kingdom of which they had dreamed seemed farther off than it had in the days of David. The kings who sat on David's throne at Jerusalem were David's descendants, but none of them fulfilled the people's expectations as to the great Son of David who was to set up a Kingdom to last forever. In thus expecting a descendant of David to become their deliverer, the Hebrew people were evidently thinking of a human helper, but mingled with this thought was another which had in mind One who should be something more than man.

**A Divine Saviour and Redeemer.** As the clouds gathered about the declining Hebrew nation, the sense of need for divine help grew strong. The problems with which the little band of the faithful were grappling were seen to be too great for man to solve alone. The eyes of the righteous few were turned Godward. They longed for some manifestation of Jehovah such as they had never yet known, some visible evidence of his presence in the midst of his people which would turn the scale of battle in the struggle between good and evil. You can hear a note of unutterable longing in prayers like this of the prophet Isaiah:

"Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might quake at thy presence, as when fire kindleth the brushwood, and the fire causeth the waters to boil; to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!"—Isa. 64:1, 2.

The belief that God would in some way come in person to the rescue of his people and in defense of righteousness grew stronger and stronger. Under God's inspiration Isaiah declared that the name of the coming Redeemer should be "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Ever-

lasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isa. 9:6. In another sermon he predicted the coming of Jehovah in person to rule over his people.

“Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: . . . thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tent that shall not be removed, the stakes whereof shall never be plucked up, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there Jehovah will be with us in majesty, a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our law-giver, Jehovah is our king; he will save us.”—Isa. 33:17, 20-22.

That this belief in the coming of Jehovah in person to dwell among his people persisted is shown by the writings of Malachi, one of the last of the Hebrew prophets. Certain words of his seem to be predictions concerning the coming of Christ and concerning his forerunner, John the Baptist:

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts.”—Mal. 3:1.

**Jesus as the Fulfillment of Messianic Prophecy.** There is only one person in all history who can fulfill the Messianic prophecies. He was a man, born of a woman. He was a descendant of King David. He is God’s Son, and one with the Father in power and glory. He is the King for whom the righteous Hebrews longed, the Saviour not only of the peoples and of the nations, but of all who come to him.

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown him Lord of all.”

#### THE KINGDOM OF THE MESSIAH

The utterances of the prophets concerning the Kingdom which the Messiah is to establish are among the most beautiful and sublime passages of the Bible. Here

is Isaiah's picture of the universal peace and good will which shall prevail in that Kingdom :

“And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.”—Isa. 11:6-9.

As we saw in our last lesson, we have the opportunity to become helpers in the great task of setting up the Kingdom of the Messiah. No enterprise is half so important as this. No knight ever started out on a quest half so noble. Every boy and girl who studies these lessons can have an important part in this sublime undertaking, if all will be true to their pledge of loyalty to the Kingdom that is to be.

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## SUNDAY SESSION

### THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

Isa., ch. 53

We come now to the study of one of the most remarkable chapters in the Old Testament. It is Isaiah's great picture of the suffering Saviour. It was written hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus, yet it is a wonderful picture of him and of his sufferings for the salvation of the world. How did the prophet come to write these words? Most of the people thought that the Messiah would be a king like other kings, only more powerful; that he would wage a war of extermination against his enemies and triumph through the power of force. Here is a picture so different from what we might expect that the effect is startling. Some have thought that the sufferings of the Hebrew people helped the prophet to under-



stand that the Messiah would win a hard way to victory through suffering. We do not know about this, but, in any case, it seems certain that God must have helped the prophet to understand what the world's Saviour would undergo to redeem humanity.

**The Lowly Origin of the World's Redeemer.** The picture which the prophet gives us in the opening verses of the chapter is not the picture of a king of the usual kind. The kingliness of the coming Messiah was not to be evident in the manner of his advent into the world. His coming was to be in such a quiet and usual way that it would not create any great comment. He was to grow up "as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." There was to be nothing in the outward appearance of the Coming One to advertise to the world the greatness of his character and the sublimity of his mission. He was to have no "form nor comeliness" and there was to be "no beauty" leading men to desire him. The comeliness and the beauty of the Redeemer were to be inward in their nature, seen only by those who had eyes to see such things.

**A Bearer of Other Men's Sins.** When any person voluntarily takes upon himself the consequences of some other person's sins and suffers for these sins, we call such suffering "vicarious." The prophet declares that the King for whom the Hebrews were longing would be a vicarious sufferer. He was to be "wounded for our transgressions, . . . bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." The Messiah was to be a sin bearer: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

**A Lamb Led to Slaughter.** Instead of mounting the throne of David to pronounce awful doom against his enemies, as so many of the Hebrews believed that the Messiah would do, we are told by the prophet that the Messiah whom he foresaw would himself be led before a judgment seat of oppression and cruelty. In meekness and self-control he would open not his mouth in the presence of his accusers. He would suffer shameful

death among wicked men and would be buried in the grave of a man of wealth. The Messiah should suffer all these things, "although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

**Glorified and Triumphant Through Sufferings and Death.** The prophet foresees that through vicarious suffering and death this Servant of Jehovah will accomplish the great objectives of his mission: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many." "The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand," that is, the work God wishes done in the world will be accomplished under the leadership and help of this Servant Messiah.

The words of this chapter were fulfilled in a wonderful way by Jesus. When we come to study his life, we shall see how this picture of the suffering Servant of Jehovah is a life portrait of Jesus of Nazareth.

**Our Redeemer and Lord.** This Saviour of whom the Hebrew prophets wrote has a very personal relationship to each one of us. He suffered and died to save each of us from the guilt and power of sin and to make it possible for us to become citizens of his Kingdom. Without fellowship with him we cannot accomplish the life work which God has intended for us. Without him we cannot grow into the purity of life and unselfishness of spirit which make one fit for the life everlasting. We can all become his disciples, if we will; and if we follow him he will make us to become something greater in character and more useful in service than we can possibly become without him.

### THE COST OF THE KINGDOM

A visit to the battle field of Gettysburg is one of the most interesting and instructive experiences possible for a thoughtful person. Hundreds of monuments are scattered over this ground where the Union and the Confederate armies contended for three days in the most decisive battle of the Civil War. Some of these monuments mark the positions held by various regiments in the great

conflict. Some of them are high towers of granite or marble erected by states to the memory of their own soldiers who fell in the great struggle. Some of them mark the spots where some noted generals fell. But more impressive than any of these are the grim old trenches running all along Cemetery Ridge, the very fortifications behind which the Union soldiers were concealed on that last memorable day of the battle, the same fortifications against which the Confederates made their gallant assault, only to be hurled back, at last, in confusion and despair. But there is an even more impressive sight than any of these. It is the long rows of unmarked stones where lies the dust of the thousands of common soldiers who gave up their lives in the great battle. For the most part, these soldiers were hardly more than boys. They gave their lives for their country in their early youth.

Do you know why our country has made the Gettysburg battle field a national park? Was it that these heroes who gave up their lives for the saving of the nation might be honored? That was a part of the object the nation had in view, but its primary motive was something else. Our nation wished the boys and girls of every future generation to know what it had cost to save the nation in the dreadful days of the Civil War. For the same purpose Valley Forge has been made a public park, because it was there that the little American army suffered so heroically from hunger and cold during the Revolutionary War. So you will find all over our country these spots which are a constant reminder to each generation that our nation has cost something.

One of the important lessons we should learn from our study of the patriarchs and prophets is the cost of the religious truths which are offered so freely to us in our own day. These truths have been bought with a great price, but not too great, for their value is beyond computation. It was for these truths that men like Jeremiah suffered persecution. It was for these truths, and that man might know and love them and obey them, that Jesus gave up his life as the suffering Servant of Jehovah. We should regard the opportunity to become members of God's Church and of his Kingdom as a privilege, the

value of which it is beyond our powers to estimate. Jesus had a good deal to say about the value of the Kingdom of God. He said that it is like a pearl of great price, so immensely valuable that a man might wisely sell all that he had in order to buy it.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, help us to appreciate the value of the religious truths which are so freely offered to us. Help us all to become worthy citizens of thy Kingdom. Teach us how to honor thee. Teach us the way of brotherhood and service. Fit us for the largest and most useful life possible for us now and in the life to come. Give us self-control and a spirit of friendship and justice. We ask in the name of our Redeemer. Amen.

#### THE LESSON HYMN

"I hear thy welcome voice  
That calls me, Lord, to thee  
For cleansing in thy precious blood  
That flowed on Calvary.

#### Refrain:

"I am coming, Lord,  
Coming now to thee:  
Wash me, cleanse me, in the blood  
That flowed on Calvary.

"'Tis Jesus calls me on  
To perfect faith and love,  
To perfect hope, and peace, and trust,  
For earth and heaven above.

"'Tis Jesus who confirms  
The blessed work within,  
By adding grace to welcomed grace,  
Where reigned the power of sin.

"And he the witness gives  
To loyal hearts and free,  
That every promise is fulfilled,  
If faith but brings the plea."

**EXPRESSIONAL SESSION****THE DAY WHEN WE MAKE OUR GREATEST  
DECISION**

The success, or failure, of a life depends on the kind of decisions it makes. Those who have attained large success in various forms of human effort have usually made, early in life, certain wise decisions which they have kept faithfully. Our spiritual and mental condition when we make great decisions is a matter of importance. Some people make important decisions when they are down-hearted and discouraged, and they find afterward that their decisions have been wrong and have caused them to fail. One should be in the right frame of mind when considering some decision which will affect all the rest of his life.

Many of the important decisions of life are made in youth. It is then that most of us decide on a life work. It is then that we decide whether we are to receive a college education, or only a common-school or a high-school education. It is then that we decide what things we are going to find pleasure in and the kind of people we are going to have for our friends. But there is a more important decision than any of these, and it is nearly always made in youth. That decision is the choice or rejection of the Christian life.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR DECISION FOR OR AGAINST THE  
CHRISTIAN LIFE**

The day when we decide for, or against, the Christian life is the day of our greatest life decision. It has more to do with ourselves than any other decision and it affects many more people than ourselves, perhaps even the people who will be living centuries ahead of us in the future. This decision has to do, not only with the few years we live on this earth, but with the immeasurable time we shall live in the world to come.

**REASONS WHY WE SHOULD DECIDE FOR THE CHRISTIAN  
LIFE**

There are so many reasons why each of us should decide for the Christian life that we cannot even name them

all here. In fact, every valid reason is in favor of such a choice and there is absolutely not one reason against it.

**Such a Choice Leads to Perfect Spiritual Growth.** Did you ever see a plant that had tried to grow in a dark cellar? If you have, you know that it was a very imperfect plant. There was nothing perfect about it. Its leaves lacked the important green substance without which they were hardly real leaves. The flowers were without color and they never bore any fruit. Life without religion is like a plant growing in a cellar. Religion is the sunlight of God for the soul and there will be no perfection for our souls if God's sunlight is denied them. That is what our lesson hymn means when it says,

" 'Tis Jesus calls me on  
To perfect faith and love,  
To perfect hope, and peace, and trust,  
For earth and heaven above."

**Such a Choice Leads to the Highest Usefulness.** If we would do as much good as we can we must have religion. Religion will give us that spirit of unselfishness without which there is no true service. Religion will cause us to love to do good to others and it will make us diligent and faithful and wise. God chose Jacob because Jacob was capable of becoming religious and therefore useful to God in his great plan. If we would be helpers of God we must know God's way of doing things and to know that is to be religious.

**Such a Choice Is Obedience to God's Commandments.** This is not a matter in which God has said, "Do as you please." He has said to every one of us, or will say it soon, "Son, daughter, give me thy heart." If we refuse to choose the religious life we say, "No," to God.

#### WHEN TO DECIDE

There comes a time in the life of every boy and girl when God calls to a closer fellowship with himself than it was possible to know in childhood. Boys and girls at that time begin to feel a real desire to become religious

in a deep way. They begin to think about joining the Church. These feelings are God's call to them. This is the time for them to make the great decision. Nothing is gained by putting it off and there is great danger in such an act. The interest will be apt to grow less as they grow older, and may finally disappear and the whole of life be spent without fellowship with God. "Now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

### HOW A PERSON BECOMES A CHRISTIAN

The process through which a person becomes a Christian is simple. We become Christians through faith in Jesus as our Saviour. We not only believe that there was such a person as Jesus, but we respond to him with love and devotion. When we believe on Jesus in this way we become his disciples. We learn more and more about him and we come to be more and more like him.

### THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Loyalty to Jesus Christ.** (To be subscribed to by those who are Christians or who now make their decision for the Christian life.) We believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Therefore:

1. We accept him as our Lord and Saviour.
2. We promise that we will try to do what he would have us do.
3. We will honor and love him and try to grow like him in character.

CHAPTER XXI  
THE INVINCIBLE PURPOSES OF GOD  
WEEK DAY SESSION  
THE TIME BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS  
Isa. 6 : 8-11 ; 55 : 10-13

Some hundreds of years come in between the time when the last Old Testament book was written and the beginning of the New Testament times. These were centuries marked by many stirring events in the life of the Jewish people when God was working for the fulfillment of his plans quite as truly as he had been working in the preceding centuries when the Hebrew people were enjoying the opportunities of that second chance which their God had graciously given them. The story of this second chance for the Jewish nation cannot be completed in this series of lessons based on the Old Testament, for it extended on into New Testament times.

**The Slow Growth of the Restored Hebrew Nation.** The little band of Jews who had come back to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem grew but slowly. Occasionally new bands of returning Hebrews joined them, however, so that after a good many years the empty land began to be refilled with Hebrew people. The Hebrew nation was no longer independent. It was subject to the Persian monarchy which, in addition to the land of Palestine, ruled nearly all the world that was known at that time, with the exception of the land of Greece and the territory westward from the Greeks. The Hebrews could not be entirely satisfied under foreign dominion, but the period of peace enabled them to develop and the power of Persia protected them during this period when they were too few to protect themselves.

**The Conquests of Alexander the Great.** You doubtless have read of the great Macedonian general, Alexander, who conquered the Persian Empire. The land of the Jews became a part of the dominion of Alexander the



Great. After the death of Alexander, his immense empire was torn to pieces by the wars between his different generals and Palestine came under the rule of one of these generals. Great numbers of Greek people came into the country and built splendid cities, especially in the northern portion of the country and in the lands east of the Jordan River. The Greek language came to be the common speech of the country, especially among the educated people.

**The Persecutions Under Antiochus Epiphanes.** The Jews were fairly well satisfied so long as they could worship Jehovah as they believed he desired to be worshiped. But after a time there came to be a king named Antiochus Epiphanes who was ruler over the country. This king made up his mind that his country would be stronger if it spoke one language and had one religion. He determined to make the Greek language the only speech of all his realm and the Greek religion the only religion. So he issued laws that the Jews should no longer worship their God, Jehovah. They must worship Jupiter and Venus and the other gods whom the Greek people worshiped. It was a time of great peril. If the Hebrews yielded, the religion of the true God was likely to perish from the world. Antiochus was an energetic and determined ruler. He sent his officers and soldiers into all the towns and cities of Palestine to see that his orders were obeyed. He went to Jerusalem and took possession of the Temple of Jehovah and proclaimed it to be a temple of Jupiter. He went in and offered a pig as a sacrifice on the great altar where Jehovah had so long been worshiped. Pigs are regarded by the Jews as unclean animals and to offer this animal on God's altar was regarded as the climax of sacrilege.

**The Maccabean Revolt.** Many of the Jewish people were fearful. They ceased to worship Jehovah openly. Some even offered sacrifices to the pagan gods, in obedience to the commandments of Antiochus. There were others, however, who were ready to die rather than deny the God of their forefathers.

There lived at this time in the little town of Modin on the edge of the plains of the Philistines, a certain Jewish

priest named Mattathias. There were five stalwart sons in the family of this priest, and they were all determined that they would never deny Jehovah and worship idols. They heard of the armed officers who were going about the country compelling the Jews to become worshipers of Jupiter. In due time these officials came to Modin and erected an altar on which they expected to compel the Jews of the town to offer sacrifices to the idols of Greece. When Mattathias and his sons were summoned they came with their weapons concealed beneath their clothing and, when they were commanded to worship the gods, instead of offering the sacrifices, they fell upon the king's officers and slew them. The report quickly spread through the whole country and loyal Hebrews came flocking to the standard of revolt which the sons of Mattathias had raised. It was a desperate struggle. The Hebrews were few in number compared with the armies of Antiochus, but they were fired with heroic courage. Judas Maccabæus, the third son of the priest, Mattathias, became the leader of the Hebrew cause. He was one of the greatest military leaders of Jewish history. The struggle was long and bitter, but in the end the Hebrews won their independence. Their boundaries were pushed out to almost as great an extent as in the days of David. The Hebrews had shown their zeal for Jehovah and were now face to face with great opportunities.

**The Roman Conquest.** The Maccabees, as the descendants of Mattathias are called, established themselves as rulers over the Hebrew nation. Had they all been nobly unselfish, they might have established Jewish independence and led the nation forward in the fulfillment of its mission as God's helper. But some of these Maccabees were selfish and unprincipled. They thought only of their own honor and their own power. There arose quarrels within the family and the nation was divided into warring factions. As was their custom, the Romans took a hand in these quarrels and gave their support to one of the factions. They ended by sending an army under Pompey to subdue the whole country. This general led his army to Jerusalem and captured it. The Hebrew nation, after its brief period of independence, now became a Roman

province. This is why we find that the land of the Hebrews was ruled by the Romans during the whole of the period covered by the New Testament.

### THE PERSEVERING GOD

When Jesus wished to teach his disciples about God's care for his creatures he said to them: "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Some Bible students have thought that Jesus referred in these words to the little red anemone which grows everywhere in Palestine. Others have thought that he referred to some lily-like plant such as the iris. It may be, however, that Jesus referred to the true lily, for at least one species is found in Palestine. This is the beautiful "scarlet Turk's-cap" lily which grows sparingly in the valleys and fields of most parts of the country; it is cultivated in the gardens of many parts of Europe and may have been the lily mentioned as a garden plant in The Song of Solomon. Its rarity and beauty would have made this flower a fitting object lesson for the Master's use.

Such a plant as the lily, when we consider it carefully, teaches us other lessons about God, for flowers are God's handiwork. People used to think that in the beginning of the world God made the lily just as we see it to-day. We are now quite sure that this is not the case. God made the lily, but it took him so many ages to do it that our minds cannot grasp the immense span of time. The lily as it stands before us is the work of a great Artist who has worked at his task through millenniums. If God had chosen to do so, he doubtless could have created the lily in a moment's time by the word of his power, but it is at least as wonderful that he should have created it gradually.

We believe that God created the life of the plant world, just as the Bible says he did. We believe it because the Bible says so, also because we cannot think of any better

explanation of the beginning of life. Scientists have made some wonderful discoveries but they have discovered nothing which could suggest in any way that life could begin in any other way. Let us consider the lily in the light that modern science throws on it. How has it grown up through the ages into its present form of beauty?

As we have said we cannot tell in what form the life of the lily began, but we are sure that the Creator gave it life in the beginning. Perhaps it was at first some very low form of plant life in the water. As the ages passed it grew in size and in complexity of structure. In time it formed the habit of sending some leaves into the air and they became suited to that kind of life. Gradually our ancient lily-like plant became a swamp dweller. It lived half in mud and water, half in air. It began to have some queer little flowers, not at all like the beautiful blossoms of the Turk's-cap lily. Ages and ages later the lily was a dry land plant. Its flowers had grown larger and were taking on a little color. So step by step the lily grew, that is, the lily race grew. Individual lilies changed but little, but these many little changes toward grace and beauty were all treasured up by the God of nature who was creating the lily of to-day. At last the lily family was well-established, but it occupied only a small part of the world's surface; perhaps just a little section of land far toward the North Pole, where the world had become suited in climate for the life of plants like lilies.

God has not only made a wonderful variety of plants, but has scattered them widely over all the earth. It was not his plan that one little portion of the earth should have lilies and all the other parts of the earth should have none. So he scattered his lilies with a generous hand over all the countries of the earth, so that there is hardly a country of the world which does not have its beautiful lilies. The world grew colder and the lilies moved southward from their birthplace near the North Pole. As they moved southward they became scattered out over wider areas. If you will take a globe and trace the meridians running out from the poles you will see that they get farther and farther apart as they move away from the

poles; thus by following the meridians the lily family was spread out in fan-shaped areas to the southward. The world's great winter known as the glacial period came on and the lilies were forced far down toward the equator. Then the world grew warmer and the lilies moved northward again. In this way the lily family was scattered over the continents of the northern hemisphere.

But all this time changes were going on in the lily family, so that it came to pass that each continent had its own varieties of lilies. In the islands of Japan there developed the wonderfully beautiful lilies which we often see in greenhouses and gardens. On our Pacific Coast of America there grew up the magnificent Redwood lily of the Coast Ranges, the splendid Humboldt lily of the Sierras, and half a dozen other kinds. In eastern America, we have as a result of this scattering of the lily family our Canada lily, our Turk's-cap lily, and several others. Some of the lilies came down through Europe and western Asia. One of these grew to be snow-white. We call it the Easter lily. Another came down across the Caucasus mountains into Syria. It found a home in Palestine and grew there in the time of Jesus just as it does to-day. We may well believe that this was the flower on which the Master looked when he said to his disciples, "Consider the lilies, how they grow."

The lily teaches not only the care of God for his creatures but the infinite perseverance of the great Creator who has worked through ages to give to the flowers their beauty and their fragrance. Have we not seen something of that same perseverance, patient and invincible, in God's dealings with the people of Israel as he sought through them to bring his children to spiritual beauty and to grandeur of character?

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### SUNDAY SESSION

WHAT GOD ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE  
HEBREW PEOPLE IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

Psalm 147

Perhaps we have felt as we studied these lessons that God's effort to bless humanity through the Hebrew

people was largely a failure. It is true that much that might have been accomplished was not done because so many of the people were untrue to their God. Man's unfaithfulness, however, while it hinders God's plans, can never utterly defeat them. When we survey the whole field we see that much had been accomplished in spite of the failures due to the unfaithfulness of the nation, as a whole.

**During This Period the Old Testament Was Written.** The writing of the Old Testament by men inspired by God was a success for God's plans valuable beyond our powers to estimate. This great part of the Bible was ready to be given to the world when the period we are studying came to an end. It contained ideas of vast spiritual importance. It taught the oneness of God; that Jehovah is the sovereign Creator and that there is no other besides him. It taught the brotherhood of man: that all are created by the same God and responsible to him for their acts. It was a great victory for God's plans that even a few people like the prophets had caught visions of the universal brotherhood and justice which were to characterize God's Kingdom in the world. There was no such thought in the pagan world; injustice was there all but universal. The Old Testament contains the great songs of religion which we call The Psalms. It was a victory so great that we cannot measure it for humanity to be lifted where it could be possible for even a few people to sing a song like the Twenty-third Psalm.

**During This Period a Whole Nation Had Been Won from Idolatry.** We have seen how the Hebrew people fell again and again into idolatry. It was for some centuries their besetting sin. But after the dreadful experiences of the Captivity, they were cured. They never again became an idolatrous people. They had a loathing of all idol worship which was extreme and could not be eradicated. Sometime we shall study the history of the Christian Church and learn the story of its heroic struggle with idolatry and its full triumph. The triumph of the Hebrews over the sin of idolatry was a preparation for this later triumph of Christianity.

**During This Period a Whole Nation Had Been Taught**

to **Expect a Divine Deliverer.** We have seen how the Messianic hope grew stronger and stronger among the Hebrews. This was a very real preparation for God's plans in the future. Many of the Hebrews were mistaken in their ideas as to what the Messiah would be and as to what he would do, but there were a faithful few who earnestly longed for his coming and who were ready to follow wherever he might lead. Thus we see how God was fulfilling his promise that his word should not return unto him void, but should accomplish the thing whereunto he had sent it.

#### GATHERING UP THE FRAGMENTS

The story is told that during the erection of one of the great cathedrals of Europe an accident occurred to one of the beautiful stained-glass windows. The artist had labored on the window for many months and regarded it as his masterpiece, but as it was being raised into position, the ropes slipped and it came crashing down upon the stone pavement. The glass was shattered into fragments and scattered far and near. The workmen were making ready to cart away the broken glass when the artist who had made the window came in. He had the broken fragments brought to his workshop and set to work with them. Slowly he reproduced the picture with the little particles of glass. At last the picture was completed for the second time. It was raised to its place and many who saw it there regarded it as the most beautiful window in the cathedral, more beautiful even than it had been before the accident. God is the great Artist. He is able to take the failures and the disasters of men and out of the fragments of good in men's lives and in their plans he builds something of everlasting worth and beauty.

#### THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father and our God, teach us to know thee as thou art. Give us something of thy perseverance and patience that we may accomplish our tasks well. Help us to appreciate the Bible and to know thee better

through a diligent study of its messages. Teach us to see thee in all thy works, that we may know more of thy beauty and thy love. We thank thee for the visions which righteous men have had of the Kingdom thou wilt establish on earth. Fit us to be thy helpers in the great task of bringing in such a Kingdom. We thank thee for the Saviour whom thou didst send to satisfy the desires of all nations and to be our Teacher and Friend. Help us to honor him and love him. We ask in his name. Amen.

### THE LESSON HYMN

“Hark! the voice of Jesus crying,  
 ‘Who will go and work to-day?  
 Fields are white, and harvests waiting;  
 Who will bear the sheaves away?’  
 Loud and long the Master calleth,  
 Rich reward he offers free;  
 Who will answer, gladly saying,  
 ‘Here am I; send me, send me.’

“If you cannot cross the ocean,  
 And the heathen lands explore,  
 You can find the heathen nearer,  
 You can help them at your door.  
 If you cannot give your thousands,  
 You can give the widow’s mite;  
 And the least you give to Jesus  
 Will be precious in his sight.

“If you cannot speak like angels,  
 If you cannot preach like Paul,  
 You can tell the love of Jesus,  
 You can say he died for all.  
 If you cannot rouse the wicked  
 With the judgment’s dread alarms,  
 You can lead the little children  
 To the Saviour’s waiting arms.

“Let none hear you idly saying,  
 ‘There is nothing I can do,’  
 While the souls of men are dying,  
 And the Master calls for you:  
 Take the task he gives you gladly,  
 Let his work your pleasure be;  
 Answer quickly when he calleth,  
 ‘Here am I; send me, send me.’”



**EXPRESSIONAL SESSION****A MAXIMUM LIFE SERVICE****SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LEADER'S OPENING ADDRESS**

We have come to the end of our lessons in the Old Testament. During our study of these lessons we have had before us the lives of some of the greatest men of history. These men were not great as military leaders but great as spiritual guides. They were in close enough fellowship with God to know him intimately and to understand his plans. If we are to accomplish the most possible in life we must have some of the traits of character which these great men of the Old Testament possessed. We must have something of their faith in God and reverence for him. We must be fair and fearless as they were. We must love humanity and hate every evil which wrongs our fellow men or blights their lives. In discussing the following topics, the members of the class will tell some incident from the life of a great man of the Old Testament and show how it illustrates the truth of the topic.

**STUDY TOPICS**

1. The Old Testament Heroes and Their Faith in God.
2. The Old Testament Heroes and Their Love of Justice.
3. The Old Testament Heroes and Their Love of Humanity.
4. The Courage of Old Testament Heroes.
5. The Visions of Old Testament Heroes.
6. The Fidelity of Old Testament Heroes.

**VERSES FOR USE IN THE MEETING**

Prov. 8:17; Matt. 21:28-31; 25:14-30; Luke 12:27-34.

**COMMITTEE TO BE APPOINTED**

**Communicant's Class Committee**, to organize a class of prospective Church members to be taught by the pastor.

## THE CLASS CODE

**The Law of Maximum Life Service.** We shall pass through this life but once and we know that we are placed in this world to serve God and to help our fellow men. We know that we ought to do as much good as we possibly can. Therefore:

1. We will begin early in life, even now, to serve God and help our fellows.

2. We will seek wisdom and guidance from the Bible as God's Book and from every other source which God uses to make known his truth to his children, for without such wisdom and guidance we cannot give the greatest possible service.

3. We will give as much of our time as we can to Christian service and will try to do our work for God in an efficient and enthusiastic manner.











