

God Revealing His Truth

Through His Son

By

WALTER ALBION SQUIRES, B. D.

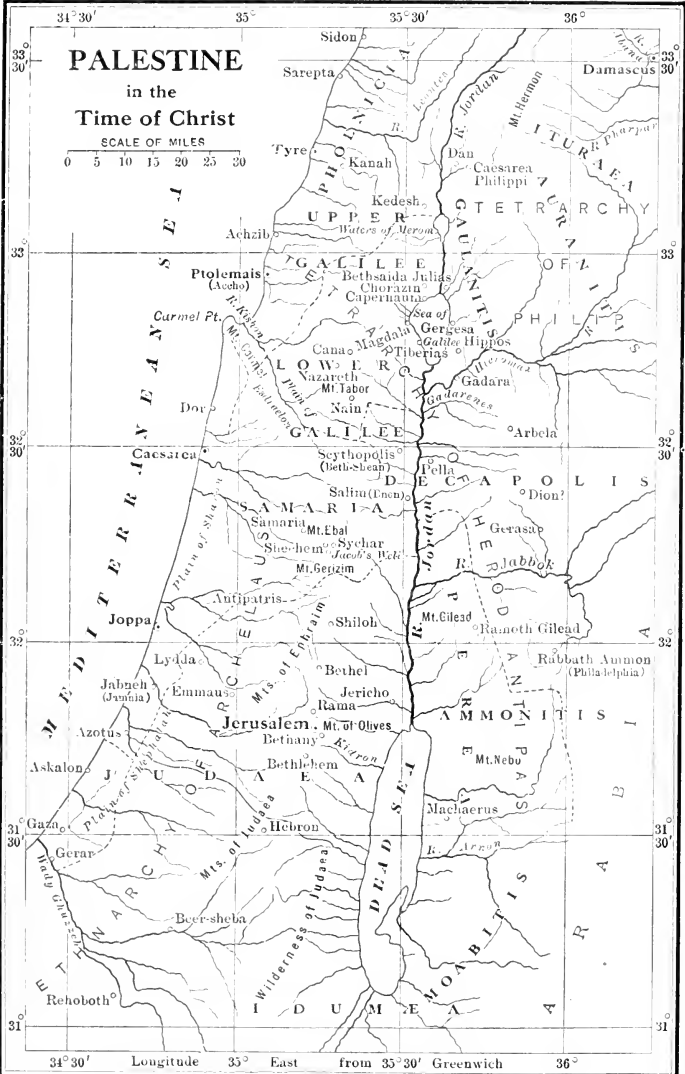
The Westminster Textbooks of Religious Education
Intermediate Department, First Year, Part II

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God revealing His truth

PALESTINE

in the
Time of Christ

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God Revealing His Truth

II. Through His Son

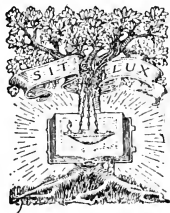
Intermediate Department, First Year, Part II

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

Edited by JOHN T. FARIS, D. D.



Philadelphia
The Westminster Press
1922

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Introduction

GENERAL PLAN OF THE WESTMINSTER TEXTBOOKS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Westminster Religious Education Textbooks aim to unify the educational program of the individual church by furnishing a graded course of study suitable for Sunday-school classes, week-day church school classes, and expressional organizations. The lessons are so constructed as to make the Sunday sessions largely devotional and the week-day sessions largely informational. Suggestions are given for an expressional meeting in which pupils discuss the application of the truths they have learned to their own life problems. In these meetings they also plan for various forms of Christian service without which mere information and formal devotion are devoid of any great religious value.

Churches planning to use these textbooks will need to provide for one hour of religious instruction on week days in addition to their usual program. In the Primary, Junior, and Intermediate departments of the Sunday school, the Westminster Textbooks will replace the lesson materials heretofore in use. The expressional work of the Westminster Textbooks will supplant the usual topics in the Junior and Intermediate Christian Endeavor societies, or new expressional organizations will be formed to have charge of this phase of the educational task of the church.

In carrying out the plan it is desirable that, so far as possible, the same teachers be in charge in all three sessions of the church school. Where this is not possible, there should be one efficient supervisory agency and an efficient superintendent for the whole program.

SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING THE GOAL OF THE LESSONS IN THIS VOLUME

Teachers of pupils in the first year of the Intermediate Department are face to face with a great opportunity. At the age of twelve or thirteen, young people begin to be peculiarly responsive to the altruistic ideals presented in the life and teachings of Jesus. The time is drawing near when most of them will make a life decision for or against the Christian religion. An adolescent religious awakening is entirely normal for young people of the Intermediate age. Without wise guidance and careful nurture this religious tendency of the young life is apt to be but a feeble and transient spiritual phenomenon. But under the guidance of wise and consecrated parents and teachers the religious awakening of the youthful soul becomes a permanent and compelling influence, dominating the whole personality of its possessor. Statistics seem to show that the greatest number of decisions for the Christian life are made at about the age of sixteen. This does not mean, however, that the age named is the most desirable time for this great choice, neither does it mean that it is the normal age for such a decision. Many facts of psychology indicate that the choice is belated even when it occurs at the comparatively early age of sixteen years. If our religious educational program were perfect in the home, the Church, and the community, it is probable that the majority of people would make the decision for the Christian life and experience a marked religious awakening at about the age of twelve. The first warm and tender affections of approaching adolescence would find expression in a deepening love of God as he is revealed in his Son. Like the boy Jesus in the Temple, these young lives would become conscious of a personal relationship and

precious fellowship with the eternal God. They would hear him calling them to be about the Father's business.

The bringing of boys and girls to such an experience is the goal of these lessons and the teacher should have it ever in mind. These lessons do not undertake to create Christians by any other process than that which consists in a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord.

NOTEBOOK WORK

It will be found very helpful if the pupils are given notebook work in connection with the lessons. Notebooks should be of a uniform size and pattern and large enough to contain a picture five and one-half inches wide by eight inches long. Pictures suitable for each lesson will be named, together with the catalogue number and the firm where they may be purchased. Thus, "The Nativity, Hofmann (797C Perry)" would mean that the picture named is for sale by the Perry Pictures Company, Malden, Massachusetts, and that its catalogue number is as indicated. References will be made to pictures for sale by George P. Brown and Company, Beverly, Massachusetts; and by W. A. Wilde Company, 120 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts. The teacher should secure the catalogue of each of the firms named. Most of the pictures listed will be of the one-cent or two-cent type.

Some such title as "The Life of Jesus in Art" should be placed on the front cover of the notebooks. These titles may be put on very neatly with Wilson's gummed letters for sale by The Tablet and Ticket Company, 624 West Adams Street, Chicago, Illinois. The firm named has branch offices in New York and San Francisco, and pupils living in parts of our country remote from Chicago will probably save time by ordering from the branch of the firm nearest to them. These letters are sometimes on sale at the Dennison stores.

The teacher should be provided with the following books in order that she may give the pupils information concerning the pictures:

"Pictures in Religious Education," by Beard.

"The Gospel in Art," by Bailey.

"The Story of the Masterpieces," by Stuart.

With these books for reference, the teacher will be able,

in most cases, to give her pupils facts concerning the artists who painted the pictures, where the original paintings are to be found, and other interesting items for their notebook work. Pupils may be asked to write brief compositions on the various pictures. Information regarding pictures will be indicated in the lessons by giving the name of the author of the book containing the desired material, together with the page on which it is found. Thus, "Bailey, page 103," would mean that the desired information may be found on page 103 of "The Gospel in Art," by Bailey.

SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING THE EXPRESSIONAL MEETING

The expressional meeting will be found to be of the greatest importance. It is in this meeting that the pupils will learn self-expression and initiative. It is here that they will learn how to apply the spiritual truths they have learned to their own life problems. It is here that they will plan and organize those forms of Christian services without which the results of the other sessions of the church school will be largely wasted. It is suggested that pupils be chosen to lead the meetings under the supervision of the teacher, that committees be formed for planning the work of the department, and that the social and recreational activities of the pupils be centered here.

Following is a list of the committees which may be formed. It is not thought that all of these committees ought to be set up at the start. It would probably be best to organize them one at a time as opportunities arose for using them, or as their need was indicated by lesson studies. Other committees than those named may be needed and will suggest themselves to the thoughtful teacher.

1. Lookout Committee. This committee would endeavor to gain new members for the class, or department, look after absent members, and seek in other ways to keep the class up to a high standard of attendance and punctuality.

2. Class Meetings Committee. It would be the duty of this committee to secure leaders for the expressional sessions of the class and to help the leaders to prepare plans for the meetings.

3. Flower Committee. This committee would supply flowers for church services and for those confined to their homes through sickness.

4. Pastor's Helpers Committee. It would be the duty of the members of this committee to help the pastor of the church in any way he might direct.

5. Teacher's Helpers Committee. The members of this committee would help the class teacher in such matters as putting material on the blackboards, grading papers, and distributing school supplies.

6. Sabbath Observance Committee. This committee would be given such tasks as are involved in finding out how the Sabbath is kept in the community and in suggesting ways and means for a better keeping of the Sabbath in the community.

7. Surveys Committee. The members of this committee might be asked to report on the number of boys and girls of Intermediate age in the community, number of the same age in Sunday school, and the like. The teacher could show them how to construct simple graphs showing the results of their investigations.

8. Home Missions Committee. It would be the duty of this committee to gather information concerning the home mission enterprises of the denomination. The members might secure letters from home missionaries and Sunday-school missionaries to be read in the meetings of the class. Certain meetings might well be given over to the study of home mission matters.

9. Foreign Missions Committee. This committee would do for the foreign mission work of the denomination what the preceding committee is expected to do for the home mission enterprises of the denomination.

10. Visitation Committee. The members of this committee would be given the task of visiting those of the class who were sick, or the visiting of children's wards in hospitals, and other like forms of Christian service.

11. Community Betterment Committee. It would be the task of this committee to consider such problems as the beautifying of streets and parks and all movements for community cleanliness. They might plan for community picnics or community song services.

12. Wild Life Committee. This committee would have to do with all matters pertaining to the conservation of our birds and wild animals. They might inaugu-

rate campaigns for the putting out of nesting boxes for birds and the feeding of the birds in times of storm or drought.

13. Press Committee. This committee should attend to all matters of publicity, seeing that reports of the activities of the class are sent to the local papers.

14. Quiet Hour Committee. It would be the duty of this committee to cultivate the habit of prayer among the members of the class.

15. Stewardship Committee. This committee would cultivate in the class the habit of systematic, generous, and proportionate giving.

Some central truth of each chapter in this volume is formulated into a law. These laws are to constitute the fundamental basis of conduct for the pupils. The members of the class should feel that they are taking upon themselves a serious obligation in subscribing to these laws. A part of each expresssional session might profitably be spent in discussing the laws of the class and in hearing from pupils concerning their experiences in keeping these laws. If pupils are asked to write out these accounts and hand them in without signing their names to them, the temptation to become priggish will be removed.

USE OF THE BIBLE IN THIS COURSE

The textbooks ought not to be used as a substitute for the Bible. Each pupil should have his own Bible and should use it constantly both in the preparation of the lessons and in the classroom discussions. Pupils should read the Scripture on which each lesson is based before taking up the study of the lesson. Teachers should insist on this constant use of the Bible and make constant use of the Scriptural material in conducting the recitations. It is recommended that, instead of the memorizing of isolated verses, Scriptural passages of some length be chosen. These passages could be repeated in concert and occasionally by individual pupils. In this way some of the sublime passages of the New Testament could be made the lasting possession of the children. Following is a list of passages suggested as suitable for such use:

Matt. 2:1-12.	Mark 4:1-9.	Luke 15:11-32.
Matt. 5:1-12.	Luke 2:8-20.	John 3:1-21.
Matt: 25:1-13.	Luke 10:30-37.	John 14:1-24.
Matt. 25:31-46.	Luke 15:1-7.	John 15:1-15.

VARIOUS ADJUSTMENTS OF THE WESTMINSTER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS TO THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OF THE CHURCH

Since the lessons in these textbooks constitute a unified course of study, they may be used in a great variety of ways. If, for any reason, a church finds it impossible to discontinue the use of its present Sunday-school lesson materials, yet wishes to set up a week-day school, the Westminster Textbooks may be used in the week-day classes. The part of each chapter intended for the Sunday school may be taken on a week day. If the church has a one-hour-a-week school, the Sunday lesson of the Westminster Textbooks would be taken one week, the regular week-day lesson the next week, and so on.

Churches not wishing to use the expressional material in the Christian Endeavor societies could plan for an expressional meeting on a week day or use as much of the expressional material as was found possible in the other two sessions. In all of these plans, however, there would be an imperfect correlation of the educational program of the church. It is urged that wherever possible the whole program be put on as it is explained in a preceding paragraph. With a unified course of study, it is believed that the educational program of the church can be greatly strengthened, by the elimination of duplications and the giving of adequate emphasis to all phases of the teaching process.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September, 1922.



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CHAPTER I
PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF JESUS
WEEK DAY SESSION

A CRUEL GOVERNMENT AND A SELFISH RELIGION

Matt. 2:1-8; 23:1-28

At the time when Jesus lived on earth the Roman Empire controlled nearly all the known world. Palestine was a part of this world-wide empire. The descendants of David no longer ruled any part of that land which had once been the Jewish kingdom. Indeed, many of the people who were descended from the former Jewish kings were now among the poorest inhabitants of the land. God had graciously given the Hebrew people a second chance when he allowed them to return to their homeland after they had been carried away as prisoners to Babylon. But the Hebrews wasted this second chance.

God punishes the sins of nations just as he punishes the sins of individuals. He punishes the nations for their own good, that they may "cease to do evil" and "learn to do well." The Hebrews had shown that they were not worthy to be free. They had failed to govern themselves; so God sent the Romans to be their masters. Yet God's love is so wonderful that even while he punishes he continues to love. He was planning to give his chosen people one more chance, a greater chance than they had ever known. He was planning to send them his own Son to be their Teacher and their King. How this wonderful Son of God came to the earth, what he said and did, and how the people of the world received him are topics which we are to study in the lessons of this book. Surely no story in all the world can be more interesting than this.

Into what kind of world did God's Son come? We shall try to answer this question in the lesson for to-day.

We have chosen two passages of Scripture which throw some light on the question. The first of these passages tells us something about the kind of government under which the people were living when Jesus was born.

Herod the Great. A certain man named Herod was the ruler of the Jewish people at the time of Jesus' birth. He called himself king of the Jews though he was not really a king at all. He had to obey the Romans in everything. He was not a descendant of David for he was not even a Jew, but an Idumæan, that is he was a native of the country southwest of the Dead Sea.

Because he knew that he had no right to be king, Herod was always afraid that some one would take the kingdom from him. The longer he lived, the more suspicious he became. He began to think that members of his own family were plotting to kill him and to seize the throne. His first suspicions were regarding his wife's relatives who were descendants of the Maccabæan kings. He feared they would try to make themselves rulers of the land instead of himself so he had many of them cast into prison and some of them were put to death. Then the suspicions of this cruel and selfish man were turned toward his own sons. There were wicked men about Herod who kept whispering to him that his sons were planning to make themselves rulers over the land. In his jealous rage he took the lives of three of his sons. Last of all his beautiful wife, the Maccabæan princess Mariamne, came to be suspected. Herod had her put to death also. It was this dreadful man that ruled over the Jewish people when Jesus came to be the Saviour of the world.

Herod and the Wise Men. Matt. 2:1-8. One day when Herod was an old man certain strangers from far-away lands in the East came into Jerusalem. These strangers went about the streets of Jerusalem asking, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him." When Herod heard about these strange visitors, and about the question they were asking, he was troubled. The mention of a king of the Jews was enough to awaken within him the fiercest kind of jealousies and hatreds. He had been fighting all his life to keep some "king of the Jews" from

taking his throne and now somewhere out among the villages of Judea a little child had been born. These strangers were speaking of that child as "King of the Jews" and were seeking him to worship him. The tottering old man, only a few months away from his grave, rose up and gnashed his teeth, but he soon smothered his rage. He had gained his throne and kept it by craftiness. He did not wish people to know how agitated and angry he was. He sent for the Wise Men and talked with them about this infant King who had been born. Then he sent them away with a hypocritical request to "Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and," said he, "when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him."

The Troubled City. Herod was not the only person in Jerusalem who was stirred by the question of the Wise Men. We are told that all "Jerusalem" was troubled with him. The word, "troubled," as used here, means agitated or excited. Ever since the days of the prophets the Hebrew people had believed in the coming of a Messianic King. Was he about to appear? How differently the message must have affected different people! It woke the suspicious jealousy of Herod and caused him to plot the destruction of the infant King. Down in Herod's dungeons there may have been some righteous man held as a prisoner by that cruel tyrant. Perhaps this lonely man heard some rumor of the Wise Men's question and a great hope sprang up in his heart: "Can it be true? Is the King, indeed, about to appear?" Over in the Temple was an aged and saintly man. We know that he had been waiting for years to see the coming King. He had been praying to God that he might not die until he should see the Lord's Christ. It may be that this old man heard about the question which the Wise Men were asking and that his heart was made glad because he knew that his prayer was soon to be answered. Maybe there were bad men in high offices in Jerusalem who heard about the King who was born and through whose hearts fear began to creep at the mention of his name. A guilty conscience makes cowards of us all. In Jerusalem, too, there were multitudes who were hungry and

cold and sick and poor. These people probably heard the rumors about a king's being born and were encouraged to hope once more, for they believed that the coming king would "judge the poor of the people" and that he would "save the children of the needy" and "break in pieces the oppressor."

Herod is known in history as "The Great," but he was great only in wickedness. He might have been a truly great man for he had abilities of a high order and he had large opportunities, but he fell far short of true greatness. He missed the mark through sin. And there were other men of that time who, at heart, were just as bad as Herod. Many of these bad men were high officials of the Jewish Church.

The Pharisees. As we study the story of Jesus' life, we shall find the Pharisees mentioned again and again. Our second passage of Scripture for this lesson gives us some of the words which Jesus spoke to these Pharisees. We see in what Jesus said that the Pharisees were, for the most part, evil men. They thought themselves very righteous, however, and despised all people who were not Pharisees. They thought that religion consisted in obeying little rules which they had made concerning how the law of Moses should be kept. They put chalk on their faces that people might think that they were pale from fasting and therefore very religious.

The Scribes. We shall find that certain persons called scribes are often mentioned along with the Pharisees. These scribes were among the most learned men of the times. They copied the Scriptures and made them into books. These books were not like our books of to-day, but were long rolls wound on two sticks. The scribes were also teachers of the laws of Moses and of the rules which had been made concerning the way in which these laws should be kept. In character the scribes were much like the Pharisees. There were some just and honest men among them, but most of them were so full of pride and prejudice that they refused to have anything to do with Jesus.

The Publicans. We shall also find frequent mention made in the New Testament of certain persons called

publicans. These publicans were tax collectors. The Romans, having conquered the Jews, made them pay very heavy taxes. The burden of taxation was made still more grievous—in fact, almost unbearable—by the way in which it was collected. The Romans would sell a man the right to collect taxes in a certain territory. Then this man who had bought the right to collect the taxes was given the right to collect money from the people of the territory over which he had been appointed tax collector. No limit was set as to the amount he was to collect. He usually aimed to gather enough to repay him for what he had given to the Romans and as much more as he could. There were Jews who were mean enough to become tax collectors under this plan and thus they became robbers and oppressors of their fellow countrymen. It is little wonder that these publicans were looked upon as traitors to their country and enemies to the religion of their forefathers.

The Samaritans. When the people of the Northern Kingdom were carried away into captivity by the Assyrians, there were a few poor Jewish families who were left behind in the desolated land. Later the Assyrians brought in a good many foreign people and gave them homes in the lands which had belonged to the Jews. These foreign people and the poor Jews who had been left in the land, mingled with one another and became known as the Samaritans. Their country was called Samaria. The Samaritans wished to be worshipers of Jehovah and would have joined with the Jews of Judea, but the Jews would have nothing to do with this mixed race. So the Samaritans built a temple to Jehovah on Mount Gerizim. This made the Jews very angry and at one time they burned the temple which the Samaritans had built. So it had come to pass that in the time of Jesus there was the bitterest kind of hatred between the Jews and Samaritans. In their hatred of Samaritans the scribes and Pharisees were worse than any other Jews.

NOTEBOOK WORK

It is hoped that the pupils who study these lessons will make notebooks in which they will paste the pictures

given them by the teacher. In these books should be recorded interesting items concerning the lessons. The compositions which pupils write about the various pictures should also be given a place in these notebooks. Place on the outside cover of the notebooks the title, "The Life of Jesus in Art." Under the title should be placed the pupil's name, as the author of the book. Titles and names may be put on very neatly with the Wilson gummed letters for sale at stationers.

Suitable pictures for the notebook: For a frontispiece, The Christ, by Hofmann (802 B, Perry; two-cent size.); to illustrate the Sunday lesson, Ruth and Naomi, by Calderon (414, Wilde).

SUNDAY SESSION

HUMBLE HEARTS AND GODLY HOMES AS THE CITADELS OF GOD'S TRUTH

Ruth, chs. 1, 2, 4

In ancient times every important town had its citadel. This was usually a high and fortified hill in the center of the town. In times of war the besieging armies could not gain a permanent foothold until they had captured the citadel; hence it was the one place to which the defenders held most desperately. In this lesson we are to learn how the hearts of humble and righteous people, and the godly homes in which such people lived, were like a citadel where God's truth found refuge in the evil times in the midst of which Jesus was born. A wicked and cruel tyrant, calling himself the king of the Jews, ruled over God's chosen people. The leaders of the Jewish Church were proud, selfish, and hypocritical. Yet we must not conclude that there were no righteous people in the world when Jesus came. Neither must we think that God's plans for a universal Kingdom of justice and brotherhood had come to naught. None of God's plans ever really fail and this greatest of his plans can never fail. In spite of the seeming failure there had been real

progress and there had been a true preparation for the coming of God's Son.

Even the Leaders Not All Bad. As we continue our study of the life of Jesus we shall learn that there were some good people among the leaders of the Jewish Church and some good people connected with the government in the days when Jesus lived. We shall learn of a Jewish priest and his wife who "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." We shall learn of an aged man and an aged woman who lived continually in the Temple and who "were righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel." We shall learn of Roman captains who recognized Jesus as a just and holy man and who paid him highest honors.

Jesus and the Common People. But it was among the common people that Jesus found most of his friends. These people were not Pharisees, neither were they scribes. They had no time to learn the thousands of little rules about the keeping of the Jewish law. They were fishermen and farmers. Some of them were publicans. The Pharisees despised these common Jews and said that they were accursed because they did not keep the law of Moses in the right way. We shall learn how these common people of Palestine rallied around Jesus, how they followed him about in such a vast crowd that sometimes they almost trampled upon one another. We shall see how they wished him to become king of their country and how they welcomed him into Jerusalem with shouting and singing while they carpeted the road with their own garments and scattered flowers all along the way. From this class Jesus chose his disciples.

The Messianic Hope. Ever since the time of David and the prophets, the Hebrew people had been expecting the coming of one who should be a just and noble king, one who should be a deliverer, setting them free from the rule of foreign nations and restoring the kingdom of the Jews in unity and strength. The Jews called this expected deliverer the Messiah, or the Anointed One, hence their expectation is called the Messianic hope. We shall see how Jesus was the true Messiah, the Son of

David for whom the people were hoping, but we shall also learn that he had come to do a more sublime work than the people of that day could understand. He had come, not to save one nation, but to save the world and to establish a Kingdom that should last forever. It will be interesting for us to see how some of the Jewish people rose to this grander conception of the Messiah's mission and how some of them rejected Jesus because he would not be the kind of Messiah they wished him to be.

Godly Homes. Although religion had grown cold and formal with regard to the public services in the time of Jesus, true religion was still found in many humble homes. There were many Hebrew parents who still carried in their hearts the commandments of Jehovah and who taught these commandments diligently to their children. In many homes there was a spirit of true piety and festivals like the passover were largely religious services in these homes. In a humble home of this kind, the home of a workingman of Nazareth in Galilee, Jesus spent his childhood and youth.

THE STORY OF RUTH AND NAOMI

There is a beautiful story in the Old Testament which gives us a word picture of the kind of people and the kind of homes about which we have just been speaking. It is about people who lived in Palestine a good many years before Jesus was born, but they lived very much as people lived in the time of Jesus. Indeed, the people about whom this story is told were ancestors of King David and since Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a descendant of David, they were of course ancestors of Jesus.

On the hills near Bethlehem there lived, in the times of the Judges, a Hebrew farmer with his wife and two sons. The soil is not very fertile around Bethlehem. It is too near the desolate wilderness of Judea to be very productive. But this Hebrew farmer managed to raise enough wheat and barley to keep himself and his family above serious want so long as the usual spring

rains fell. There came a season, however, when these rains did not come. The farmer and his family had meager food that winter. The next summer the drought was worse than before. Elimelech, for that was the farmer's name, now told his family that they must seek another home. They heard that across the Jordan in the highlands of Moab there had been abundant rain. Moab was not so very far away. They could see the blue wall of its mountain highlands rising dimly in the east. So Elimelech and his wife Naomi and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, crossed the Jordan River and journeyed into Moab. There they found food, but they longed for their little home in the hills of Bethlehem in the land which Jehovah had given to their forefathers.

These simple farmer folk were worshipers of God. It was Jehovah, their God, who gave them food by sending the rain for the wheat and the barley. It was Jehovah, too, who withheld the rain and caused the crops to wither. They thanked Jehovah for his gifts and although they could not always understand why he brought them sorrow, yet they felt that he must be just and wise and good; and so they loved and trusted him always.

After a time Elimelech died and was buried in the land of Moab. The two sons married young Moabite women. The names of these two young women were Ruth and Orpah. Mahlon and Chilion also died and Naomi was left alone with her two daughters-in-law.

When Naomi heard that Jehovah had visited her native land and had given the people bread, she determined to return to her home at Bethlehem. Her two daughters-in-law had come to love Naomi and when she began her homeward journey they went with her a little way along the road. Then Naomi kissed them both and bade them good-by, telling them to return to their people and to the gods their people worshiped. Both young women said that they wished to go with Naomi but she thought it best for them to go back to their own people. Orpah took Naomi's advice and turned back, but Ruth pleaded still to be permitted to go with her mother-in-law. Hear the noble words which this Moabite girl spoke to her Hebrew friend as she clung to her: "Entreat me not to

leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." So Naomi consented to let Ruth return with her to Bethlehem.

After they reached Bethlehem, Ruth went into the harvest fields of Boaz, a relative of Naomi's, and gathered up the scattered heads of wheat and barley. At night she would thresh out what she had gathered and take the grain home to her mother-in-law and they would make bread of it. When Boaz saw Ruth in his fields with other poor people who had come there to gather up the scattered heads of grain, he asked who this beautiful young girl was, and his reapers told him the story of how she had come back with Naomi and how diligently she labored to gain food for herself and her mother-in-law. The story of how Boaz came to love Ruth and to take her as his wife is one of the most beautiful in the Old Testament. God probably had it put into the Bible that we might see the kind of life that was going on all the time among the Hebrews. In the Book of Judges we read of fierce fighting and in other books of the Old Testament we read about kings and their armies, but the story of Ruth gives us a more important kind of history than that which speaks only of rulers and nations and wars. It tells of the simple and humble life of the common people where the love of God was kept secure within the hearts of his children.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for our homes. We thank thee for relatives and friends. We thank thee for all who love us and for those whom we love. Help us to do those things which tend to make our homes beautiful and happy. Forgive us if we have been thoughtless concerning the welfare and comfort of those we love. Forgive us if we have been selfish and rude and have thus marred the happiness of the home circle. Help us to

think of Jesus, thy Son, as ever present in our homes, listening to all we say and seeing all we do. Help us to say and do the things which will make him glad. Help us to do all we can not only to make our own homes beautiful and happy, but to help everyone else to have happy homes, too. We ask these things in the name of Jesus, thy Son. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

O happy home where thou art loved the dearest,
 Thou loving friend and Saviour of our race,
 And where among the guests there never cometh
 One who can hold such high and honored place.

O happy home whose little ones are given
 Early to thee in humble faith and prayer,
 To thee, their Friend, who from the heights of heaven
 Guides them, and guards with more than mother care.

O happy home where each one serves thee, lowly,
 Whatever his appointed work may be,
 Till every common task seems great and holy,
 When it is done, O Lord, as unto thee!

“The Hymnal” (Revised), No. 676.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

MAKING THE HOME LIFE BEAUTIFUL

I John 3:7-21

The home, the school, the Church, and the nation are called social organizations. All of these organizations are important. They all help to educate boys and girls. Which of them do you think is most important? We know that the home is the most important of all. The influence of the home begins before the influence of any of the other social organizations. For a good many years of childhood the home is almost the whole world to us.

What we learn in these early years determines, to a large extent, what we are to be as men and women.

When we study the life of a great man like Martin Luther, we find that his greatness of character is due chiefly to the kind of home he had. Luther's parents were not wealthy. His father was a coal miner and received very low wages, but Luther's home was a happy Christian home. When he was just a little baby his mother used to rock him in a big wooden cradle and sing songs to him about the Christ-child. The following is one of the songs which she sang to her baby boy:

O Jesus, Master, meek and mild;
 Since thou wast once a little child,
 Wilt thou not give this baby mine
 Thy grace and every blessing thine?
 O Jesus, Master, mild,
 Protect my little child.

Now sleep, now sleep, my little child;
 He loves thee, Jesus, meek and mild,
 He'll never leave thee nor forsake
 He'll make thee wise and good and great.
 O Jesus, Master, mild,
 Protect my little child.¹

¹ Translation of a German cradle song used in the time of Luther.

Do you wonder that Luther grew up to be wise and good and great when he had such a mother?

When Luther was a little older, his mother taught him the Lord's prayer and the Ten Commandments and other parts of the Bible. The leaders of the Church in that time did not like to have the common people read the Bible, but Luther's parents knew more about this matter than the Church leaders and they taught their little boy to know and honor the Bible as God's Word. If it had not been for this home training Luther might never have become the great and good leader of the Protestant Church.

BIBLE VERSES

Ex. 20:12; Col. 3:20; Eph. 4:31, 32; John 15:12; I John 4:7, 8; Jer. 31:1; Gen. 28:14; Prov. 4:1.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What nation controlled Palestine at the birth of Christ?
2. What kind of man was Herod?
3. What was the Messianic hope?
4. Who were the Pharisees?
5. What was the work of the scribes?
6. Who were the publicans, and why were they despised by the Jews?
7. Why did the Jews dislike the Samaritans?
8. Name some Jewish leaders who were good people.
9. Tell what you can of the home life of the Hebrews.
10. What are some of the great lessons in the story of Ruth and Naomi?

STUDY TOPICS

(For individual reports and general discussion.)

1. Life in a Humble Scottish Home. (Read or recite "The Cotter's Saturday Night.")
2. The Use of Songs in the Home.
3. Pictures Which Help to Make the Home Life Bright.
4. The Bible in Our Homes.
5. The Author of "Home Sweet Home." (John Howard Payne.)
6. Things Which Boys and Girls Can Do to Help Make Home Life Happy.

THE LAW OF THE HOME

We know that a good home is one of the greatest blessings of life. Therefore:

1. We will try to appreciate the blessings of home and be thankful for them.
2. We will strive to make our homes beautiful and glad by being obedient to the commandments of parents or others in authority in the home, thoughtful for the comfort and welfare of others, and diligent in all home duties.

3. We will try to help others to have homes that are beautiful and happy.

(Pupils should make an earnest effort to carry out this law and they may be asked to hand in at the next meeting written reports concerning how they have helped to make home life beautiful.)

CHAPTER II
THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS
WEEK DAY SESSION

WONDERFUL EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE
BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 1:5-23, 26-38; 2:1-39; Matt., ch. 2

The coming of God's Son to be the Saviour of the world was a wonderful event and we need not be surprised to learn that many unusual things happened at that time. It would have been strange, indeed, if nothing unusual had accompanied the coming of such a person as Jesus proved to be. When we really believe that Jesus is God's Son, we do not find it hard to believe that he did many wonderful things and that wonderful events occurred at the time of his birth.

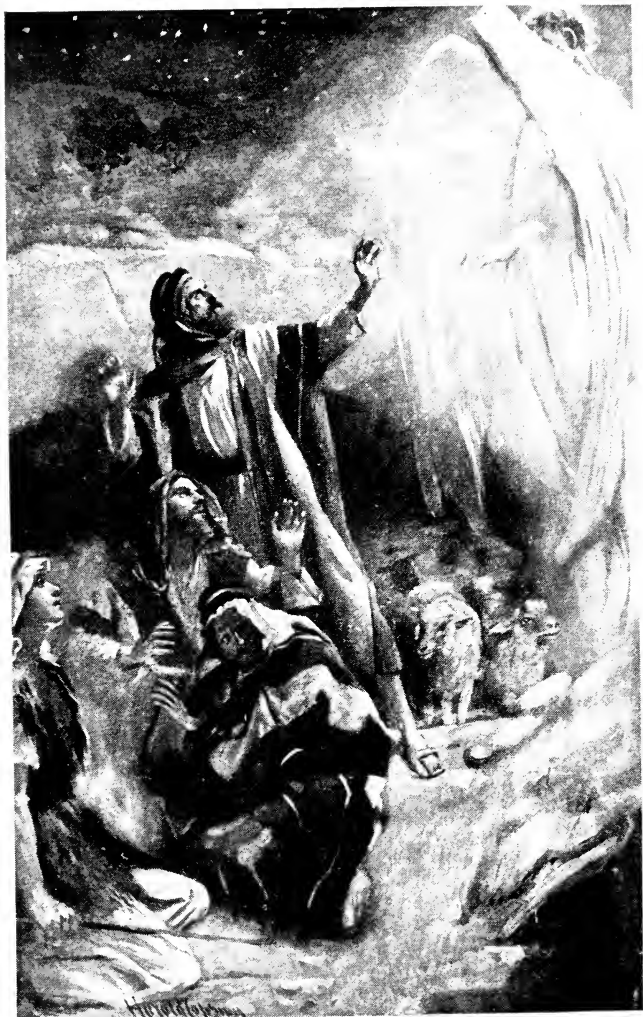
Heavenly Messengers. Luke 1:5-23. There was an aged priest who, with his wife Elizabeth, lived in one of the villages of Judea. The name of this priest was Zacharias and both he and Elizabeth were "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Most of the priests were proud and selfish men caring nothing for the spiritual welfare of the people and using their sacred office to make themselves wealthy. It is good to know that there were some of the priests who were righteous and true.

One day it was Zacharias' turn to offer sacrifices in the Temple at Jerusalem. There were so many priests, and the sacrifices were so seldom offered to God in the Holy Place of the Temple, that it is probable that any one priest had the opportunity to make the offering but once or twice in his life. So it must have been a great day for Zacharias, the village priest, when his turn came to offer the sacrifices in the Holy Place. Entering alone, he scattered incense on the fire burning upon the altar.

In the court outside the Holy Place the multitudes stood praying at this hour of incense. All at once Zacharias saw an angel standing on the right side of the altar. He was troubled and filled with fear at the sight of the heavenly visitor, but the angel spoke kindly to him, telling him not to be afraid. He told Zacharias that his prayers were heard and that he should have a son who should be named John. Probably Zacharias had been praying for years that a son might be given him, just as Abraham prayed for a like blessing. The angel told Zacharias that this son should be a great man and that his life work would be to prepare for the coming of the world's Saviour. Zacharias could not believe that the angel's words would come true and he was punished for his unbelief by becoming dumb for a season. In due time a baby boy came into the home of Zacharias and they called his name John. In another lesson we shall learn of the wonderful man who prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus and who was none other than this little son of Zacharias and Elizabeth grown to manhood.

Not long after this, the same angel appeared to Mary who was to become the mother of Jesus. He told her that a child should be given to her and that he should be called "the Son of the Most High," that God would "give unto him the throne of his father David," and that he should "reign over the house of Jacob for ever."

Not long after this, the same angel appeared to Mary, was in Nazareth, a town on the hills of Galilee. She was living in Nazareth when a decree was sent out from Augustus Cæsar, the emperor of Rome, ordering that all the world should be enrolled, that is, that a kind of census should be taken. Mary and Joseph could not be enrolled in Nazareth, but had to make the long trip to Bethlehem where their ancestors had lived. So Joseph and Mary prepared for the journey. The night they reached Bethlehem they found the inn full of people. Many besides Joseph and Mary had come to Bethlehem for the census. The rooms were all taken. No one in all the crowd offered to give up his place to the tired little woman who had come all the way from Galilee. Joseph got the keeper of the inn to let him go into the stable for the



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THE SHEPHERDS OF BETHLEHEM

night. And there in the stable, in the midst of the sheep and the cattle, Jesus was born. Mary and Joseph found a manger, a kind of feed box for the animals of the stable, and they used this as a cradle for the little babe who had come to them and to the world.

Silent night! Holy night!
 All is calm, all is bright;
 Round yon virgin mother and Child!
 Holy Infant, tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace,
 Sleep in heavenly peace.

The Angels and the Shepherds. Luke 2:8-20. Out in the fields near Bethlehem, shepherds were watching their flocks. Suddenly an angel stood by them and said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." Then there was all at once a great multitude of the heavenly host with the angel and they sang, saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
 And on earth peace among men in whom
 he is well pleased."

After the angels went away, the shepherds came and found Mary and Joseph and the babe in the manger, and they went out and told their friends of the wonderful things they had witnessed that night.

Silent night! Holy night!
 Shepherds quake at the sight!
 Glories stream from heaven afar,
 Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia.
 Christ, the Saviour, is born!
 Christ, the Saviour, is born!

The Wise Men and the Star. Matt. 2:1-12. The Messianic hope had spread far beyond the boundaries of

Palestine. Wherever the Jews had gone, as captives or for purposes of trade, they had carried with them the great hope of their race. Gradually people of other nations learned that the Jews were expecting a Deliverer and some of these Gentile peoples, being in like bondage with the Jews, learned to share in the Messianic hope. Possibly some of these reports of a coming "King of the Jews" had reached into the distant East and found their way to those mysterious visitors who came to Jerusalem saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

How did the Wise Men know that the time had come for the King to be born? They said they saw his star in the east, but how did they know what the star meant? These are questions which we may not all answer alike and none of us may be able to answer them correctly. It seems, however, that since Jesus was to be the Saviour of the whole world, God let the Gentile nations know that his Son was about to come. The coming of these Wise Men may have been a kind of sign of the time when all the people of the earth will come to accept Jesus as Lord and King and bring their choicest offerings to his feet.

The Flight into Egypt. Matt. 2:13-23. When the Wise Men went back into their own land by another road than that which led through Jerusalem, Herod was "exceeding wroth." The men of the East were gone beyond his grasp, but he determined to make sure of the young King of the Jews. He ordered a company of soldiers to visit Bethlehem, telling them to destroy all the male children "from two years old and under." But God had sent a warning to Joseph and already the little family was far on its way toward Egypt. So it came to pass that the infant Saviour sojourned for a time in the ancient lands beside the river Nile.

One night an angel appeared in a dream to Joseph and with majestic simplicity said to him, "Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life." That monstrous Herod, man of iniquity and power, was dead. He had sought the life of Jesus, sought to

defeat God's plans, and now he was still, cold, and powerless forever. They who set themselves against the plans of God may seem to prosper in their designs for a little season, but in the end they are always like Herod.

Coming back into the land of Israel, Joseph heard that Herod's son, Archelaus, had taken his father's throne and he was afraid to go into Judea. So he went back to the old home at Nazareth and there Jesus grew to manhood.

The Presentation in the Temple. Luke 2:22-39. There is one other incident in the infancy of Jesus which must have occurred some time before the flight of Joseph and his family into Egypt. God had given the Hebrews a law requiring parents to dedicate their first-born son to him. So the little babe was brought into the Temple and there presented to Jehovah with solemn sacrifices. The regular offering was a lamb, but if the family were poor, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons, might be brought instead of the lamb. Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple to dedicate him to God and offered not the lamb, but the other sacrifice, so that we know that the family must have been poor.

There was in the Temple a very old man named Simeon. We are told that he was "righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him." This old man had been praying that he might not die before he should see the Saviour of the world. When he saw the infant in Mary's arms, he knew that the child was to be the Redeemer for whom he had been praying and waiting. He took Jesus out of Mary's arms and then he burst forth into a wonderful psalm of praise which you may read in the second chapter of Luke.

There was also a very old woman named Anna who likewise on seeing Jesus believed that he was the Messiah for whom the people were waiting. She "spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." Thus we see that God gave earnest-hearted people the power to recognize Jesus as the Saviour of the world even when Jesus was only a little babe.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: Repose in Egypt, by Merson (625 Perry, Page 90, Bailey); Holy Night, by Correggio (367 Perry, Page 23, Stuart, Page 63, Bailey); Sistine Madonna, by Raphael (321 Perry, Page 35, Stuart).

SUNDAY SESSION

GOD'S MESSAGE IN THE CHRIST-CHILD

Heb., ch. 1

Our Scripture lesson tells us that God's final and full revelation is through his Son. God spoke in Old Testament times through the prophets and his message was "by divers portions and in divers manners;" that is, God was able, in different ways, and to a certain extent, to speak to people through such great men as Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Through Jesus his Son, however, God is able to speak a complete message concerning himself. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has some wonderful statements concerning Jesus. Jesus is God's Son; he is "heir of all things;" he is the Creator of the world; he is "the effulgence" of the Father's glory. The last statement is a beautiful figure of speech. Did you ever see the sun bursting through the clouds and brightening all the sky above and all the earth below with a flood of light? Perhaps the sun was so dazzlingly bright that your eyes could not bear to gaze upon it, but its wonderful light made all nature beautiful, and helped you to understand the power and majesty of that great light which God made to rule the day. So Jesus is the effulgence, the shining forth, of God's glory.

There is another fine figure of speech in the author's statement that Jesus is the "very image" of God's substance. If you have ever seen one of our great printing presses you know that it is very hard to read the material which is set up in type. All the material of the paper, or book, to be printed is there in the type of the press, but

it is all in bright metal and the letters do not stand out clearly. Moreover, the lines read backwards. So you would find it a difficult and slow process to spell out a few words from the type of the printing press. But let the great press make one revolution and it throws out a paper, or the page of a book, and then the printing stands out clearly upon the white paper. You can read it with ease. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews meant that Jesus was a revelation of God in just that way. In him we read God's messages about himself and about all that is true. The author of this epistle had never seen a printing press, but he had seen something somewhat like it. He had seen signet rings used in sealing letters. These rings contained the initials of the owner of the ring, or sometimes his likeness cut into the stone or metal of the ring. When pressed down upon the wax with which a letter was sealed, the signet left a perfect impression of itself. So Jesus is the "very image" of God.

The whole life of Jesus was a message from God. It was not only as a man preaching and teaching and healing that he revealed God to men. He revealed God when he lay as a little babe in the manger at Bethlehem. What were God's messages in the Christ-child? What did God say to the world through the coming of his Son as a child? These are the questions we wish to consider.

The Sacredness of Childhood. We believe that, through sending his Son to the world as a little child, God wished to teach all mankind that a child is the most precious thing in all the universe. People had not learned this lesson before Jesus came. Under the Roman law, fathers and mothers had a right to get rid of their children if they did not wish to be bothered with raising them. These unwelcome little ones were taken out to some lonely place and left there to die of cold and starvation. Such a thing seems very terrible to you, because the teaching of Jesus has changed this cruel practice in all families which are Christian. There was widespread poverty and distress when Jesus came. Little children suffered more than others from these hardships. God sent his Son to save the little ones of the world. Jesus said as much in a beautiful little story about a lost sheep:

“How think ye? if any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.”—Matt. 18:12-14.

As we study the life of Jesus we shall see that he was the Friend and Defender of children. When the disciples rebuked those who were bringing little children to him he rebuked the disciples and said, “Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven.” He solemnly warned his disciples against committing any sin against childhood. He told them that it would be better for a man to have a great millstone tied about his neck and to be cast thus into the depths of the sea than for him to cause a little child to stumble. He told them that children are so precious that in heaven there are angels who keep watch over the children of earth and that these angels are charged with such an important task that they stand ever before the presence of God.

The Beauty of Motherhood. God could have sent his Son to earth as a full-grown man, as a mighty king. He could have sent him as a bright and deathless angel. He sent him to be born as other children are born, to have a human mother. By sending his Son to be born of a woman God honored, not only Mary, but all true mothers everywhere. The birth of Jesus was a message from God proclaiming that motherhood is one of the most beautiful and most holy offices in all the world. God sent his Son to save the mothers of the world. You can tell whether any country has heard and heeded God’s message by the way it treats its women. In India women are given no education. They are like slaves, for most of them must labor hard all their lives and live on the scraps of food which are left after others have eaten. The same is true of practically every country where Jesus is not known and honored. But the more a country knows about the life and teachings of Jesus, the more is woman honored and made the companion and helper of man.

Universal Brotherhood. Jesus was born in lowliness and poverty. His lot was cast among the great masses of mankind who must toil continually for their daily bread. He might have been born among the classes who have become separated from the rest of mankind through the attainment of wealth, learning, or social position; but God sent his Son among the multitudes of the common people. God's angels bore the message concerning his birth, not to the officers of the state, nor to the schools of the rabbis in Jerusalem, but to lowly shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night under the open sky. Jesus grew up among humble people who labored with their hands. He himself learned the trade of a carpenter.

Does it not seem to you that God was speaking to the world through the life of Jesus, telling us that we are all members of one great family? It is a good thing to have wealth if we use it to honor God and to help people in need. It is a good thing to have an education if we use our knowledge unselfishly. But neither wealth nor education is of much value if the possession of these things makes us proud and causes us to lose our fellowship with others not so fortunate.

Infinite Love. The word "infinite" means that which cannot be measured, that to which we can set no boundaries. The coming of God's Son was a message concerning the infinite love of God. The birth of Jesus shows us that God's love is boundless. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." When we send gifts to our friends, we show our love by our gifts. If we love anyone a great deal, we are willing to give gifts of great value when the person loved needs such a gift from us. Sometimes people have loved their friends so much that they were willing to give their lives to save their friends. Jesus once said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But God's love is greater than any man's love can be. Can you think what it meant for God to give his Son; to give him as a babe born in a stable; to give him to be crucified?

A MOTHER AND CHILD WHO WERE LOST IN THE SNOW

Some years ago a railway train was speeding across the level prairies of North Dakota. A great blizzard was raging across the plains and the driving snow shut out all the landscape from the view of the people on the train. Near the door of one of the cars sat a little woman with a child about three years old. Her husband was waiting with a sleigh at a station some miles farther along the track and the woman was anxiously trying to catch sight of the home station through the storm.

The train began to slow down and came to a standstill. The woman hurried with her baby through the door of the car, letting in a gust of wind and a cloud of powdery snow as she went out. Then the train moved on again.

Soon the conductor came in and noticed her absence. He asked where she had gone, and some of the passengers told him that she got off when the train stopped.

"She got off!" cried the conductor. "Why that was not the station! That was only a sidetrack and there is no house within a dozen miles of where the train stopped. She will be frozen to death in such a storm as this before she has walked half a mile."

Seizing the bell cord the conductor signaled to the engineer to stop the train. Then the train was backed to the place where the stop had been made.

Brave men buttoned their overcoats about them and plunged into the storm. They risked their lives to save a woman and a child whom they had never seen before that day. They spread out over the prairie, calling to one another so that no one would get lost and perish in the snow. The engineer sounded the whistle to let the rescuers know where the train was. And so they searched until they found the mother and child and brought them to the train where they were nursed back to life again.

Such an incident could hardly happen in any other than a Christian land. Can you tell why?

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the messages which thou didst give to the world through Jesus, thy Son, when he was a little child. Help us to understand these messages and to live in obedience to the truths they contain. Forgive us if we have been narrow in our sympathies and have been thoughtless concerning those who are our brothers and sisters in thy great family. Give us the spirit of love and kindness toward all. Make us like Jesus thy Son in patience, unselfishness, and self-control. We ask in his name. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

It came upon the midnight clear,
 That glorious song of old,
 From angels bending near the earth
 To touch their harps of gold:
 "Peace on the earth, good will to men,
 From heaven's all-gracious King:"
 The world in solemn stillness lay,
 To hear the angels sing.

"The Hymnal" (Revised), No. 177.

See "The Story of the Hymns and Tunes," by Brown and Butterworth, page 466.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

OUR DUTIES TO THOSE WHO ARE YOUNGER THAN
 OURSELVES

Matt. 18:1-14

Practically all the truly great people of the world have had a marked love for children. If a boy of twelve years old or so is kind to young children and loves them, it is a good sign that he will grow up to be a noble and great-souled man. He has already in his character one of the most manly of all traits and it is only reasonable to believe that this desirable quality will increase from year to year. Such a boy shows that he has a high sense of honor. He feels a kindly interest in those who are not

so strong and not so wise as himself. But beware of the boy who is mean to little children. It is hard to see what good there can be in such a boy. He must be a coward or he would not be unkind to those who are younger and weaker than himself. He has in him the spirit of the tyrant and the heart of a ruffian if he finds pleasure in causing his young companions pain and discomfort. Such a boy needs to learn the spirit of the Golden Rule: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them."

What is said of boys is equally true of girls. The girl of twelve who loves babies and all children who are younger than herself has a quality that makes womanhood noble. It shows that she is not selfish, when she finds her own happiness in making those who are younger than herself happy. Such a girl has already some of the qualities which make motherhood honored in all the Christian lands of the world.

BIBLE VERSES

Acts 20:35; I Cor. 1:26, 27; Matt. 21:16; 11:25, 26; Rom. 12:10; Matt. 19:13-15; John 21:15.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did Jesus happen to be born in Bethlehem?
2. What visits from angels occurred at about the time of Jesus' birth?
3. Who were the Wise Men and what do you think their visit shows?
4. How did God save Jesus from Herod's plots?
5. Why was Jesus brought into the Temple as a babe?
6. What happened on the day when the infant Jesus was brought to the Temple?
7. Name one great painting which is a picture of the infant Jesus.
8. In what ways had God revealed his truth to men before he sent his Son?
9. Tell some of the things which the author of The Epistle to the Hebrews says of Jesus.

10. What messages did God give the world through the Christ-child?

STUDY TOPICS

1. Child Life in India.
2. Child Life in China.
3. Child Life in Africa.
4. What the Foreign Missionaries Are Doing for Children.
5. What Sunday-School Missionaries Do for the Children of the Mountains and Prairies.
6. A Visit to the Children's Ward of a Hospital.
7. Infant Mortality in Our Own and Other Lands, and How the Lives of Children May Be Saved.
8. What the Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic Has Done for Children.
9. Little Children of our Community: Have They Playgrounds? What Can We Do to Make Their Lives Safe and Happy?
10. How Boys and Girls Can Help Those Younger Than Themselves.

THE LAW OF KINDNESS AND HELPFULNESS TO THOSE YOUNGER THAN OURSELVES

To be helpful and kind to those who are younger than ourselves is both a duty and an opportunity. Therefore:

1. We will try to be kind and helpful to the little brothers and sisters in our own homes, if God has given us the blessing of their presence.

2. We will try to be kind and helpful to our little brothers and sisters of the community and will treat them as members of this larger family

3. We will try to be kind and helpful to our little brothers and sisters of other lands, of whatever race or color they may be, and will consider them as members with us in the great family of God.

(Reports next week on What I Have Done to Help Those Younger Than Myself.)

CHAPTER III
THE YEARS AT NAZARETH
WEEK DAY SESSION
A PERFECT CHILDHOOD

Matt. 2:23; Luke 2:39, 40, 51, 52

There are only a few verses in the New Testament which tell us about the childhood and youth of Jesus. The Bible, however, has a way of giving a great deal of information in a few words, and when we come to study the statements in the Gospels which speak of the childhood of Jesus we find that they contain the facts which we most need to know. We can also understand a good deal of what the early life of Jesus must have been by learning about the manners and customs of the people of Palestine in the days of Jesus. We can learn what the boyhood life of Jesus probably was by coming to know the facts about the country where he spent the days of his childhood.

The Town Where Jesus Lived for Nearly Thirty Years. The boyhood home of Jesus was at Nazareth in Galilee. Nazareth is to-day a town of some seven thousand people and it was probably about the same size in the days of Jesus. The town lies on the side of a hill which rises more than sixteen hundred feet above the sea and nearly a thousand feet above the Plain of Esdraelon which is spread at its feet. From the top of this great hill just back of his home town, we may believe that Jesus often looked away westward to where the blue waters of the Mediterranean lay sparkling in the morning sunlight. There he would have seen white-sailed ships bearing the commerce of the nations to the distant lands lying behind the western horizon.

From the hilltop, too, he would have looked down on some of the great caravan routes which lead from the valley of the Euphrates into Egypt. Along these roads in the days of Jesus long lines of camels made their way bearing the merchandise of the East to the valley of the Nile and the products of Egypt to the valley of the Euphrates. Dusty bands of Roman soldiers passed along that road. They were returning from campaigns along distant frontiers, or were outward bound to quiet some uprising in the rebellious cities of the East.

Nazareth has flat-topped whitewashed houses to-day and the walls of many of these dwellings are clad with vines. There are vineyards and olive groves on the slopes of the hill. In these respects the town is probably much the same as it was in the boyhood days of Jesus. At one point in the town a splendid spring bursts forth and supplies water for all the people of the community. This spring is called to-day "The Fountain of the Virgin." Jesus was doubtless often there, as a child, with Mary his mother.

Over the Nazareth hills there is spread, in spring and early summer, a mantle of waving grass sprinkled everywhere with wild flowers in great variety and profusion. In this hill country multitudes of birds still make their homes, as they doubtless did in the days of Jesus. In the lonely gorges ravens make their nests upon the cliffs and you can often see them pursuing their solitary way across the sky in the evening as they go croaking home to their young ones. Sometimes a lammergeier, greatest of the vulture tribe, comes soaring down from the snow-capped peaks of Mount Hermon. He is a mile above the earth, but with his wonderful eyes he is searching every nook and corner of the plain for the carcass of some animal which will give him daily food.

As the boy Jesus gathered lilies on the hills, he admired their beautiful colors and their grace of form and he thought of the Jehovah God who had given them a glory greater than that of Solomon. The ravens crossing the evening sky also made him think of the great Father who cares for even the birds of the wilderness.

The hills and valleys stretching away from his hill-

built home would have another charm for the Nazareth boy. There was hardly a mountain, valley or stream visible from the Nazareth hill which did not suggest some hero tale connected with the history of the chosen people. There was the long, bush-clad ridge of Carmel where Elijah called down fire from heaven and discomfited the prophets of Baal. In the opposite direction was Mount Gilboa where Saul and his sons fell fighting with the Philistines. There was the widespread Plain of Jezreel over which so many Jewish armies had pursued the fleeing foe, or fled before the enemy.

The School Which Jesus Attended. There was a school connected with practically every synagogue and we may be sure that Jesus was enrolled in the synagogue school of Nazareth when he was about six years of age. There he learned to read and write. He studied first the book of Leviticus, then others of the early books of the Old Testament. Later he studied the Prophets and the Psalms. He committed to memory long passages of Scripture so that he knew by heart much of the Old Testament. There were other schools something like colleges or theological seminaries. They were intended for the training of rabbis but Jesus never attended these.

The Home Life of Jesus. Joseph was a carpenter and, in harmony with the custom of the Jews, Jesus learned the same trade. The family was large; besides Jesus there were four other sons in the family and at least two daughters. Jesus, being the eldest child, doubtless early began to share the burden of earning food and clothing for the household. It is probable that Joseph died while Jesus was yet a boy and thus the responsibilities of the home fell on the young shoulders of him who was to be the Saviour of the world.

In a simple Jewish home like that in which Jesus lived religion had a large place. The children were taught little prayers as soon as they could talk and they said these prayers morning, noon, and night. They were taught a thanksgiving prayer to be said before meals. The Jewish Sabbath began at sunset on Friday and it was a day of solemn rest and worship in the home. As soon as the sun

touched the western horizon a hush fell on the household, but it was not a silence of suppression. The Sabbath was a glad day for the children. The father went away each Friday evening to a service in the synagogue. When he returned home, he would find the Sabbath lamp burning brightly and the table spread with the best the household could afford. Before sitting down the father placed his hands on the head of each child and asked Jehovah's blessing on his offspring.

Then there were the great feast days like the passover and the feast of Purim which were household festivals. There was the feast of tabernacles when the whole family moved out of the house and lived in a tent or a booth made of boughs—a delightful occasion for the children. All these festival occasions were filled with the thoughts and feelings of religion. They were not mere times of feasting and pleasure such as our Christmas and our Thanksgiving are so prone to become. At the passover festival the youngest child in the family would always ask for the story of the deliverance from Egypt. The family sat in attentive silence while the father told the old, old story of how Jehovah, their God, had delivered the Hebrews from the hands of cruel Pharaoh. Then they all joined in singing the passover psalm.

A Reader in the Synagogue. Jesus doubtless went with Joseph and Mary to the synagogue services, even when he was a little child. There he would hear the reading of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. He would hear the reader explaining the Scriptures to the people. He would hear the solemn prayers and the singing of the psalms. Even while he was yet too young to understand very much that was said, the service would nevertheless make a deep impression upon him. As he grew up he was accustomed to attend the Sabbath services in the synagogue. When he became a young man his neighbors had so much confidence in him that they made him a reader for their synagogue. Thus he was given the privileges of reading the Scriptures every Sabbath and explaining the different passages to the people who had assembled for worship and instruction.

THE YEARS OF PERFECT GROWTH

Luke 2:40-52

“And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.”—Luke 2:40.

This brief verse covers twelve years of the life of Jesus. They tell us about a perfect childhood. Childhood is a time of growth, and the childhood of Jesus was not an exception; only in his case growth was perfect.

Perfect Physical Development. Jesus “grew, and waxed strong.” He was laying the foundations for physical strength in manhood. As we study his life we shall see that he must have possessed great powers of physical endurance. He was a carpenter and doubtless had to handle heavy beams. He made long and toilsome journeys. He spoke to crowds of people where many thousands were gathered together. After speaking and healing all day he often toiled far into the night, and the next day he was out a long time before dawn. Jesus could not have labored as he did unless he had laid good physical foundations in boyhood. If a boy does anything to weaken and injure his body, he is lessening his chances to become a strong and useful man.

Perfect Intellectual Development. Jesus during the years of his boyhood was becoming “filled with wisdom.” He was learning the psalms and the words of the prophets. He was learning the laws given by Moses and the wonderful stories of the Old Testament patriarchs. He was learning to see God and to know him in the birds and the flowers and the clouds. He grew as perfectly in mind as he grew perfectly in body. Every boy and girl should try to grow as Jesus grew. The nearer they are like the child Jesus, the greater will be their strength and usefulness when they become men and women.

Perfect Spiritual Development. Luke says of the boy Jesus, “the grace of God was upon him.” Jesus never did that which was wrong even when he was a boy. He never disobeyed his parents. We are told that he was “subject unto” Mary and Joseph all the days of his

childhood and youth. Jesus never broke God's laws so the grace of God was upon him as a constant and ever-growing blessing all the days of his life.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: Christ and the Doctors, by Hofmann (797 G, Perry, Bailey, page 103); Nazareth and the Hill Country, (182 Wilde); Jesus' First View of Jerusalem, by Mengelberg (3058 Perry).

SUNDAY SESSION

IN THE TEMPLE AT THE AGE OF TWELVE

Luke 2:41-52

There comes to every boy and girl at the age of twelve years, or thereabouts, a call from God. We can know God and love him when we are little children, but boys and girls of the Intermediate Department may begin to know God in a deeper way than is possible in childhood. Happy is the boy, or girl, who hears this early call of God and who answers gladly, "Here am I; speak, for thy servant heareth." Such a decision means that they are dedicating all of life to God; that they do not intend to live their best years in sin and then bring the fragments of their lives as an offering to their Creator. It means a lifelong growth and a lifelong service.

Sometimes boys and girls have not learned to love God as little children and have done many things that were not right in God's sight. Such boys and girls must of course be sorry for the sins they have committed before they become Christians. They must be converted, or turned toward God.

We have seen in our last lesson that Jesus grew just as other children grow, only he never did wrong things such as other children always do to some extent. Jesus seems to have had an experience when he was twelve years of age which was much like the experience of other people at about the same age. There was this difference, how-

ever: Jesus had never disobeyed God's will, so there was no struggle and sorrow for sin in his case. He heard God's call and there was nothing but gladness in his instant answer to his Father's voice.

The Journey to Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary, being godly people, went every year to the feast of the passover in Jerusalem. When Jesus was twelve years old, he went with them. This was probably the first time that Jesus had been in Jerusalem since he was a baby. It must have been a wonderful day for the boy of Nazareth when he first set out to visit the Holy City of which he had heard so much in his home and in his classes at school. How eagerly he must have counted the days before the wonderful journey should begin!

They probably started early in the morning. Coming down from their home in the hill town of Nazareth, they descended into the deep gorge of the Jordan, leaving beautiful Lake Galilee on their left. Then they crossed the Jordan and continued their journey down the eastern bank of that historic river. They camped at night with the neighbors and relatives who were going with them to the feast. They cooked their food over a camp fire and slept under the stars. Around the fires at night they probably told tales of other journeys they had made in the years long past, or they spoke with hushed voices of Jehovah's wondrous deeds when he brought up their forefathers out of the land of Egypt and drove out the inhabitants of the land before the armies of Joshua.

They crossed the Jordan just east of Jericho by the very ford where the Hebrews crossed with Joshua. Then they began to climb the long, steep road that leads up from Jericho to Jerusalem. They reached the village of Bethany, then followed the road which winds around the Mount of Olives. All at once the Holy City lay stretched out before them. Beyond its grim old walls of stone the homes of the Hebrews rose tier on tier upon the hills of Zion. There was the white-walled Temple, the dwelling place of Jehovah, with the gold upon its towers glittering in the sun.

The pilgrims had now become a great multitude and at

the sight of the city a great shout arose. They began to sing one of the Songs of Ascents:

“ I was glad when they said unto me,
 Let us go unto the house of Jehovah,
 Our feet are standing
 Within thy gates, O Jerusalem,
 Jerusalem that art builded
 As a city that is compact together;
 Whither the tribes go up,
 Even the tribes of Jehovah,
 For an ordinance for Israel,
 To give thanks unto the name of Jehovah.”

—Ps. 122:1-4.

The Passover Services in the Temple. The passover services in Jerusalem must have been deeply impressive to the boy Jesus. There were vast throngs of people from all parts of the known world crowded into the courts of the Temple. The priests offered sacrifices and the odor of incense filled the air. There were great choirs which sang psalms expressing the hopes of the Hebrews for the coming of their Messiah. Everywhere Jesus would hear the confession of sins and prayers for the coming of the Deliverer of the nation. Yet he would feel no call to confess any sin, for he had never disobeyed the will of God. He would come to realize how different he was in this respect from all other people. It may be that he began to realize then that he was to be the Deliverer for whom the nation was longing and praying. Many men and women who have lived great lives have caught visions of their life tasks when they were yet children and it may be that this was the case with Jesus. With him the vision would have been more sublime than it can be with anyone else, because his task was one of immeasurable importance and grandeur.

A Son of the Law. At the age of twelve Jewish boys became “sons of the law,” that is, they were looked upon as entering into manhood and citizenship at that age. This is probably why Jesus went to Jerusalem when he was twelve years old. There may have been some kind of

examination given such boys by the rabbis of the Temple and they may have taken part in a kind of confirmation service.

Lost in the City. When Joseph and Mary started back home Jesus was left behind in Jerusalem. They thought he was with some of their relatives and did not note his absence until they stopped to camp for the night. It may be that Jesus had become so absorbed in the thrilling events of the passover festival that he had forgotten all about the time set for the beginning of the homeward journey. Mary and Joseph went back to Jerusalem seeking for Jesus and at last found him in the Temple. He was sitting surrounded by the greatest of the rabbis of Jerusalem. He was hearing them and asking them questions and all that heard Jesus "were amazed at his understanding and his answers." Mary reproved her son, saying, "Why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing." But Jesus replied, "How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" These are the first recorded words of Jesus and they show us that he had come to believe that God was his Father. It may be that he had already begun to know that he was God's Son in a different sense from that in which all people are children of God.

Eighteen Years at Nazareth. So Jesus went back to Nazareth with his mother and Joseph and he "was subject unto them." There he lived in a humble home and labored in a carpenter shop for eighteen years. Some of the most heroic deeds of mankind are never written in books. They are done in secret with no applause from the passing throngs. It is probable that Jesus lived this heroic kind of life at Nazareth. He had seen visions of vast possibilities for the future, but he went back to his humble tasks, to provide food for his mother and his younger brothers and sisters. He labored on until he was twenty, until he was twenty-five, and still there was no change. Yet he was true to the visions God had given him, true also to the humble tasks just at hand. It was not until he was thirty that Jesus entered upon the great work which he had so long foreseen and for which his

heart had long been yearning. These eighteen years were a time of growth and preparation and testing.

THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we thank thee for the example of thy Son. We thank thee for his life as a boy. We thank thee for his character so pure and helpful and true. We ask thee to help us to live as he lived. Help us to keep our bodies strong and pure that we may be good servants of thine. Help us to study diligently and to think truly so that we may have minds that will make us useful to thee and to every good cause in the world. Keep us from doing anything which would injure the living souls within us and which thou hast given unto us. Forgive us for all we have done which was displeasing to thee and help us to be victors over evil, through Jesus thy Son. 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 turned 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.

“The Hymnal” (Revised), No. 316.

See “The Story of the Hymns and Tunes,” by Brown and Butterworth, page 318.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION**THE TRIANGLE OF PERFECT MANHOOD AND
PERFECT WOMANHOOD**

Eph. 6:10-20

The emblem of the Young Men's Christian Association and also of the Young Women's Christian Association is a triangle. Each side of this triangle stands for one word which is sometimes printed along the side. One side stands for the word "body," another for the word "mind," and the third side for the word "spirit." The triangle means that these two great organizations seek for a perfect development for each individual. They strive to give young people strong and healthy bodies; they try to improve their mental powers; they help young people in that most important of all tasks, keeping the soul strong and pure.

The thought that in order to be perfect men and perfect women we must have strong bodies, trained minds, and pure souls, did not originate with the leaders of the Young Men's Christian Association, however. Great and good men and women have known it for a long time. Paul wrote to the young man Timothy urging him to take good care of his health, admonishing him to "give diligence" to show himself "approved unto God" and solemnly warning him to keep himself pure. But the thought did not begin with Paul either. We find it stated very exactly by Luke as he describes the boyhood of Jesus. He says Jesus "grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." Jesus lived a life which met all the requirements of the triangle of perfect development.

We must have all sides of our triangle of life developed if we are to be really strong and worthy men and women. If a man has strength of body and not much else, he is not a fit model for the boys of our land. Boys who wish to amount to anything really worth while must try to have strong bodies but also something more. A man with a strong body but the sloping forehead of a wolf and the heart of a tiger is not what sensible boys wish to

become. Neither is it enough to have a strong body and a trained mind and nothing else. Such a man might be a villain. The kind of a soul a man has is more important than anything else. If a man or woman has a strong body, a trained mind, and a pure soul, the triangle of life is complete.

BIBLE VERSES

Prov. 4:10, 13-19; 3:7, 8; 4:20-22; Ps. 18:31, 32; 27:1; 84:5; Isa. 40:31.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we know about the childhood of Jesus?
2. Where was Nazareth and what kind of town was it?
3. What can be seen from the summit of the Nazareth hill?
4. What kind of school did Jesus probably attend?
5. Tell all you can about the probable home life of Jesus.
6. What does the fact that Jesus was a reader in the synagogue show us about his character, his habits of life, and his standing in the community?
7. What does the Bible tell us about the development of Jesus as a child?
8. Tell all you can of Jesus' visit to Jerusalem at the age of twelve.
9. What lessons can we learn from the childhood of Jesus?
10. What lessons can we learn from the eighteen years Jesus spent in Nazareth as a laborer in a carpenter's shop?

STUDY TOPICS

1. Habits Which Help Boys and Girls to Grow Up Physically Strong.
2. Habits Which Injure the Health of Boys and Girls.
3. The Effect of Cigarettes on Growing Boys.
4. How I Get My Lessons in School.

5. Which is Most Important: Body, Mind, or Spirit?
6. The Boy Scout Program and its Possibilities for All-Round Development.
7. The Girl Scouts as a Preparation for Womanhood.
8. The Program of the Pioneers and Other Like Organizations.
9. A Recreational Program for our Department.
10. Games Which Are Valuable for Exercise and Development.

COMMITTEE WORK

Appoint a Recreation Committee to report on a program of recreation for the department.

THE LAW OF PERFECT DEVELOPMENT

In order that we may become perfect men and women we must be strong in body; we must be alert and informed in mind; and we must be pure in heart. Therefore:

1. We will seek to develop habits of life which will give us health and strength. We will avoid all acts which will injure our bodies.
2. We will be diligent in study. We will seek to gather information and to develop the power of concentrated thinking.
3. We will strive after purity of mind and heart. We will to this end honor God and seek his help.

CHAPTER IV
THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF JOHN THE
BAPTIST

WEEK DAY SESSION

MAKING READY FOR THE MESSIAH

Matt. 3:1-12; 14:1-12; Luke 7:18-23

In this chapter we turn aside from our study of the life of Jesus to consider the life and character of one intimately associated with the beginning of Jesus' ministry. John the Baptist is one of the greatest men of history. Jesus said that no greater man had appeared during all the centuries of the Old Testament times. He said that John was a prophet "and much more than a prophet." There are two reasons, then, why we should know about John the Baptist: first, because he was a great and good man; second, because of the close connection of his work with that of Jesus.

A Man of the Wilderness. Matt. 3:1-4. We have already studied the passages of Scripture which tell us about the birth of John. His mission was so important that an angel foretold his birth and gave him a name from heaven. John grew up apart from the city. He was a country boy. He lived in a part of the country where he saw but few people. He spent much time in thinking and studied diligently the writings of Moses and the prophets. As he grew older he seems to have withdrawn still farther from the haunts of men. He dwelt in the wilderness; perhaps in some of the wild gorges of the Wilderness of Judea. In this desolate and lonely home, he was getting ready for his great life work. The great religious leaders of the world have often lived, for a time at least, as John lived. Such a life of solitude for one who seeks fellowship with God has great advantages. It leads to

simplicity and grandeur of character. It frees a person from many artificial habits and many modes of thought and conduct which are among the grave dangers of society. So John, living in his desert home, dressing in coarse clothing, eating locusts and wild honey, was getting ready for use as God's instrument in a great cause.

The Preaching of a Prophet. Matt. 3:5-12. John appears upon the scene with startling suddenness. From the very beginning of his preaching, he made a profound impression. He had a simple message, for he said to all, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Such a message was understood perfectly by every Jew. They knew that it meant that the Messiah was about to appear. People came flocking out into the desert places to hear this prophetic preaching. Nothing of the kind had been heard for hundreds of years. People came from the great cities. Even the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem joined the multitudes going out to hear the prophet of the wilderness. People came from all parts of Palestine and from many other lands where the Jews had gone to find homes.

John was fearless and practical. When he saw the scribes and Pharisees coming to hear him he said to them, "Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." The scribes and Pharisees did, indeed, think that they had great favor with God because they were descendants of Abraham, so we see that John understood them very well. It took a man of lofty courage to speak so plainly to these proud religious leaders.

Thousands came to John, professing to be penitent for their sins and asking to be baptized. Multitudes were so stirred that they cried out, saying, "What then must we do?" John answered their question with the words, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise." It is well for us to remember these words of John when we pray

saying, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." When the multitudes asked John what they should do to get ready for the coming Kingdom, he advised them to drop all selfishness and to do acts of generosity and helpfulness.

Even the despised and outcast publicans came to hear John and many repented of their sins. These came to John saying, "Teacher, what must we do?" John's answer was, "Extort no more than that which is appointed you." He did not tell them that they would have to give us the occupation of tax-collecting, which was a task necessary and honorable, in itself; but he did tell them to stop at once the extortion which was the great sin of the publicans. Even some soldiers from the Roman garrisons were touched by John's message. Perhaps they had come out of curiosity, but had been conquered by the power of John's preaching. These soldiers came saying, "And we, what must we do?" How strong and sensible was John's answer! "Extort from no man by violence, neither accuse any one wrongfully; and be content with your wages." John laid bare in these words the besetting sin of the soldiers of that time. They often extorted money from citizens by threatening their lives. They often brought false charges against people for the purpose of wreaking personal vengeance, or that they might extort money through blackmail. John went straight to these besetting sins of the soldiery and told them all such things must cease if they were to be citizens of the Kingdom.

In the Dungeon of Machærus. Matt. 14:1-12. John's fearless preaching finally brought him to imprisonment and death. On the death of Herod the Great, one of his sons named Herod Antipas became ruler of Galilee. This weak and wicked son of a wicked father divorced his lawful wife, who was an Arabian princess, and enticing away the wife of his own brother married her. This shameful deed brought on war with the king of Arabia who came with an army to avenge the wrong done his daughter. There was one man within the king's own dominions who dared to denounce such wickedness even though it was the wickedness of a king. John the Bap-

tist faced the sinful monarch and told him that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife.

Herod seized John and had him cast into prison. His place of confinement was probably the lonely castle of Machærus east of the Dead Sea. Beneath this great castle there were dungeons, where the air was always heavy with the sulphurous fumes constantly escaping from the cracks in the volcanic rocks. It is probable that John was cast into one of these cells below the castle.

The Answer of Jesus to a Message from John. Luke 7:18-23. John was a man of the open air. He had led an active life. To such a man confinement in a dungeon was a terrible experience. He had proclaimed to the multitudes that Jesus was the Messiah for whom they were waiting. He had pointed out Jesus to his own disciples saying to them, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." But after he had been for a long time in the dungeon, doubts seem to have entered John's mind. He was not doubting Jesus, for Jesus had never told him that he was the Messiah. John was rather doubting his own statements regarding Jesus.

John was, after all, a man of Old Testament ideas and many things which Jesus did puzzled him somewhat. He was still more puzzled by the things he had expected Jesus to do but which Jesus had not done and seemed to have no thought of doing. When we have doubts, it is a good thing for us to face them honestly and to seek the best information available. John did both of these things. He called two of his disciples and sent them to Jesus with the question: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" John ought not to have doubted, but when we consider that he was in a dungeon we cannot condemn him too severely.

Jesus answered John in a remarkable way. He had no word of reproof for the man who had proclaimed him to be the Messiah, but who had begun to waver in faith under trying circumstances. Jesus went right on with his work. He cured many of diseases and plagues. He opened the eyes of the blind. After an hour or so of

teaching and healing, he turned to the disciples of John and said, "Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me."

What a perfect answer that was! By teaching and healing Jesus was manifesting the very spirit of God and giving evidence that he was the kind of Saviour God would send to the world. Moreover, he was fulfilling to the letter some of the predictions of the prophets. How gentle and kind, yet how firm is the warning in his closing words! John was in danger of stumbling because of misunderstanding as to the acts of Jesus. Jesus does not point out the dangers so much as he points out the blessings that will come if John's faith does not fail: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me." We may well believe that John was satisfied with this answer of Jesus and that he met his fate firm in the belief that Jesus was the Redeemer for whose coming he had labored to make preparation.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the Notebook: John the Baptist Preaching, by Titian (43 Wilde); Christ Healing the Sick, by Schonherr (3174 Perry); John the Baptist, by Del Sarto (42 Wilde, Page 117, Bailey).

SUNDAY SESSION

A MAN GREAT IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD

John 1:6-37; 3:22-30

You will remember that the angel told Zacharias that his son should be "great in the sight of the Lord." Some people who are called great by men are not great in God's sight. Herod was called "The Great," but he was great only in wickedness. Alexander was called "The Great,"

but he could not control himself and died as the result of a drunken revel. But when a man can be said to be "great in the sight of the Lord," we may be sure that he is truly great. In this lesson we wish to see just what qualities of character John possessed and how these qualities made him great in the sight of God.

Great in His Sincerity. If a person has sincerity it means that he is genuine, that he is, as we say, "out and out." A sincere person is free from what we call duplicity. He does not pretend to feel, think, or do what he really does not think, feel, or do. It was John's absolute sincerity that helped to attract the multitudes. No man can have great and lasting power over large numbers of people if he is insincere at heart. One of the greatest of our presidents was once asked, "How is it that you have such power over the people of the country?" The man to whom the question was addressed was thoughtfully silent for a moment and then he said, "I do not know why this is true, unless it be that it is because I am absolutely sincere." Sincerity was a result of John's tremendous moral earnestness. He had a great life goal and he went at his great task with all his might. The poet Whittier once said to a young man, "Find some great and worthy cause and then give yourself to it without reserve and your devotion to a great cause will help you to become truly great in character." People who become great and useful develop this moral earnestness early in life. Like Jesus and John the Baptist, they hear even in childhood the call to be about the Father's business.

Great in His Humility. Truly great people are nearly always humble. They realize their own littleness in comparison with the vastness of God's universe. A truly wise person knows enough to see that one can know only a very small part of all that is to be known. Sir Isaac Newton said that he had "picked up only a few pebbles on the beach while the vast ocean of truth lay all undiscovered." If you know people who go about with an air which seems to suggest that in their estimation they know all there is to be known, you may set down for certain that these people are far from being great in char-

acter. John was a truly humble man. He did not claim to be the Messiah, nor would he be called Elijah. He would not claim to be the prophet. He said of himself that he was a voice crying in the wilderness. That was all he cared to be, just a voice. He did not care to be seen, but just to make his message known and thus prepare for the coming of the King. He said that he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose the shoe latches of the Messiah.

Great in His Democracy. When any person has a sympathy wide enough to take in all classes of people, and recognizes a universal brotherhood including every race, color, and condition of humanity, such a person is said to be democratic, and we say that such a person has the quality we call democracy. A person with a democratic spirit believes in the fundamental equality of the race. Such a person treats his fellow men in a uniform manner. He never despises one person and comes crawling up to some other person with flattery and fawning.

Do you remember what Jesus said to the multitudes after John's disciples had asked the question which John had sent them to ask and had gone back to their master with the answer of Jesus? Nothing is a better index to character than the way a person speaks about people in their absence. If we talk about people when they are not present in a way we would not think of talking about them in their presence, we show ourselves to be mean and cowardly. It is a sign of noble character when anyone speaks well of the absent whenever possible. Jesus might have reproached John to the multitude. He had some occasion for doing so, as you will remember, but he commended John with the highest kind of praise. He said to the people, "What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment?" Jesus meant something like this: "Was John a crafty man, one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow? Was he one thing to one man and another thing to other men? Was he like a reed turning about every time the wind changes? Was he a man seeking always his own comfort and his own honor, seeking ever to 'feather his

own nest,' as we say?" Then Jesus told the people that they would find these self-seeking men in king's courts, and the palace of Herod was, indeed, full of them. But he said that John was a prophet and more than a prophet, that no greater man than John had ever been born.

Great in His Courage. John the Baptist was a man of lofty moral courage. He dared to stand alone for righteousness. We have seen how courageously he rebuked the Pharisees and how heroically he reproved King Herod. A man must have strong moral courage to be democratic; so the two qualities, democracy and courage, are usually found together. John treated the Pharisees just as he treated the despised publicans. He spoke to Herod just as firmly as he spoke to the Roman soldiers who came to him in the wilderness. A less courageous man than John would have thought it good policy to win the Pharisees by some utterance which would have flattered their pride. Such a man would have passed over the sins of the Jewish leaders in silence. But John was too sincere, too democratic, too courageous, for any such course of action as that.

Great in His Usefulness. Selfishness and soul greatness are deadly foes. They cannot exist side by side in the same personality. Selfishness makes people little; it makes them little in their sympathies, little in their plans, little in their outlook on life. Great souls have forgotten self in devotion to some great understanding. They have come to think of their personal comfort as amounting to nothing in comparison with the task to which they have devoted themselves. They have come to value life itself as of less value than the goal which they have set before them.

The unselfishness of John the Baptist was shown by an incident which occurred near the close of his ministry. John 3:22-30. Jesus had begun to preach and his disciples had begun to baptize. In a little while the multitudes which had followed John the Baptist were following Jesus. This disturbed the disciples of John. They came to their master and said, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness,

behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." John answered: "A man can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but, that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is made full. He must increase, but I must decrease." This is one of the most nobly unselfish utterances in the Bible. Instead of growing peevish because of the increasing popularity of Jesus, John found fullness of joy in the success of his friend. His own popularity was waning and he knew it. Perhaps he had premonitions of the fate which would ultimately befall him, but he had joy and satisfaction in the thought that Jesus was meeting with growing success in his efforts to reach and interest the multitudes.

Great in His Fidelity. John the Baptist was wholly devoted to his task of preparing for the coming of the Messiah. Such devotion to duty we call fidelity and it is one of the finest traits of character. John probably grew up with his life work ever in view. We may believe that Zacharias and Elisabeth told their little son at an early age the story of the angel's visit and the words he spoke about John's work in the world.

THE LESSON PRAYER

We thank thee, our Father in heaven, for the life and example of thy faithful servant, John the Baptist. Help us to have that moral courage which he manifested so largely. Help us to have a wide sympathy for all thy children. Help us to be unselfish and faithful. If it be thy will, reveal to us at an early age the life task which thou hast for each one of us, and when we have found our work, help us to be diligent and true. Bless our homes and our church school. Help us to make our homes happy dwelling places where helpfulness and love abound. We ask thee in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
 Announces that the Lord is nigh;
 Come then and harken, for he brings
 Glad tidings from the King of kings.

E'en now the air, the sea, the land,
 Feel that their Maker is at hand;
 The very elements rejoice,
 And welcome him with cheerful voice.

“The Hymnal Revised,” No. 200.

 EXPRESSSIONAL SESSION

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Mark 1:1-8; 6:14-19

In Old Testament times there were people called Nazirites. The name “Nazirite” means separated or consecrated, and was given to people who had vowed to consecrate their bodies and their minds to the service of God. Some people became Nazirites after they were grown but sometimes parents took the vows for their children and then the person so dedicated to God in infancy grew up to be a Nazirite for all his lifetime. This was the case with Samuel for his mother promised God that if he should give her a little son, she would “give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life.” So when Samuel was only a little boy, his mother brought him to the house of God and he made his home with the old priest, Eli, and grew up to be one of the greatest and noblest men of the Hebrew nation. If you do not know about this beautiful story of the little boy Samuel, you must read it in the first three chapters of I Samuel.

John, too, was consecrated to God by his parents from the day of his birth. He grew up with a healthy body, because he ate simple food and did not drink strong drink. He grew up with an ever-widening knowledge of the Bible, because his parents taught him the Psalms, the Law, and the Prophets, from his earliest years. He grew up strong and courageous in spirit, because he did

right and kept his conscience clean and learned to know God more and more.

Since Jesus has come to the world, we do not have just a few people called Nazirites who are consecrated to God. Jesus taught us that every true follower of his is consecrated to God. Every follower of Jesus ought to live so as to be strong in body, pure in mind, and upright in soul. It is a fortunate boy or girl who has godly parents and who, like Samuel and John the Baptist, is given to God in earliest years.

BIBLE VERSES

Prov. 28:20; I Cor. 4:2; Rev. 2:10; II Chron. 34:12; Deut. 31:6; Josh. 10:25; Ps. 27:14; Col. 3:11; Gal. 6:10.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where did John the Baptist live as a boy and what effect did his home life have on his character?
2. What was the character of John's preaching?
3. Who came to hear John?
4. What did John say to the publicans? to the soldiers?
5. How did it happen that John was cast into prison?
6. What question did John send his disciples to ask of Jesus and how did Jesus answer the question?
7. What acts and words of John the Baptist show us that he was a courageous man?
8. How did John show his unselfishness?
9. How did John the Baptist prepare for the coming of Jesus?
10. How do we know that John the Baptist was a humble man?

STUDY TOPICS

1. Circumstances Which Demand Courage in Boys and Girls.
2. Duties of Which We can Give Faithful Devotion.
3. The Story of Little Arthur in "Tom Brown's School Days" as an Illustration of Moral Courage.

4. How Tom Brown Showed Moral Cowardice.
5. What Should be the Attitude of a Christian Boy or Girl Toward Children of Foreign or Colored Parentage?
6. Is It Right to Use Such Names as "Sheeny," "Dago," or "Hunkie?"
7. Find the Meaning of the Following Words in the Dictionary and Write Sentences Using them Correctly: Democracy, Duplicity, Sincerity, Humility, Courageous, Fidelity.
8. Qualities of Character Found in Great Persons.
I. Abraham Lincoln.
9. Qualities of Character Found in Great Persons.
II. Frances Willard.
10. Qualities of Character Found in Great Persons.
III. Martin Luther.

THE LAW OF MORAL COURAGE

Moral courage is essential to true manhood and true womanhood. Without it little of real value can be accomplished in life. Therefore:

1. We will not be afraid to defend that which is right and true even though we must stand alone.
2. We will not be afraid to do the right at all times even though others do evil and laugh at us for doing the right.
3. We will not be afraid to own our allegiance to Jesus Christ and his Church at any time and in any company.

CHAPTER V
JESUS MAKING READY FOR HIS GREAT TASK
WEEK DAY SESSION

THE BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Matt. 3:13 to 4:11

John the Baptist had not been preaching many weeks before rumors concerning the new prophet reached Nazareth. Like all other parts of Palestine the quiet town on the Galilean hills was deeply stirred by reports that John was proclaiming the immediate coming of the Kingdom of heaven. For hundreds of years there had been no prophet in Israel, but now one had at last appeared. The masses of the Jewish people were quickly convinced that John the Baptist was a true prophet. His manner of life, his courageous denunciation of the shams and the sins of the time, and his message calling for repentance, all helped to mark him as one of that heroic line of men who had so often appeared in the crises of Hebrew history.

Jesus Comes to the Jordan to Be Baptized. Matt. 3:13. The people of Galilee went in large numbers to hear John and to be baptized by him. The Galileans were generally deeply religious. They were not so coldly formal as the Jews of Jerusalem and had more zeal for that kind of religion for which the prophets had striven. So we may believe that the number of people who went out from Galilee to hear John and to be baptized by him was especially large. Peter and John perhaps others who afterward became disciples of Jesus became disciples of John.

When the people of Nazareth went to hear John, Jesus went also. Perhaps he knew that he was leaving the peaceful home at Nazareth never again to make it his permanent abiding place. He had come to know the hol-

lowness of the religious life of that time. He probably knew that the scribes and Pharisees and the priests would not respond enthusiastically to the appeal of a true religion, spiritual-minded and wide in its sympathies.

John's Protest and Jesus' Reply. Matt. 3:14, 15. When John was baptizing the people one day, Jesus also came and presented himself for baptism. John felt that it would not be a fitting thing for him to baptize Jesus. He said with his usual humility, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Jesus may have expected some such protest from John, for he had evidently thought over the matter and decided that it was his duty to be baptized just as the rest of the people were. Jesus had no sins of his own to confess, but by being baptized he showed that he was supporting John in his work and by the power of his example he doubtless helped many others to take the same step, that is, to be baptized and to become followers of John in his efforts to prepare for the Kingdom of heaven. If we are truly kind and unselfish, we will often do things that are not necessary for our own selves but which are helpful to other people.

The Opening Heavens and the Descending Spirit. Matt. 3:16, 17. The baptism of Jesus was for him the occasion of a wonderful spiritual experience. Matthew says:

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 3:16, 17.

Luke tells us that this vision and voice from heaven came to Jesus as he was praying. Perhaps Jesus thus gained a clearer and more certain knowledge of his relationship to God and his tasks as the Messiah.

Alone in the Deserts. Matt. 4:1, 2. Immediately following his baptism Jesus went away into the wilderness. The lonely desert mountain of Quarantana is pointed out to-day as the place to which Jesus went. This may not be the exact place but it is probably much like the coun-

try where Jesus lived for forty days immediately after his baptism. Jesus went away so that he could be alone and could think about his great task as the Messiah. We know that from this time on he was sure that he was God's Son sent to be the world's Saviour. He had come out into the deserts not only to think but also to talk with God in prayer. We shall see that he often spent whole nights in prayer and we may be sure that he went into the wilderness to pray. Mark tells us that during the forty days in the wilderness, Jesus was "with the wild beasts."

But there was another presence near the Master during all these days. That presence was not a wild creature of the deserts but that spirit of evil, the Tempter, who is ever seeking the souls of men to destroy them. The New Testament tells us that Jesus was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." In that lonely spot in Palestine a forty day's battle raged. It was a more important battle than Waterloo, or Gettysburg, for the issue of the conflict was the eternal destiny of all mankind.

Tempted to Use His Power for His Own Comfort and Safety. Matt. 4:3,4. Jesus probably told his disciples about his experiences during those forty days in the wilderness when he wrestled with the suggestions of the Tempter. We do not know in how many different ways the Tempter tried to ensnare Jesus. Luke says that the temptation extended through the entire forty days, but the three temptations concerning which we are given information seem to have occurred at the close of the period of fasting.

Having fasted for forty days Jesus must have been in very great need of food, in fact ready to perish from starvation. Now when people are starving for food, they will often do almost anything to satisfy their terrible hunger. The weakening of the body tends to weaken the will power; at the same time, the body's demand for food becomes more and more insistent. One of the reasons why we believe that there is an evil mind lying back of our temptations is the fact that temptations are apt to come at a time and in a way which makes it hard

for us to resist them. They often have every appearance of being perfectly harmless. It was thus with the first temptation of Jesus of which we have record.

All about Jesus on the desert were scattered stones. Some of them were round and flat, looking very much like the loaves of bread used in Palestine. Into the mind of Jesus the Tempter sent the thought, "If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Just a little while before Jesus had heard God's voice saying, "This is my beloved Son." He knew that as God's Son he had limitless power. Why suffer here with the pangs of hunger when by a word he could have bread? Why run the risk of fainting and dying in the wilderness?

Why would it have been wrong for Jesus to turn the stones into bread? It is a little hard for us to see just why, until we study the matter carefully. That is where Jesus showed his great wisdom and his great loyalty to God and right. He detected just a little danger, just a shade of wrong, in the suggestion. The greatest evils in the world grow from very small beginnings. If we can detect these beginnings and refuse them, we shall never do the great acts of wickedness to which they lead. Perhaps the wrong was just this: If Jesus had used his power to escape discomfort and danger on this occasion, he would doubtless have done so again. The policy of using his power thus would have become established. But as we study his life we shall see that he could not have carried out such a policy and accomplished at the same time his mission. The time was coming when with unlimited power at his command he must submit to ignominy and death and not call on the "twelve legions of angels" waiting to give him succor. Recognizing this danger in the principle underlying the proposed course of action, Jesus firmly said, "No," to the temptation.

Tempted to Use His Power for Display. Matt. 4:5-7. The Jewish people were expecting the Messiah to make some great display of his power when he came. They believed that he would thus prove to the satisfaction of all that he was the One whom the nation was expecting. The Tempter used this fact to attempt a second time to

entangle Jesus in evil. He suggested a trip to the Temple in Jerusalem. Why not climb to the highest tower of the Temple and leap off before the assembled thousands on one of the great feast days and by coming down to earth unhurt prove to all the people that he was the Messiah? Certain predictions of the prophets and in the Psalms seemed to indicate that the Messiah would give some such exhibition of his powers. .

Jesus saw in this thought also, traces of evil. Perhaps he knew that such a method could never bring about true faith in the hearts of the people. Those who were to become true followers of the Messiah must believe in him because their hearts responded to his goodness, his gentleness, and his truth, and not because their minds were amazed by his powers as a wonder-worker. So Jesus refused the second suggestion also.

Tempted to Use His Power in a Worldly Way to Gain Worldly Dominion. Matt. 4:8-11. In the majestic words of Matthew we read:

“Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”

This last of the three temptations of Jesus was evidently a suggestion that he use the ways of the world to make himself master of the nations. With his divine powers, Jesus could have conquered the world by force. This was exactly what most of the Jews were expecting the Messiah to do. But Jesus saw that no permanent, happy, and lasting kingdom could be set up on earth in that way. He recognized the suggestion as coming from the Tempter and answered it with a stern, “Get thee hence, Satan.” Jesus had conquered every temptation and his soul felt the presence of the angels of God as they ministered unto him.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: Christ Tempted by Satan, by Cornicelius (Wilde 547, Bailey, page 131);

The Baptism of Christ, by Perugino (Wilde 255); Christ and the Fishermen, by Zimmermann (Perry 1101, Bailey, page 144).

SUNDAY SESSION

FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH THOSE WHO WERE TO BECOME HIS DISCIPLES

John 1:35 to 2:12

The great leaders and reformers of history have made their work permanent and insured its growth by gathering about themselves disciples. These disciples have gone about winning others to the support of the principles taught them by their master. Jesus began his great task in the same humble manner. We have seen how he refused to cast himself from the pinnacle of the Temple in an attempt to win the multitudes in a wholesale manner by the acts of a wonder-worker. We shall learn in this lesson how simply and naturally the great work of making the whole world Christian began.

Two Fishermen Who Became Disciples of John the Baptist. John 1:35-37. The Sea of Galilee is in many ways strikingly different from the Dead Sea. Whereas the waters of the Dead Sea are so full of salt and other chemicals that they are almost without life of any kind, the pure and sparkling waters of the Sea of Galilee abound with fish. In the days of Jesus fishing was one of the leading industries among the people living around the lake. Among these fishermen of Galilee were two young men, one of whom was named John and the other was named Andrew. Both of these young men heard about the preaching of John the Baptist and went out into the wilderness to hear him. Both were stirred by his messages concerning the coming of the Messiah. They were baptized and became disciples of John.

One day these two disciples were standing in a certain place and Jesus passed by them. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he said to his disciples, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The disciples knew very well what their leader meant by these words. You will remember

that John had preached about the Messiah. He had said that he would thoroughly cleanse the threshing floor, burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. He had said that the ax was already lying at the roots of the trees and that every useless tree would be hewn down. His brief acquaintance with Jesus seemed to have changed John's ideas somewhat. He had come to think of the Messiah not so much as a destroying fire as a meek and gentle Lamb who should take away the sin of the world.

A Day of Fellowship with Jesus. John 1:38-40. In his writings John, the disciple, tells us about the day he first met Jesus. John and Andrew followed Jesus along the path after their master, John the Baptist, had pointed him out and called him "the Lamb of God." When Jesus turned around, he saw two men following him and he said to them kindly, "What seek ye?" The future disciples answered timidly, "Rabbi, where abidest thou?" We can feel a tone of good-natured humor in the kindly spoken invitation of Jesus, "Come, and ye shall see." So the two went home with Jesus that day; that is, they went to the place which Jesus was making his home since he had left Nazareth. It may have been only a rough booth made of branches. When John, the disciple, wrote the verses which we are studying in this lesson, he was probably an old man nearly a hundred years old. But he remembered the exact time of day when he first met Jesus so long ago. He says, "It was about the tenth hour."

We do not know what Jesus and John and Andrew talked about that day, but it was probably about the Kingdom which Jesus had come to establish. They must have been deeply impressed by their first visit with Jesus for they went out to tell others that they had found the Messiah.

The First Followers of Jesus Go Out and Find Others. John 1:41-51. Andrew after his visit with Jesus went at once and found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah." Then he brought Simon to Jesus and we know that Jesus accepted Simon as a disciple for he gave him a new name, as a sign that he

was to enter upon a new and important undertaking. It was customary among the Jews, as it has been among many other peoples, to give a person a new name at some important event. So Jesus told Simon that henceforth his name should be Peter.

The next day Peter found his friend Philip and brought him to Jesus. Philip lived in Bethsaida, the same village in which Andrew and Peter lived. When Jesus saw Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." Thus without any ceremony but in the simplest possible way, Philip became a disciple of Jesus.

That very day, Philip went out and found one of his friends named Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Now Nathanael lived in Cana, just a little way from Nazareth. Perhaps the two towns were not on very friendly terms, for Nazareth does not seem to have stood very high in the esteem of Nathanael. He said, to his friend, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip answered enthusiastically, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael he knew just what kind of man he was. We shall see that Jesus had a wonderful power to read character. He said to his disciples as Nathanael drew near, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael was greatly surprised at the wisdom manifested by Jesus and quickly came to believe that Jesus was the Messianic King.

Jesus at a Wedding Feast. John 2:1-11. It was only a few days after this that Jesus and his disciples were invited to a wedding festival in the town of Cana. Jesus now had five disciples and it was this little group of men who went with him, to Cana. The wedding was probably in a family well known to Jesus and his relatives in Nazareth, for Mary, the mother of Jesus, was one of the women who had charge of the wedding supper.

It was at this wedding that Jesus performed his first miracle. In the midst of the festival Mary and the other women were filled with embarrassment and dismay to find that there was no more wine. Not to have wine enough for the guests would be considered a disgrace.

The troubled mother of Jesus came to her Son and told him the circumstances. Perhaps she had learned to trust him at such times because he always knew what to do in times of difficulty.

We have seen in our last lesson how Jesus refused to perform a miracle for his own relief when he was in great personal distress and his life possibly in danger. But here was an opportunity to use his miraculous power to help another person in trouble and that person was his mother. We like to think that the first time Jesus used that wonderful power which he possessed as the Son of God, he used it to save his mother from embarrassment and sorrow. Jesus avoided any display. He gave directions as to how the water was to be poured from one jar to another, and when it had become wine he told the servants to carry it to the ruler of the feast. Apparently Jesus, his mother, his disciples, and a few others were the only people present who knew that anything unusual had taken place.

Jesus and His Family Move Down to Capernaum. John 2:12. Soon after the miracle at Cana, Jesus, his mother, and the other members of the family left their home in Nazareth and came down to a town called Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum is today only a heap of ruins, if, indeed, anyone can say just which rock pile marks the place where the city once stood. But in the days of Jesus it was a thriving city. The low fertile lands along the Sea of Galilee were densely populated. Perhaps Jesus had come down to Capernaum in order to be near the center of the territory in which he expected to labor. The disciples of Jesus also went with him to Capernaum and they were now with him much of the time. The time had not yet come, however, for them to leave their work and give all their time to being with Jesus. So we shall learn in another lesson how Jesus called them away from their fishing that they might become fishers of men.

THE LESSON PRAYER

We are grateful our Father in heaven, for the beautiful story of Jesus, thy Son. Help us to study the lessons

in the Bible which tell us about him so that we may know just how pure and brave and kind he was. When we are tempted to do anything that is wrong, help us to remember Jesus and in remembering him may we be victorious over every temptation. Help us to conquer selfishness. Help us to be sincere and simple in our manners, putting away false pride and the love of display. We ask thee to help us to be worthily ambitious. We would be of service to thee and to thy Son all the days of our lives. We would be true disciples of thy Son, our Teacher and Friend. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

O Master, let me walk with thee
 In lowly paths of service free;
 Tell me thy secret; help me bear
 The strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move
 By some clear winning word of love;
 Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
 And guide them in the homeward way.

“The Hymnal Revised,” No. 196.
 See also No. 192 in the same book.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

RECRUITING FOR THE KINGDOM

Matt. 13:31-33

We have been studying in the week-day session and in the Sunday session of the church school about the beginnings of Jesus' great task as the Messiah and Saviour. We have seen how he began with two disciples who had been disciples of John the Baptist. In a few days the number of disciples had been increased to five by the activities and testimonies of these first followers of Jesus among their relatives and acquaintances. Jesus knew that it was best for his work to begin as it did, for in our Scripture lesson for this session we have

two brief parables which teach us that the Kingdom which Jesus had come to establish was to begin and grow in just the way the work of Jesus had begun. The Kingdom was to be very small at first, as small as a grain of mustard seed, but it was to be a living, growing, and expanding power. It was to grow as the leaven grows in meal by the contact of little particles of meal with one another in the mass of meal which was to become bread. Andrew found his own brother Simon and brought him to Jesus and the leaven of the Kingdom began with that event.

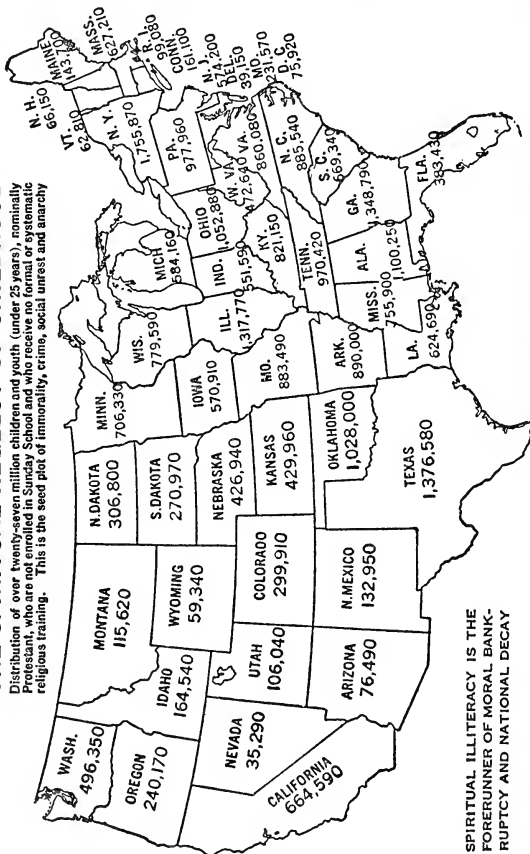
God has made it possible for every Christian boy and girl to have an important part in setting up his Kingdom in the world. There are some things which they can do better than anyone else. Sometimes a boy can get his chum to go to Sunday school when nobody else can. Do you know how many children and young people in our country are not enrolled in any Sunday school? There are over twenty-seven millions of them. The number in each state is shown in the map on page 64. Do you know what our greatest force for getting these children and youth into our Sunday schools is? It is not the pastors of our churches, because we have only a few thousand of them and they have so many other duties that they cannot do more than a small part of this great task. Our Sunday-school missionaries help, but they also are few in number. Our greatest force for getting these spiritually untaught children into our Sunday schools and church schools is the army of boys and girls already in Sunday school. If each boy and girl and young person in Sunday school could bring in one other child or young person in a year, there would not be many left outside at the end of the twelve months. The aim of this lesson is to help you to do this. You can, if you will, be like Andrew and Peter and Philip. You can be a recruiting agent for the Kingdom of God.

BIBLE VERSES

Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 14:23; Matt. 19:14; II Tim. 4:5; 2:15; Acts 1:8.

AMERICA'S GREATEST PERIL THE SPIRITUAL NEGLECT OF CHILDHOOD

Distribution of over twenty-seven million children and youth (under 25 years), nominally Protestant, who are not enrolled in Sunday School and who receive no formal or systematic religious training. This is the seed plot of immorality, crime, social unrest and anarchy



SPIRITUAL ILLITERACY IS THE FORERUNNER OF MORAL BANKRUPTCY AND NATIONAL DECAY

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus wish to be baptized?
2. Why did Jesus go away into the deserts after his baptism?
3. What temptations came to Jesus and how did he overcome them?
4. Who were the first disciples and how did they become followers of Jesus?
5. Tell the story of Jesus' first miracle.

STUDY TOPICS

1. How a Knowledge of the Bible Helps Us Overcome Temptation.
2. The Work of a Sunday-School Missionary.
3. Why a Boy or Girl Should Attend Sunday School.
4. Vacation Bible Schools: Their Purpose and Their Plans.
5. Week-Day Church Schools: Their Value and Their Forms.

COMMITTEE WORK

Survey Committee. To report on the number of boys and girls from six years of age to fifteen years of age who are not enrolled in any Sunday school or like educational institution in our community.

Invitations Committee. To call on all boys and girls who are not attending any church school and invite them to come to the social meetings and regular class recitations of this school.

Social Committee. To plan for a social to which all boys and girls found by the Survey Committee to be not enrolled in Sunday school may be invited.

THE LAW OF LOYALTY TO THE CHURCH SCHOOL

The educational work of the church is of great importance in the task of spreading the teachings of Jesus throughout the world and in building up the Kingdom of God on earth. Therefore:

1. We will manifest our loyalty to the school of the church by being regular and prompt in our attendance.

2. We will do our tasks with diligence and faithfulness.

3. We will seek to recruit new members for the church school by inviting our friends and companions and by any other means which the Committee on Invitations desire.

CHAPTER VI
JESUS BEGINNING HIS MINISTRY
WEEK DAY SESSION

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

Mark 1:14-39; Luke 5:1-11

When Jesus came back to Galilee from Judea, where he had been preaching and his disciples had been baptizing, he had finished what Bible students call "The Early Judean Ministry." He had begun what is called "The Galilean Ministry." There are two events of The Early Judean Ministry which we shall take up in a lesson on the methods Jesus used to reach people with his message of truth. These two events are the conversation which Jesus had with Nicodemus and his talk with the woman of Samaria.

The Wonderful Draft of Fishes. Luke 5:1-11. We have seen that when Jesus began his work in Galilee he had five disciples. These five disciples still spent a part of their time in fishing but they were with Jesus much of the time. One day Jesus was with his disciples in a boat and under his direction they let down their nets into the sea. When they tried to pull in the nets, they found them full of fish. Perhaps there were more fish in the nets than the disciples had ever caught at one time before. Moreover, they had been fishing all that day and up to that time had caught nothing. The number of fish caught was so great that all the disciples were amazed. They felt that the wonderful catch was due to the power and presence of Jesus. Simon Peter seems to have been especially impressed. In the presence of one so strong and pure, he remembered the many wrong things he had done. He fell down before Jesus and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Then Jesus told them that soon they were to leave their nets and become fishers of men.

The Fishermen Called to Become Fishers of Men. Mark 1:14-20. When the time came for the disciples to give all their time to being with Jesus as his helpers and as students in his school, Jesus called them away from their former work. One day Jesus was walking along the shores of the Sea of Galilee and he saw Simon and Andrew casting their nets into the sea. He called to them and said, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Perhaps the disciples had been expecting some such call, for immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Going on a little farther Jesus saw James and John, with their father Zebedee. These three with some hired servants were sitting in a boat mending their nets. Jesus called James and John just as he had called Peter and Andrew, and the two brothers came at once, leaving their father and the servants in the boat. The addition of James to the company of the disciples increased their number to six. Busy days were now beginning for Jesus and his disciples. Mark gives us a description of one day in the life of Jesus which shows us how diligently he labored at his great task. We shall now consider some of the events in this story of a day in the life of Jesus.

The Morning Service in the Synagogue. Mark 1:21-28. It was the Sabbath and Jesus with his six disciples went to the religious service in the synagogue. Jesus had been a reader, as you will remember, in his home synagogue at Nazareth. Moreover, he was becoming well known as a religious teacher in Capernaum. So he was asked to speak in the service that Sabbath morning. The people were astonished at his teaching because his methods were so different from those of the rabbis. They expressed no opinion of their own but the opinions of those who had lived many centuries before them and whom they regarded as great teachers. Jesus "taught as one having authority," that is, he gave his own statements as to matters and did not quote from the ancient rabbis.

After Jesus had been speaking for a time there was an interruption. There was a man in the synagogue having "an unclean spirit." We shall find these demon-possessed people mentioned often in the New Testament. They were evidently not merely sick or insane people, but more like persons suffering from what psychologists have called "divided personality," or "deranged personality." They felt themselves in the grip of a power not themselves. This demon-possessed man in the Capernaum synagogue began to cry out, saying to Jesus, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." In the midst of the confusion growing out of the demoniac's interruption of the service, Jesus showed his mastery over both the circumstances and over the mysterious power of evil within the life of the demon-possessed man. "Hold thy peace, and come out of him," said Jesus. There was a terrific struggle within the soul of the demon-possessed man and loud protesting outcries, but there was obedience to the Master's command. "The unclean spirit ... came out of him." What Jesus had done caused amazement, and the report of his power over the unclean spirits soon spread over all Galilee and into the surrounding regions.

A Guest in the House of Simon Peter. Mark 1:29-31. After the service in the synagogue, Jesus went home with Simon Peter. James and John also went to Peter's home. There was sickness in the house for Peter's mother-in-law was ill of a serious fever. Notwithstanding this sickness of his wife's mother, and with the simple hospitality which has ever been a pleasing trait of the common people, Peter invited his friends and the Master to his home. It was well that he did so for the presence of Jesus in the home brought to it a great blessing. On entering the house they told Jesus about the sick woman and he at once went into the room where she lay and, taking her by the hand, raised her up, and the fever left her. She was so completely cured that she began at once to prepare food for the company.

A Sunset Scene in Capernaum. Mark 1:32-34. The

report of how Jesus had healed the demoniac in the synagogue and the woman stricken with fever in her home spread rapidly through Capernaum and the surrounding country. In many a home where there was some loved one stricken by sickness or tormented by the strange demon possession, new hope sprang up that Sabbath afternoon. A great Healer had come and if they could only bring their stricken loved ones to him, they believed he would make them well. But it was the Sabbath day and they must not break it by carrying the sick to Simon's house. The Jewish Sabbath began at sunset on Friday and ended at sunset on Saturday. So all over the city they waited for the sun to set. The moment the sun touched the Galilean hills west of Capernaum they began to come. They came in such multitudes that they filled the streets. Mark says, "All the city was gathered together at the door." Perhaps every sick person in Capernaum who could possibly be moved was there in the street before the door of Peter's house. Jesus doubtless labored far into the night teaching and healing. Possibly it was long after midnight when the last of the sick had been healed and had gone back home.

Early Morning Prayer. Mark 1:35-39. It was probably very late before Jesus could seek rest but "in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed." Jesus had evidently risen long before any other members of the household were awake, for no one knew where he had gone. Peter and the other disciples went out from Capernaum seeking for him. When they found him they said, "All are seeking thee." But Jesus answered, "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth."

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: Miraculous Draft of Fishes, by Raphael, (1585 Brown; Bailey, page 141); Calling the Apostles on the Lake of Genesaret, by Ghirlandajo (253 Wilde).

SUNDAY SESSION

THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHOSEN AND TRAINED
FOR SERVICE

Mark 2:1-27; 3:1-19; Luke 6:12-19

We have seen how Jesus gradually gathered about him a little band of disciples. When he came back into Galilee after his first preaching tour in Judea he had five disciples, but the little company continued to grow. It grew just as it had at the beginning. The men who had become disciples told their friends and relatives about Jesus and brought them to see Jesus. Many of these friends and relatives of the disciples were so attracted by the preaching and the personality of Jesus that they, too, became his followers. So in a little while there came to be a large number of disciples. Luke tells us that, at one time, Jesus selected seventy of these followers and sent them out to preach and heal. Luke 10:1-20.

A Publican Chosen as a Disciple. Mark 2:13, 14. One day as Jesus was walking by the seaside he saw a certain publican, named Levi, sitting at his desk and collecting taxes from the people. You will remember that these publicans, or taxgatherers, were hated and scorned by nearly all of the Jews. So it was a truly remarkable thing that Jesus did when he said to this publican, "Follow me." The scribes and Pharisees would never have done such a thing. They hated and despised the publicans as a class. They would have refused to be associated with a publican in any way whatsoever. But Jesus had no such prejudice. He saw in Levi great possibilities. By calling him away from his unpopular and morally dangerous occupation, Jesus saved a soul which was in danger of going far astray, if it had not already done so. Levi, the publican became Matthew the apostle. When we read the wonderful Gospel of Matthew, we should remember that it never would have been written if Jesus had been narrow and prejudiced like practically all the other people of his day. It is to the credit of the other disciples that they welcomed

Matthew; at least they do not seem to have made any objection to his being added to the company.

Carping Criticism and Growing Opposition. When anyone criticizes some one else just for the sake of finding fault and not in a spirit of kindness and helpfulness, we call such criticism carping criticism. Such criticism is not honest. It finds little faults, or what it considers faults, and makes great things out of them. It does not seek the good but the harm of the person criticized. Such criticism nearly always springs from jealousy and envy, two of the meanest and most dangerous feelings anyone can ever experience. It was jealousy and envy that caused the Jewish leaders to begin finding fault with Jesus. The masses of the common people cared little for the scribes and Pharisees. They were so proud and exclusive that it is little wonder that they were disliked. But when these leaders of the Jewish religion saw thousands upon thousands crowding around to hear Jesus preach, or even to get a sight of him, their hearts were filled with jealousy. Their selfish envy made them so spiritually blind that they could not see the good that Jesus was doing. They could not see the beauty and grandeur of his character as the simple Galilean fisherman had seen it. They could see only certain acts of Jesus which their dishonest judgment had fixed upon as faults. Let us now consider a few incidents which show this spirit of carping criticism of the scribes and Pharisees and the resulting gradual degradation of their character.

The Paralytic Who Was Lowered Through a Hole in the Roof. Mark 2:1-12. One day Jesus was preaching and healing in Capernaum. There was such a great crowd that it completely filled the street in front of the house where Jesus was. People were bringing their sick friends and relatives to Jesus. After a time four men came carrying a sick man on a litter. Of course they could not get through the crowd with such a burden, but these four men were not to be foiled of their purpose. They climbed up to the roof of the house. Possibly they found a place at the rear of the house where there were not so many people and so reached the roof, or

they may have climbed to the roof of some other house a short distance away and, as the houses were close together, passed from roof to roof until they reached the house where Jesus was. There they found a spot over the room in which Jesus was preaching and healing. The roof was probably made of clay spread over rough boards or tiles and pressed down hard. They dug through the roof and made a hole big enough to let down their sick friend. We are told that "Jesus seeing their faith" said to the sick man, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." Perhaps Jesus saw that the poor fellow was sorry for his sins and wished to be forgiven for them even more than he wished to be healed. Now there were certain scribes there and they began to reason "in their hearts," saying, "Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth." Even after Jesus had healed the man and he had taken up his bed and gone out, these Jewish leaders could not, or would not, see anything good in what Jesus had done.

Eating with Publicans and Sinners. Mark 2:15-17. It was not long before the scribes and Pharisees found what they seized upon as another fault in Jesus. After Levi became a disciple, he made a kind of farewell dinner to his publican friends, or perhaps it was rather a festival in honor of his new Master and Teacher. At all events, many of Levi's publican friends were present. Jesus and his disciples were invited and they went. To the Jewish leaders this was a great scandal. They came to the disciples of Jesus and asked how it was that their Master was eating with publicans and sinners. Jesus overheard their question, and said to them, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." A more perfect answer could not have been given.

Jesus and His Disciples Condemned for Not Fasting. Mark 2:18-22. The scribes and Pharisees were keeping such close watch on Jesus and his disciples that after a while they detected the fact that Jesus and his little company did not fast on certain days as the Pharisees and even John's disciples were accustomed to do. So they came and found fault on this score. Their question

as to why Jesus and his disciples did not fast implied that if Jesus was a really righteous leader and teacher, he would fast himself and see to it that his disciples did so. Jesus told them that he and his disciples were having such a happy time together that they were like a bridal party, and fasting would be out of place for them at the present time. Then he added with a tinge of sadness, "The days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them;" then, he said, his disciples would fast. These words of Jesus can mean nothing less than that thus early in his ministry he foresaw the inevitable end of the growing opposition of the Jewish leaders. Perhaps he saw even then that the end was not so much inevitable as it was indispensable.

Accused of Breaking the Sabbath. Mark 2:23-27. One Sabbath day Jesus and his disciples were going through a grain field and the disciples began to pluck a few of the heads of grain and to eat the kernels. Perhaps the Pharisees themselves would have done the same thing, but when they saw the disciples of Jesus doing it, they seized the opportunity to find fault. They said that the disciples were reaping and threshing on the Sabbath day and were therefore lawbreakers. Their faultfinding was so childish that it would have been ludicrous had there not been so much ill feeling lying back of it.

Jesus Heals a Man on the Sabbath Day. Mark 3:1-12. The ill will of the Pharisees against Jesus was growing fast, and soon an event took place which brought it to a climax. Jesus was in a certain synagogue on the Sabbath day. There was also in the same synagogue a man with a withered hand. Many unfriendly eyes were fixed on Jesus, for they were watching to see whether he would dare to heal the man on the Sabbath. What do you think Jesus ought to have done? Ought he to have waited until the next day? Ought he to have let the man go away without being healed? Would it have been a worthy thing for Jesus to have taken the man away somewhere and healed him without letting the Pharisees know about it? I think you will agree that there was only one thing to do, and that was to heal the

man without regard to the consequences. He said to the man, "Stand forth." And then, while they watched him with eyes full of malice, Jesus healed the man. Such open and courageous defiance enraged the scribes and Pharisees beyond measure. At first they had just disliked Jesus; then they had become more and more bitter in their criticisms; now their hearts were filled with murderous hate. The Pharisees went out from that place where they were supposed to worship God and they went straight to the Herodians. The Herodians were people who had supported King Herod. Usually the Pharisees and Herodians hated one another, but now their common fear and hatred of Jesus made them friends, if we can use that sacred word to express the relationship between such people. That Sabbath evening the Pharisees and Herodians plotted to take the life of Jesus. And they were so blind that they could not see that they were breaking the Sabbath day. They thought that the disciples had broken the Sabbath day by pulling a few heads of wheat, but it did not occur to them that they were breaking the Sabbath by plotting murder.

Making Ready for the Inevitable Conflict. Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-19. Jesus was now in deadly peril, but he was not thinking of his own safety. He was thinking of the safety of the great cause which had brought him to earth. He knew that his enemies sought not only to destroy his life but to destroy every vestige of the movement which he had begun. That night Jesus went out by himself and climbed a lonely mountain. There he spent the whole night in prayer. When day came, his plans were made. His enemies had organized to destroy him and his work. He proceeded to organize his forces for resistance that his work might not perish. Out of the considerable number of his disciples he chose twelve men and gave them the name of apostles. These twelve were to be with him continually. On these twelve the success of his undertaking must finally depend. It was an unequal contest which had begun. The scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, priests, and Herodians were a vast company of people and they were

now solidly united in their opposition to Jesus and in their determination to destroy him and the movement he had begun. These Jewish leaders were strong. Even the Roman governors quailed before them and did their bidding. Jesus had a few humble people around him, and the multitudes liked him, but his main dependence was upon the twelve men he had chosen.

THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, our Father, we pray thee to free us from all deceit and prejudice. Help us to be, not like the enemies of Jesus, narrow and selfish and dishonest, but like thy Son, noble and courageous and true. We know that the battle against thy Son and his cause is not yet ended and we would be loyal soldiers in the army of the King. Help us to do our part in winning a victory for justice and brotherhood. Help us to honor thy Son and to establish his Kingdom over all the world.

THE LESSON HYMN

What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone
 Around thy steps below;
 What patient love was seen in all
 Thy life and death of woe.

.
 Thy foes might hate, despise, revile,
 Thy friends unfaithful prove;
 Unwearied in forgiveness still,
 Thy heart could only love.

.
 One with thyself, may every eye
 In us, thy brethren, see
 That gentleness and grace that spring
 From union, Lord, with thee.

“The Hymnal” (Revised) No. 203.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION**CHRISTIAN DILIGENCE****I Tim. 4:6-16**

Our Scripture lesson is a part of Paul's letter to his young friend Timothy. Paul urges Timothy to exercise himself unto godliness, telling him that while bodily exercise gives physical strength for a little season, spiritual exercise "is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which it to come." He tells Timothy that it is to this end that "we labor and strive." He urges his young friend to "give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching," and then, as though he fears that Timothy might not catch the full meaning of his words, he admonishes Timothy to "be diligent in these things," to give himself "wholly to them."

If we know about Paul's life and the tremendous energy he put into the accomplishment of his great life work, we shall understand that Paul was asking his young friend to do only what he himself had long been doing. Paul was getting old when he wrote this letter to Timothy but he was still intensely active.

Moreover, we know that Paul in his intensely active life was only following in the footsteps of Jesus. We have just been studying the events of the first few weeks of Jesus' ministry and we have seen with what devotion he threw himself into his task. We shall see more and more of his diligence as we continue the story of his life.

There are some really great lessons in these accounts of the diligence of Jesus. They are lessons especially helpful for boys and girls, because the habits of hard and persevering effort are usually formed early in life, if they are ever formed at all. If we are to do anything really worth while in life, we must put forth more than the ordinary amount of effort. We must lay hold on some great task such as young Timothy had taken up, then we must labor and strive and be diligent and give ourselves wholly to the thing we have undertaken.

BIBLE VERSES

Prov. 22:9; Luke 15:8; Prov. 6:6-11; Rom. 13:11;
John 5:17; 9:4; Phil. 2:12.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus choose such men as Peter and John to be his disciples?
2. Tell of the events in one day of the life of Jesus as described by Mark.
3. What were Jesus' habits of prayer?
4. What is meant by "carping criticism"?
5. What faults did the Pharisees think they discovered in Jesus?
6. How did the enemies of Jesus organize to destroy him and the movement he had begun?
7. How did Jesus organize his followers to defend the cause he had undertaken?
8. What does the choice of Matthew to be a disciple show us about the character of Jesus?
9. Is it right for a girl to have a chum with whom she is very friendly if the friendship for her chum makes her unfriendly to other girls?
10. What do you think of the boy who said he would not go to Sunday school if the "Italian Jew" were put in his class?

STUDY TOPICS

1. "The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."

(Who Wrote These Lines and What Do They Mean?)

2. The Diligence of Lincoln as a Boy.
3. Why Is It a Good Thing to Be Diligent in Reading?
4. Why Should a Boy or Girl Be Diligent in Public School?
5. Why We Should Be As Diligent in Our Church School as We Are in Our Day School?

THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN DILIGENCE

No really worth while thing can be accomplished in life without diligence. Therefore:

1. We will be diligent in home duties because we thus form most helpful habits and by our diligence add happiness to our homes.

2. We will be diligent in our day-school duties because without earnest effort and perseverance in our studies we shall not be properly equipped for usefulness in life.

3. We will be diligent in our church-school duties and in all we undertake for Jesus and his Kingdom. Without diligence in these things we are blamable in the things of greatest importance and we betray our Master who has given us tasks to do and who is depending on us.

CHAPTER VII
THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
WEEK DAY SESSION

CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM: THEIR BLESSINGS AND
THEIR TASKS

Matt., chs. 5; 6:1-18

After his night of prayer on the mountain Jesus chose twelve men out of the many who had become his followers. He chose these twelve men "that they might be with him." Much of his time and effort for all the rest of his life on earth was spent in teaching these twelve men. Some of these apostles, namely, Peter and Andrew and the sons of Zebedee, had been with Jesus during most of the time since his baptism. Some of their names we hear for the first time when the list of the apostles is given.

The selection of the Twelve seems to have taken place in the early morning on the mountain top where Jesus had spent the night in prayer. Then Jesus "came down with them, and stood on a level place, and a great multitude of his disciples, and a great number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases. Luke 6:17.

The Horns of Hattin. About four miles from the shores of the Sea of Galilee and some eight miles southwest of Capernaum is a double-peaked mountain. Traditions coming down through many centuries say that this is the place where Jesus delivered that great address which we call "The Sermon on the Mount." Between the two peaks is a level place which may be the very spot on which Jesus stood while he spoke to his disciples and the multitudes. If this is the spot where Jesus preached that day, we may be sure that all the little



THE HORNS OF HATTIN FROM THE SEA OF GALILEE

level space was occupied by people, chiefly the professed followers of Jesus, and that the hillsides rising on both sides like a great amphitheater were covered with other multitudes of people.

From the Horns of Hattin a splendid panorama is spread off toward the eastward. A beautiful valley lies at the foot of the mountain and the floor of this valley is checkered over with cultivated fields. The soil there is the most fertile in Palestine. At its northern end this broad valley narrows down into a deep gorge which descends steeply into the great depression where the Sea of Galilee lies nearly seven hundred feet below the level of the ocean. East of this valley the hills rise again in bold escarpments, but they are not high enough to shut out entirely the view of the blue Galilean lake. Beyond the valley of the Jordan the mountain wall of Bashan rises dim in the distance. The spot would seem to be a fitting place for Jesus to choose as the scene of his great address.

The Constitution of Christianity. When people are ready to set up a government, they usually choose a constitution which is a kind of fundamental law telling who are to be citizens under the government about to be established and what their duties and privileges are to be. The Sermon on the Mount is vastly more than a mere address on general religious truth. It is a kind of Constitution of Christianity. It tells who are to be counted as citizens of Christ's Kingdom, what their characteristics are to be, what blessings they will enjoy, and the work they are to do.

Blessed Citizens of the Kingdom. Matt. 5:1-12. It is natural for us to desire happiness. The people in the days of Jesus were just like us in this respect. They thought a great deal about the Kingdom which had been promised through the prophets. They longed for the coming of the Kingdom, because they believed the prophet's words which promised that,

“The ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”—Isa. 35:10.

Jesus had come to set up the happy Kingdom which the prophets had foretold. When the Kingdom is established in the hearts of its citizens, what blessings will it give them? When the Kingdom is established in the world, what blessings will it bring to humanity? These questions Jesus answers in the verses which we have come to call "The Beatitudes."

The poor in spirit, people who have lacked the things that satisfy the soul as well as the things that satisfy the physical needs, will be blessed by entering the Kingdom because it will be rich in spiritual treasures. There will be comfort for all who mourn because the Kingdom of God will begin in this world and will stretch out into the world of eternal life that lies beyond, thus insuring hope now and the realization of hopes in the world beyond. In the usual world order the meek person is overlooked and crowded into the background, but in God's Kingdom meekness will be recognized as such a desirable quality of character that the one possessing it will be exalted to highest places of power and responsibility. Those who have hungered and thirsted after righteousness for themselves and for the whole family of mankind will be satisfied when the Kingdom is established. In the Kingdom, the merciful will obtain mercy, a compensation often denied them in the kingdoms of the earth; the pure in heart shall see God and the Kingdom will be such as to make and keep men's hearts pure; the peacemakers, not the war makers, shall be honored most in the Kingdom, and they shall bear the exalted name of "sons of God." In the Kingdom of God those who have held to truth and righteousness in spite of persecutions will find their rest and their reward.

Salt of the Earth and Light of the World. Matt. 5:13-16. What are the citizens of the Kingdom to be and to do while they live in this world? Jesus tells the multitudes that his followers must be the salt of the earth. They must be a saving and preserving force. And that is just what every real Christian is. He helps to preserve all that is of value in our civilization. What do you think would become of our nation if every Christian were taken out of it and every Christian influence re-

moved? This preserving quality is of such great importance that Jesus says any professed follower of his who does not have it is like salt which has wholly lost its savor. Such a person is useless in the enterprises of God and in all his universe God has no place for a useless thing.

Citizens of the Kingdom, that is, Christians, are to be the light of the world. We speak of "Darkest Africa," and it is, indeed, a dark continent because there are so few there who are citizens of the Kingdom of Jesus. What if we should take out of the world all those elements of our civilization which may be truly called the light of the Christian religion? We should lose nearly all the great paintings of the world, for most of them are distinctly Christian. They are pictures of the Christ as a child, or as he walked and served men in the days of his manhood, or as he died to save the world. We should lose practically all our great songs and much of our best literature. So Jesus spoke a great truth when he said that his followers should be the light of the world. The lives of the great Christian leaders of past centuries still enlighten the world. Paul, John the Disciple, Augustine, Luther, and Wesley, still are lights of the world, though their bodies have long ago become dust.

Fulfilling the Law and the Prophets. Matt. 5:17-48. Jesus told his disciples that he had not come to destroy the teachings of the Mosaic Law and the teachings of the Hebrew Prophets. He had not come to destroy but to fulfill. The laws which Moses gave the Hebrews aimed to make of the chosen people true and loyal followers of Jehovah. The laws had a lofty purpose and Jesus had come to help the people to attain that lofty purpose. The Hebrew prophets had one and all foretold better days lying beyond the days of disaster and national ruin. Jesus had come to fulfill these hopes of the prophets. Do you remember Jeremiah's sublime words about the new and better covenant? Jesus had come to proclaim this covenant which should be written on the hearts of true followers of God. Jer. 31:31-34.

Jesus showed how the citizens of the Kingdom would

fulfill the conditions of the new and better covenant. They would not only obey the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," but they would free themselves from the subtle feelings of hatred and contempt which are the seeds of evil from which such great crimes as the taking of human life grow.

The law of Moses had proclaimed "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." That is, if anyone struck you and knocked out a tooth, you had the right to strike him back and injure him just as much as he had injured you. Now this was a humane law in the times of Moses. Its aim was to forbid wholesale and unmeasured vengeance. Under this law a man could be punished if he retaliated against one who had injured him and in his retaliation wrought his enemy greater injury than he had received at the hands of his enemy. Jesus took up the humane purpose of the law and carried it further, fulfilled it. He said, "Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Jesus meant something like this: If a ruffian comes up on the street and slaps a gentleman in the face, the gentleman will have self-control enough and will be courteous enough not to slap back.

The Importance of Motives. Matt. 6:1-18. In his teaching, Jesus recognized the great importance of the motives which lie back of the things we do. Not what we do, but why we do it, is the important question for Christians to consider. The scribes and Pharisees gave a good deal to the poor, but they gave from wrong motives. They did not give because they loved and pitied the poor and wished to help them. They gave in order that people might see them giving away their money and consider them very good and generous. Thus a perfectly worthy act was spoiled because it had a bad motive back of it. Jesus showed how wrong motives also lay back of the prayers of the Pharisees and back of their fasting. He told his followers how to give alms, how to pray, and how to fast in such a way as to avoid the unworthy motives which lay back of so many of the religious observances of the Pharisees.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: The Sermon on the Mount, by Hofmann (64 Perry); Consider the Lilies, by Le Jeune (67 Perry); Prayer in Secret, by Rida (66 Perry).

SUNDAY SESSION
CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM: THEIR TRAITS OF CHARACTER

Matt. 6:19-34; ch. 7

A nation can be truly great only when it is composed of great citizens. The Kingdom of which the prophets had dreamed and which Jesus had come to establish must likewise have the right kind of citizens if it is to be worthy of the title, "the Kingdom of God." So we find that a great part of what Jesus had to say in the Sermon on the Mount had to do with the characteristics of the citizens of the Kingdom he had come to start on earth.

Not Servants of Mammon but Servants of God. Matt. 6:19-24. The word "mammon" means wealth or riches. It is very important for us to have right attitudes toward property if we are to be loyal and effective followers of Jesus. Knowing this to be true, Jesus told his followers some important truths about worldly possessions and the proper attitude towards property values. He told them that they ought not to make earthly possessions their treasure. The thing for which the citizens of God's Kingdom care most ought not to be houses, lands, or gold. They ought to have their treasures in heaven. They should seek for the establishment of justice for all. They should make righteousness for themselves and for all mankind the supreme object for which they strive.

Jesus knew that when people make the gaining of wealth their chief aim in life, they are very apt to become slaves to their possessions. They toil and plan

and use the wealth they have to gain more wealth. Jesus told his followers that people who were thus the servants of mammon could not become servants of God. To be a worthy citizen of God's Kingdom a person must be, first of all, a loyal servant of God. If he is a servant of God, he will use his time, his strength, and his wealth in such a way as to honor God and help build up God's Kingdom on earth.

The Spirit of Trust Which Drives Out Anxiety. Matt. 6:25-34. Many to whom Jesus spoke that day were very poor. There were fathers there who were troubled because their children were hungry for bread. There were many listening to Jesus who had labored hard all their lives for the poorest kind of living and who had often been hungry because there was no food in the house. They had often been cold because they had no money with which to buy clothing for themselves. These people were not in danger of becoming selfish hoarders of wealth. They had no opportunities to do anything of that kind. They were in spiritual danger of another kind, however. Many of them were constantly anxious about food and clothing. They thought so much about their problems that they had little time to think of God and his Kingdom.

Jesus had a beautiful message to these careworn poor. He said, "Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God." He told them not to be anxious about food and raiment. He showed them how God cares for the flowers and the birds and he said to them, "Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" He told them to seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all the things they needed would then be added unto them. And we know that Jesus spoke the truth. If people are hungry and cold and homeless in the world, it is not God's fault. He has made a wonderful home for his children. The earth and the sea are alike full of food for man. If all men were trying to do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven—in other words, if they were citizens of God's Kingdom—there would be no hunger and nakedness among men. So Jesus said to his followers, "Be not

therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Instead of being anxious about these little things for yourselves, seek the greater and more important things. Seek to build up God's Kingdom on earth and then there will be no cause for anxiety about such things as food and clothing. Moreover, God will take care of those who trust him and work for his Kingdom, so that all those who are truly seeking God's Kingdom have no need to be anxious.

Citizens of the Kingdom Are Not Carping Critics. Matt. 7:1-5. Jesus told his followers that they were not to make it their chief business in life to pick flaws in other people. They were not to be like a half-blind oculist who has a beam of wood in his eye, yet is always dispensing advice as to how a particle of dust may be removed from a neighbor's eye. Jesus meant that we ought to examine ourselves rigidly to see whether we may not have, ourselves, the faults we think we see so plainly in others. If we overcome our own faults first, we shall then know how to help our brothers to overcome their faults, too.

Reverence for Things that Are Holy. Matt. 7:6. Reverence is one of the finest traits of character. A person who has no reverence for anything has lost a pearl of priceless value from his personality. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs," said Jesus; "neither cast your pearls before the swine." There are certain things which every boy and girl ought to reverence, and must reverence; if they are to grow up to be worthy citizens of God's Kingdom.

Reverence for God. Every citizen of God's Kingdom has the reverence of God as a first and fundamental trait of his character. He speaks God's name reverently. He is humbly thankful to God and obedient to the heavenly Father's commandments.

Reverence for God's Day. If we profane the Sabbath day, we are guilty of casting that which is holy to the dogs. For the Christian, every day ought to be a holy day, it is true. But that does not make it desirable that we do away with the one day of the week when we give

more time to the consideration of things distinctly religious than we are able to do on other days of the week.

Reverence for God's Book. The Bible contains God's messages to man. It tells us of the life and teachings of God's Son. It is hard to see how anyone could be a true believer in Jesus and a citizen of God's Kingdom if he refused to honor the Bible.

Citizens of the Kingdom Have Faith in God's Goodness and Power. Matt. 7:7-14. A great preacher once urged his congregation to "ask great things from God and expect great things from God." This man was only following the example of Jesus, for in his sermon preached on the mountain top, Jesus said to his followers, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Jesus told his followers that God is a good and wise Father and that he will give good gifts to all his children. Citizens of the Kingdom of God must have full faith both in God's goodness and in his power.

Citizens of the Kingdom Are Genuine in Character. Matt. 7:15-23. As we continue our study of the life of Jesus, we shall see that he found all hypocritical pretenses unbearable. He could not endure people who pretended to be very good when they were, in reality, very evil. So we need not be surprised that as he neared the end of his great sermon he warned his followers that they must be genuine. Their character must show itself in good works. It would not do to call the tree good, if it bore corrupt fruit. There was to be no place in his Kingdom for false prophets dressed up in sheep's clothing so as to look like sheep while they had within them the hearts of wolves.

The test of citizenship was not to be some profession of loyalty made by word of mouth alone. The profession must be backed up by acts and habits of life in harmony with the profession. Jesus told his followers that in the great day of judgment many would say to him, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name,

and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?" He said that in that day he would say to these pretended followers of his, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

The Two Foundations. Matt. 7:24-29. Orators often end their addresses by some word of appeal which makes a fitting close to all that they have said. Such closing sentences of an address are called the peroration. We find that Jesus closed the Sermon on the Mount with such an appeal. He said that everyone who heard his words and did them would be like a wise man who built his house upon a rock. When a great storm came and the wind and rain beat against the house and the floods came up and rushed around its foundations, it did not fall because it was built on a rock. He said that everyone who heard his words and did not do them would be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. When the storm came with its wind and rain and flood, this house built on the sand fell into a heap of ruins.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the teachings of Jesus, thy Son. We thank thee for this wonderful sermon which he preached on the mountain in Galilee. We thank thee that thou hast preserved it through all the centuries and hast given it unto us for our guidance. We thank thee for the Church of thy Son, and for its influences which have been about us from our infancy. We thank thee for the influence of Christian homes and for the privileges of a Christian land.

Help us, we pray thee, to show our love and gratitude by living for thy Kingdom. Help us to be worthy citizens in the Kingdom of our God. Make us true and sincere and upright in every way. Help us so to build our lives and our characters that they may stand any testing that life may bring. Give us the spirit of friendship for all and the spirit of devotion to thee which manifests itself in trust and faithful service. We ask in the name of thy Son. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

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.

“The Hymnal” (Revised) No. 304.

 EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

THE ETIQUETTE OF THE KINGDOM

Matt. 3:13-17; John 4:1-3; Matt. 7:12; 11:7-11

Etiquette is the science of good manners. It is unfortunate that this science of good breeding has not been made a subject of study in our country to so great an extent as we might wish. Why should a nation, at least nominally Christian like ours, be inferior to a pagan people like the Japanese in matters of politeness? Is it not because we have based our ideas of good manners on the artificial standards of society, or drawn them from the customs prevailing in the ancient court circles of Europe? Christians need not go to such sources for their standards of politeness. They have a perfect model in the life of Jesus and perfect instructions concerning this matter in his teachings. Perhaps we have not thought of the life and teachings of Jesus in just this way, but a little attention will show us how many of his acts have lessons in politeness for us and how many of his precepts bear directly on habits of courtesy.

The Fundamental Law of Courtesy. All politeness really worth while is based on the Golden Rule: “All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them.” True courtesy expresses itself in care for the comfort and happiness of other people. Selfishness lies at the basis of most acts of impoliteness.

The Courtesy of Jesus Shown at His Baptism. Some

of the acts of Jesus concerning which we have been studying are fine illustrations of his perfect courtesy. When he came to be baptized, and John objected on the grounds that it would not be a fitting thing for him to baptize Jesus, the reply of Jesus was, "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." The courteous person will do many things which he does not need to do for his own good but which add to the comfort or safety of other people. We find many such acts in the life of Jesus. One day in Capernaum some tax collectors came to Peter and asked him whether or not Jesus paid the half shekel which was collected for the support of the Temple. We know from what Jesus said to Peter that he did not regard himself as under any obligation to pay the tax. Nevertheless he asked that it be paid, "lest we cause them to stumble." That was true politeness. Jesus would rather suffer an injustice than to have any person put in spiritual danger. Matt. 17:24-27.

Jesus' Courtesy Toward John the Baptist. As soon as Jesus began to preach, great crowds gathered about him. It was not long before the crowds following Jesus were greater than the crowds following John the Baptist. John was too nobly unselfish to be jealous of Jesus, but some of John's disciples were much concerned about the matter. They came to John and told him how Jesus and his disciples were baptizing and how all men were coming to the new teacher. Now when Jesus heard how John's disciples felt, he left Judea and departed into Galilee. The work of John was not yet done, and rather than cause John embarrassment because of the attitude of his disciples, Jesus withdrew from his field of labor. He was too courteous to allow his own great work to overshadow the work of his great predecessor. Under the Study Topics other instances of the courtesy of Jesus will be noted.

BIBLE VERSES

Show how the following verses have a message concerning politeness: Matt. 5:21, 22, 33-42; 6:1, 5; 7:3.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is the Sermon on the Mount called the Constitution of Christianity?
2. What does Jesus teach us about happiness?
3. In what sense are Christian people the salt of the earth and the light of the world?
4. How does the teaching of Jesus show the importance of motives?
5. How did Jesus show the dangers of too great desire for wealth?
6. What message did Jesus have for people who were poor?
7. Name some things for which every Christian should have reverence.
8. What words of Jesus show his dislike for pretense and hypocrisy?
9. How did Jesus close his great sermon?
10. Name some act of politeness in the life of Jesus.

STUDY TOPICS

1. Jesus Rebukes the Impoliteness of a Pharisee. Luke 7:36-50.
2. Jesus Gives the People at a Dinner Party a Lesson in Politeness. Luke 14:7-11.
3. Jesus Gives His Disciples an Object Lesson in Courtesy. John 13:1-5.

THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN COURTESY

Courtesy is one of the finest of the Christian graces. In its widest sense it demands of us politeness toward mankind and reverence toward God. Courtesy is both a duty and an opportunity. Therefore:

1. We will cultivate habits of politeness in our homes and in our relationships at school.
2. We will base our standards of courtesy on the Golden Rule of Jesus.
3. We will strive after that highest type of courtesy which expresses itself in reverence for God. We will honor God's day, God's Book, and God's house.

CHAPTER VIII
METHODS WHICH JESUS USED IN HIS WORK
WEEK DAY SESSION

CONVERSATIONS OF THE CHRIST

John 3:1-21; 4:1-42; 12:20-28

We have already seen something of the way in which Jesus took hold of his great task. We have followed him through one busy day. We have studied the great sermon which he preached on a mountain top. We must not think of this day of teaching and labor and of the sermon to a great multitude as unusual events in his life. Most of his days, after he began his ministry, were probably much like the busy days we have studied.

Jesus, however, had many ways of working besides healing, preaching, and teaching. He was so intensely interested in his great mission that he used every minute and seized every opportunity to do something for the cause he loved. No individual was too poor and despised for Jesus to take notice of him. Every little incident of the day was made to teach his disciples some spiritual truth which would help them to be good "fishers of men." In this lesson we are to study a few of the conversations which Jesus had with certain individuals.

With Nicodemus on the Housetop. John 3:1-21. Quite early in the ministry of Jesus, when he was spending a night in Jerusalem, one of the chief Pharisees came to visit him. This man's name was Nicodemus and he was a member of the Jewish court called the sanhedrin. He was evidently an honest and sincere man. If he had only had the courage to come out boldly and profess his faith in Jesus, he might have been one of the truly great men of New Testament times, but

such a course would have cost him his official position and probably his life.

Nicodemus came to see Jesus at night. It may be that he did not care to have his Pharisee friends know that he had come to see the teacher from Nazareth. It is thought that Jesus and Nicodemus sat on the flat roof of the house that night as they talked together. The roof of a house in Palestine is a cool and delightful place to spend a summer evening.

When the two had seated themselves, Nicodemus said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no one man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." That was a noble declaration. And it is good to know that there was at least one Pharisee who was willing to make such a statement. As Jesus looked at this Pharisee, one of the leading men of the nation, he seems to have been thinking of the profound change which such a man must undergo before he could really become a citizen of the Kingdom God was seeking to set up on earth. Nicodemus had a certain faith in Jesus because he had seen Jesus perform miracles, but did he believe in Jesus enough to give up his honorable position in the State and in the Church? Did he believe in Jesus enough to become a real disciple who would go about the country learning little by little the great secrets of the Kingdom?

Jesus expressed the profound change which Nicodemus must undergo by a remarkable statement. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." That was a very surprising statement to make to a chief Pharisee. The Pharisees never doubted at all that they were to be the great people in God's Kingdom when it was set up on earth. To be told that he could not even see that Kingdom unless he was born again was certainly a surprising thing for a chief Pharisee to hear concerning himself.

Then Jesus went on to explain to Nicodemus how it is that we must enter God's Kingdom by a new spiritual birth. Nicodemus had been impressed by Jesus' miracles

of healing and Jesus now told him of that far greater miracle which is wrought within the souls of all who really believe in the world's Saviour.

We may well believe that Nicodemus never forgot the conversation of that night. We have reason to hope that this noble-hearted Pharisee came at last to experience that spiritual birth which makes one a citizen of God's Kingdom.

With the Woman of Samaria by the Well at Sychar. John 4:1-42. One day Jesus and his disciples were on their way from Judea to Galilee. They were passing through Samaria and had come to a very interesting spot. They had reached a place where there was a well which had been dug by Jacob and which was located on a plot of ground which Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jesus was wearied by the journey and by his days and weeks of preaching, healing, and traveling. So he sat down by the well to rest while his disciples went away into the village to buy food for the noonday meal.

While the disciples were away, a woman of Samaria came to draw water from the well. Seeing Jesus sitting there, she recognized him as a Jew and doubtless her heart was stirred by hatred, for the Jews and Samaritans, almost without exception, hated one another. She was greatly surprised, therefore, when Jesus asked her to give him a drink of water. She asked for an explanation. She had never heard of such a thing as a Jew's asking a Samaritan for water and taking a cup from a Samaritan's hand that he might put it to his lips. The request would have been remarkable had it been a Jew asking a Samaritan man for such assistance, but for a Jew to ask a Samaritan woman for such a favor was truly astonishing.

Jesus began by talking about the water in Jacob's well, but in a little while they were talking about something quite different from ordinary water. They were talking about a wonderful and inexhaustible well of water that springs up within the soul of all who know God and love him. This woman had not been a very righteous person and even then she was living a life of sin. Jesus skillfully brought thoughts concerning her

wrongdoing to the woman's mind. She did not like the personal turn the conversation had taken and tried to escape by bringing up some old matters of dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans. Jesus seized this opportunity to tell the woman some of the deepest truths of the New Testament.

As they talked, something in the manner or words of Jesus made the woman remember the great hope of her people, as well as the great hope of the Jews. She said, "I know that Messiah cometh: . . . when he is come, he will declare unto us all things." Then Jesus told her something which, so far as we know, he had never told anyone else. He said to her, "I that speak unto thee am he." The woman went away to tell her friends and neighbors that she had found the Christ.

When the disciples came back, they were surprised to find Jesus talking with the woman. Having prepared the meal, they urged Jesus to eat. But he answered them, "I have meat to eat that ye know not." The disciples were surprised and, looking at one another, said, "Hath any man brought him ought to eat?" Then Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." Jesus meant that if we do something for God, he gives us in return soul food which brings us joy, satisfaction, and hope. That is what Jesus meant when he said, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal." A pessimist is one who is always looking on the dark side of things. One who works for God can never be a pessimist. He feels something of what Jesus felt when he said to his disciples, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest."

That conversation with a woman by the well of Jacob was the beginning of great things in Samaria. The woman went and told her friends and relatives about Jesus and a large crowd of the Samaritan people came out and asked Jesus and his disciples to stay for a time in their city. They remained there two days and many came to be followers of Jesus in that part of Samaria.

The Greeks Who Wished to See Jesus. John 12:28. Near the end of Jesus' ministry he was one day teaching the multitudes, when some people who were Greeks came asking to see him. These Greeks were probably believers in the true God, for we are told that they had come up to Jerusalem to worship at the feast. The Greeks were a learned and keenly intellectual people. Jesus took time to talk with these strangers. He told them some very deep and important truths concerning why it was necessary for him to give up his life in order that the world might be saved. Turning from these foreigners who had so earnestly sought him, and who had doubtless listened with attentive ears to all he had to say, Jesus warned the people of his own nation. He told them that for only a little while longer the light would be with them and that they had best walk while they had the light lest darkness overtake them. He told them that he had come "a light into the world, that whosoever believeth" on him should not "abide in the darkness."

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: Nicodemus' Visit to Jesus (53 Wilde); Jesus and the Woman of Samaria, by Hofmann (55 Wilde).

SUNDAY SESSION

HOW JESUS PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST

Luke 10:38-42; 19:1-10; John, ch. 9

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told his followers to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and that, when this end was attained, all other needful things would be added unto them. As we study the life of Jesus and his ways of working we see that he himself did the things he asked his followers to do. Jesus put first things first. If we study his motives and his deeds, we see plainly that his great goal was the establishment of God's Kingdom of justice and truth in the

earth. We see that his chief aim in all his dealings with men was to lead them to become truly righteous. When the poor paralyzed man was let down through the roof and lay on his bed before Jesus, the first words the Master spoke were, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." In this lesson we are to study a few other instances where Jesus put first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness.

The Story of the Man Born Blind. John, ch. 9. One day Jesus and his disciples saw a blind man on the streets of Jerusalem. Perhaps the disciples knew the man, for they seem to have been informed concerning him and to have known that he was born blind. It was a common belief in those days that all such afflictions as blindness were a direct punishment from God because of the afflicted person's sin or the wrongdoing of some one nearly related to him. So the disciples said to Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus told them that this affliction had come upon the man neither because of his own sin nor because of the sins of his parents. He told them that the man was blind in order "that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

Jesus made clay and put it on the blind man's eyes and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." The man went away and did as Jesus had commanded, and he was cured of his blindness. When the neighbors of the man who had been blind saw him, they were astonished. Some could hardly believe that this was the same man who had been blind all his days. The man himself, however, said to all who asked him, "I am he." As we follow this man we shall see how his loyalty to Jesus and his courageous defense of the truth grew under the opposition and persecution of the Jewish leaders. Jesus doubtless had this great end ever in mind. He was glad to heal the man's physical blindness, but he was more anxious still to open the man's spiritual vision so that he might become a worthy citizen of God's Kingdom. Jesus was putting first things first in all his dealing with this man who had been born blind.

The neighbors wished to know how this formerly

blind man had received his sight. With simple straightforwardness the man said, "The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Siloam, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight." The Pharisees, as was their usual habit, could see nothing good in what Jesus had done. In spiritual matters they were hopelessly blind because of prejudice. It was the Sabbath when Jesus had mixed up the clay to put on the blind man's eyes. They declared that Jesus had therefore broken the Sabbath day. That was all they could see in the whole matter. They could not see that a wonderful act of mercy and helpfulness, entirely in harmony with the spirit of the Sabbath, had been wrought.

The Pharisees asked the man how he had received his sight and he told them. They said to the man, "What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes?" The man answered, "He is a prophet." The prophets were, as you know, among the greatest men the world had ever seen and in calling Jesus a prophet the man was paying him a very high tribute.

The Pharisees could not believe that the man had been blind and they were angry when they heard him call Jesus a prophet. So they sent for the man's parents and asked them if this man was their son and if he had been born blind, but they refused to discuss how he had received his sight. They said, "Ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself." They were afraid to say that Jesus had healed him, for the Jewish leaders had agreed to cast out of the synagogue, or as we would say excommunicate, any person who should say that Jesus was the Messiah. Excommunication was a really terrible punishment. It meant that the person so marked was to become a social outcast. No one would have him in his house. No one would have any business dealing with him. Excommunication meant loss of employment and financial ruin as well as deep disgrace.

Then the Pharisees called the man who had been blind and gave him their decision. They said, "Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner." The man

answered courageously, "Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." Then the Pharisees said, "What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?" This was in effect saying something like this: "You say that you do not know whether or not this man is a sinner; did he not break the Sabbath day by making clay to put on your eyes? Must he not therefore be a sinner, as we have said?" The man who had been blind was not ready to set himself up as a judge to decide such nice points of the Mosaic law. One great fact, however, stood out clearly: Jesus had healed him, and his heart was full of love and gratitude for his benefactor. He resented the charge made against Jesus. He answered the Pharisees with a show of righteous anger, "I told you even now, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples?" The slanders of the Pharisees had only driven the man nearer to Jesus, and he was now ready to come out boldly and declare himself a disciple of Jesus.

This courageous statement of the man who had received his sight was answered with an outburst of scoffing and reviling on the part of the Pharisees. "Thou art his disciple," they cried, "but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God hath spoken unto Moses: but as for this man, we know not whence he is." But neither threats nor ridicule could shake this man's courageous loyalty to Jesus. He answered the Pharisees with a statement so clear and fearless that we can but admire the spirit of the one who uttered the words. "Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes. We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." The Pharisees could answer only with bitter personalities and by using their power as leaders of the Jewish religion to make the brave man suffer for his heroic defense of Jesus. They said to him, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou

teach us?" Then they proceeded to pass a ban of excommunication against him.

When Jesus heard that the man had been excommunicated, he hunted through the city until he found him. When Jesus found the man, he said to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man answered, "And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee." Then the man answered, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Jesus.

Jesus in the Home of Zacchæus, the Publican. Luke 19:1-10. One day Jesus was passing through Jericho and there was a great crowd of people about him. In the crowd was a certain publican named Zacchæus. This publican had evidently joined the crowd out of curiosity. He wished to see the great Teacher and Miracle Worker. But he was "little of stature" and he could see nothing over the heads of the taller members of the multitude. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a tree. When Jesus came along, he looked up and, seeing Zacchæus, he said, "Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Greatly surprised and at the same time delighted, Zacchæus came down the tree and receiving Jesus he took him to his house.

What do you suppose Jesus talked about as he sat with Zacchæus in his house and at his table? Did he talk about the weather, the markets, or the trials and profits of a taxgatherer? We know that he must have talked of other things, of the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, for his visit with the publican had some remarkable results. As Jesus was taking leave, Zacchæus said to him, "Lord, I am going to give away half of all my property to the poor, and if I have wronged any man I am going to restore to him four-fold." As Jesus left the house, his farewell words were: "To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Jesus in the Home at Bethany. Luke 10:38-42. After Jesus began his ministry, he had no home of his own.

He must have felt keenly this deprivation for we may well believe that he was a lover of home. His thirty quiet years at Nazareth would imply as much. There is a tone of loneliness in his words, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." There was at least one home, however, always open to Jesus, and it was a place where he evidently delighted to withdraw from the jostling crowds and the distressing opposition of his enemies. This was the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus in the village of Bethany.

Jesus and his disciples once came into this humble home for a brief rest. Martha was at the door to bid them welcome; then she busied herself with the preparation of food for the company. Mary, however, sat down at Jesus' feet and listened as he talked to her and the disciples about the things of the Kingdom and the true elements of personal righteousness. Mary was so interested that she forgot all about the dinner. Martha was "cumbered about much serving," and indeed it was no light task to prepare food for thirteen hungry men. As Martha saw her sister sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to him and making no move to help her, she became more and more provoked. She felt that her sister did not care so much as she ought about having the dinner ready on time and everything in first-class order. She felt that Jesus did not care so much as he ought, or he would not keep her sister sitting there and leave her to do all the work.

At last Martha came up and with hasty and discourteous address said to Jesus, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." The Bible says that a soft answer turns away wrath, and it was with gentle and kindly reproof that Jesus said to his friend, "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

THE LESSON PRAYER

In the life of Jesus, we have, our heavenly Father, a

perfect pattern for our own lives. In his teachings there is light and truth. Give us diligence, therefore, in the study of thy Word that we may know our Saviour more perfectly and may honor thee more fully by living in harmony with thy will. Forgive us our transgressions and teach us to love thee more perfectly in the future than we have in the past. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

Who is on the Lord's side?
 Who will serve the King?
 Who will be his helpers,
 Other lives to bring?
 Who will leave the world's side?
 Who will face the foe?
 Who is on the Lord's side?
 Who for him will go?
 By thy call of mercy,
 By thy grace divine,
 We are on the Lord's side,
 Saviour, we are thine.

“The Hymnal” (Revised), No. 369.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

PUTTING GOD'S KINGDOM AND HIS RIGHTEOUS- NESS FIRST

Phil. 3:7-16

We have been considering in our week-day and our Sunday lesson how Jesus put first things first in his teachings and in his labors. Our Scripture lesson for this expressional meeting shows us how one of the great followers of Jesus put first things first. Paul tells us in these verses some of the things he had given up in order to have fellowship with Jesus, and in order that he might gain the righteousness which is like the righteousness of Christ. “The high calling of God in Christ Jesus” was the goal of Paul's life. In the life and teachings of Jesus, God calls us to perfect righteousness. To be like

Jesus in helpfulness, in sincerity, in broadness of sympathy, in devotion to all that is good and just—these are the elements of character to which God calls us in his Son. These are the first things of life. They are first in importance and their attainment should be given first consideration in all our plans and all our activities. These are the things for which even boys and girls ought to live and for the attainment of which they ought to count no price too great.

BIBLE VERSES

Luke 12:22-34; John 6:35; James 1:12; I John 2:15-17; Matt. 13:44-46.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell of the three instances in which Nicodemus is mentioned in the Gospels.
2. Why did Jesus enter into conversation with the woman of Samaria?
3. What did Jesus say to the Greeks who came to see him?
4. In what respects was the man born blind superior to the Pharisees in character?
5. What were the results of Jesus' visit in the home of Zacchæus?
6. What lessons can we learn from the story of Jesus' visit to the home in Bethany?

STUDY TOPICS

1. Is It Right to Stay Away from Church in Order to Prepare a Sunday Dinner?
2. Esau: A Young Man Who Did Not Put First Things First. Gen. 25:27-34.
3. A Thirteen-Year Old Girl Who Would Like to Come to the Week-Day Church School Class Is a Member of a Basket-Ball Club Which Meets at the Same Hour. What Should She Do?
4. Does a Merchant Who Crowds Another Out of

Business by Underselling Him, Put God's Kingdom and His Righteousness First?

5. How Can We Use Our Friendship So As to Promote Righteousness in the World?

6. How Can We Use Our Money So As to Help Build God's Kingdom?

7. Show How Jesus Put Righteousness First When He Was Tempted in the Wilderness.

8. Show How Jesus Put Righteousness First When He Asked John to Baptize Him.

9. When John the Baptist Heard of the Wickedness of Herod, Did He Follow a Policy of "Safety First," or of "Righteousness First"?

10. Tell Something About a Great American Statesman Who Said, "I Would Rather Be Right Than to Be President."

THE LAW OF DEVOTION TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THE SUPREME VALUE

There is no value great enough to justify a sacrifice of justice, righteousness, and truth in order that it may be attained. We are never to do that which is wrong in the belief that good will come from our acts. Therefore:

1. We will make personal righteousness a standard of life which we will endeavor to maintain. We will strive to do right no matter what the results may be.

2. We will seek to establish righteousness in all those organizations of which we are a part. We will try to make righteousness the standard in our homes, our schools, and in our play.

3. We will study diligently the life and teachings of Jesus in order that we may understand the nature of true righteousness.

CHAPTER IX
SOME PARABLES OF JESUS
WEEK DAY SESSION
LESSONS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM

Matt., ch. 13; Mark 4:26-29

Much of the teaching of Jesus was given in the form of parables. A parable is a short story drawn from the everyday events of life and used to impress some spiritual truth which the parable illustrates. Jesus chose this method of teaching because it was well suited to give to those earnestly seeking the truth the guidance and light they desired. It was likewise less liable to awaken faultfinding than some other methods, and Jesus never raised unnecessary opposition, if he could avoid it. Many of the parables of Jesus had to do with the nature of the Kingdom he had come to establish on earth.

The Parable of the Sower. Matt. 13:1-23. One day when there was a very great multitude about him, Jesus entered into a boat and pushed out a little way from the land. Then he sat down in the boat and taught the people who were seated on the beach and on the sloping hills behind. As he sat thus in the boat, he spoke to the people in parables. His first parable was about a farmer who went out to sow grain. In Palestine there are often beaten paths winding through the grainfields. The ground under these paths becomes so hard that the poor kind of plows used by the peasant farmers cannot stir it. Some of the grain which this farmer sowed fell on these hard pathways and the birds came and devoured it. Some of the grain fell on thin soil—that is, there was just a little soil, a few inches deep, and underneath that was the bedrock. The grain which fell on this soil sprang up quickly. It was green and strong for

a little while, but when the weather began to get dry and the sun became hot, it withered away and there was no grain at all on these stony patches when harvest time came.

Thorny weeds and bushes are very abundant in Palestine. They are a foe to every farmer, for many of them have strong perennial roots and are very hard to destroy. So long as a fragment of a root remains in the ground, it will grow and ultimately crowd out the grain. These thorns have a tendency to preempt the most fertile portion of the field. Some of the grain which this farmer sowed fell into ground full of these thorn roots. When the wheat sprang up, the thorns sprang up too, and they grew so much faster than the wheat that the wheat was smothered and finally died without producing any grain.

But some of the grain fell into good ground and brought forth a harvest. Some parts of the field yielded thirty times as much grain as had been sowed on them, some sixty times as much, and some even a hundred times as much.

This parable of Jesus is a wonderful picture of human nature and the way in which different people respond to the appeal of righteousness. Some people are so hardened in wickedness that they care for none of these things. They are the wayside people. They seldom turn to a life of righteousness unless there is some tremendous upheaval in their lives, some disaster which sweeps away all the things on which they have set their hearts and in the pursuit of which they waste their lives. Then there are other people who are like the stony ground on which the wheat sprang up quickly and made a promise of abundant harvest, but which ultimately failed completely. Have you ever known anyone of this type? They respond quickly to an appeal and are all enthusiasm for a time, but afterward they "play out." They lose their enthusiasm and finally end by accomplishing nothing at all. Then there are the preoccupied people. They have so many engagements and are so busy that they give no time to the cultivation of righteousness either in their own lives or in the lives of other people. Many of these "thorny ground people" are

possessed of great ability and could make their lives a blessing to their fellow men if they were not so busy with things which, after all, do not count for very much.

But there was also the good ground that brought forth fruit, "some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." Some parts of the field were naturally less fruitful than others and of course produced less grain, but all parts that brought forth a harvest were called "good ground."

Jesus did not mean to imply that people must inevitably fall into one or the other of these classes. We usually become the kind of ground our choices and our habits make us. No boy or girl of Intermediate age is a "hardened ground" person as yet, and none of them need ever fall into that unfortunate condition. None of them are really "shallow ground" people. Fickleness and undependability are usually the results of our habits, not traits of character which we have inherited. No boy or girl is a "thorny ground" person as yet. They may become so if they form the habit of giving their time and energy to things that are not first in importance. All boys and girls may become "good ground" persons, bearing fruit for righteousness, "some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Parable of the Tares. Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43. Jesus told about another farmer who sowed good seed in his field. But while this farmer slept an enemy came and sowed tares all over the field where the wheat had just been sown. The word "tares" refers to a kind of poisonous wild grass called the bearded darnel. It looks almost exactly like wheat while it is growing, but when it forms heads they are seen to be very different from heads of wheat. If this darnel is allowed to remain with the wheat until it is milled, it adds certain poisonous substances to the flour and thus causes sickness and death.

When this farmer's wheat began to form heads, the darnel became visible. The farmer's servants came to him and said, "Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares?" The owner of the field replied, "An enemy hath done this." Then the

servants said, "Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?" But the owner said, "Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

Jesus evidently gave his disciples this parable that they might understand something of why there is a mingling of good and evil in the world and even within the circles of the Church. The parable teaches us that God has made everything good and pure, but that there has come into God's creation that which is evil, the sowing of an enemy, seeking to destroy and defeat the plans of God. It likewise shows us that while this mixture of good and evil is to continue for a time, in the end evil will be destroyed.

Two Parables Showing the Growth of the Kingdom. Matt. 13:31-33. The parable of the Mustard Seed and the parable of the Leaven teach us the way in which God's Kingdom on earth is to grow. At first it is to be very small, like a grain of mustard seed. But it will grow until it fills all the earth. Perhaps the beginnings of the Kingdom sometimes seemed small to the disciples. Like other Jews they had expected great and sudden changes when the Messiah came. Jesus told them that the movement for making all the world righteous must have a small beginning.

The parable of the Leaven shows us the same truth as the parable of the Mustard Seed. It also suggests that God's Kingdom on earth is to grow through personal contacts. As each grain of meal becomes leavened, it leavens others which it touches. So our lives, if they are truly righteous, will influence and change all other lives which we touch.

Two Parables Showing the Value of the Kingdom. Matt. 13:44-46. The parable of the Hidden Treasure and the parable of the Pearl of Great Price teach us the great value of the Kingdom of God. As the disciples came to know that there was not to be a kingdom of the kind they expected, not a throne and an army and a

wide rule over the nations by force, they needed to gain an understanding of the far greater value of the kind of kingdom Jesus was trying to establish. All of them, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, finally gained this larger view of the truth. When Jesus gave them these parables he was trying to show them these higher and truer values. The Kingdom was like treasure hid in a field. A man on finding it went and sold all that he had and bought the field. The Kingdom was like a pearl of such great value that a merchant might wisely sell everything he had to buy that one pearl.

The Parable of the Seed Growing of Itself. Mark 4:26-29. The parables we have just been studying seem to refer primarily to the growth and value of the Kingdom of God in the world. The parable we are now taking up seems to refer more especially to the growth of the Kingdom of God in the individual. Righteousness is not reached at a single bound. Individuals do not become fully equipped servants of God in a moment of time. The growth of religion is a gradual process, beautiful and simple and yet so profoundly significant that no one can ever fathom its mystery. It is like the growth of a stalk of grain. It is "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: Parable of the Wheat and the Tares (694 Wilde); Parable of the Sower, by Robert (77 Wilde).

SUNDAY SESSION

PARABLES WHICH TEACH THE UNIVERSAL AND PERSEVERING LOVE OF GOD

Luke, ch. 15

Some of the grandest of the parables of Jesus were spoken in answer to the sneering remark of the scribes and Pharisees, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth

with them." It was like Jesus to answer such scoffing with words of eternal light and truth. We can feel as we read these parables the earnest desire of Jesus to give to these spiritually blind critics some insight into the truth of God. These remarks of the enemies of Jesus grew out of a sadly perverted conscience. They were suffering from a threefold misconception, though their unfortunate spiritual condition was the direct result of their own evil choices. They had wrong ideas about the people they called "sinners." Many of these people were at heart far better than most of the scribes and Pharisees. They did not know much about the endless rules which the rabbis had built about the law of Moses, but their hearts were for the most part sincere. They at least made no very large claims to being righteous and were therefore largely free from the repulsive sin of hypocrisy.

In the second place these scribes and Pharisees had wrong ideas about themselves. They believed that they were very righteous because they had learned the rules concerning the law of Moses and were particular about many trifling matters. They did not seem to realize that their hearts were full of envy and jealousy and hatred and pride.

In the third place, they had wrong ideas about God. This misunderstanding was the most serious of all, for when a person has wrong ideas about God he cannot think correctly on moral matters and his life lies open to vast iniquities. Jesus was trying to cure these scribes and Pharisees of their threefold error. He was trying to show them how precious in God's sight were the people they called "sinners." He was trying to help them to see some of their own defects of character, for no one can make moral improvement so long as he thinks himself spiritually perfect. Most of all, he was trying to give them better and truer ideas about God.

The Shepherd of the Lost Sheep. Luke 15:1-7. The first story which Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees was simple and beautiful. It was about a kind-hearted shepherd who had a hundred sheep. One of these sheep had strayed away from the sheepfold and was lost some-

where in the desert wilderness. It was a story well suited for the purpose of Jesus for the Jews were a nation of shepherds. Practically everyone in the land of Judah kept at least a few sheep. We can best catch the message of this parable if we consider it in the very words of Jesus:

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance.”—Luke 15:4-7.

It was evidently Jesus' intention in this parable to give his critics light on the threefold error which we have noted. These people they called “sinners” were not worthless trash. They were precious in the sight of God. God is not indifferent to his children, even though they have disobeyed him and gone astray like lost sheep. They are not to be considered as being outside the love of God. God is like a good shepherd who keeps safe his sheep that are within the fold but who cares also for the sheep that have strayed. The shepherd had ninety-nine sheep left and the natural increase of his flock would, in a little while, more than make good the loss of one sheep. But everything in the story shows that it was not merely the money value of the sheep that caused the shepherd to seek it so diligently. He cared for the sheep itself. Jesus was trying to show the scribes and Pharisees that God's love is like the love of a father or a mother for a child. The love of a good father and a good mother for their children does not grow less and less as the number of children in the family increases.

The Lost Piece of Money. Luke 15:8-10. Jesus told another short story to the scribes and Pharisees who scoffed at him for eating with “sinners.” It was about a woman who had ten pieces of silver. This woman lost one of her pieces of money and was very much dis-

tressed. She lighted a lamp and swept the house and sought diligently until she found the piece of money that she had lost. When she at last found it, she was so glad that she called her neighbors and friends and said to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost." Then Jesus said to those who had criticized him for receiving "sinners" and for eating with them, "Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Like the parable of the Lost Sheep, this parable shows us the persevering love of God. He not only loves his wandering children but he seeks them, seeks them diligently and until he finds them. Those whom the Pharisees called "sinners" were coming back to God through their fellowship with Jesus, and if the scribes and Pharisees had really known the extent and nature of God's love, they would have known that angels were rejoicing at the coming again home of these wandering children of the Father in heaven. If the scribes and Pharisees had not had hearts full of pride and envy and jealousy, they would have rejoiced, too, in the home-coming of their wandering brethren.

The Father of the Prodigal. Luke 15:11-32. The parable of the Prodigal Son is one of the most sublime of the utterances of Jesus. It forms a climax to the matchless answer which Jesus made to those who scoffed at him for receiving sinners and for eating with them. The son who asked for his share of the property and then went away and spent his money in riotous living is a picture of those whom the Pharisees called "sinners." The father of the prodigal is a picture of the Father in heaven, who grants his children liberty; freedom to depart from him, if they are determined to do so; freedom to waste the Father's good gifts in riotous living. But the Father in heaven, like the father of the prodigal, never forgets his children, nor does he cease to love them. He knows of their first thoughts of a return. While they are yet a great way off, he sees them and hastens to meet them. He gives the best robe to the prodigal and receives him home with rejoicing.

This last of the three parables of the chapter contains an excellent portrait of the scribes and Pharisees. They are pictured perfectly in the elder brother of the prodigal. This young man had some excellent traits of character. He was evidently industrious and free from many of the faults of his younger brother, but he had certain grave "sins of the disposition." He was intensely selfish. His selfishness kept him from being glad when his brother came home. It caused him to mar the happy occasion and to bring shame and sorrow to his old father. It made him refuse to go into the house and stand around and sulk when everyone else was rejoicing. "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but when this thy son came, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf." It would be hard to find a more selfish expression than this in all literature. Note how many times the elder brother uses the first person singular of the personal pronoun. It is "I, my, me" with him all the way through. Note his sneering "this thy son." He does not say "my brother," but "this thy son." He was self-righteous. "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine." What he said may have been true, in a sense, but it seems questionable when we remember that he had just refused to enter the house to greet his brother, even when his father came out and entreated him. After all, that was the fundamental sin of the scribes and Pharisees. They were selfish. Selfishness made them envious, jealous, haughty, cruel. Selfishness kept them from being glad when they saw Jesus winning those they called "sinners." Selfishness made them despise their fellow men in their self-righteous pride, for it kept them thinking about their own goodness and other people's faults. The words of Jesus were a message from God to these sulky and selfish elder brothers of the Jewish race. They reveal the sorrow in the heart of God and the reproof which he must give to all who refuse to be brotherly. "It was meet to make

merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found."

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the parables of Jesus which we have been studying. They have many lessons which we need to learn. Help us to know thee better than we have known thee in the past. Help us to understand something of thy great love for all thy children. And help us, our Father, to be brotherly to all thy children. Save us from the sins of the disposition so clearly shown in the character of the elder brother. Grant that we may never wander far from thee and that we may not waste our lives in riotous living. Help us to seek thee earnestly early in life and give all our years to thy service. Grant that, like Jesus thy son, we may grow strong in spirit and may the grace of our God be upon us. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,
 God of glory, Lord of love;
 Hearts unfold like flowers before thee,
 Opening to the sun above.
 Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
 Drive the dark of doubt away,
 Giver of immortal gladness,
 Fill us with the light to-day.

"The Hymnal" (Revised), No. 115.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

INTELLECTUAL INTEGRITY

Matt. 12:24-37

The Pharisees were lacking in a quality of character which we have come to call intellectual integrity. They were intellectually dishonest. They did not judge matters in the light of the facts but in the light of their own prejudices. They were envious of Jesus and their dis-

like for him kept them from seeing anything good in his wonderful messages of truth and his acts of mercy and helpfulness. In our Scripture lesson we are told how Jesus healed a man who was blind and dumb. The people were amazed and were asking one another, "Can this be the son of David?" But the Pharisees could see nothing good in what Jesus had done, at least nothing to lead them to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. On other occasions they had found fault with Jesus for healing on the Sabbath day. In this case the cure was not wrought on the Sabbath so they could not find fault on that score. Nevertheless, they said that Jesus was using the power of the prince of demons to bring about his cures.

Intellectual dishonesty is one of the most subtle, as well as one of the most dangerous, sins. There are thousands of people who have this fault and who hardly know that they are afflicted with it. There are thousands of people who would not tell a lie with their words, but who do tell lies in other ways, by their actions and deep down in their thoughts. A little boy four years old is eating his breakfast of oatmeal, bread and butter, and milk. He takes a notion that he would like a piece of pound cake for breakfast and asks his mother to give it to him. His mother replies, "No, my son, you must not have pound cake for breakfast; it would not be good for you." Then the little fellow begins to sulk. He refuses to eat any more. He goes off in a corner and these are the thoughts that are running through his head: "My mother doesn't wish me to have anything to eat for breakfast. So I won't eat a thing and then maybe I will get sick. Maybe I will die and then I guess she will be sorry." Now that little fellow isn't thinking honestly at all. Down in his heart he knows that his mother is just as good to him as she can be. If he doesn't get over that way of thinking, it is apt to get worse and worse and when he becomes a man he won't be able to think in any other way.

Sometimes the parents of boys and girls forbid them to do certain things, such as going down town at night, and these boys and girls do some of this dishonest

thinking and say within themselves, "Father and mother do not wish me to have a good time." They know, however, that this is not the case. They know that this is not the reason why their parents forbid them the privilege they desire. They know that their parents really live and labor that their children may have joys and opportunities. Every boy or girl who finds this dishonest thinking coming up in the mind should say firmly and finally, "Get thee behind me, Satan." This sin of dishonest thinking is really very serious. Jesus told the Pharisees who had so large a measure of this fault, that they were in danger of committing a sin that could never be forgiven.

BIBLE VERSES

Deut. 32:3, 4; Ps. 25:10; 51:6; John 14:6; Rom. 2:2; Matt. 23:27, 28; I Sam. 16:7; James 3:14; I John 5:6.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the lessons to be learned from the parable of the Sower?
2. What parables show the way in which the Kingdom of God is to grow?
3. How can we explain the existence of evil in the world?
4. In what ways is the Kingdom of God the most valuable thing in the world?
5. What lesson do you gain from the parable of the Seed Growing of Itself?
6. How did Jesus come to speak the parables recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Luke?
7. What fundamental mistakes were the scribes and Pharisees making in their thinking?
8. What is the central lesson in the parable of the Lost Sheep?
9. What truths are taught in the parable of the Lost Piece of Money?
10. In what way did Jesus show the Pharisees their own faults?

STUDY TOPICS

1. Explain the Words, "Lifting Up His Soul Unto Falsehood," in Ps. 24:4. Can This Be Done Without Speaking a Lie with the Lips?

2. Explain the Words, "Speaketh Truth in His Heart," in Ps. 15:2. Can You Illustrate?

3. A Man Reads a Certain Book and Cannot See Anything Good in It, Though It Is Really a Very Good Book. Can You Suggest Possible Reasons Why the Man Cannot See Anything Good in the Book?

4. Did Nicodemus Possess Intellectual Integrity?

5. Can You Name an Event in the Life of Jesus Which Shows that He Possessed Intellectual Integrity?

THE LAW OF INTELLECTUAL INTEGRITY

God wishes us to speak the truth not only by word of mouth but in our thoughts and in our actions. Therefore:

1. We will try to decide every question on the basis of facts, rather than on the basis of our likes and dislikes.

2. We will try to keep our minds and hearts free from blinding prejudices.

3. We will seek to learn more and more of the truth as it is revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus.

CHAPTER X
THE POWER OF THE SON OF GOD
WEEK DAY SESSION

THE CONQUEROR OF DISEASE AND DEATH

Matt. 8:1-13; 9:18-26; John, ch. 11

In this chapter we are to consider some of the greatest of the miracles of Jesus. If we really believe that Jesus is the Son of God, it will not seem strange to us that he possessed powers so much beyond that of men. Jesus used his wonderful powers to cure suffering, to turn sadness into joy, and to make plain the great spiritual truths he had come to teach. He refused to use these powers, as we have seen, to relieve his own distresses or to gain the support of the populace by working wonders.

A Leper Healed. Matt. 8:1-4. Leprosy has long been a scourge to the people of Palestine. In the days of Jesus the lepers were everywhere. They slept along the highways and cried out, "Unclean! Unclean!" at every bend of the road. There were no hospitals where these unfortunate people could be cared for. In spite of the safeguards contained in the Mosaic law, the dreadful disease spread continually throughout the land and menaced every life.

One day early in his ministry, Jesus met one of these lepers. The poor fellow came to Jesus and fell down before him saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." When Jesus saw the leper, he was moved with compassion. Perhaps the ravages of the hideous disease were all too evident upon him. Stretching out his hand Jesus touched the leper and said, "I will; be thou made clean." At once the man's leprosy departed from him and he became well of his awful malady.

The Centurion's Servant. Matt. 8:5-13. Soon after

the healing of the leper, Jesus entered Capernaum and a centurion, or Roman captain, came to him saying, "Lord, my servant lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." Jesus said to him at once, "I will come and heal him." How ready Jesus was to serve! How wide were his sympathies! This man was a Roman and yet Jesus made no distinction. He was as ready to heal the slave of a Roman captain as he was to heal anyone else. But this officer was a humble man and he said to Jesus, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." Jesus was greatly delighted at the simple faith of this Roman and he said to him, "Go thy way: as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." In that same hour the servant was healed.

The Little Daughter of Jairus. Matt. 9:18-26. Jesus was soon to give a more marvelous evidence of his power than any he had yet manifested. Into the crowds jostling about Jesus there came a man whose heart was heavy with anxiety and impending sorrow. This man's name was Jairus and he was a ruler of the synagogue, probably of that synagogue in Capernaum in which Jesus sometimes preached. This man had a little daughter twelve years old who was lying at the point of death and she was his only child. This ruler of the synagogue came to Jesus and fell down before him pleading with him to come and save his little daughter. It may be that this officer, like others, had been doubting Jesus. If this were the case, his doubts had all been driven away by his desperate need. He knew that there was only one hope for his child, and that was in the power of Jesus to heal.

Jesus went with Jairus, but the multitudes were so great that they surrounded him and pressed against him on every side. A woman who had been ill for twelve years with a distressing malady heard that Jesus was passing by and she made her way through the crowd. She was saying over and over to herself, "If I do but touch his garment, I shall be made whole." When she was within reach of Jesus, she touched his garments and was healed. In some way Jesus knew what had hap-

pened, and he turned about and asked who had touched him. The disciples thought that this was a strange question for Jesus to ask when the crowds were all about him and pressing against him. Jesus had recognized, however, the touch of human need, and at his question the woman came and, falling down at Jesus' feet, told him what had happened. Jesus said to her "Daughter, . . . thy faith hath made thee whole."

Just at that moment a messenger from the house of Jairus arrived and said to him, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Teacher." Jesus overheard the words of the messenger and he said to Jairus, "Fear not: only believe."

When they came to the house of Jairus, Jesus would not permit anyone to enter with him excepting his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the little girl. The friends and relatives were weeping and making lamentations. Hired mourners were probably also present for that was the custom of the times. Jesus said to these people, "Give place: the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." "And they laughed him to scorn," knowing that she was dead.

Jesus took the hand of the little girl. Then he called to her in his native Aramaic tongue, the language he had learned on Mary's knee; "Talitha cumi!"; which means "Maiden, arise." At the touch and the voice of Jesus, the child arose and walked. Jesus then told them to give her something to eat.

The Raising of Lazarus. John 11:1-44. As Jesus neared the end of his ministry the miracles he performed became more and more wonderful. He began by healing the lame and the palsied. Then he gave sight to one who had been born blind. Then he vanquished death itself when he raised the widow's son at Nain and the little daughter of Jairus at Capernaum. In these cases, however, the persons restored to life had been dead for only a short time. Lazarus had been dead four days when at the command of Jesus he arose and came forth from the sepulcher.

As we read this wonderful eleventh chapter of John we are impressed with the grandeur and tenderness of

the Christ. Possessing limitless power, he is yet humble and compassionate. We feel that he restored Lazarus to life because he loved the inmates of that humble home where he had so often been as a guest. At the same time we are conscious of a wider purpose in the working of this wonderful miracle. He was seeking to lead as many as possible to believe in him and in the eternal life he had come to bestow. Nor was he acting for the spiritual help of that generation alone. He was acting for all the generations of people that were yet to be.

Amazing Unbelief. John 11:45-57. We are not surprised to learn that after the raising of Lazarus, many of the Jews believed on him. The surprising thing is found in the fact that they did not all believe on him. Some of the Jews who had witnessed the miracle went and told the Pharisees. A hurried council was called. Instead of being convinced of the goodness of Jesus and his just claim to being the Messiah, the Pharisees were roused to a frenzy of anger and fear by the raising of Lazarus. Their fear and ill temper are clearly seen in the brief account which we have of the meeting. From that day they were determined to destroy Jesus at any cost. Their wickedness is amazing and it shows us to what lengths jealousy and prejudice are capable of leading people. The very climax of their wickedness is seen in their conspiracy not only to put Jesus to death, but to take the life of Lazarus, also. They had now thrown themselves completely into the fight against Jesus. If Jesus could restore a man to life, they believed they could defeat him by destroying the life he had restored.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: Christ the Consoler, by Zimmermann (1101B Perry, page 200 Bailey); Jairus' Daughter Cured, by Hofmann (79 Wilde); Peace Be Still, by Doré; Raising of Lazarus, by Rubens (120 Wilde).

SUNDAY SESSION

THE MASTER OF THE NATURAL WORLD

Mark 4:35-41; Matt. 21:18-22

Some years ago a company of British scientists gathered on the veldt in South Africa. They had come all the way from England that they might study a total eclipse of the sun which was to be visible in the southern part of the African continent. They set up their instruments and made ready for their observations. When everything was arranged, the leader of the expedition took out his watch and looking at it said, "At this moment the eclipse ought to begin, if we have made no mistake in our calculations." Even as he spoke the disc of the moon began to obscure the face of the sun and the eclipse began.

This incident shows us the regularity and the dependability of the laws of nature. The discovery of laws which govern the natural world has effected the religious belief of different people in different ways. Some who have come to see the regularity and dependability of these laws have said, "What place is there for a God in such a universe as this where everything is governed by fixed laws." Other, and as we believe wiser, people have said, "There must be a God who has made and who governs the universe, for we see evidences of him in all the laws of nature."

We are not to think of the miracles of Jesus as violations of natural law. They were doubtless only instances in which Jesus used other and higher laws than any with which we are familiar. God as the maker of natural laws does not violate his own ordinances, but neither is he a slave in the universe he has created. It is a natural law that any object heavier than air shall fall to the earth, but this law is now set aside in the case of the aeroplane because man has discovered and learned to use other laws which cause a suspension of the law of gravity under certain conditions. So we believe that God, who knows all things and who has all power, can accomplish that which he wills and we be-

lieve that Jesus as his Son was able to show himself master over the forces of nature in the ways described in the New Testament.

Stilling the Tempest. Mark 4:35-41. After a hard day of teaching and healing, Jesus was crossing the Sea of Galilee with his disciples. When they were in the midst of the sea, a great storm of wind arose and the waves beat into the boat, so that it began to fill and was on the point of sinking. The disciples were, for the most part, experienced fishermen who had spent all their lives on the waters of the Sea of Galilee and they knew the peril all too well. These sudden storms occur occasionally in the deep gorge of the Jordan. On a hot, still day the air becomes overheated and rises suddenly at evening and the cold air from the slopes of Mount Hermon rushes in with great violence, accompanied by dashing rain, lightning, or hail. It was one of these sudden storms that had caught the boat in which Jesus and his disciples were crossing the lake.

When the storm arose, Jesus was in the stern of the boat asleep on a cushion. In their terror the disciples aroused their leader, saying to him, "Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?" There are few experiences more terrifying than to be on a sinking boat in a storm, and we need not be surprised to find that the disciples were panic-stricken. Jesus awoke and unafraid looked out upon the tossing waters. "Peace," he commanded, "be still." Instantly the winds and the sea obeyed him, and there was a great calm. "Why are ye fearful?" Jesus said to his disciples, "have ye not yet faith?" As the twelve disciples stood there in the boat with Jesus, a great awe came over them. They knew that they were in the presence of one who had manifested the power and authority of God. They said to one another in hushed tones, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

The Withered Fig Tree. Matt. 21:18-22. During his last days in Jerusalem Jesus performed a miracle so unlike most of the others of which we have any account that it is well for us to consider it for a moment. Jesus and his disciples had spent the night in Bethany and

were on their way to Jerusalem in the morning. Seeing a fig tree in the distance, Jesus expressed the hope that figs might be found upon it for he was hungry. It was a common practice in that day for travelers to gather figs and other fruits from trees growing along the way-side, and Jesus and his disciples had doubtless often obtained food in this way.

When they came to the fig tree they found that it had nothing but leaves upon it. Jesus said to the tree, "Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward for ever." Either then or soon afterward the fig tree withered and died. How different is the miracle from the other miracles of Jesus. On other occasions he used his power to restore life and health, to give food, and to save from distress and loss. Why did he on this occasion use his power to destroy life, even though it was only the life of a fig tree? Those who have studied the matter deeply believe that this miracle was one of the acted parables of Jesus. It was a picture of the doom which was coming upon the Jewish nation because it had rejected the Messiah. God had done great things for the Hebrew people. He had given them a goodly land. He had sent them prophets and righteous men. He had a right to expect fruit but there was none from the nation as a whole. The leaders of the Jewish Church and the Jewish nation were like that barren tree, their offering was nothing but leaves.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we thank thee that thou hast sent thy Son to be our Teacher and Saviour. We thank thee that thou didst give unto him power to heal and save. We pray that we may believe on him fully and trust him always. Help us to understand the beauty and perfection of his character. Help us to become like him in purity, helpfulness, and devotion to duty. We pray that his Church may be made strong so that the message of the gospel may be carried into all the earth. Bless the missionaries who are laboring in the pagan countries of the world. Help them to turn the people of these lands

from darkness to light. Help us to make our own land more truly Christian than it is to-day so that thy Kingdom may really be established on earth and thy will done in the world as it is done in heaven. We ask thee in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

Fierce was the wild billow,
 Dark was the night;
 Oars labored heavily,
 Foam glimmered white;
 Trembled the mariners,
 Peril was nigh:
 Then said the God of God,
 "Peace! It is I."

Ridge of the mountain-wave,
 Lower thy crest!
 Wail of Euroclydon,
 Be thou at rest!
 Sorrow can never be,
 Darkness must fly,
 Where saith the Light of Light,
 "Peace! It is I."

Jesus, Deliverer,
 Come thou to me;
 Soothe thou my voyaging
 Over life's sea:
 Thou, when the storm of death
 Roars, sweeping by,
 Whisper, O Truth of Truth,
 "Peace! It is I."

"The Hymnal" (Revised), No. 210.

See "The Story of the Hymns and Tunes," by Brown and Butterworth, page 354.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO PHYSICAL HEALTH

Prov. 4:10-27; Isa. 35:6-10

In the lessons which we have been studying we have seen that Jesus was anxious to heal as many people as

he could. His concern for the physical welfare of men was second only to his concern for their spiritual welfare. He said that he had come that people might have life and have it abundantly. In thus ministering to the physical needs of men Jesus was fulfilling the hopes of some of the greatest of the prophets. In speaking of that evening when at sunset the people came crowding about Jesus to be healed and to present their loved ones for healing, Matthew says that these events were a fulfillment of Isaiah's statement that the Messiah should take our infirmities and bear our diseases. In another chapter Isaiah had said that in the days of the Messiah the eyes of the blind should be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped; that in that day the lame man should leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb should sing.

The Church which Jesus established in the world is carrying on the work which he began for giving health to the people of the earth. If we wish to know how much the world owes to Jesus in the matter of physical health, we have only to compare health conditions in a Christian land with the conditions in a land like India or China where the teachings of Jesus have not yet become known and accepted in any large way. And we have only made a beginning even in a land like ours. When our nation is wholly and truly Christian, we shall be able to banish many of the diseases which still afflict mankind and we shall become a people strong in body and in mind.

Near Chicago is a manufacturing community where a great many foreign-speaking people live. Some of these people are very poor and they live in crowded quarters. The water they have to drink is impure and there are often epidemics of typhoid fever and other like diseases. In this community some Christian people have built what is called a "settlement house." The people who manage this house live among the people of the community in the midst of which it is located. They teach the people better ways of living than they have known in their homelands. They have what are called "free clinics" where parents bring their little children to have

them examined by physicians who come once or twice a week and give their services free.

One day a mother brought her little girl to this settlement house. The child was entirely deaf and had never learned to talk. She was so crippled that she had never taken a step in her life. The physicians examined the little girl and said they thought that they could help her. They sent her to a hospital where an operation was performed on her ears and throat and she returned to her home able to hear as well as other children. Their treatment also greatly helped her in her efforts to walk. In a little while she could get about quite well and had learned to talk like other children. This is one way in which Jesus is still unstopping the deaf ears and causing the tongue of the dumb to sing.

BIBLE VERSES

Ps. 67:1, 2; Prov. 16:24; I John 2:14; Ps. 103:1-3; Matt. 10:8; James 5:16; Mal. 4:2; Rev. 22:2.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what ways did Jesus use his miraculous powers?
2. Name some ways in which Jesus might have used his powers but would not.
3. Name an instance in which Jesus used his miraculous powers to relieve human distress.
4. Name an instance in which Jesus used his miraculous powers to teach a spiritual truth.
5. Is it reasonable to doubt the existence of God because the universe seems to be governed by law?
6. What was Jesus' purpose in causing the barren fig tree to wither?

STUDY TOPICS

1. Christian People Are Chiefly Responsible for the Passing of the Prohibition Amendment to the Constitution. What Effect Will Prohibition Have on the Health of the Nation If It Is Rightly Enforced?

2. Tell All You Can of the Medical Work of the Foreign Mission Stations.

3. What Has the Playground Movement Done for American Children?

4. Find Out About Missions for Lepers.

5. Would Jesus Wish a City to Have Slums Where There Is Neither Light and Room Nor Cleanliness for the Children?

6. Conditions in Our Community Which Are Favorable to Health.

7. Conditions in Our Community Which Are Unfavorable to Health.

8. Fresh Air Outings for Mothers and Children of the Great cities.

9. The Spiritual Value of Clean Athletics.

10. The Boyhood of Jesus as a Perfect Type of Development. Luke 2:40.

COMMITTEE WORK

Hospital Committee. To visit and report on the work done in children's hospitals.

Hygiene Committee. To secure a physician to address the school on matters of health.

THE LAW OF HEALTH

God desires us to have strong bodies, keen minds, and pure souls. Therefore:

1. We will seek to form right habits of eating and drinking and will seek active exercise in the open air that we may be robust in health.

2. We will avoid doing any act that will cause injury to our bodies, guilt of conscience, and loss of self-respect.

3. We will seek good health for others, as well as for ourselves. To this end we will seek to have such conditions as promote physical health in our homes, in our community, and in the nation.

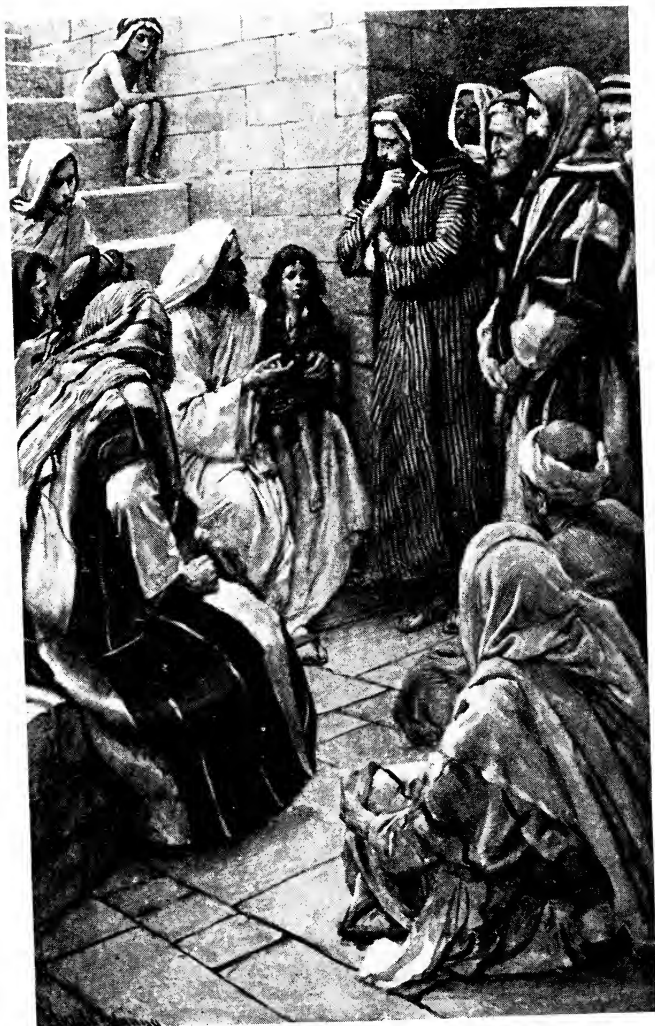
CHAPTER XI
THE PERIOD OF GREATEST POPULARITY
WEEK DAY SESSION
FOLLOWED BY THE MULTITUDES

Mark 6:7-13, 30-44; 10:1-31

The period immediately following the Sermon on the Mount was for Jesus a time of great and growing popularity with the common people. It is not hard to discover why the multitudes gathered about Jesus. Some were attracted by his teaching. There was a very real hunger for religious instruction. Especially was this the case among the humble peasants of Galilee. They had become spiritually starved on the teaching of the rabbis. They recognized at once the difference between the customary religious teaching of the times and the teaching of Jesus. The rabbis taught traditions; Jesus taught them as one having authority.

They liked Jesus because he was so friendly and approachable. He was not at all like the proud Pharisees who were afraid to touch a common person lest they be made unclean. Jesus went among people—visited them in their homes, talked with them on the streets, and ate with them. This friendliness of Jesus attracted many different types of people. The despised publicans found to their surprise that he was their friend. The hated Samaritans found that he was not too proud to talk with them and heal their diseases. Poor, outcast, sinful men and women found that he had for them a great compassion rather than a spirit of contempt, and they took new courage because they could see that he loved them.

Many came to Jesus to be healed, or to have him heal their relatives and friends. By no means all of these people who came seeking the help of Jesus were Jews. Some were Roman captains in charge of the garrisons



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THE LITTLE CHILD SIT IN THE MIDST

stationed here and there throughout the country. Some people joined the crowds which followed Jesus because they were curious to see and hear this wonderful Teacher concerning whom reports had spread all over Palestine. A few of the accounts concerning the different visitors who came to see and hear Jesus as they are given in the Gospels will now be considered.

Parents Bring Their Children to Be Blessed. Mark 10:13-16. We are glad to know that in the midst of the vast throngs gathered about Jesus were many little children. Parents had brought their children that Jesus might lay his hands upon them and bless them. Some of the disciples evidently thought that Jesus ought not to be bothered by having the children brought to him for his blessing. Therefore they rebuked those who were bringing the children. When Jesus saw his disciples forbidding the people to bring their children to him, "he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me: forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God." Then he added, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." Then he took the children up in his arms and blessed them.

Pharisees Come to Find Fault. Mark 10:1-12. The more popular Jesus became with the multitudes the more he was disliked by the Pharisees. They were jealous of him. They sought in every way to make the people believe that he was not a wise and good teacher. They planned all sorts of traps, hoping to lead Jesus to say something which would make the people think he was not loyal to the law of Moses. They found however that they were not able to accomplish their purposes. Jesus understood their aims perfectly. He knew the Old Testament better than the Pharisees did and was able to put them to confusion in every conflict. These victories of Jesus, however, only added to the hatred which they felt for him.

A Young Man Comes to Jesus for Advice. Mark 10:17-31. One day a young man came to Jesus asking him what he should do to inherit eternal life. We know

that this young man was honest. His question was not a miserable trap like the questions of the Pharisees. He was really seeking the truth. The young man was humble. He came to Jesus and knelt down courteously before him calling him, "Good Teacher." The young man was a ruler and he had great wealth but he was not too proud to seek advice from the Carpenter-Teacher from the despised city of Nazareth.

The young man had lived a clean and upright life for when Jesus spoke to him about the Commandments in the Old Testament, he could look straight into the Master's eyes and say, "Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth." We are told that Jesus, "looking upon him loved him." So we know that what Jesus asked the young man to do was for the young man's good. Jesus told him to go and sell all his possessions and give away the money to the poor. Then he added, "Come, follow me." That was the same call that had come to Peter and Andrew and James and John. Jesus was evidently asking the young man to become a disciple. But the young man's face grew sad at the words of Jesus and he went away sorrowful. We ought not to think of this request of Jesus as unreasonable. Under the circumstances it was the only wise thing to do. If the young man had tried to be a disciple and keep his property, he would have made a failure of one or both of his undertakings. What would have become of his wealth during the persecutions which the followers of Jesus underwent? By going away he showed that although he longed to have Jesus as his Teacher and Master, his wealth was already a master whom he was accustomed to obey and whom he was not ready to renounce.

This young man might have been one of the great men of the New Testament. He might have become a great apostle like John or Paul, but he missed his opportunity because he loved his possessions more than he loved God's Kingdom.

Jesus Sends Out His Disciples to Heal and Preach. Mark 6:7-13. About this time in his ministry Jesus sent out his disciples in six groups of two men each.

He sent them into the various cities and towns to heal the sick and to preach to the people. Jesus seems to have undertaken this campaign of preaching and healing for several purposes. In the first place, he could reach many more people in this way than he could by keeping all his disciples about him. In the second place the work of the disciples in any community was a preparation for his own work. We are told that he sent the disciples into communities where he was himself about to come. In the third place, the experience of the disciples would be of very great value to them. We learn to do by doing and Jesus was too wise a teacher to overlook this principle. As the disciples went about from town to town in Galilee, they were learning how to carry on the great task which was to fall to their lot when Jesus should be taken away from them.

A Much Needed Vacation Abandoned. Mark 6:30-33. When the disciples had finished their preaching tour, they came back to Jesus. They were full of exultation at their success. They had healed the sick and cast out demons. They were conscious of a new power for they had really accomplished something for the setting up of the Kingdom of God in the world. Jesus seems to have noted that his disciples were tired by their labors, for he said to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." The crowds were now so great about Jesus and his disciples that they hardly had opportunity to eat or take any rest. So the little company got into a boat and started across the Sea of Galilee. They were bound for the hills that lay on the eastern shore. Not many people lived there and it was evidently the plan of Jesus and his disciples to spend a few quiet days there among the hills and along the shores of the lake.

But the people saw the boat making its way across the water and they ran along the shore all the way around the upper end of the lake. As they went, more people from the villages joined them. Jesus and the disciples, having crossed the water in a leisurely fashion, drew near to the eastern shore. There they saw a great multitude of people awaiting them. We are told that when

Jesus saw the multitudes, "he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd." Instead of taking a vacation, Jesus spent the day teaching the multitudes.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand. Mark 6:34-44. When evening was come on, the disciples came to Jesus reminding him that the day was far spent and that the place where they had landed was an uninhabited district. They suggested that the people be sent away into the villages to buy themselves food. The tender courtesy and unselfishness of Jesus is seen in his reply, for he told his disciples to make ready to give the multitudes food. The people had come a long way and Jesus would not send them away hungry lest they faint on the homeward journey.

So the disciples caused the people to sit down in companies upon the hillside and Jesus took the few small fishes and the few cakes of bread which were at hand and with these he fed the multitudes. You will remember that Jesus had refused to use his divine power to feed himself when he was almost ready to perish from hunger, but he used his power gladly to relieve the hunger and distress of the multitudes. In his love and compassion for the multitudes, Jesus shows us the sublimity of his character. Some of our greatest men and women of history have shown something of this same love for the crowds, but none of them in the same way and to the same extent as Jesus. Most people are capable of loving a few individuals. But to look on the crowding thousands and to feel for them a compassionate affection is to experience something of the all-including love of God.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook work: Christ and the Rich Young Man; by Hofmann (802 Perry, Bailey, page 254); Christ Blessing Little Children, by Plockhorst (110 Wilde).

SUNDAY SESSION

THE MULTITUDES PLAN TO MAKE JESUS KING

Mark 6:45-56; John 6:15-71

The miraculous feeding of the five thousand made a profound impression throughout Galilee. Jesus had performed many miracles before this, but they had been confined, for the most part, to the healing of individuals. By feeding five thousand people Jesus had given a direct demonstration of his power to a vast number of people. It is probable that every town and village for miles around was represented in the crowd that partook of the food which Jesus provided that day. So we need not be surprised to know that startling events resulted from what Jesus had done.

A Plot to Make Jesus King by Force. John 6:15. As the people sat there on the hillside by the sea and ate the food which Jesus had provided, they talked with one another about the wonderful power of Jesus. The conviction spread rapidly through the crowd that Jesus was the Messiah. He had provided them with food just as Moses had provided manna for their ancestors in the desert wanderings. What a leader Jesus would make for a revolution intended to throw off the Roman dominion and set the Jewish people free! How easily he could supply an army and how quickly he could vanquish the foe by turning against them the mighty power which he had manifested on so many occasions! There was a party of intensely patriotic Jews called the Zealots. These Zealots were especially numerous in Galilee and Jesus had chosen one of them as a disciple. They were collecting arms and were ready to rise against the Romans whenever an opportunity should present itself. Many of these Zealots were probably present in the company of people who had just been fed by Jesus. Under their leadership the multitude determined to proclaim Jesus the Messianic king. They seem to have had some doubts as to whether Jesus would consent to be the kind of king they wished him to be, for we are

told that Jesus perceived "that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king."

Can you imagine the situation in which Jesus now found himself? He had already been rejected by the Jewish leaders and they were plotting to take his life. But his popularity with the masses had grown steadily and they were now plotting to make him king whether he would consent to it or not. So long as Jesus held the good will of so great a part of the people, he was safe from his enemies. We are told again and again that these enemies desired to seize him, but "they feared the people." It was the old temptation of the wilderness reënforced by a chain of almost compelling circumstances, the temptation to use worldly methods to set up the Kingdom of heaven. If Jesus allowed himself to be made king, he would be compelled to be the kind of king the people were expecting. Jesus doubtless saw that a refusal to be made king would cost him the support of most of the multitude, and that without the united support of the common people his enemies among the Jewish leaders would ultimately triumph in their plans for his destruction. He must make a choice between a crown and a cross.

Putting Aside the Crown and Facing the Cross. Mark 6:45, 46. Jesus acted with promptness and determination. He "constrained" his disciples to enter the boat and set sail for the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The word used seems to indicate that Jesus compelled his disciples to depart. Possibly they were not willing to do so. Their ideas as to the kind of kingdom to be established did not, as yet, differ greatly from the ideas of the multitude on the same subject. They were quite in sympathy with a movement looking toward the proclamation of Jesus as king.

Then Jesus sent the multitude away. We are not told what he said to them that evening by the sea, but he sent them away to their homes. Then he went up into a lonely part of the mountains lying back of the Sea of Galilee and there he spent the hours of the night in prayer. Another great crisis had risen in his life and Jesus, as his custom was, sought the help and counsel

of God. In that night of prayer he again vanquished every temptation. He could not become the kind of king the people wished without making a compromise with evil, but to refuse the crown meant desertion by the people, increasing danger from the Jewish leaders, and ultimately the cross. Jesus did not waver; he put aside the crown that was tainted with evil and resolutely turned his face toward the cross.

Jesus Walks Upon the Sea. Mark 6:47-56; John 6:16-21. Sudden and violent storms sometimes arise on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples were caught in such a storm while crossing the Sea of Galilee that night after the feeding of the five thousand. They labored at the oars to keep the bow of the boat in the teeth of the wind for if the great waves should strike the boat from the side, it would be capsized in a moment. So as the storm raged over the lake, the disciples labored on through the night and Jesus in the same wild storm was somewhere off among the mountains of the northern shore praying to God for help and guidance in the hour of crisis which had come upon him.

Jesus was ever ready to use his miraculous powers to save others from danger and distress. He had not forgotten his disciples.

“And seeing them distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them, about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking on the sea.” “Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid,” he called to them and when he had entered the boat, the wind ceased.

Jesus Reproves the Multitudes. John 6:22-59. The very next day the multitudes came together again. They had probably not yet abandoned their plans to make Jesus king. But Jesus knew that not one person in the crowds about him was ready for the kind of kingdom he had come to establish. His own disciples even were not ready. Jesus told the multitudes that day some very plain truths. He told them that they were seeking him not because they had seen the signs which he did, but because they had eaten of the bread which he had provided them. “Work not for the food which perisheth,” he said to them, “but for the food which abideth unto

eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." In fact, the multitudes cared little for the high standards of life and conduct which Jesus wished them to adopt and which were necessary for all who were to become citizens of the Kingdom of God. They did not care to be told about their sins and their mistaken ideas as to righteousness. They wished Jesus to use his power to give them food and to free them from the rule of the Romans.

Waning Popularity. John 6:60-66. When the multitudes saw that Jesus would not give them food continually and would not be the kind of king they wished him to be, they began to go away. The period of great popularity ended abruptly. Not only the general masses fell away, but many who had become professed followers of Jesus from this time on "walked no more with him." It was a time of testing for the followers of Jesus as well as for Jesus himself. Summer friends, who forsake us as soon as the first cloud appears, are not worthy to be called friends, at all. There were many of these "summer friends" among the followers of Jesus and these were the people who "went back, and walked no more with him" as soon as the fickle multitudes turned away from the great Leader whom they could not corrupt.

"Would Ye Also Go Away?" John 6:67-71. In a little while there were but few people left as professed followers of Jesus. There were the twelve disciples and a little group of faithful women and a few others. Turning one day to the twelve disciples, Jesus said to them, "Would ye also go away?" It is to Peter's everlasting honor that he answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." There was one of the disciples who did not share in these noble sentiments of Peter. Judas Iscariot, from this time on, while he was one of the company of the disciples, was nevertheless not a loyal follower of Jesus.

Peter and the ten other disciples who were true to their Teacher when the world was turning against him are worthy of our highest honor. They were no "sum-

mer friends" ready to go away when the clouds appeared. They did not care for Jesus simply because he gave them food and because they believed he might be useful to them and their nation. They appreciated the "words of eternal life" which he spoke. Though they could not understand him, they nevertheless believed in him and honored him as "the Holy One of God."

THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we honor and love thee because thou hast revealed thyself to us in thy Son. Help us to appreciate the words of eternal life which Jesus spoke to his followers in the days of his life on earth. Help us to understand his teaching and to bring our lives into harmony with his truth. We thank thee for the heroic devotion which Jesus showed to righteousness and truth. We thank thee for the faithful disciples who would not forsake their Master when so many were leaving him. Give us that kind of devotion to our friends and to Jesus who is our Teacher and Friend. We ask these things in the name of thy Son. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

" O Jesus, I have promised
 To serve thee to the end;
 Be thou forever near me,
 My Master and my Friend:
 I shall not fear the battle
 If thou art by my side,
 Nor wander from the pathway
 If thou wilt be my Guide.

O let me feel thee near me,
 The world is ever near;
 I see the sights that dazzle,
 The tempting sounds I hear:
 My foes are ever with me,
 Around me and within;
 But, Jesus draw thou nearer,
 And shield my soul from sin.

O Jesus, thou hast promised
 To all that follow thee
 That where thou art in glory
 There shall thy servant be;
 And Jesus, I have promised
 To serve thee to the end;
 O give me grace to follow
 My Master and my Friend.

“The Hymnal” (Revised), No. 388.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP

John 15:1-15

In the lesson we have just been studying we have seen that eleven of the disciples had developed a true friendship for Jesus. The loyalty of these disciples is in striking contrast to the shallow, fickle, and transient friendship which the multitudes, as a whole, had for Jesus. It is evident that Jesus selected the twelve disciples with much wisdom. The friendship of Jesus was by no means confined to his twelve disciples, for we have seen how it went out to all classes of people. Indeed he was criticized because he was a friend of publicans and sinners. The disciples proved themselves more worthy of the friendship of Jesus than many of the other people did. They developed a love and friendship for their Teacher which nothing could destroy, whereas many of the others who had been blessed by the friendship of Jesus developed no such devotion to the Master.

Jesus is our perfect pattern of friendship. By studying his life and his teachings we can find out what our own friendship ought to be. Our Scripture lesson for to-day is a part of Jesus' conversation with his disciples the last night he was with them. On that evening he told the disciples that they and he were friends and he explained the conditions under which friendship between himself and others could exist. Let us consider some of the facts about Christian friendship as they are set forth in the life and teachings of Jesus.

The Love Which Binds Friend to Friend Is as High and Holy as Any Love. Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The friendship of Jesus for his disciples was of that noble kind which willingly sacrifices its own life for the lives of others. On a number of occasions Jesus showed how close and sacred was the relationship existing between himself and his disciples. One day he was teaching in the midst of a great throng of people and his mother and his brothers came to speak with him. The crowd was so dense that they could not reach the place where Jesus was standing, but they sent word from one person to another so that at last some one standing near Jesus said to him, "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee." Jesus said to the people, "Who is my mother and my brethren?" Then looking upon his disciples he said, "Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Mark 3:31-35. In saying this Jesus did not mean to imply that the relationships of the family were not high and holy. He intended to teach that the friendship existing between him and his followers was a high and holy relationship, even equaling that of the home circle.

The Friendship of Jesus Was Wide. It went out to publicans and sinners and included even his enemies. It is a poor kind of friendship that will not "go around" when the circle of friendship is large. Sometimes a boy or girl seems to think that if a new and intimate friend is found, some other friend must be dropped, or given a less conspicuous place in the list of friends. Such a feeling shows a smallness of spirit which we ought to try to overcome. True friendship is a wonderful thing; the more you give it out to others and the wider you extend it, the greater your capacity for true friendship grows.

The Friendship of Jesus Was Intimate. Intimate friendships are possible only where there is mutual confidence between friends. Jesus said to his disciples, "All things that I heard from my Father I have made known

unto you." If I have a friend with whom I cannot trust my personal plans and my inmost purposes, the friendship between us is not all that it ought to be.

BIBLE VERSES

Luke 12:4; Prov. 17:17; Isa. 41:8-10; Matt. 26:50;
Luke 11:5-13; 16:9; John 3:29; 11:11.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Name some of the different motives which led people to come to the places where Jesus was teaching.
2. Why did Jesus ask the rich young ruler to sell his property and give the proceeds to the poor?
3. Why did Jesus send out his disciples into the cities and towns of Galilee?
4. Why did Jesus give up the plans for a vacation for himself and his disciples?
5. Tell the story of the feeding of the five thousand.
6. What were the causes of the great popularity of Jesus with the common people?
7. What kind of king did the multitudes wish Jesus to be?
8. Why could Jesus not be such a king as the people desired?
9. What did it mean for Jesus to refuse to be made king?
10. How did the multitudes show that they had no real friendship for Jesus?

STUDY TOPICS

1. The Friendship of David and Jonathan. I Sam. 18:1; II Sam. 1:26.
2. The Friendships of Paul. Rom., ch. 16; Acts 20:17-38.
3. An Apostle's Letter to a Lady Friend. II John.
4. An Apostle's Letter to a Gentleman Friend. III John.
5. How We Can Use Our Friendships for the Good of Christ's Kingdom.

THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP

A bond of friendship binds the followers of Jesus to their Master and to one another. Christian friendship likewise makes its possessor friendly and helpful to all. Therefore:

1. We will seek to be loyal and true to all our friends.
2. We will try to be worthy of the friendship of Jesus and true to him always.
3. We will try to be friendly and helpful to all in so far as their attitude toward us will permit.

CHAPTER XII
WITH HIS DISCIPLES IN THE LAND OF THE
GENTILES

WEEK DAY SESSION

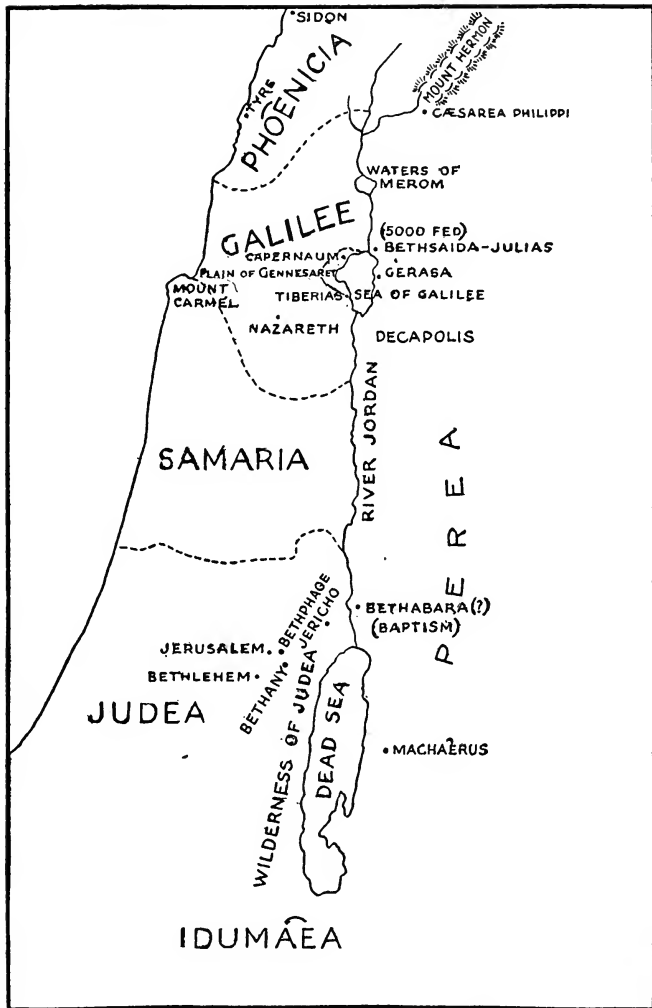
A JOURNEY THROUGH A REGION OF SCENIC
GRANDEUR

Mark 7:24-37

Not long after the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus led his disciples on a journey which extended far beyond the bounds of Jewish territory. The region through which they traveled on this journey is wonderfully picturesque. The New Testament writers give us only a brief account of this trip into Gentile territory, but by studying the ancient road systems of Palestine we are able to determine with practical certainty the route followed by the little band which at that time made up the school of Jesus.

Probably none of the disciples had ever before been outside the boundaries of their native land. Neither had their Teacher, for that matter, except when he was carried as an infant into Egypt to escape the jealous rage of wicked King Herod. It must have been a wonderful experience for both Jesus and his disciples to go along the Great Sea and across lofty mountain ranges and among strange peoples.

Jesus and his disciples traveled on foot and they slept at night under the open sky. They ate their meals seated on the grass beneath the trees, or on some rocky ledge beside a rushing mountain stream. The total distance traveled by Jesus and his disciples on this trip into Gentile territory must have been over two hundred miles and it probably took them several weeks to complete the journey.



Withdrawing from Jewish Territory. The dangers surrounding Jesus in his native land were becoming more and more menacing. The Jewish leaders had made up their minds to get rid of him at any cost. The multitudes had grown indifferent to him after his refusal to be made king. The Jewish leaders had hesitated to seize Jesus because "they feared the multitude," but of late the crowds which followed Jesus had become noticeably less and the Jewish leaders had consequently less to fear, should they undertake to destroy the Nazarene Teacher.

Yet we know that in leaving Jewish territory Jesus was not fleeing from personal danger. His enemies may have so interpreted his actions, but they must have seen their mistake when a little later Jesus came back to Galilee and then went boldly up to Jerusalem. From this time on Jesus was moving in the midst of constant perils, but we find no suggestion of fear in any of his acts or words. Many years afterward one of the disciples wrote, "There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear." I John 4:18. The truth of this statement may have been suggested by memories of the matchless Teacher and Friend who once walked so courageously amidst the perils and plottings of cruel and jealous enemies.

Jesus was seeking rest and recreation for his disciples and for himself. You will remember that not very long before this journey Jesus said to his disciples, "Come ye . . . apart into a desert place, and rest a while." But the plans of Jesus for a rest were defeated on that occasion because the multitudes saw them going across the lake and followed along the shore, so that when Jesus landed with his disciples the crowds were there awaiting him. Instead of resting Jesus turned again to his task of healing and teaching.

But now Jesus was going into foreign territory where he would not be so well known and where there would be opportunity for that rest and recuperation of which both he and his disciples must have been sorely in need. Jesus knew the restoring power of fellowship with nature and with the Creator through his works. It is re-

markable how many times in the gospel stories we find him by the shores of the Sea of Galilee, out alone among the hills, on the mountains, and along the highways. He was a man of the open air and he and his disciples spent much of their time out of doors.

Yet this was probably much more than a mere vacation jaunt for Jesus and his little company. The primary object of the great Teacher in planning this journey was probably the gaining of an opportunity to teach his disciples under circumstances where they would not be distracted by the constant presence of the crowds. There are religious truths so deep that it is practically impossible to impart them unless circumstances are favorable. So we may believe that as Jesus walked with his disciples down the road which winds from the highlands to the Great Sea he talked to them of the Kingdom he had come to establish and of what kind of kingdom it must be if it was to go on forever.

The Borders of Tyre and Sidon. Mark 7:24. The road which Jesus followed as he left the land of the Jews, winds down from the highlands of northern Galilee to the plains of Phœnicia. As they descended, the Mediterranean Sea, or "The Great Sea" as they called it in those times, lay spread out before them. Many white-sailed ships of Tyre were scattered over the blue sea. Some of these were near to shore sailing south toward the Egyptian seaports of the Nile delta. Others were far out to sea, only their topmost sails showing above the horizon. These westward-sailing ships were outward bound for the ports of Greece, Italy, and Spain.

Tyre and Sidon were the two great centers of ocean commerce in the days of Jesus. The Phœnicians had been famous sailors for hundreds of years and they still carried in their ships the commerce of the world. These two cities were likewise the termini of numerous caravan routes which wound their way thither over mountains and valleys and deserts from the far-away lands along the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Indus. We do not know whether Jesus actually entered these cities or whether he only came into the neighborhood of them. In any case he and his disciples must have seen many

new and interesting sights in this part of their journey and they probably met many people from distant lands.

Near Tyre a large river, the Litany, pours its waters into the Mediterranean Sea. Crossing this river, Jesus led his disciples northward along the coast until they were in the neighborhood of Sidon, or perhaps they entered that city. From Sidon an ancient road leads eastward across the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon Mountains to the region about Damascus. This we may be sure was the route Jesus followed.

Over the Lebanon Mountains to Damascus. Where the road from Sidon to Damascus crosses the main ridge of the Lebanon Mountains it is six thousand feet above the sea. Such a spot must have been deeply impressive to Jesus and his disciples. Westward they looked out over a vast expanse of the Mediterranean. Southward they looked down over snowcapped mountains to where the hills and valleys of Galilee, Samaria, and Judea lay spread out beneath them. The Litany cuts its way through the mountains through a tremendous gorge. At one point this gorge is spanned by a natural bridge of rock. The road which Jesus and his disciples most probably followed crosses the Litany by means of this natural bridge.

This whole mountain region is one of abundant grassy meadows and evergreen forests. Here may still be seen some of the cedars of Lebanon. These wonderful trees are often mentioned in the Old Testament. They furnished timber for the building of Solomon's Temple. They made a profound impression on the Hebrew people. Prophets and poets saw in them symbols of the greatness and majesty of God, and they were called "the trees of Jehovah." It is good to know that the eyes of Jesus and his disciples rested on these grand trees. Perhaps the sight of them helped the Galilæan fishermen to understand better than they had understood before the greatness and majesty of their Teacher and to be true to him in the times of severe testing which were soon to come to them.

The Region of Damascus. Damascus was an ancient city, even in the days of Jesus. Indeed, it is sometimes

said to be the oldest city in the world. Wonderful springs bursting out from the foothills of Mount Hermon give rise to rivers which run down into the plain and transform the desert into a paradise, in the midst of which stands the city of Damascus. Jesus and his disciples came into the neighborhood of this ancient city. Possibly they entered within its walls. Then they turned south and, skirting a vast region of volcanic rock, they are thought to have reached a town called Kanatha some thirty miles east of the Sea of Galilee.

The Borders of Decapolis. Mark 7:31. Journeying westward from the neighborhood of Kanatha, Jesus and his disciples passed through a region called, in that day, the Decapolis. The name means the ten cities and it was given to the region because it contained ten Greek cities which in the times of Jesus had formed a league. In this region Jesus and his disciples must have come into contact with Greek life and civilization in a way impossible in Galilee, or Judea. Here were Greek cities with their splendid marble temples, their theaters, and their public baths.

Having journeyed through Decapolis, Jesus and his disciples came again to the eastern, or northeastern, shore of the Sea of Galilee and were once more amid familiar scenes. Many Jews lived in the country immediately east of the lake, and the multitudes again began to gather. Jesus had evidently accomplished his plans on the northern journey. He had found opportunity for the uninterrupted teaching of the disciples. Now he was ready to take up again his task of healing the sick and teaching the multitudes.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: Cæsarea Philippi and View of Mount Hermon (219 Wilde); Light of the World, by Hunt (3235 Perry, page 181, Bailey).

SUNDAY SESSION

SOME INCIDENTS OF THE NORTHERN JOURNEY

Matt. 15:21 to 16:12; Mark 8:22-26

Although Jesus had left Jewish territory in order that he might have an opportunity to teach his disciples in retirement for a season, he was too well known to escape entirely from the crowds even in the lands of the Gentiles. The New Testament writers tell us that although Jesus wished to keep his presence within the countries he visited a secret, nevertheless, "he could not be hid." Consequently the northern journey was not without its ministry of healing and public teaching. This ministry of Jesus to the crowds when on his journey with his disciples is especially interesting to us because of the fact that those he helped during this time were for the most part foreigners, or Gentiles, as they were called by the Jews of that time.

We have studied several incidents which showed us Jesus' attitude toward people who were not of the Jewish race. We have seen how he talked with a Samaritan woman and lived for a while in a Samaritan village, both of these acts being unprecedented for a Jewish rabbi. We have seen how kindly he responded to an appeal from a Roman captain whose servant was sick. But on this northern journey Jesus for the first time came into contact with a population distinctly foreign and his actions have therefore a special significance for us.

The Syrophœnician Woman. Matt. 15:21-28. Up to this time Jesus had wisely confined his efforts very largely to his own country and to his own people. Had he attempted to travel widely among Gentile peoples and to teach them the fundamental religious truths necessary in the setting up of his Kingdom, it is certain that his efforts would have been to a large extent wasted. The Hebrew people had been undergoing a process of preparation for hundreds of years that they might be ready for the coming of the world's Saviour. As a whole they were not ready for the Messiah, but there were a

few who were capable of responding to him. On these few Jesus was depending for the success of his mission. To have turned away from them and to have entered upon a campaign to reach Gentile peoples would have meant defeat; and Jesus knew this. These facts will help us to understand why Jesus was not willing to make his northern journey a time devoted wholly to healing and teaching among the people belonging to the regions through which he passed. Jesus knew that, while his mission was to all the world, he must reach the world through the few faithful ones of his own nation who had become his true disciples.

Jesus and his disciples were evidently hardly outside of the territory of the Jews when an incident occurred which shows us the attitude of Jesus in the matter we have been considering. A Phœnician woman came to him, beseeching him to heal her daughter who was afflicted with that strange malady which in the New Testament is called demon possession. The woman is called a Syrophœnician because she belonged to that branch of the Phœnician race which lived in Syria rather than to that branch which had colonized northern Africa.

At first Jesus seemed to be loath to grant the woman's request. She persisted and followed him and his disciples, calling out for help that her daughter might be healed. The disciples advised their Master to send the woman away that they might be rid of her entreaties. Perhaps the great Teacher was helping the woman's faith to grow strong. Faith, like other activities of the soul, grows strong with exercise; so, with each seeming refusal, the woman's faith grew stronger because it would not be overcast by any doubts as to the power and goodness of the Christ. Perhaps Jesus wished his disciples to learn a lesson from this faith of a Gentile woman. The Jews had just given an exhibition on a large scale of their lack of faith in Jesus, but here was a woman of Gentile blood who possessed a faith which could not be destroyed. So Jesus told the woman that his mission was first to his own people. This the woman was ready to grant, but she pleaded that some small part of the blessings he had brought might be bestowed

upon her. And so Jesus rewarded the humble, true, and persistent faith of the woman by healing her daughter.

Many Miracles of Healing Near the Sea of Galilee. Matt. 15:29-31. As Jesus and his disciples moved westward through Decapolis, they came into regions where Jewish people were more and more abundant. The people of the region were, for the most part, fishermen and farmers. Their simple faith in Jesus had not been tarnished to any great extent by contact with the fault-finding Jewish leaders who had so greatly hindered the work of Jesus in Judea and Galilee. So Jesus again threw himself into the hard labor of teaching and healing. After their little season of rest and recreation in the mountains of the north and along the Mediterranean coast, Jesus and his disciples were now ready to take up with renewed effort the tasks which they had laid down for a little while.

The Feeding of the Four Thousand. Matt. 15:32-39. Day by day the multitudes grew until there were thousands of people about Jesus and his disciples most of the time. On one occasion a crowd of some four thousand people had been with Jesus continually for three days. The food which the people had brought with them from their homes was now exhausted. Jesus knowing the situation called his disciples and told them that he had compassion on the multitudes because they were hungry and had nothing to eat. He told them that he feared that if he should send the people away hungry some of them might faint by the way, for many had come from far. The disciples began to explain to their Master how impossible it was for them to feed such a multitude of people, but Jesus said to them, "How many loaves have ye?" They had only seven loaves and a few small fish, but with these Jesus again by his divine power fed the multitudes, just as he had done on a previous occasion.

The Critics Seek a Sign from Heaven. Matt. 16:1-12. It was not long before the Sadducees and Pharisees heard that Jesus had returned, and that many people were again gathering about him on the eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee. They were determined that Jesus

should be discredited everywhere and that the people should be turned away from him, so they came long distances, in many cases from Jerusalem, to find fault with Jesus and try to persuade the multitudes that he was not a good man. The Jews believed that when the Messiah came he would show what they called "a sign from heaven"; that is, that he would perform certain miraculous acts which would be his credentials as the Messiah. So these Pharisees and Sadducees who sought Jesus on the east of the Sea of Galilee came asking him to show signs from heaven. They hoped Jesus would undertake to do some wonderful thing which they should suggest. They believed that if he should attempt such an act and fail, the people would regard him as an impostor and forsake him; then they could seize him and do with him as they wished.

Jesus said to these spiritually blind critics: "When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the heaven is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." In effect, Jesus told them that there were signs enough. The trouble was with themselves, not with the signs. They could read in the evening or the morning sky certain signs which enabled them to predict the nature of the weather for the day or two just ahead, but they had no such vision for spiritual things as they had for these temporal things. Indeed, these critics were so blinded by jealousy and prejudice that no sign however startling could have changed their opinions, in the least. They would have found some way to explain away the sign. They would have said that Jesus wrought the sign by the aid of the prince of the demons as they did on other occasions.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our God and Father, we ask thee so to open our spiritual eyes that we may see and understand the lessons of truth contained in the words and in the life of Jesus Christ, thy Son. Teach us to love the truth,

virtue, and spiritual courage which he so fully manifested in his life and ministry. May we seek and find through him those qualities of character which made him great and good. Teach us also the smallness and meanness of selfishness and jealousy. Enable us to put out of our lives and actions all that is low and unworthy.

We thank thee for the example of Jesus in his dealings with foreign people. Make us, like him, free from all race hatreds and race prejudice. Give to us a spirit of true Christian democracy which recognizes all classes of people as children with us in the great family of God. We ask in the name of thy Son. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

The light of God is falling
 Upon life's common way;
 The Master's voice is calling,
 "Come, walk with me to-day;"
 No duty can seem lowly
 To him who lives with thee,
 And all of life grows holy,
 O Christ of Galilee.

"The Hymnal" (Revised), No. 354.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

THE STRANGERS WITHIN OUR GATES

Rom. 1:14-17; Col. 3:9-11

Paul was once one of the most narrow of men. He was trained in the ideas of the Pharisees and taught to despise as worthless trash all people of the Gentile world. He even regarded those Jews who did not know all about the interpretations of the rabbis as being accursed and worthless. From this exceedingly narrow view of his relationships to his fellow men he became a man of wonderfully wide sympathies. He became the friend and servant of all mankind and lived for a universal brotherhood. This new man in Christ Jesus which Paul had become speaks to us in the splendid passages from his pen which we have chosen for our

Scripture lesson. He felt himself in debt to all mankind whatever their race or color or nationality might be. He realized that in the great all-including love of the Father Creator of the race, and in the love of his Son Jesus, the Saviour of all mankind, there could be no separation of humanity into Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian and Scythian, bondmen and freemen, but that all were of one family and one brotherhood under the fatherhood of God. He realized that in his own spirit a change was going on, whereby he was being renewed after the image of the Creator and that he was slowly coming to look upon humanity with the eyes of God.

This thought has a special message for all who call themselves American Christians. Our country is dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created free and equal." The Christian religion demands a recognition of this fundamental equality and requires us to live in harmony with a far-reaching and universal law of democracy. We have many opportunities to show whether we are true to these laws of our nation and our religion. We have many strangers within our gates who have come to us from other lands. If we regard them as our brothers and sisters in God's family, our equals before our God and Creator, we may feel assured that we are living up to the high ideals of our nation and our religion. If we look on these people of other nations or other races as our inferiors, refuse to have fellowship with them, and show by our actions that we have contempt for them, we are neither good citizens of the United States nor worthy members of the Church of Jesus Christ.

BIBLE VERSES

Ex. 23:9; Lev. 19:33, 34; Deut. 1:16; 10:18; 23:7, 8; 24:14, 15; Mal. 3:5; Matt. 25:35; Heb. 13:2.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus lead his disciples on a journey through the countries north of Galilee?

2. Tell something of the Phœnician cities on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.
3. What and where were the cedars of Lebanon?
4. Why do you think the journey through Decapolis was of interest to Jesus and his disciples?
5. Name some instances where Jesus showed friendship for people who were not Jews.
6. Why did Jesus not spend more time working among Gentile peoples?
7. How did the Syrophœnician woman show her faith in Jesus?
8. Why did Jesus refuse to show signs to the Pharisees and Sadducees?
9. What statement does the Declaration of Independence make regarding human equality?
10. Tell of Paul's changed attitude toward his fellow men after he became a follower of Jesus.

STUDY TOPICS

1. How Americans Should Regard Nearly Forty Million People in Our Country Who Were Born in Some Foreign Land or Whose Parents Were Born in Some Foreign Land.
2. Name Some of the Good Traits of Italian Character. What Contribution Can the Four Million Italians in America Make to American Life? Find Out Which States Contain Most of These Americans of Italian Lineage.
3. There Are More Than Three Million Poles Living in the United States. Find Out Something About the History of Poland. Who Was Kosciuszko? Sobieski? Who is Paderewski?
4. Name a Great Philosopher Who Was a Greek; a Great Poet; a Great Sculptor. Tell Something of Ancient Greek Civilization. What Contribution Can the Four Hundred Thousand Greeks in Our Country Make to American Life and Civilization?
5. Three Quarters of a Million of Bohemians and Moravians Have Come to This Country in Recent Years.

to Make This Land Their Home. Who Was John Huss? Find Out Something About Moravian Missions.

6. What Foreign Speaking People Live in Your Neighborhood?

7. Why Is It Wrong to Use Such Nicknames as "Dago," "Sheeny," and "Hunkie"?

8. Which Is More Important for a Nation, to Be of One Race or of One Mind and One Brotherhood?

9. Find Out Something Which the Church Is Doing for the Immigrant.

COMMITTEE WORK

Have committee investigate and report on the problem: Foreign People of Our Community and What We Can Do to Help Them.

Have committee report on the subject: What Our Denomination Is Doing for New Americans.

THE LAW OF BROTHERHOOD AND JUSTICE FOR THE STRANGER WITHIN OUR GATES

Both our national laws and our religion teach us that all men are equal in the sight of God and are brothers. Therefore:

1. We will put out of our hearts all ill will toward the people of foreign lands who have come to dwell among us.

2. We will seek to secure for them all the opportunities and privileges which we ourselves enjoy.

3. We will seek to make our country a worthy part of that Kingdom of God in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, but in which Christ is "all, and in all."

CHAPTER XIII
WITH HIS DISCIPLES ON THE SLOPES OF
MOUNT HERMON
WEEK DAY SESSION
PETER'S CONFESSION

Matt. 16:13-21

After their return from their extended northern trip, Jesus and his disciples spent some time on the eastern and northern shores of the Sea of Galilee. Then they moved northward along the valley of the upper Jordan until they came to a town called Cæsarea Philippi lying at the foot of Mount Hermon. The sources of the Jordan are in the region about this town. At numerous places wonderful springs gush forth giving rise to fair-sized rivers. Cæsarea Philippi is more than a thousand feet above the sea, and back of the town Mount Hermon towers up more than eight thousand feet higher. It was to this interesting and secluded spot that Jesus led his disciples for one of the most important conferences he ever held with them.

Preparing for the Announcement of his Sufferings and Death. We may well believe that Jesus had long been preparing to tell the disciples concerning the sufferings and the death which he now saw to be inevitable if he should persist in his mission. Perhaps we should rather say that he had come to understand that this rejection, suffering, and death were indispensable in God's plans for the redemption of humanity. The northern journey with the disciples was probably undertaken that he might prepare them for this revelation so likely to overthrow all their conceptions as to what the Messiah should be and do. It was a time of peril. Would the twelve apostles remain true to their Master after they learned that there was to be no earthly kingdom such

as they had expected? The multitudes had for the most part gone away. One of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, was already a traitor to his Master in his innermost feelings. Would the other eleven remain true when they learned that their Teacher was to die on a cross?

As at other times of stress and crisis, Jesus had come away from the haunts of men into the solitary places that he might have time for prayer, meditation, and quiet conversation with his disciples. Luke tells us that the events which we are to study in this chapter happened during a season when Jesus was "praying apart."

Various Opinions Concerning Jesus. Matt. 16:13, 14. Jesus approached the subject which he wished to discuss with his disciples with the skill characteristic of the great Teacher. He said to his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" The disciples replied, "Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

The opinions of these people were very good as far as they went, but it is well to note that none of the people said that Jesus was the Messiah whom they were expecting. He was so different from what they had been taught to expect the Messiah to be that they could not yet believe that he was the long-expected Deliverer.

Other opinions concerning Jesus had been uttered from time to time. Some of these were cruel and unjust; they were not based on the facts of his life and character but on the jealousy, prejudices, and hatreds of his critics. The Pharisees had called him a deceiver and had said that he was in league with the prince of the demons. Even some of his friends had said that he was "beside himself." His neighbors at Nazareth had said of him, "Is not this the carpenter?"

"Who Say Ye that I Am?" Matt. 16:15. Jesus had asked this question that he might make ready for another question of momentous importance. The disciples had reported various opinions concerning Jesus as they were held among the people. Would the disciples agree with any of these? Would they say that Jesus was Elijah, knew that they would not. This is indicated by the or Jeremiah, or some other prophet? Jesus evidently

little word "but" with which he begins his question. "But who say ye that I am?" This is one of the greatest questions any person is ever called upon to answer. We must all answer it in one way or another. Its answer determines momentous consequences for us both in this life and in that which is to come. People who have been reared in Christian homes and taught in the schools of the Church usually answer it one way or another before they are sixteen years old.

"Thou Art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Matt. 16:16, 17. It was Peter who made answer. Peter was ever quick to speak and quick to act. He doubtless spoke, too, as the leader of the disciples. All the disciples said through Peter as their leader, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." There was one of the Twelve, however, who if he said the words with his lips did not mean them in his heart. That one was Judas Iscariot.

The Christian Church had its beginning that day on the slopes of Mount Hermon when the eleven men avowed together their sincere belief that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God. All that had gone before had been largely a preparation for the great decision they reached that day. They had much still to learn, but they were already true followers of Jesus. They had confessed him as Lord and Master.

A great wave of joy and relief swept over the soul of Jesus at the words of his leading disciple. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah," he said, "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." The belief in Jesus as God's Son is something more than a mere intellectual act. It is a response of our souls to the wonderful and beautiful personality of Jesus as he is revealed to us in the Bible, in the lives of those who know and love him, and through the work of the Spirit of God in our hearts.

The Foundations of the Unconquerable Church. Matt. 16:18-20. "And I . . . say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." "Hades" is a term which includes all the forces of death, decay,

and destruction. Jesus meant that he would build his Church out of people who, like Peter and the other disciples, had come to believe on him as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. He meant that all the forces of evil and destruction could never be able to bring to naught the work which he had begun. "Upon this rock I will build my church" was a figure such as Jesus the carpenter would use. He knew the value of right foundations. It was a figure that the disciples would understand. Many of the buildings of Palestine were constructed on foundation stones of wonderful size. "Teacher, behold what manner of stones, are here," the disciples had said to Jesus one day as they were coming out of the Temple. They were, indeed, very wonderful stones. Some of them were fifteen feet long, four and a half feet wide, and four and a half feet thick. Yet Jesus told the disciples that the day was coming when not one of these great stones should be left upon another.

From the higher slopes of Hermon the ruins of Baalbek can be seen away to the northward at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon range of mountains. It is possible that Jesus visited these ruins when he was on the northern journey with his disciples. Some of the most wonderful foundation stones in the world are found in the ruins of Baalbek. One that still lies in the quarry from which it was cut is seventy feet long, fourteen feet wide, and thirteen feet thick. Others almost as large have been removed from the quarry, carried long distances, and lifted to positions in the foundations of the ancient Temple. Great as were these foundations, the temples erected upon them have fallen into ruin. Time and the vicissitudes of history have brought their magnificence down to the dust.

Perhaps Jesus and his disciples had facts like these in mind when the words were uttered, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." When we study the history of the Christian Church, we see that time and again the gates of Hades have been opened against it for its destruction, but we see, too, that they have not prevailed.

Jesus Foretells his Death and Resurrection. Matt.

16:21-28. It was now possible for Jesus to tell the disciples concerning his approaching sufferings and death. He was sure that their faith in him as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world would stand even this severe test. Believing in him as God's Son they would come to know that he must do all things well and that even though he should suffer death at the hands of his enemies, he must in the end be the Conqueror of death itself. Yet the announcement was one of severe testing for the disciples. It seemed to be the destruction of all that they had hoped and believed. Peter, loyal and impulsive, declared that these things should never be. Jesus saw in Peter's actions the suggestions of the Tempter and he rebuked Peter saying to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumblingblock unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Then Jesus uttered one of the most courageous challenges to heroism to be found in all history. He had just told his disciples that he was soon going up to Jerusalem and that there he would be rejected by his own nation and crucified by the Romans. Now he called upon his disciples to follow in his steps. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." There was a ringing note of confidence in these words of Jesus. He seemed to be assured that his disciples, having believed in him as the Son of God, would ultimately rise to that lofty devotion and courage which would make them glad to lay down their lives for the great cause which was so dear to him. It is good to know that this confidence of Jesus was well founded. Nearly all the disciples at last gave their lives for the great cause.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: The Transfiguration, by Raphael (339, Perry, page 240, Bailey); Christ's Charge to St. Peter, by Raphael (88 Wilde).

SUNDAY SESSION

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Matt. 17:1-20

We have seen how Jesus often spent nights in prayer when some grave problem was pressing upon him for solution. On such occasions he usually retired to some secluded spot where he could be entirely alone with God. In this lesson we are to learn of one such night of prayer when Jesus took three of his disciples with him, and of the wonderful events which occurred during that night of prayer on the mountain.

The Mount of Transfiguration. Bible students are now quite well agreed that the events described in this lesson occurred on Mount Hermon, the highest mountain of Palestine. This mountain is over nine thousand feet high and snow lies on some of its northern slopes throughout the year. The view from its summit is of vast extent. "Northward is Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, with the ruined temple of Baalbek at its feet. . . . Eastward the city of Damascus, with its gardens and groves, appears surprisingly near, while the prospect fades away over and beyond the Hauran to where earth and sky meet and blend together along the indistinct and hazy horizon of Arabia's boundless desert. Southward lies the plain of the Huleh, Lake Merom, and the Sea of Galilee; and, farther than the eye can follow, the valley of the Jordan sinks down into the deep chasm of the Dead Sea. The mountains of Bashan and Gilead are there; and westward, across the Jordan, are the hills of Samaria and Galilee, the promontory of Carmel, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon; while beyond them all is the broad expanse of 'the uttermost sea' that 'great and wide sea'" of which the psalmist sang." (Thomson, "The Land and the Book," Vol. II, page 522.)

It was to the fastnesses of this great mountain that Jesus had retired to pray and to be alone with his disciples as they confessed him to be their Lord and Messiah and he told them of the sufferings and death through which he was to accomplish the plans of God and redeem mankind from iniquity.

A Week of Sorrow and Perplexity. Matt. 17:1. Jesus' announcement of his approaching death must have been a great shock to his disciples. After he had told them what was to happen to him, the little company still lingered for some days in the solitudes of the mountain. It must have been a week of sorrow and perplexity that intervened between Jesus' announcement of his death and his transfiguration. It must have lingered long in the memories of the disciples for it is specially mentioned by three of the gospel writers. The disciples had believed that Jesus, as the Messiah, would set up a kingdom which would displace the hated rule of the Romans. They had pictured themselves as honored officials in this glorious kingdom of the Messiah. Now Jesus had told them that the enemies who had so long been hounding his footsteps would soon succeed in having him put to death. Instead of a crown there was to be a cross. Moreover, Jesus had told them that they, too, must be willing to follow him through sufferings and death, if the cause in which they were engaged was to succeed. This week of sorrow and perplexity ended with a wonderful event which assured the disciples that they were not mistaken in their decision that Jesus was the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

A Glimpse at the Glorified Christ. Matt. 17:2-8. The Bible teaches us that Jesus is the eternal Son of God, that he has existed forever with the Father, and that he "emptied himself and took upon himself the form of a servant" when he came to earth. In the events which we are now to study it seems that the glories of the Son of God were for a little while revealed to the disciples in order that they might have comfort and assurance in the dark days of their sorrow and perplexity.

Jesus had taken with him Peter and James and John and had gone up to some height of the mountain to pray. While he prayed his appearance was changed. His face glowed with a heavenly light and even his garments became glistening with a brightness unknown to earth. Then there appeared two heavenly visitors who talked with Jesus and the subject of their conversation was the approaching death of Jesus at Jerusalem.

As they talked a bright cloud, symbol of the presence of God, gathered over them and there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Then the vision quickly disappeared and Jesus was standing alone with his disciples.

From the Mountain Top of Religious Experience Down to the Valley of Ceaseless Toil and Human Need. Matt. 17:9-21. While Jesus and his three disciples were on the mountain, the other disciples were having a trying time in the valley. A father with an epileptic boy brought his child to the disciples, imploring them to heal him. The disciples undertook to comply with the father's request, but they failed utterly. The failure of the disciples caused much excitement. The enemies of Jesus were quick to seize upon this failure of the disciples of Jesus that they might thereby discredit their Master.

Peter had wished to build habitations on the mountain that Jesus and Elijah and Moses might dwell there permanently with the three disciples as their companions, but Jesus had no such plan in mind. He knew that the religious life, if it is to be true, must be something more than rapturous experiences on the mountain tops of spiritual experience. He knew that true religion means toil and sympathy and helpfulness in the midst of a needy humanity.

As Jesus drew near with his three disciples, the father of the epileptic boy came to him, imploring him to heal his child and telling of the failure of the disciples. The man's faith in Jesus had begun to waver because of the failure of the disciples, but Jesus rebuked them all and commanded that the boy be brought to him. Then he healed the boy.

Afterward the disciples came to Jesus and asked him why they had not been able to heal the lad and Jesus told them that it was because of their lack of faith. He said to them, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

THE LESSON PRAYER

We thank thee, our Father in heaven, for the Bible and its wonderful lessons of truth. We thank thee for the life and character of Jesus, thy Son, who was faithful to duty and truth under circumstances of appalling danger and hardship. We thank thee for the faithful disciples who remained loyal to their Master although they could not understand his methods and his purposes. If thou shouldst ever lead us through ways that are dark with perplexity and sorrow, help us, like the disciples of Jesus, to keep a firm faith in our Teacher and Friend. Teach us to love him and to believe in him as thy Son and the Saviour of the world. May we every day grow more like him in character and in our habits of life. We ask thee in the name of Jesus. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

Lord Jesus, on the holy mount
 We would abide with thee,
 Still drinking from the blessed fount
 Of grace, so rich and free.

The rays of thy transfigured face
 Beam with such golden light
 That we would never leave the place,
 Nor lose the heavenly sight.

But there is work on earth to do,
 The suffering soul to heal;
 The harvest great, the laborers few
 Thy kingdom to reveal.

“The Hymnal” (Revised), No. 214.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

THE UNCONQUERABLE CHURCH

Acts 2:43-47

The declaration of Jesus that the gates of Hades could never prevail against a Church founded upon the confession of himself as the Messiah and Son of God has been proved true time and again in the centuries which have

passed since the words were uttered. The powers of evil have been united again and again in an organized effort to destroy Christianity, but they have never prevailed against it. Indeed, it has often happened that during such periods of persecution the Church has been at its best in purity of doctrines and in its zeal for the evangelization of the world.

It should be remembered that the words of Jesus apply, however, only to a Church which is his, and which he has builded, and which is built upon confession of his divine Sonship and Lordship. The words evidently apply to what we call the Church universal, that is, to the great Church which is made up of all true believers in Jesus as the Son of God. They do not mean that any one form of organization or any one denomination is unconquerable.

BIBLE VERSES

Col. 1:18; Acts 14:23; 8:1-4; 16:5; Eph. 1:22; Rev. 11:15; Eph. 5:27.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus command his disciples to refrain from telling anyone that he was the Christ? Matt. 16:20.
2. Why did he tell his disciples to keep silence regarding the transfiguration until after he was risen from the dead? Matt. 17:9.
3. Was the death of Christ inevitable, or was it indispensable? (Look up meaning of these two words.)
4. Why did not Jesus tell his disciples that he was the Messiah as soon as they became his followers?
5. Is it possible for anyone to avoid answering the question of Jesus, "Who say ye that I am"?
6. Why is faith in Jesus as the Son of God so important a matter for the individual? for the Church?
7. How did the transfiguration help the disciples?
8. Does Jesus care whether his Church is divided or not? John 17:20, 21.
9. If we emphasize a belief in Jesus as the Son of God more, and other matters on which Christians dif-

fer were emphasized less, do you think we could have more of Christian unity?

10. Name some benefits which came to countries where the Christian Church is strong.

STUDY TOPICS

1. What the Christian Church Was Like in the First Days of Its Existence. Acts 2:43-47.

2. The First Persecution of the Christian Church. Acts 4:1-12.

3. The Persecution Which Was Led by Saul. Acts 8:1-8.

4. The Persecution Under Herod. Acts, ch. 12.

5. How a Dangerous Controversy in the Early Church Was Settled. Acts 15:1-29.

6. The Persecutions Under Nero. (See any good Church history.)

7. The Persecutions Under Domitian.

8. Persecution of the Hussites.

9. The Protestant Reformation and How It Shows the 'Truth of Jesus' Words Regarding the Indestructibility of His Church.

10. Are There Any People in the World To-Day Who Would Destroy the Christian Church If They Could?

COMMITTEE WORK

Give committee task of reporting on the topic: What Is the Federal Council of Churches?

THE LAW OF LOYALTY TO JESUS AND HIS CHURCH

Nearly two thousand years of history show us that the Christian Church is a blessing and that, so long as it is true to its Founder, it cannot be destroyed by all the forces of evil. Therefore:

1. We will honor the Church of Christ and speak in its defense when we hear it slandered and maligned.

2. We will make it a task of our lives to help the Church to be united, pure, and strong.

3. We will seek that fellowship with Jesus which will help us to be true members of his Church.

CHAPTER XIV

AN EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGN IN THE REGION EAST OF THE JORDAN

WEEK DAY SESSION

LABORING UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

Matt. 19:1, 2; Luke 10:1-24; Matt. 20:20-28

Jesus now knew that the Jewish nation would reject him and that his own life would be taken unless he abandoned the cause to which he had been called. He had told his disciples what awaited him and them in the near future, yet there was no slackening of his efforts. "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day," he said to his disciples, "the night cometh, when no man can work." It takes heroic courage to labor on under such circumstances as surrounded Jesus from this time on to the end of his ministry. Only profound unselfishness can enable a person to labor on with devotion and enthusiasm when all prospect of personal advantage has been taken away. Jesus possessed such unselfish devotion. Immediately after the week spent with his disciples in the region about Mount Hermon, we find Jesus entering upon the most extensive campaign of evangelization he ever undertook.

Perea and the Country Across the Jordan. Matt. 19:1, 2. There was a considerable region lying east of the Jordan which in the days of Jesus was thickly populated. The people living there were mostly Jews. Jesus had covered most of the other parts of Palestine in his preaching tours. But apparently he had up to this time done nothing in Perea. Hence we find him entering this field at this time with a well-planned program. Most of his remaining time was given to work in this

region. The Jewish leaders had already rejected him and it was now certain that the nation as a whole would not receive him as the Messiah, but these facts did not cause Jesus to lessen his efforts. He might still reach individuals who would be responsive to the truth. He could still lay the foundations for that advance of his cause which he foresaw must come when his disciples should take up the task in the years that were to come.

Two Visits to Jerusalem. John 10:22 to 11:16. Twice during his Perea ministry Jesus left his work and went up to Jerusalem. Jesus could now enter the neighborhood of Jerusalem only at the risk of his life. Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians had for the time being forgotten their hatred of one another and were united in their determination to destroy Jesus at any cost. Such a political combination had great power. Even Pilate, the Roman governor, would not dare to deny anything such a group should demand. Nevertheless, Jesus went boldly up to Jerusalem when he had occasion to do so. His first trip was made because of his patriotism and his loyalty to the religious customs of his forefathers. The feast of dedication was to be held on a certain day. This feast commemorated the rededication of the Temple which had been polluted by the offering of pagan sacrifices under Antiochus Epiphanes, but which had been rescued from the rule of that cruel tyrant by the heroic Judas Maccabæus. The feast of dedication was therefore something like our Fourth of July in that it commemorated national independence.

Jesus would not stay away from Jerusalem on this great feast day so he went up to the city, and while he was there he taught the people in the courts of the Temple. He would neither stay away from the city because of personal danger nor refrain from using every opportunity while there to teach the people who were hungry to hear his message. The sight of Jesus teaching in the Temple filled the Jewish leaders with a great rage and they attempted to stone him.

The second visit to Jerusalem was made under even more perilous circumstances than the visit which we have just considered. Word came to Jesus from Mary

and Martha, of Bethany, that their brother Lazarus was ill. When Jesus proposed that they go up to Bethany, the disciples protested. They said, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" But Jesus was not to be deterred from going where there was sorrow and need because the going put him in personal peril. How calmly and courageously he answered the protest of his disciples: "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him." Jesus was walking in the light of God's guidance and he knew that no accident could befall him. He knew that his enemies could do him no harm until the moment for his deliverance into their hands had come.

The Sending Out of the Seventy Disciples. Luke 10: 1-24. Jesus entered with great energy upon his campaign east of the Jordan. He organized a company of seventy disciples and sent them out, two by two, into all the region where he was planning to carry on his work. These thirty-five bands went, therefore, into all the villages and towns of Perea, and thus it is probable that there were very few people in all the region who did not have an opportunity to hear about Jesus.

The undertaking was highly successful, for we are told that the seventy disciples returned with joy to their Master saying to him, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in thy name." The report of the seventy disciples made Jesus glad. "In that . . . hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father; for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight." Luke 10:21.

The Enemies of Jesus Try to Frighten Him Out of the Country. Luke 13:31-33. The scribes and Pharisees had probably noted the somewhat prolonged absence of Jesus from the country when he was away with his disciples on the northern journey. Very likely they misinterpreted his actions and believed that he had with-

drawn from the territory of the Jews because of a desire for personal safety. Perhaps they thought that he had now only ventured back with hesitation and could be again driven away. So they sent messengers to him, telling him that he had better leave the country for Herod was plotting to kill him. There was nothing improbable in such a report. Herod had already taken the life of John the Baptist and it might well be true that he was planning to make away with Jesus.

But the scheme of the Pharisees did not succeed with Jesus. He was not to be frightened from his task. It may be that Herod had, indeed, made some such threat. Possibly he had made it at the suggestion of the Pharisees and to please them. Something of the kind seems to have been suspected by Jesus. He felt that there was a cunning scheme and that probably Herod was connected with it, for he answered the messengers: "Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected. Nevertheless I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

The Unworthy Ambitions of James and John. Matt. 20:20-28. It may seem strange to us that even up to this time the disciples were still thinking of a temporal kingdom which they believed Jesus would soon establish. They had been taught from childhood to think of the work of the Messiah in this way and the early influences of life and its early impressions are not changed in a day. All the disciples had become followers of Jesus fully expecting a temporal kingdom to be established and with personal ambitions to attain positions of prominence in the government of such a kingdom. Even after Jesus' plain statements on the slopes of Mount Hermon, the disciples kept on thinking and talking about the kingdom which they had so long expected.

Two of the disciples, James and John, were especially anxious about the place they were to occupy in the government of the kingdom they expected Jesus to set up. They schemed to get the highest places for themselves. So they enlisted the help of their mother and, without

letting the other disciples know, they came to Jesus with a certain request. They presented their request with a good deal of formal courtesy, we are told that they worshiped him. They tried to get Jesus to promise them what they desired before he knew the nature of their request. They knew that Jesus loved them and respected them, and it would almost seem that they wished to make capital for themselves out of his regard for them. Jesus was not to be deceived. He put to them a direct question: "What wouldest thou?" Then the two brothers and their mother joined in a request that when the kingdom was set up, one of the brothers might sit at the right hand of Jesus and the other at the left. That is, they wished to be prime ministers, or chief officials of the government, next in power and honor to the king. There is a note of sadness and disappointment, as well as a deep compassion, in the words of Jesus as he said to these two disciples of his: "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?"

When the other disciples heard of the request of the two brothers and their mother, they were angry. They felt that James and John had no right to use such methods to advance themselves over the other disciples. Calling the company together, Jesus kindly and patiently explained matters to them. He told them they were not to try to "lord it" over one another as the Gentiles were accustomed to do, but that whoever among them would be great should become the servant of all. He said that he had come among men, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: The Good Samaritan, by Plockhorst (466 Wilde); Christ and Zebedee's Children, by Bonifacio (121 Wilde).

SUNDAY SESSION**SOME LESSONS GIVEN DURING THE PEREAN
MINISTRY**

Luke 14:7-14; 10:25-37; 12:13-21

Some of the greatest of the teachings of Jesus were given in the midst of his busy evangelistic campaign in Perea. In this lesson we are to study some of the utterances of Jesus which belong to the period of the Peraan ministry.

A Lesson on Courtesy. Luke 14:7-14. One day Jesus was invited to the house of a leading Pharisee. This particular Pharisee may have been friendly to Jesus or he may have invited Jesus to his house out of curiosity and possibly because he wished to find grounds for effective criticism of Jesus' ways and methods. We know that some of the guests were watching Jesus all the time he was in the Pharisee's house. But Jesus was watching them, also. He noted that all the guests at the feast were evidently people of wealth. They were the friends and relatives of the wealthy Pharisee who had given the dinner. How different they were from the people with whom Jesus came in contact every day in the market places and along the shores of the Sea of Galilee!

Jesus noted that some of these finely dressed people were angry because they had not gotten just the seats that they felt they ought to occupy. The seats nearest to the host were the places of honor and there seems to have been a good deal of rivalry as to who should occupy them. The host had evidently neglected to provide place cards and each guest seemed inclined to choose the highest place of honor for himself. Now Jesus was not afraid to tell these people some plain truths about the fundamentals of etiquette. He told them that the courteous thing to do under the circumstances would be for each of them not to seek the seat of greatest honor but to take the lowest seat of all. He spoke to them of a law of retribution and a law of compensation which runs through the whole warp and woof of existence. He said that whoever exalted himself would in the end inevitably

be abased and that whoever humbled himself by an inevitable law would through his unselfishness be exalted.

Then Jesus turned to the host. He had a lesson for him, too. He told this Pharisee that he was making a mistake by inviting only his rich relatives and friends to this great supper. These friends and relatives would in turn invite him and so no one was really benefited very much. "When thou makest a feast," he said, "bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just."

A Lesson on Neighborliness. Luke 10:25-37. One day a lawyer came to Jesus and asked him, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The questioner was not a lawyer such as we have to-day. He was an ecclesiastical lawyer, an expert in the law of Moses and in the many interpretations which the rabbis had given concerning how that law ought to be kept. His question was not personal but merely theoretical. He was not concerned about the eternal welfare of his soul. He doubtless considered himself perfectly safe on that score for he believed that to know the Mosaic law and its interpretations was all that was required. The lawyer had a subtle purpose in asking Jesus this question. He believed that he could compel Jesus to make some statement which would prove him to be a heretic and which would discredit him among the people.

Jesus met the lawyer's cunning query with a straightforward question which completely foiled the secret intentions of the crafty ecclesiastic. Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" Then the lawyer could not do otherwise than mention some of the fundamental requirements of the Mosaic code. He replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus said to him, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." The lawyer saw that he had blundered. He knew that he could not lay claim to having kept perfectly the sublime law he had just uttered. In-

stead of discrediting Jesus before the multitudes, he stood himself discredited. He felt the need of justifying himself. Of course, he could hardly claim to have loved God in the way the commandment required and as for his neighbor—well, there was some ground for differences there. "Who is my neighbor?" he said to Jesus.

Then Jesus told him the story of the man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and who fell among thieves who stripped him and beat him and left him half dead. He told of a priest who came along and who passed coldly by the stricken man although he saw him lying by the road. He told of the Levite who saw the man and stopped to look at him, but afterward passed on without giving any assistance. Then Jesus told of a Samaritan who saw the unfortunate man and had compassion on him. Turning to his questioner Jesus said, "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?" The lawyer could hardly say anything else than, "He that showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said, "Go, and do thou likewise."

A Lesson on the Folly of Selfishness. Luke 12:13-21. A certain man in one of the communities where Jesus was teaching had been having some misunderstanding with his brother over the division of property which had belonged to their father or some other relative. This man came to Jesus saying to him, "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." Perhaps Jesus read selfishness and covetousness in the man's face and manner for he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Then he said to all who were present, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." After this he told them a story about a certain rich man who had wide fields and whose ground brought forth abundantly. The harvests of this rich man were so great that he was at a loss how to take care of his grain. At last he determined to tear down all his old granaries and his old barns and build greater ones.

"Then," thought this rich man as he lay on his bed at

night and planned for the future, "then, I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry." But God looking down on the selfish rich man said, "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" "So is he," said Jesus, "that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we know that the words of thy Son are true. We know that they are our safest guide in every time of perplexity. If we obey his commandments we shall live in purity and helpfulness all our days. Give us hearts responsive to the truth which Jesus taught. Enable us to understand the beauty and strength of the character of thy Son. Show us how to be worthy disciples. May we learn day by day to do his will and thus become like him. We ask in the name of thy Son, our Saviour. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

Teach me, O Lord, thy holy way,
 And give me an obedient mind;
 That in thy service I may find
 My soul's delight from day to day.

Help me, O Saviour, here to trace
 The sacred footsteps thou hast trod;
 And, meekly walking with my God,
 To grow in goodness, truth, and grace.

Guard me, O Lord, that I may ne'er
 Forsake the right, or do the wrong:
 Against temptation make me strong,
 And round me spread thy sheltering care.

"The Hymnal" (Revised), No. 201.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

WORTHY AMBITION

Luke 2:49; Matt. 4:8-11, 23; 28:19, 20

Many people fail to accomplish anything really worth while in life because they are lacking in ambition. Their lives do not get anywhere because they are like derelict vessels drifting with the winds and the tides. Ambition is to life what the captain with his charts and his compasses and his definite objectives is to a vessel sailing the sea. Two boys enter a business firm together. At the end of twenty years one has made little advancement. He is still at about the same place where he began. His wages are small, because his value to the business is small. The other boy is now a partner in the firm. What do you think has caused this difference? Was it a matter of luck? Not at all. Was it due to a difference in ability? No. The difference is due to a difference in ambition. The one lad said, "I am not paid much, so I will not work much." He watched the clock and grabbed his hat and coat the minute the gong sounded announcing the close of the day. He didn't look ahead and plan for the years to come because he was too busy with having a good time, or what he was deluded into believing was a good time, as he went along.

The other lad was ambitious. He looked ahead and found his pleasure in planning for great things in the future. His ambition gave him interest in his work. He rose step by step from one position of responsibility to another. He said, "I must improve my mind if I am to be useful in the world; I must keep my body strong, if I am to do all that I hope to do when I am a man."

There is one danger, however, connected with ambition. If ambition is to be a blessing to its possessor and to the world, it must be worthy. Unworthy ambition has often been a curse and a scourge, not only to the individual who was afflicted with it but to multitudes of other people. Napoleon was a man of almost unbounded ambitions, but his plans were selfish and his splendid energy caused widespread disaster throughout Europe. Had he

been a man of worthy ambitions he might have been a great blessing to the world. The World War was to a very large extent the result of selfish and wicked ambitions of men and nations.

We have been studying the life of Jesus and in this lesson we wish to review some few facts of his career that we may see what his ambitions were. In this matter, as in everything else, he is our perfect model.

His Ambitions Had an Early Beginning. Luke 2:49. We have seen how at the early age of twelve he felt the call to be about his Father's business.

His Ambitions Were Noble and Unselfish. Matt. 4:8-11. Satan tried to trap him by pointing out all the kingdoms of the world and promising him personal power and highest honor among men, but Jesus would not make his life goal a selfish goal. He had come to minister, not to be ministered unto.

The Ambitions of Jesus Caused Him to Be Diligent. Matt. 4:23. We have seen how ardently Jesus labored. He preached and taught throughout all Galilee and in Samaria and in Judea and throughout Perea. He labored far into the night.

The Ambitions of Jesus Made Him Conscious of Boundless Possibilities. Matt. 28:19, 20. With only a little handful of followers he believed that the gospel could be preached to every creature and he commanded them to begin the task.

BIBLE VERSES

Unworthy Ambition Reproved, Gen. 11:1-9. The Ambition of a Great Apostle, Phil. 3:8-14. An Appeal for Worthy Ambition in the Life of a Young Man, I Tim. 1:6, 7. Jesus' Conception of Worthy Ambition, Luke 12:33, 34.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Name some incidents in the life of Jesus which show his courage.
2. Name some incidents in the life of Jesus which show his worthy ambition.

3. Name some incidents in the life of Jesus which show us what things gave him joy.

4. Did the disciple John ever learn to be nobly and unselfishly ambitious? See I John 2:15-17.

5. Name some incidents in the life of Jesus which show his courtesy.

STUDY TOPICS

1. The Boyhood Ambitions of Abraham Lincoln.

2. The Attitude of a Worthily Ambitious Boy or Girl Toward the Matter of Getting an Education.

3. Is It Possible for a Person to Be Worthily Ambitious and at the Same Time Neglect the Development of His Religious Faculties?

THE LAW OF WORTHY AMBITION

Worthy ambition is essential to any large and useful accomplishment in life. Therefore:

1. We will live for something higher than our own selfish desires and pleasures.

2. We will think and plan for future usefulness, rather than waste our days of youth in shallow thinking and aimless activities.

3. We will make it a part of our lifelong ambition to advance the Kingdom of God on earth and to increase brotherhood and friendship among men.

CHAPTER XV
NEARING THE END OF HIS MINISTRY
WEEK DAY SESSION

MAKING READY FOR THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

Matt. 26:6-13; 21:1-32

The village of Bethany lies in a secluded spot at the northern base of the Mount of Olives. Though only a few miles from Jerusalem, it is shut off from a view of the city by the intervening mountain, and there is nothing about the village to suggest its nearness to a large city. It was to this secluded spot that Jesus often retired with his disciples. In Bethany lived three intimate friends of Jesus, Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. Jesus made this home of his friends in the quiet village his lodging place during the last days of his ministry. During these last days he went regularly to Jerusalem every day to teach in the Temple, but every night he left the city and came out to Bethany, to lodge there until the morning.

Jesus Anointed by Mary of Bethany. Matt. 26:6-13. In the New Testament times, it was the custom to partake of food while reclining on couches arranged about the table containing the repast. One day as Jesus was thus eating with his disciples, Mary came up to Jesus and opening an alabaster flask of precious perfumed oil began to anoint the feet of Jesus. The value of the flask of oil was considerable. In purchasing power it was equal to about two hundred dollars of our money, a large sum for people comparatively poor, as were the fishermen disciples and most of the other companions of Jesus.

The disciples felt that it was a needless waste for Mary to use the costly oil to anoint the feet of Jesus. Judas Iscariot, whose heart was continually becoming more and more false to his Master, was the leader of those who

criticised Mary for, as they thought, wasting the precious oil. It might have been sold for much," said Judas, "and given to the poor." We have in this remark of Judas a good illustration of the deceitfulness of sin. In his heart Judas cared nothing for the poor. He was vexed not because the oil had not been sold and the money given to the poor, but because it had not been sold and the proceeds given to him. He was the treasurer of the company and his love of money had so far gotten the better of him that he was day by day embezzling from the little store of money committed to his keeping.

Yet sin is such a deceiver that we may well believe that Judas was largely unconscious of his hypocrisy. He felt himself a much abused man. He brooded day by day over his supposed wrongs, telling himself that he had given up everything to become a follower of Jesus and now he had gotten nothing at all in return. He had been made treasurer, but the disciples and other members of the company were ignoring him and his office. All moneys expended by the company ought to pass through his hands and here was a woman throwing away precious oil which might have been sold for much. Thus does sin make men small and crooked in their thinking and blind to all that is highest and noblest in life.

It is the way of human nature to join in when anyone begins to make vigorous criticism. Many people do not take time to consider whether the criticism is well founded or whether it is born of prejudice and selfishness. It was so on this occasion. The other disciples sided with Judas and the murmuring against Mary grew louder. The poor little woman stood abashed before the twelve men who so evidently condemned her for what they regarded as a sinful waste. Perhaps Mary had done the act in a moment of impulse and was now uncertain as to whether she ought to have acted as she did. Perhaps she looked with appealing glance to see whether Jesus, too, condemned her for pouring out the precious oil on the feet of the Master she loved.

Jesus never made any mistakes as to human motives. He read them unerringly. He knew the motives which had led Mary to anoint his feet. He knew the motives

which had led Judas to make censorious remarks concerning what Mary had done. There is something of indignation in the words of the Master: "Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she poured this ointment upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." The disciples seem to have been unable to realize that Jesus was soon to be taken from them, but Mary, with the finer sympathy of her womanly nature, had understood.

The Triumphal Entry. Matt. 21:1-11. There was an ancient prophecy which spoke of the Messianic king coming into Jerusalem seated on an ass's colt. The horse was an animal of war in Bible times, but the ass was the animal of peaceful industry. The prophecy seemed to indicate that the Messiah would be a prince of peace rather than a military hero. The time had now come for Jesus to let it be known that he regarded himself as the Messiah. He did so in a manner far more impressive than any mere declaration by word of mouth. He directed his disciples to secure an ass's colt, and then he came riding into Jerusalem in the manner described by the prophet.

The people understood at once the significance of this act of Jesus. Great crowds gathered about the Teacher as he rode. Other crowds came out of Jerusalem to meet him and the people who were with him. The people strewed palm branches and flowers in the way and took off their garments and spread them upon the roadway. A great shout of welcome arose: "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."

The people kept on shouting as Jesus entered the gates and as he passed through the streets to the Temple. Within the courts of the Temple the older people seem to have ceased their shouting, but the children kept right on shouting, "Hosanna to the son of David." This made the priests, Pharisees, and scribes very angry. They

came to Jesus and said, "Hearest thou what these are saying?" Jesus answered them, "Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise"? He told them that if the children ceased to shout welcome to him, the very stones of the Temple would cry out.

The Cleansing of the Temple. Matt. 21:12-14. After Jesus had ridden into the city and had entered the Temple, he did a most unexpected thing. Within the Temple area were ample courts where the people were accustomed to gather. One of the largest of these courts was called the Court of the Gentiles. God's gracious plan was that the Gentile people should gather in this great court where they would come into close contact with the true religion. As soon as a Gentile became a believer in Jehovah, he was allowed to enter the Court of Israel and was looked upon as a member of the Jewish Church and the Jewish nation.

But in the days of Jesus this gracious purpose of God had been almost wholly defeated by the selfishness and greed of the Jewish leaders. The Temple courts were filled, not with Gentile peoples seeking to know more of the God of Israel, but by hucksters and venders and money changers. The people had to buy doves and lambs and cattle for sacrifices and these were all offered for sale inside the Temple area. Any bird or animal offered for sacrifice had to be examined by a priest to see whether it was suitable for such a purpose. This enabled the priests to build up a huge monopoly and to charge exorbitant prices. It is said that Annas, the former high priest, had huge dovecotes on the Mount of Olives and had become wealthy through the sale of these birds for sacrificial purposes. This was especially selfish and contemptible. God had provided that the very poor people might offer as a sacrifice "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." By maintaining a monopoly on these birds Annas and his associates had grown rich through the defeat of God's plans and the oppression of the poor.

The Jews who came from distant lands brought with them the money of the country where they were residing.

This money the priests would not receive in payment for animals and birds for the sacrifices. It had to be exchanged for the money in use in Judea. So certain money changers were present who made such exchanges, charging a good round sum for their services.

When Jesus saw all this going on in the sacred building set apart for the worship of God, he was filled with indignation. He found a stick somewhere and tied some small ropes to it. Then with this whip he fell upon the desecraters of the Temple. "Take these things hence" he cried, "it is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers." Then he took hold of the tables of the money changers and overturned them, scattering their coins far and near. He drove out the cattle and their keepers together. Before his righteous wrath the crowds of venders fled panic-stricken and soon the great courts were empty of them.

Then a remarkable scene took place. Into the vacated courts came the blind and the lame and Jesus healed them and the multitudes gathered about him and he taught them.

Jesus' Authority Questioned. Matt. 21:23-27. The next morning Jesus came again to the Temple and taught the people. The chief priests and the other leaders of the Jews had now had time to collect their wits after the dramatic events of the previous day. They were afraid to seize Jesus, but they came and demanded by what authority he had done such things and who had given him such authority. The leaders believed, doubtless, that Jesus would claim authority from God for what he had done and thus they would have grounds for charging him with blasphemy. But Jesus was more than able to silence these crafty leaders of the Jewish people. Instead of discrediting Jesus they found themselves discredited before the multitude. Of course this only added to their hatred and their determination that Jesus should be destroyed.

Jesus answered their question by asking one in turn. He said: "I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from

heaven or from men?" Then the leaders said among themselves: "If we shall say, From heaven: he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet." So the leaders said that they could not answer Jesus' question and Jesus told them that neither would he answer theirs. But Jesus had in a very real sense given them an answer to their question. John had said of Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." For anyone who believed this message of John, there could be no question but that Jesus had authority to do what he had done.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: Christ's Entry Into Jerusalem, by Plockhorst (814 Perry); Christ Driving Out the Money Changers, by Hofmann (797P Perry, page 285, Bailey).

SUNDAY SESSION

EARNEST PLEADING AND SOLEMN WARNING

Mark 12:1-12; 14:10, 11

As Jesus neared the end of his ministry his thoughts were not of himself. He was thinking of the cause he loved and making every effort to save even his bitterest enemies by solemn warnings and earnest pleadings. He was giving every possible effort to instructing his disciples that they might be prepared for their great task of taking up and carrying on the work he had begun.

Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem. Luke 19:41-44; Matt. 23:37-39. Jesus and his disciples were coming into Jerusalem one day and, as they came along the road which winds over the Mount of Olives, all at once the city of Jerusalem lay spread out before them. There was the long, encircling wall pierced with gates here and yonder. On Mount Moriah rose Herod's splendid Temple with its marble and gold glittering in the sun. There were

the homes of the city of Zion, its busy streets, and its market places. As Jesus saw the city and remembered that a dreadful doom awaited it because it had rejected the Anointed One of God, he wept. What compassionate tenderness runs through his lament over the city which had been chosen of God to enlighten the world but which had chosen rather to walk in ways of darkness! "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. . . . O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Thirty-five years or so later the city of Jerusalem and its splendid Temple were almost wholly destroyed in the ghastly siege and the furious assaults which marked the closing months of the rebellion of the Jewish people against the dominion of Rome.

Parables of Warning. Mark 12:1-12. Jesus wished the Jewish leaders to know exactly what they were doing in rejecting him. He spoke at this time certain parables which were such perfect pictures of God's dealings with the chosen people and of their selfishness and jealousy in rejecting the Messiah that they could not but understand what he meant. They "perceived" that he spoke the parables "against them," and their rage was all the more increased.

Jesus told them of a husbandman who planted a vineyard and planted a hedge about it and digged a pit for the wine press and built a tower. Thus he had done everything necessary for a successful operation of the vineyard. He had constructed a hedge of thorns to keep

out the wild hogs and other animals which might plunder the vines. He had dugged out of the solid rock a place for pressing out the juice of the grapes. He had built a tower where the watchman could overlook the whole vineyard and also the surrounding country and thus guard the grapes from robber bands.

When everything had been prepared, the owner of the vineyard let it out to certain husbandmen while he went away into a distant country. At the time of harvest he sent one of his servants to receive his portion of the fruits of the vineyard. The husbandmen seized this servant and beat him and sent him away empty. The owner of the vineyard sent other servants, but the wicked husbandmen beat and wounded some; others they stoned and killed.

Now the owner of the vineyard had an only son, greatly beloved. He said to himself, "They will reverence my son," so he sent him to the vineyard. When the husbandmen saw this son of their master they said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." And they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. After Jesus had told this story to the Jewish leaders, they drew near to seize him that they might take his life, but when they looked around they saw the solid ranks of the multitudes who were, on the whole, friendly to Jesus and they did not dare to touch him.

A Sinister Gathering in the Court of the High Priest. Matt. 26 :3-5. The answer of the Jewish leaders to these parables of Jesus and to the wonderful miracles which he wrought was a secret gathering in the court of the high priest where they discussed the situation. "If we let him thus alone," they said, "all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." "We must save ourselves" was their argument. It was expedient that one man die rather than that the whole nation perish. So they conspired to seize Jesus secretly and to put him to death before the multitudes should know what was being done. From that time they redoubled their attempts to find an occasion when they could safely seize Jesus.

The Treachery of Judas. Mark 14:10, 11. There was another who was saying, "I must save myself." Judas saw the coming disaster. The kingdom that he had expected was not to be. On the other hand, Jesus was to be seized by the Jewish leaders and delivered to the Romans. Perhaps Judas had fears for his own safety. Perhaps he wished to save as much as he could for himself out of what he regarded as a hopeless wrecking of the enterprise upon which he had been led to enter. So he reasoned, "I must save myself." He slipped out from the little company as soon as he realized that Jesus knew the dark designs of his heart. He went to the priests and said to them, "What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" When the priests heard these words from the lips of one of the disciples of Jesus, they were glad. They were glad because they believed that at last they were about to seize the one they hated and feared. They were glad because it was one of the disciples who was to be the traitor who guided them to the Nazarene Teacher in some midnight hour. They were glad to think that there was treachery among the most intimate of the followers of Jesus and because they believed that the whole movement which Jesus had inaugurated was now crumbling. Gladness is no proper goal of life; neither is it a measure of character values. There is a certain gladness which comes with the triumph of evil plans. It is not the highest type of gladness, it is true, but it is one of the lower forms. The chief priest and his associates were glad. Only a few hours later, Jesus was saying, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Yet Jesus was walking the way of righteousness and the Jewish leaders the way of wickedness. The true goal of life is duty and service. We should follow these and let gladness or sorrow come as they may.

So Judas and the high priest bargained and it was agreed that Judas was to receive thirty pieces of silver for guiding the Jewish leaders to Jesus at a time and in a place where there would be no danger of an uprising of the multitudes in defense of Jesus. Judas now watched his chance to carry out his part of the contract.

He knew quite well the plans of Jesus for the next few days. He knew the habits of Jesus and the quiet spots where he often went at night to pray. So he thought out his plans for betraying his Teacher into the hands of sinful men.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, teach us to know and love the elements of character which were so perfectly set forth in the life of Jesus, thy Son. May we have something of his devotion to duty, something of his heroic devotion to a great cause, something of his patience in the midst of trying circumstances. Enable us to make, not selfish pleasure, but unselfish service the goal of our lives. Keep us from that form of subtle selfishness which manifests itself in various efforts to save ourselves from difficult tasks and from the sorrow which is born of sympathy with those in distress. Help us to establish as our life goal, not personal happiness, but duty and service. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
 Upon the Saviour's brow;
 His head with radiant glories crowned,
 His lips with grace o'erflow.

"The Hymnal" (Revised), No. 566.

See "The Story of the Hymns and Tunes," by Brown and Butterworth, page 23.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

THE JOYS OF OUR LORD

John 17:13-23

Jesus has been called "the man of sorrows." His sympathies were so wide and so deep that he entered into the sorrows of each individual person and into the sorrows of the whole world. He was moved with com-

passion by the sight of a leper and as he beheld the multitudes scattered like sheep without a shepherd. He wept with Mary and Martha at the sepulcher of Lazarus. In some way too profound for us to understand fully he took upon himself the sorrows of humanity.

And yet we must not think that the life of Jesus was all sorrow. Indeed, we have reason to believe that the life of Jesus was the happiest life ever lived on earth. We find him, even during the last trying days of his ministry, speaking of joy, his joy which he wished to bestow upon his disciples. As he approached the hour of his death, he spoke of that hour as a time when he should be glorified.

Now there is no contradiction in the thought that Jesus was a man of sorrows and that he felt joys such as but few others have ever felt. Both joy and sorrow are emotions of the soul. Their intensity depends upon the emotional range of the individual soul. A person who is shallow in his sympathies and incapable of feeling deep sorrow will be shallow in his emotional life in other matters. He will be incapable of feeling the more profound joys of the soul. People really great in soul have a great range of the emotional life; they are capable of deep sorrows and of lofty joys.

We know that the life of Jesus must have been a joyful life because of what we know of the laws governing our own lives in these matters. From our own experiences and the experiences of the race, we are able to reach the following conclusions concerning the joys of Jesus:

- 1. The joys of Jesus must have been great because of his unselfishness.** John 4:31-34. Most people learn sooner or later that life's highest joys are never reached through selfish pleasure-seeking. The joys reached in such a way are shallow, unsatisfying, and of short duration. But the joys which come to us, as it were incidentally, when we are serving others are deep, satisfying, and abiding. The life of Jesus must have been full of joy because it was so full of service.

- 2. The joys of Jesus must have been great because of his close and constant fellowship with God, the Father.**

John 14:8-10. A good many centuries ago one of the great men of the early Christian Church said, "Our souls, O God, were made for thyself and they are restless until they find rest in thee." When we feel the presence of God and come into communion with him, we experience one of the highest joys of which our souls are capable. What then must have been the joys of him who could say, "I and the Father are one."

3. The joys of Jesus must have been great because of his perfect purity. John 8:46. Sin mars the capacity of the soul to experience the higher joys. The soul of Jesus was never marred by sin. He never had to pray as David did:

"Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me to hear joy and gladness." Ps. 51:7, 8.

4. The joys of Jesus must have been great because of great accomplishments. John 16:33. Something attempted and something done brings satisfaction if the thing attempted and done is something worthy. Jesus had undertaken the most sublime task in all the universe. To most people it looked as if not much had been accomplished as Jesus drew near the end of his ministry, but Jesus knew that the foundations had been laid for the saving of the world. We can hear in many of his utterances a note of deep joy and satisfaction. "Be of good cheer," said he to his disciples; "I have overcome the world."

BIBLE VERSES

Neh. 8:10; Job 20:4, 5; Ps. 16:11; 126:5; Isa. 35:10;
65:14; Matt. 13:44; Rom. 14:17.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Was it right for Mary to use the precious ointment to anoint the feet of Jesus?
2. Why did Judas become a traitor?
3. Why did Jesus ride as he did into Jerusalem?

4. What qualities of character did Jesus manifest when he drove the money changers out of the Temple?

5. What events show us that Jesus was not thinking of himself during the last days of his ministry?

6. Why did the high priest and his associates think it necessary to destroy Jesus?

7. It has been said that "self-preservation is the first law of nature"; are there times when the true follower of Jesus must disregard this law?

8. Why did Jesus praise the poor widow who cast only two mites into the treasury?

9. How do we know that Jesus lived a happy life?

10. Could Jesus be "a man of sorrows" and at the same time live a life in which there were great and abiding joys?

STUDY TOPICS

1. What We Know of the Joys of Heaven. Luke 15:10; Rev. 21:1-4.

2. The Joy of John the Baptist at the Success of Jesus. John 3:22-30.

3. The Greatest Joy of a Great Disciple. III John 1-4.

4. A Joyful Salvation of the World as the Goal of Jesus' Life. Heb. 12:2.

COMMITTEE WORK

Have a committee report on the following problems:

1. How do the young people of our community find their highest pleasures?

2. Are the young people of our community finding the highest pleasures possible for them at their period of life?

3. Are the forms of recreation open to young people in our community wholesome and helpful?

4. What can we do to help other young people of this community to find the way of duty and service?

THE LAW OF HAPPINESS

True happiness is not found through selfish pleasure-seeking. Therefore:

1. We will try to make others happy rather than spend our time and efforts seeking pleasure for ourselves.

2. We will try to make duty and service rather than pleasure the goal of our lives.

3. We will try to cultivate a wide and deep sympathy with all classes of people, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep.

CHAPTER XVI
THE UPPER ROOM AND THE GARDEN OF
GETHSEMANE

WEEK DAY SESSION

JESUS' FAREWELL MEETING WITH HIS DISCIPLES

Matt. 26:17-35; John, chs. 13 to 17

The passover was one of the greatest of Jewish festivals. It commemorated that last night which the Israelites spent in Egypt when the angel of death went abroad throughout the land and smote the first-born in every Egyptian home but passed over the homes of the Israelites when he saw the blood-sprinkled doorposts. Jesus and his disciples now made ready for the keeping of the passover. The disciples were directed by their Master to a certain house in Jerusalem where they would find a large upper room made ready for them. Here Jesus and his disciples gathered for their last meeting before Jesus was to suffer for the redemption of the world.

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet. John 13:1-11. In New Testament times it was customary for a host to have one of the servants of the household wash the feet of guests as soon as they entered his house. If there were no servants in the house, the host performed this act of courtesy himself. It is likely that the disciples followed this custom. Probably they took turns in acting as the host. On the occasion of this last meeting with his disciples Jesus himself acted as the host. John says of Jesus that "knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

Jesus sought to give his disciples one last and impressive object lesson in humble, loving service. He laid

aside his outer garments, took a towel and girded himself after the fashion of a slave, and began to wash the disciples' feet. When he came to Peter, that impulsive disciple said, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" Jesus replied quietly that although Peter did not understand the significance of this act now, he would come to understand it later. But Peter declared, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." When Jesus told him, however, that no one could have part with him unless he were washed of the Christ, Peter, after his impulsive fashion, changed his attitude completely. "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," he said. Then Jesus explained once more the great principle of service which was to be the fundamental law among his followers.

Farewell Conversations with His Disciples. John, chs. 13 to 16. Much of the time during the last months of the ministry of Jesus had been spent in conversation with his disciples. In the upper room where they had gathered for the passover festival, Jesus and his disciples spent the hours from early evening to near midnight. Some of the things which Jesus said to his followers have been recorded in the Gospel of John. Jesus was anxious about the little band he was leaving behind. He knew the sorrows they were about to meet. He tried to comfort them by saying, "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me." He told them that he was going away for only a little while and that he would be preparing a place for them in the mansions of the Father in heaven. He told them of the Holy Spirit who was to come into the world as their Helper and Comforter.

Jesus knew that his disciples would succeed in their great task only as they trusted in him as their Lord and Leader. He told them that they could no more be spiritually fruitful without him than a branch of a vine could be fruitful after it was cut off and withered in the sun. He urged them to love one another. He told them of coming persecutions and that in these times of affliction they should remember that he had suffered persecution before them. He told them that there were many things yet for them to learn and these things



J. MATHAUSER

CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE

would be revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. He gave them a rule whereby they could test every new doctrine. If it were the teaching of the Spirit, the doctrine would be in harmony with what he had said and done, it would glorify him. These rules are still our best guide in determining the truth of new doctrines. If they are in harmony with the teachings of Jesus and grow evidently out of his life and his words, and if they honor Jesus as Christ and Lord, we have grounds for believing that they are the teachings of the Helper whom Jesus foresaw and who is now in the world guiding the Church into all the truth.

A Wonderful Prayer. John, ch. 17. Jesus closed this conversation with his disciples with a prayer, beautiful and sublime. Lifting up his eyes to heaven he said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee." The hour of which he spoke was the time of his suffering and death, but Jesus believed that through this way of self-sacrifice he would glorify God. Jesus prayed for his disciples, that they might be kept from the evil of the world and that they might be bound into unity by love. He prayed not only for his disciples but for all who should be led to believe on him through the words of the disciples. Thus he prayed for his followers of all the centuries, for they have all become believers in Jesus through the testimony of the disciples.

The Lord's Supper. Matt. 26:26-30. As Jesus and his disciples were eating the passover meal, he talked quietly with them. He said that he had looked forward with longing to this last meal with them. Then he instituted a service which was to be observed by his followers until the end of the world. He took bread and blessed it and breaking it gave some to each of his disciples. He said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup and after giving thanks to God he passed it to his disciples saying: "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins. But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom." Then they sang a hymn together. After singing the hymn, they

left the upper room and made their way toward the Mount of Olives.

On the Way to the Mount of Olives. Matt. 26:31-35. As Jesus crossed the valley of Kidron, which separates Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, he continued his conversation with his disciples. He told them that in a little while, that very night in fact, they would all leave him and flee for their lives, that the sheep would be scattered and the shepherd smitten as one of the Hebrew prophets had foretold. "But," said Jesus, "after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee." Peter, ever the first to speak, declared that even if all the others should foresake Jesus, he would never leave him, but would stand by him and die at his side. Jesus told his overconfident disciple that ere the cock should crow he would thrice deny his Master and Leader. Peter still insisted, however, that even if he had to die with Jesus, he would never deny him. All the other disciples said the same thing.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: The Last Supper, by Da Vinci (280 Perry, page 301, Bailey); Christ in Gethsemane, by Hofmann (797U Perry, page 311, Bailey); Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet, by F. M. Brown (133 Wilde).

SUNDAY SESSION

ALONE IN THE GARDEN

Matt. 26:36-56

We have seen how Jesus at times of stress withdrew at night into secluded places for prayer. He spent a whole night in prayer before he chose his disciples. He went out among the hills to pray at night when the multitudes were plotting to make him king by force. Before telling his disciples of his approaching sufferings and

death, he sought the solitudes of Mount Hermon where he could be alone with God.

So we are not surprised to find that after the meeting in the upper room Jesus left the city of Jerusalem and sought the quiet of a garden on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. This garden was called Gethsemane. It was an Oriental garden, that is, it was full of gnarled olive trees and shady nooks, and was more like a small natural park than like a modern flower garden.

The Supreme Struggle. Matt. 26:36-46. As he entered the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus left behind all but three of his disciples. He took with him Peter and James and John, the three who had been with him when he raised the little daughter of Jairus and who had witnessed his transfiguration. The time for the supreme struggle in the life of Jesus had come. With infinite power in his hands, would he submit to a cruel and shameful death? He wished to be alone with God as he battled for a final decision, yet he longed to feel the nearness of human fellowship, so he chose these three of his disciples who understood him best and asked them to remain near him. "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful," said Jesus, "even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me." Then he went on a little farther and fell on his face, asking God to take away the cup he was about to drink if it were possible for him to do so. But he added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

We cannot expect to understand all about this mysterious sorrow and this terrific struggle through which Jesus passed in the Garden of Gethsemane. It is not reasonable to believe that it was due to the dread of suffering and death, though we should remember that death to Jesus must have been a different experience from what it is to other people. He was the Prince of Life and in him Life itself was submitting to the sway of the enemy of Life. Those who have thought most deeply on the subject believe that in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus bore, in some mysterious way, the sins of the whole world, that there he bore our griefs and "carried our sorrows" and that there his soul was made "an offering for sin." Such a substitution, in which the innocent suffers in the place

of the guilty and pays the price of other people's sins, is not thinkable if Jesus was only a man like other men, but if we believe that he was God the case is entirely different.

The Sleeping Disciples. Twice Jesus came back to his disciples and each time he found them sleeping. He gently admonished them to watch and pray lest they enter into temptation. He reproofed them kindly for not being able to watch with him for even one hour, but even in his reproof he gave evidences of his tender compassion for them. He said of them, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh it weak." When Jesus came to his disciples the third time he said to them, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." But even as he spoke the sound of many trampling feet was heard and a throng of people came pushing into the Garden. So Jesus added to his words the command, "Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me."

The Calmness of Perfect Victory. Jesus had won a final triumph in his struggle alone in the Garden. From this time forth he was calm and strong. Had it been only the fear of suffering and death which caused his soul to be exceeding sorrowful, we should expect him to recoil in terror as he drew nearer and nearer to the end, but such was not the case and therefore we believe that his struggle in the Garden was not a struggle with the fear and dread of death.

Judas and the Night Crowd of Jerusalem. Matt. 26:47-56. It was a motely mob which Judas led into the Garden. They were armed with swords and staves and carried lanterns, although it must have been quite light since it was the time of full moon. The crowd was made up for the most part of the night revelers of Jerusalem, the low and criminal portion of society so much in evidence in the midnight hours of our large cities ancient and modern. The servants of the chief priest were there and possibly some of the Jewish leaders themselves. These proud aristocrats of the Jewish nation were glad to make an unholy alliance with the lowest elements of society, if thereby they could bring the man they hated and feared to destruction.

Judas had told the leaders of the mob that he would indicate which man in the Garden was Jesus by going up to him and kissing him. Judas had been quite sure that he could find Jesus in this garden for he was familiar with the habits of Jesus and knew the places where he went at night to pray. So Judas came to Jesus and saying, "Hail, Rabbi," he kissed him.

Peter had meant every word when he said he was willing to die for Jesus and he tried to carry out his promise. He drew his sword and, slashing out at those who were seizing Jesus, he struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. It was a perilous moment for a fight had thus begun which might have resulted in a terrible struggle there among the olive trees. But Jesus was, as ever, Master of the occasion. He firmly commanded Peter to put up his sword. Then he told the leaders of the mob that he was ready to go with them, but that they should let his disciples go their way.

The Scattered Sheep. So the leaders of the mob bound Jesus and led him away. Since he was not permitted to fight with the sword in the defense of Jesus, Peter, like the other disciples, turned and fled from the Garden, while those who had seized Jesus led him away into the city of Jerusalem.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we believe that Jesus was thy Son and that he came into the world to be the Saviour of all those who accept him and love him. We believe that he taught lessons of eternal truth. We believe that he gave his life to save the world. We believe that he is in the world to-day and that he will build a Kingdom of justice and righteousness and brotherhood which will stand forever. Enable us to have full faith in him, and unwavering loyalty to him. Give us grace to labor with him for the good of humanity and for the Kingdom of God on earth. Give us his spirit in larger and larger measure so that we may become more and more courageous in defense of the right. We ask in his name. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

'Tis midnight; and on Olive's brow
The star is dimmed that lately shone:

'Tis midnight; in the garden now
The suffering Saviour prays alone.

'Tis midnight; and, from all removed,
Emmanuel wrestles lone with fears:
E'en the disciples that he loved
Heeds not his Master's grief and tears.

'Tis midnight; and for other's guilt,
The Man of Sorrows weeps in blood:
Yet he that hath in anguish knelt
Is not forsaken by his God.

'Tis midnight; from the heavenly plains
Is borne the song that angels know:
Unheard by mortals are the strains
That sweetly soothe the Saviour's woe.

“The Hymnal” (Revised), No. 224.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

I Cor. 11:17-34

We have just been studying the events connected with the institution of the Lord's Supper. This will be a fitting time, therefore, for us to consider the significance of this religious service which was begun by Jesus and his disciples, and which because of the direct commandments of the Christ has been observed by the Christian Church during all the centuries of its existence. Every Christian should know what the Lord's Supper means so that he can take part in the sacrament intelligently and receive help from it.

1. **The Lord's Supper is a memorial service.** We have different ways of calling to mind great events and the people connected with them. Sometimes we erect marble statues as memorials. Sometimes we construct great buildings that serve some useful purpose and we call

them memorial halls. Sometimes we set apart a day as a memorial day and keep it with appropriate observances. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as a memorial of himself. He said, "This do in remembrance of me." Yet it was not merely a desire for personal remembrance that prompted Jesus to command that this sacrament of the Lord's Supper be observed to the end of the world. He knew that the safety and success of his disciples in the trying times just ahead depended on whether or not they remembered him. Jesus had in view also his followers in all the centuries. He knew that they would be spiritually safe and strong if they remembered him always. So one of the great purposes of the Lord's Supper is to call to our minds the life and the teachings, and especially the death, of Jesus Christ. We ought to make preparation for each communion service by reading the Gospel narratives which tell us about Jesus and by careful and prayerful thought concerning him.

2. The Lord's Supper is a fellowship service. As Christian believers gather at this service and partake of the bread and the wine, they are proclaiming to the world that they are all one family, that God is their Father and that Christ is their Elder Brother. This is such an important matter that we ought to cast all enmity toward our fellow men out of our hearts before coming to the Communion. Jesus told the people of his day that if any man were offering a sacrifice on God's altar and remembered that some brother had something against him, he ought to leave his sacrifice and go to his brother and effect a reconciliation, and then come and offer his sacrifice. The Lord's Supper is our supreme act of worship, just as the offering of a sacrifice was the supreme act of worship among the Jews, and we must have our hearts full of good will to men if our worship is to be acceptable to God.

3. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic service. Any object or act is called symbolic when it is intended to represent and explain some truth, or organization. Thus, the cross has become the symbol of some of the great truths of Christianity and the sign of the Christian Church. The Lord's Supper is a symbol of some of the

most profound truths of the Christian religion. It means that we are dependent upon Christ for spiritual life, just as we are dependent upon food and drink for physical life. It means that in some way, too deep for us to understand fully, the death of Jesus, the breaking of his body and the shedding of his blood, made it possible for us to have eternal life.

BIBLE VERSES

John 6:35; Acts 2:46; Matt. 26:26-30; Luke 22:14-20; Matt. 5:23, 24; John 6:51, 63.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Name some of the subjects on which Jesus talked with his disciples in the upper room.
2. Why did Jesus institute the Lord's Supper?
3. How ought a Christian to prepare for the Lord's Supper?
4. What truths are symbolized in the Lord's Supper?
5. What did Paul mean when he wrote to the Corinthians that it was not possible for them to eat the Lord's Supper? I Cor. 11:20.
6. What warning did Paul give concerning the manner in which we partake of the Lord's Supper? I Cor. 11:27.
7. The Lord's Supper is a symbol of the unity of believers in Christ. Why then is it impossible for us really to partake of the Lord's Supper if we have in our hearts ill will toward our fellow Christians?
8. Name some of the object lessons of Jesus.
9. Acts 2:42 is a brief statement of spiritual conditions in the early Christian Church. What four characteristics of the Christians of that day are mentioned, and why is each important?
10. Why did Jesus command his followers to observe the Lord's Supper until the end of the world?

STUDY TOPICS

1. The Person and Work of the Comforter as Set Forth by Jesus. John 14:16-18.

2. Read Luke 22:28 and Tell of the Different Times When Jesus Was Tempted.
3. Find as Many Words and Acts of Jesus as You Can Which Show His Love for His Disciples.

THE LAW OF REVERENCE FOR THE SERVICES OF THE CHURCH

Paul reprov'd the Corinthians for irreverence at the communion service, and both the words and the acts of Jesus teach us that we ought to reverence the church as God's house. Jesus at twelve years of age spoke of the Temple as his Father's house, and when he was a man he drove out those who made the Temple a place of trade and money-making. Therefore:

1. We will honor the church building as a place set apart for the worship of God.
2. We will honor the church services by being quiet, thoughtful, and reverent in the house of God.
3. We will honor the work of the Church, knowing that its mission is of supreme importance to the welfare of humanity and the glory of God.

CHAPTER XVII
DELIVERED INTO THE HANDS OF SINFUL
MEN

WEEK DAY SESSION

JESUS ON TRIAL FOR HIS LIFE

John 18:12-27; Mark 14:53-73; Matt. 27:3-10;
Luke 23:5-16

There were so many irregularities and illegal proceedings in the seizure and the so-called "trial" of Jesus that we are hardly justified in speaking of a trial at all, in his case. It was more an act, or series of acts, of mob violence than an orderly legal procedure, through which Jesus was seized and put to death. As we read the narratives we are impressed with the extreme haste which characterized the whole matter. Seized at about midnight Jesus was rushed from one court to another, with no opportunity to summon witnesses in his defense. Before many people knew what was taking place Jesus was condemned and crucified. Such proceedings were as illegal in that day as they are in our own times. Fear lest the multitudes should interfere led the Jewish leaders to trample over the laws in a most ruthless manner and their ultimate victory was due to a triumph of mob violence.

The Examination Before Annas. John 18:12-27. Having seized Jesus and bound him, the officers and their followers led him away to the house of a certain man named Annas who was the father-in-law of the high priest, Caiaphas. It was in no sense a legal court before which Jesus thus first appeared. There was no charge brought against him and no witnesses were examined. The high priest asked Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. It is evident that the whole intent of this first examination was to secure grounds for a charge against Jesus when he should be brought before the regu-

lar Jewish court, called the sanhedrin. The Jewish leaders evidently believed that they could lead Jesus to make some statement which could be used against him as a charge of heresy and blasphemy.

Jesus was aware of his legal rights and he appealed to justice and legal procedure. He asked why he was questioned in this irregular way. He had taught openly and in the Temple. There were thousands of people who had heard his teachings; why had not some of these people been summoned as witnesses? In answer to this courageous and perfectly fair question, a brutal officer struck Jesus, saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" The act was one of lawless violence. Jesus was uncondemned, indeed, there was not even a charge against him. He had spoken only the truth and what he had a right to say, but the only answer was a blow. "If I have spoken evil," said Jesus, "bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" The Jewish leaders saw that there was no likelihood that their plan would succeed. They would not be able to entrap Jesus in his utterances, and the circumstances demanded haste. So Jesus was led away to Caiaphas where the sanhedrin had hastily assembled.

The Trial Before the Sanhedrin. Mark 14:53-65. The trial of Jesus before the sanhedrin was a scene of appalling injustice and brutality. The elders and the chief priest and the scribes were there. Jesus was given no opportunity to summon witnesses in his defense. Even without such witnesses the utter groundlessness of the charges against Jesus soon became apparent through the testimony of those who had been summoned as witnesses against him. Some of the witnesses had doubtless been bribed to bear false testimony, but even so there was no agreement in their stories as to what Jesus had said. Under the Jewish law a prisoner could not be condemned except upon the harmonious testimony of at least two witnesses. No such testimony was put forth in the trial of Jesus before the sanhedrin. Again the effort was made to compel Jesus to utter some statement which would incriminate him in the eyes of the court. The high priest said to him, "Answerest thou nothing? what is it which

these witness against thee?" But no charge had been established by the testimony given, so Jesus answered not a word. The high priest and his associates were in a desperate situation. The testimony of the witnesses on whom they had depended had amounted to nothing, except to make manifest the groundlessness of any charges which might be brought forth against Jesus. The time was passing and soon the streets would be filled with the multitudes who were in Jerusalem for the pass-over. Jesus had so many friends among the people that the high priest and his associates shuddered with dread to think of what might happen should it become widely known that Jesus was on trial for his life.

The high priest had one last resource. It was a means utterly contrary to Jewish law, but Caiaphas did not hesitate to use it. He saw a way to compel Jesus to make an utterance which would serve as grounds for a charge of blasphemy. He put Jesus under solemn oath when he said to him, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus could now no longer keep silence, even though he knew that his words sealed his fate. To keep silence when such a question was put to him in the form of an oath would have been equivalent to a denial. The crafty high priest knew this and he was confident that Jesus would meet his query with a straightforward answer. Jesus answered, "Thou hast said," which meant, "I am the Christ, the Son of God." Then he added, "Nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The high priest made a great show of being horrified at the words of Jesus. He took hold of his garments and ripped them and cried out, "He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?" There was an answering shout, "He is worthy of death." The assembly was already in an uproar and there was no formal vote as to a verdict, no opportunity given for any dissenting vote, only this frenzied outburst of Caiaphas and the equally frenzied reply of the council.

Then followed a scene of frightful brutality. All the pent-up hatred of the priests and elders and scribes burst forth. They forgot their usual cold decorum. They rushed upon Jesus, striking him with their fists and spitting in his face. They mocked him, striking him with the palms of their hands, and saying to him, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee?"

Peter's Denial. Mark 14:66-72. When Jesus was seized in the garden, Peter tried to defend his Master with the sword. When Jesus refused to permit his disciple to defend him, Peter fled with the other disciples. After a little, however, he turned and followed after the people who had seized Jesus. He followed them to the house of Annas and from there to the meeting of the sanhedrin. As he stood by the fire in the court a maid of the high priest saw him and said to him, "Thou also wast with the Nazarene, even Jesus." Peter was taken off his guard; moreover, he was lonely, cold, and discouraged. The instinct to save himself got the better of him. He said to the maid, "I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest." A little later the same maid again charged him with being a disciple of Jesus and he again denied it. It was not long before several persons near Peter looked sharply at him and one of them said, "Of a truth thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean." Peter was now in a state of terror verging on panic. He began to curse and to swear saying, "I know not this man of whom ye speak." Just then the cock crew and Peter remembered the words of Jesus. At the sound of the cock Jesus turned and looked at Peter. Leaving the house Peter went out where he could be alone and there he wept bitterly.

The Tragic Fate of Judas. Matt. 27:3-10. Peter was not the only disciple who was present at the trial of Jesus before the sanhedrin. John was there and had been instrumental in securing the admission of Peter to the building. There was another disciple present, or perhaps we should say one who had been a disciple. Awful remorse was beginning to make itself felt in the heart of Judas. He watched the proceedings from the edge of the crowd. He heard the false witnesses. He heard

the crafty query of Caiaphas and the reply of Jesus. He heard the shout of condemnation and saw the cruel blows and the heartless mockery. He had been too long with Jesus ever to be like the priests and the scribes, utterly hardened and wholly lacking in a sense of justice and compassion. When he saw Jesus condemned to death and overwhelmed with brutal abuse, he could stand it no longer. He sought out a group of the priests and asked them to take back the thirty pieces of silver which had been his pay for betraying Jesus. He said to them, "I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood." These proud officials despised the poor creature whom they had used as their tool and they replied coldly, "What is that to us? see thou to it." Flinging down the silver on the pavement, Judas went out and hanged himself.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: Christ Before Pilate, by Munkacsy (141 Wilde, page 336, Bailey); Ecce Homo, by Cizeri (143 Wilde, page 342, Bailey).

SUNDAY SESSION

JESUS CONDEMNED AND CRUCIFIED

John 18:28 to 19:42; Mark 16:6-15; Luke 23:5-16;
Matt. 27:45-66

When the Jewish leaders and the rabble which followed them had brought Jesus to the Praetorium, or palace of Pilate, they sent Jesus bound into the presence of the governor, but they refused to enter the building. They had a rule that anyone entering a house occupied by a Gentile must be considered as unclean for several days. Anyone entering the palace of Pilate that morning would so defile himself, in their estimation, that he would be unfit to eat the passover and to enter into its religious celebrations. We have here a picture of the Pharisee's soul. These leaders of the Jewish religion had become hopeless formalists. They were hounding the Saviour

of the world to his death and they had just given a most revolting exhibition of their brutal hatred of him. They saw in such acts of wickedness nothing to disbar them from participating in the worship of their God; yet they believed that if they so much as stepped inside the house of a despised Gentile they would be rendered unfit for worship.

The Jewish Leaders Try to Force Pilate to Pronounce the Death Sentence. John 18:28-32. The sanhedrin had condemned Jesus to death, but, as we have seen, it could not carry out the penalty without the consent of the Roman governor. So the Jewish leaders made no accusation against Jesus when they brought him to Pilate. They did not wish a trial before the Roman governor; they wished his ratification of the verdict their own court had rendered. Pilate was unwilling to grant their request without learning some of the facts in the case, so he asked them what accusation was lodged against Jesus. They refused to say, for they knew that the charge on which they had condemned Jesus would have no standing at all in a Roman court. The Romans would never condemn a man to death because he laid claim to being the Messiah. So the leaders answered, "If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee." Then Pilate said, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." So Pilate took Jesus aside and talked with him a little while.

Pilate Brings in a Verdict of "Not Guilty." John 18:33-38. Pilate had some of the instincts which had helped to make the Romans masters of the world. He was a keen judge of human nature. In a few moments of conversation with Jesus he came to see that this man against whom the Jews had passed the death sentence was guiltless. He saw that it was a case of fanatical jealousy and hatred on the part of the leaders of the Jewish religion toward a rival religious leader. He came out to the porch of his palace and said to the Jews, "I find no crime in him." That was the verdict of a judge. It was the same as saying "The court finds the accused

not guilty." Why then did not Pilate go on to say, "The prisoner is discharged?" It was because Pilate was not a good and courageous man. He had a bad record, a skeleton in his closet, which made him a coward. He had led a sinful life and sin weaves a network of evil circumstances which makes it easy for us to do evil and hard to do right. Pilate's sinful life had dulled his sense of right and wrong so that, although he saw the enormous wickedness in delivering an innocent man to be crucified, he saw it but dimly. Sin puts out the eyes of the soul. Pilate's bad life had weakened his will power, so that although he willed to release Jesus, he willed it weakly and gradually yielded to the clamors of the Jews. The story of Pilate's gradual yielding to the clamorings of the Jewish leaders and the night rabble of Jerusalem is one of the most tragic accounts in all history.

Pilate Gradually Conquered by the Clamor of the Jews.

John 18:39 to 19:16. There was only one right course of conduct for Pilate and that was to set Jesus free. But Pilate began to seek some way of evading the issue or of compromising the matter. The Jewish rabble began to cry out, asking him to release one of the prisoners to them according to the established customs, for Pilate had been in the habit of letting the Jewish people choose one prisoner who should be set free at the feast of the passover. Pilate seems to have thought: "Here is an opportunity for me to get out of this difficulty. I will condemn Jesus, sentence him to death, and then pardon him, setting him free according to this established custom." It was a shameful thought for a judge, to condemn an innocent man and then send him forth as a pardoned criminal, in the hope that in thus disgracing him he might satisfy the enemies of the accused. The Jewish leaders would have no such compromise; they quickly passed word around among the rabble that the choice should be Barabbas, a noted outlaw, in prison for insurrection and murder. So the cry went up, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Pilate's first attempt at a compromise had failed.

Some one in the court happened to mention the name of Herod, and Pilate on inquiry found out that Jesus was

a citizen of Galilee and that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction. Moreover, he learned that Herod was even then in Jerusalem. So Pilate sent Jesus and his crowd of accusers away to Herod. But nothing came of it. Herod was no more willing than Pilate to take the responsibilities involved in a settlement of the case, so he sent Jesus back.

Then Pilate took another downward step. He said, "I will . . . chastise him, and release him." He had reached the point where he was willing to come as near taking the life of Jesus as he could without actually doing it. So he delivered Jesus to the cruel Roman soldiers with orders that he be scourged. This scourging was the awful punishment of the Romans. The scourge was a whip of many lashes and each lash was loaded with bits of sharp metal. Prisoners were whipped on their bare backs and they often died under the punishment. The scourging almost killed Jesus.

The soldiers subjected Jesus to cruel mockery. They had heard slanderous reports about Jesus' claim to be the king of the Jews, so they made a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple garment on him to make him look like a king. They also put a reed in his hand to represent a king's scepter. Then they bowed the knee before him and mocked him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" After this their mockery gave place to brutal violence. They struck Jesus with their hands, and taking the reed from him they hit him on the head with it.

After the scourging, and while Jesus was still wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment, Pilate brought him out to the Jews and said, "Behold, the man!" If Pilate imagined that the sight of Jesus in his pitiable condition would awaken some dormant emotion of compassion in the hearts of the crowd outside the door of the Praetorium, or if he thought that the sight of Jesus would satisfy the cruel hatred of the mob, he was mistaken. The only answer to Pilate's words was a shout of "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate answered them, "Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him." Some one in the crowd cried out, "We

have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." This was the real accusation against Jesus and it was now mentioned for the first time in the trial before Pilate. Pilate had already been deeply impressed by the personality of Jesus. We can detect a kind of awe in his attitude toward Jesus from the first. When he heard these words about Jesus' having laid claim to being the Son of God, he became still more troubled and afraid. He took Jesus aside again and asked him in an awed whisper, "Whence art thou?" In this second interview with Jesus, Pilate's desire to release him was revived. He went out to the multitudes evidently determined to be done with the case and to set the prisoner free. When the Jews saw Pilate again appear with Jesus and knew that Pilate was about to release him, they cried out, "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." Pilate knew that he had a bad record. As a governor he had taken bribes and acted with violence on certain occasions. He knew that a delegation of Jews had gone to Rome with accusations against his predecessor, Archelaus, and that as a result Archelaus had been deposed and banished. The threat of an appeal to Cæsar made Pilate tremble. How could he explain to the cruel and suspicious Tiberius his act in setting free a Jew whom his own people accused of aspiring to be king? Down in his heart Pilate said, "I must save myself." "Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified."

The Crucifixion. John 19:17-37. Jesus was crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem. Two thieves were crucified with him, one on each side with Jesus in the midst. The enemies of Jesus were there to see the end. They railed at him saying, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross." The chief priests were there. It was an hour of triumph for them. They joined in the mockery of the rabble saying of Jesus, "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

After a time silence began to fall on the crowd gathered on Calvary, for an unnatural darkness was falling

over the earth. The darkness grew more dense. When Jesus died there was a great earthquake and the rocks were rent asunder. The veil of the Temple, which was a great curtain inclosing the Holy Place, was rent in twain. That night the body of Jesus was taken down and laid in a tomb which belonged to a man named Joseph.

“Make It as Sure as Ye Can.” Matt. 27:62-66. Though Jesus was now dead and his body in the tomb, the hearts of those who had brought him to the cross were not at peace. The triumph of an evil purpose never brings peace, courage, or lasting satisfaction. The Jewish leaders were uneasy. They went to Pilate and said: “Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first.” Pilate said to them, “Ye have a guard: go, make it as sure as ye can.” So they went to the sepulcher and sealed the stone door with the Roman seal, the unlawful breaking of which was punishable with death. Then they left the armed guard to watch over the sepulcher night and day until the three days should be past. They had made the sepulcher as sure as they could.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, thou didst so love the world that thou didst send thy only begotten Son to die for the salvation of all mankind. We cannot understand the greatness of thy love. We cannot understand the wonders of thy plan of human redemption. But we can see thee and know thee as thou art revealed in the teachings and in the life and in the death of Jesus, thy Son. Fill our hearts with love and reverence for him. Teach us how to be wholly loyal to him. Help us to spend our lives in such a way as to honor him and to advance his Kingdom on earth. We ask in his name. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

Alas! and did my Saviour bleed,
 And did my Sovereign die!
 Would he devote that sacred head
 For sinners such as I!

Was it for crimes that I had done
 He groaned upon the tree!
 Amazing pity! Grace unknown!
 And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
 And shut his glories in,
 When he, the mighty Maker, died
 For man the creature's sin.

“The Hymnal” (Revised), No. 221.

 EXPRESSSIONAL SESSION

 THE DEATH OF CHRIST IN GOD'S PLAN OF
 REDEMPTION

Gen. 3:15; Isa., ch. 53; Rom. 3:21-26; Rev. 5:9-14

We have selected as the Scriptural basis of our lesson four passages from the Bible. They all deal with the subject of human redemption from sin and evil. The first passage is from the first book of the Bible. It is an indefinite, but firm, promise that the blight of sin shall be purged away from the human race. It indicates in broad outlines the method of redemption. The serpent of sin shall be vanquished by the seed of the woman, but the heel of the victor will be bruised in the conflict.

The second passage is one of the most sublime of the utterances of the Hebrew prophets. The great soul of a man of God under divine inspiration caught sight of a personal deliverer: one who should be “despised, and rejected of men,” who should be “wounded for our transgressions,” and “bruised for our iniquities,” and by whose stripes we should be healed. Note how perfect a pic-

ture is given in this Old Testament chapter of the events connected with the trial and crucifixion of Jesus: "He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?"

In the third passage, one of the greatest minds of all history, guided as we believe by the Spirit of God, is laboring to make clear to the minds of men the place of the death of Jesus in God's plan of redemption. Paul says that through the death of Jesus Christ God was able to be just and at the same time to be the justifier of all who have faith in Jesus.

In the last passage, we are given a glimpse of the triumph of God's plan of redemption. The picture is that of redeemed humanity singing psalms of praise to its Redeemer: "And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth."

Thus we see that the one great theme running all through the Bible is the theme of human redemption and that at the heart of that theme there is always a reference, direct or implied, to the death of Jesus Christ.

BIBLE VERSES

Eph. 2:14, 15; Heb. 10:10; 13:12; 9:11, 12; Rom. 5:8; I John 4:10; I Peter 1:18, 19.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did Jesus during the last moments of his life provide for a home for his mother? John 19:25-27.
2. What accusation did Pilate have placed on the cross of Jesus? John 19:19-22.

3. Tell of the conversion of the thief on the cross. Luke 23:39-43.

4. What was the significance of the rending of the veil of the Temple at the moment of Jesus' death?

5. What effect did the death of Jesus have on the Roman centurion who commanded the soldiers at the crucifixion? Luke 23:44-47.

6. What is the great central theme of the Bible?

7. What place does the death of Jesus seem to hold in the central theme of the Bible?

STUDY TOPICS

1. What Jesus Taught Concerning the Indispensability of His Death. John 12:23, 24.

2. What Jesus Taught About His Death as a Fulfillment of Prophecy. Luke 24:25-27.

3. What Jesus Meant When He Spoke of His Death as the Time When the Son of Man Should Be Glorified. John 17:1.

4. The Cross Was a Symbol of Shame for It Was the Roman Gallows. What Change Has Come into Our Thoughts Regarding the Cross?

5. Great Hymns Based on the Passion of Jesus.

6. Great Paintings Based on the Passion of Jesus.

7. What Effect Ought the Death of Jesus to Have on Our Lives?

8. The Passion of Jesus in Poetry. (See Arnold, "The Light of the World;" Sidney Lanier, "A Ballad of Trees and the Master.")

THE LAW OF REVERENCE FOR THE CHARACTER OF JESUS

The character of Jesus as it is portrayed in the gospels is one of matchless purity and strength. Moreover, the Bible teaches us that he is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Therefore:

1. We will think reverently of him, knowing that in our thoughts we must either honor or dishonor him.

2. We will speak reverently of him, honoring his name and seeking to lead others to honor it.

3. We will act reverently toward him, for we know that he is something more than a great character of history. We believe that he is with us always and that we must each day maintain some sort of attitude toward him. We will endeavor to make our attitude toward him an attitude of reverence and obedience and love.

CHAPTER XVIII
OUR RISEN LORD
WEEK DAY SESSION

THE EMPTY TOMB AND THE FIRST APPEARANCES
OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR

Matt. 28:1-15; Luke 24:13-42; John 20:19-29

There is a certain harmony between the resurrection of Jesus and the deeper currents of history. Evil has often had every appearance of a full triumph for a little while. But soon the triumph of evil is shown to be temporary and to contain within it the seeds of its own undoing. So universal is this law that it can be truly said,

“Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above his own.”

When Jesus was taken down from the cross, it seemed from outward appearances that evil had won a great triumph. Jealousy, hatred, and deceit had accomplished their end. Jesus was dead, although he had been true to the light, loyal to the truth, and faithful to his task. His body lay in a sealed grave watched by armed soldiers. The forces of evil had done their worst. They had made their triumph as sure as they could.

The Angel of the Resurrection. Matt. 28:1-4. The body of Jesus lay in Joseph's sepulcher Friday night, all through Saturday which was the Jewish Sabbath, and through Saturday night. Very early on Sunday morning, just as day was beginning to dawn, Jesus rose from the dead. This wonderful event was preceded by a great earthquake. Then an angel appeared clothed in garments

of shining white. The gospel narratives tell us that "his appearance was as lightning." He paid no heed to the Roman seal on the stone. He broke the seal and rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulcher. As for the Roman guards, at the first sight of this heavenly visitor, they fell down "and became as dead men."

First Words of the Risen Saviour to His Followers. Matt. 28:5-10. Some of the faithful women who had been with Jesus during the days of his ministry and who had stood near his cross when he died, were first to see the risen Saviour. They had come with spices to embalm the body of Jesus, but when they reached the sepulcher, they found the stone rolled away from the door. The resurrection angel appeared to these women and said to them: "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." The women departed quickly from the sepulcher, with fear and great joy, and they "ran to bring his disciples word." While they were on their way, Jesus met them, saying to them, "All hail." Drawing near, the women took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

The Report of the Watch. Matt. 28:11-15. Some of the soldiers who had been on guard at the sepulcher finally reached the Jewish leaders and told them what had taken place. A meeting of the sanhedrin was hastily called. It was decided to bribe the soldiers so as to induce them to make a false report of what had happened at the sepulcher. They said to the members of the guard, "Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept." The soldiers would have hesitated thus to incriminate themselves if the offered bribe had not been unusually large and accompanied by the promise, "If this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care."

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples on the Road to

Emmaus. Luke 24:13-35. Toward evening of that first Easter, two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to Emmaus, a village not far from Jerusalem, probably five or six miles from that city. As these two followers of Jesus walked along the road, they talked of the stirring events of the past few days; of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus and the reports which had reached them concerning certain women who had that morning found the tomb open and who had been told by an angel that Jesus was alive. As they talked some one drew near. He was apparently a stranger, but he asked them concerning the subject of their conversation. One of the disciples whose name was Cleopas answered, "Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days?" The one who had joined them answered, "What things?" They replied: "The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel. Yea and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not."

As they walked along the road the new-found companion of the disciples talked to them about the Messiah and showed them that it was necessary for him to suffer and be glorified through giving his life for the redemption of the world. At evening they reached the village and the one who had joined the disciples on the road "made as though he would go further." The two disciples besought him to enter their home, saying, "Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent." Their companion consented and entered the house with them. When they sat down to eat their evening meal, the guest whom they had invited

into their home took "bread and blessed; and breaking it he gave to them." Perhaps it was something in the words or acts of Jesus as he broke the bread and blessed it that revealed the identity of the one who had been the companion of the two disciples on the highway and who was now seated with them at the table. However this may be, we are told that the disciples at that moment recognized their guest as Jesus. As soon as the disciples recognized Jesus, he vanished from their sight. Filled with a great joy, the two disciples left their home and started back to Jerusalem.

With His Disciples in Jerusalem. Luke 24:36-42; John 20:19-29. When the two disciples reached Jerusalem, they found the followers of Jesus gathered together talking over the wonderful events of the day. They told the assembled disciples about their experiences on the road to Emmaus and how they had recognized Jesus as he broke bread in their home. As they were speaking, Jesus, himself, stood in their midst. "Peace be unto you," said he. But the disciples and the others who were present were terrified supposing that a spirit had appeared to them. Jesus sought to reassure them. He said: "Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having." In order further to convince them that it was not some spiritual apparition which they beheld, he said, "Have ye here anything to eat?" They "gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it, and ate before them."

The Resurrection Body of Jesus. The passages of the New Testament which we have studied, together with others to be taken up in our next lesson, teach us many things about the resurrection body of Jesus. It was a real body and not a mere shadowy semblance of a body in which Jesus appeared to his disciples. It was the same body in which he had lived before his death on the cross. And yet it was a more wonderful body than it had been before the resurrection. The resurrection body of Jesus had certain powers which it had not previously possessed. It was freed from certain limitations which had

beset it. We believe that the resurrection body of Jesus is a demonstration of what our own bodies shall become when "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, and death is swallowed up in victory."

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: Holy Women at the Tomb, by Ender (3330 Perry, page 390 Bailey); Walk to Emmaus, by Plockhorst (164 Wilde).

SUNDAY SESSION

SUBSEQUENT APPEARANCES OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR

John 21:1-24; Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-11

Jesus seems to have appeared frequently to his disciples during a period of about forty days. He may have been seen on other occasions than those mentioned in the New Testament. Paul mentions an appearance to James and another occasion when Jesus was seen by more than five hundred persons. When Paul wrote this statement, most of the five hundred people who had seen Jesus on the occasion mentioned were still living. Paul had probably met not only the disciples but also hundreds of other people who had seen Jesus after his resurrection. In this lesson we shall study a few of the appearances of Jesus which are most fully described in the New Testament.

With His Disciples by the Sea of Galilee. John 21:1-14. On the morning of the resurrection both Jesus and the angel had bidden the women tell the disciples to depart into Galilee and had promised them that there they should see the risen Saviour. The fulfillment of the promise came in due time. Seven of the disciples were together one day by the Sea of Galilee. Peter in his impulsive way said to the others, "I go a fishing." It had been a long time since the disciples had tried to catch fish. Perhaps Peter had some thoughts of return-

ing permanently to his former occupation. The other disciples said, "We also come with thee." That night they toiled diligently, but they caught nothing, at all. In the morning Jesus appeared to them on the shore of the lake and calling to them said, "Children, have ye aught to eat?" They answered, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find." They did so and the nets were found to be so full of fish that they could not draw them in. This miraculous draft of fishes was so much like another wonderful catch which they had made under the direction of Jesus, when they had first become his followers, that the disciples knew that the one on the shore must be their Teacher. John said to Peter, "It is the Lord." Hearing this, Peter cast himself into the water and swam to land. When they reached land, they found a fire of coals with freshly roasted fish for their breakfast.

Peter, as you will remember, had denied his Lord three times. After the breakfast on the beach, Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?" Peter had boasted that even if all the other disciples should forsake Jesus, yet he would not. Three times Jesus asked substantially the same question of Peter and each time Peter affirmed his love for Jesus. Each affirmation of Peter was followed by a word from Jesus exhorting Peter to be a shepherd to the other disciples and other members of the little band of believers.

With His Disciples on a Mountain in Galilee. Matt. 28:16-20. Another of the appearances of Jesus was in the midst of the familiar scenes of Galilee. This time it was not beside the lake but on a mountain where Jesus had told the disciples to meet with him. It was on this occasion that Jesus spoke to his disciples the words which have long been known as the "Great Commission." He said to them: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Jesus' Final Appearance and his Ascension. Acts 1:1-11. Jesus bade farewell to his disciples on the Mount of Olives, not far from the little village of Bethany where he had spent so many happy hours in the home of his friends. As his disciples gathered about him, he told them of the Holy Spirit who was to come and be their guide in the great task which he had assigned to them. He told them not to depart from Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit had come upon them.

The hope of a restored Jewish kingdom had been bred into the very lives of the disciples from the days of their childhood. Now that Jesus was risen from the dead, they began to think that after all there might be a temporal kingdom something like that of which they had dreamed. So they asked Jesus, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus answered them kindly but firmly, saying: "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." With these words Jesus was taken up from his disciples and a cloud hid him from their view.

The Best Attested Fact of History. The resurrection of Jesus has been called "the best attested fact of history." We can hardly have a doubt concerning the honest convictions of the New Testament writers who declare that Jesus rose from the dead. Many of these witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus suffered bitter persecutions for their faith. Many of them gave up their lives for the cause they loved more than they loved life. People do not do such things for that which they do not believe.

The testimony of Paul is especially strong. He lived at the time of the resurrection. For some years he was a persecutor of the Christians. He must have known all possible arguments against the resurrection. Yet he became fully convinced that Jesus rose from the dead. When he wrote his letter to the Corinthians, hundreds

of people who had seen Jesus after his resurrection were still living.

Then we have the testimony of Jesus himself. He said that he would rise on the third day after his burial. We know that Jesus taught things that are eternally true and that he had a wisdom beyond that of any other person who has ever lived on earth. Can we imagine that he was mistaken when he said that he would rise again?

The existence of the Christian Church is an evidence that Jesus really arose from the dead. The disciples went everywhere preaching the resurrection. Many in that time thought such preaching foolish. Many scoffed when they heard about one rising from the dead. But the preaching wrought wondrous results: it transformed the lives of men and of nations. Such results cannot come from error; they must arise from the preaching of a great truth

THE LESSON PRAYER

For the life and for the resurrection of thy Son, we give thee thanks, our heavenly Father. We thank thee for the hope of eternal life and the faith in the ultimate triumph of right which are both made strong within us because of the resurrection of Jesus. We thank thee for the faithful disciples who were witnesses of the resurrection and who, in so many instances, gave up their lives rather than be untrue to their mission. Teach us to be true disciples. Teach us to be humble followers of thy Son that we may partake of his spirit from day to day and so become like him. Give us the spirit of kindness and helpfulness, the spirit of loyalty and fidelity, the spirit of courage and endurance. We ask in the name of thy Son, our Saviour. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The strife is o'er, the battle done;
The victory of life is won;
The song of triumph has begun.
Alleluia!

The powers of death have done their worst,
 But Christ their legions hath dispersed:
 Let shouts of holy joy outburst.
 Alleluia!

The three sad days have quickly sped;
 He rises glorious from the dead:
 All glory to our risen head!
 Alleluia!

Lord, by the stripes which wounded thee,
 From death's dread sting thy servants free,
 That we may live and sing to thee,
 Alleluia!

“The Hymnal” (Revised), No. 246.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

CARRYING THE GLAD TIDINGS INTO ALL THE EARTH

Luke 24:44-53; Acts 16:6-10

The first passage of Scripture which has been chosen for this lesson is a wonderful summing up of God's plan of redemption. Jesus explained to his disciples how his sufferings, his death, and his resurrection were the fulfillment of the hopes and predictions of the law of Moses, of the prophets, and of the psalms. The laws, the sermons, and the songs of God's people in Old Testament times had all been full of lessons concerning the world's Saviour. By his death and resurrection Jesus had made it possible for all mankind to know God and to become right with him. The sphere of God's plan of redemption was no longer restricted in any sense to the Jewish race. Hence Jesus laid before his disciples the sublime task of preaching repentance and remission of sins in his name among all the nations of the earth beginning at Jerusalem. “Ye are witnesses of these things,” said Jesus. “And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.”

The second passage gives us a glimpse of Paul, the

first great foreign missionary. Under the guidance of God's spirit he had come down to the westernmost coasts of Asia. In his dreams he saw a man of Macedonia standing by him and calling him to come over into Europe and help the people there. In response to that call Paul carried Christianity into Europe for the first time.

The great task which Jesus gave to his followers, and which men like Paul have done so much to advance, is still unfinished. We are living to-day in the midst of it. In this meeting we wish to glance briefly over the world to see what has been done and what yet remains for us to do. The winning of the world for Christ is a task in which each of us may have, and ought to have, a share. Our nation has the greatest opportunity to advance the Kingdom of God that has ever come to any people. We are already taking a larger part in this sublime enterprise than any other nation. In 1919 the Protestant denominations of our country had 10,668 missionaries in the foreign fields, whereas the Protestant denominations of the whole of Europe had only 8730 persons so engaged. Our country the same year raised nearly thirty million dollars for the foreign-mission enterprise, whereas continental Europe raised only about a million and a half. Yet we ought not to be boastful concerning these matters; we ought not even to be satisfied. Our great, rich land has only made a very small beginning of what it could do and of what it ought to do toward sending the gospel of Jesus Christ into all the earth.

SOME OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST MISSION FIELDS

Latin America. By Latin America we mean South America and that part of North America which lies south of the Rio Grande River, together with the West Indies. In Latin America there are more than twenty million native Indians. Some of these natives of the highlands have come into contact with a nominal Christianity, but for the most part they are yet essentially pagan. The uncivilized Indians of the lowlands of the interior of South America have for the most part never even heard

of Christianity. There are likewise sixty million other people in Latin America whose need for the gospel of Christ is almost as great as that of their Indian neighbors.

Africa. The continent of Africa has an area four times that of the United States. It has a population of about one hundred and thirty millions. The people of the white race have reached either directly or indirectly with their commerce practically all parts of the vast African continent. It is estimated that less than ten per cent of the continent has not been brought into contact with the world's trade. But only ten per cent of those touched by the commerce of the world have been touched by gospel influences. The natural resources of the Dark Continent have thus gone forth to enrich the nations of the world which are called Christian. The sending of an adequate missionary force and the giving of adequate money to support such a force would be but a small recompense to Africa for the material wealth she has bestowed on Christian lands.

India. India is the home of one fifth of the human race. With an area only about one half as large as that of the United States, India has a population of nearly three hundred and forty millions. In our country we have an average of thirty-nine persons for every square mile. India has an average of one hundred and sixty-three persons for every square mile. The population of India is made up of many different types of people. There are one hundred eighty different languages with nearly as many different dialects in addition.

One of the greatest curses of India is the caste system. Birth within a certain caste predestines the individual to a life of luxurious ease or to a life worse than that of a slave. A high-caste Brahman has far more respect for his dogs than for people of a lower caste than himself. All this error and wickedness must give way before the principles of service and universal brotherhood taught by Jesus Christ.

China. China has a larger population than any other nation in the world. Its civilization is older than that of any nation existing to-day. The people of this great na-

tion are for the most part unlearned, but that they have great possibilities for mental development is shown by the students whom they are sending out to the colleges of America and Europe.

This great and ancient nation is certainly at the threshold of a wonderful future. It has become a republic, in name at least, and will ultimately become so in fact. It is engaged in the building of a vast and modern system of education. The population is increasing at a rapid rate, showing that the Chinese are a virile people. It is estimated that China's 427,000,000 people will have increased to over 800,000,000 by the end of the present century. This epoch of changing conditions in China presents a wonderful opportunity for the introduction of Christianity.

Japan. During the past few decades Japan has moved forward to a place of power and influence among the nations of the earth. At the same time she is grappling with internal problems of a most perplexing kind. Her change from a land of ancient agricultural methods to a land of teeming modern industries has been exceedingly rapid. The number of factory workers in Japan has increased sevenfold in five years.

The rapid changes taking place in Japan offer great opportunity for the introduction of the Christian religion. Whether this nation moves toward unbelief and despotism or toward Christian faith and democracy depends on whether the Christian people of America and Europe are willing to send the gospel to Japan in a really adequate way.

BIBLE VERSES

Isa. 52 :7; 9 :6, 7; Matt. 28 :19, 20; Acts 1 :8; Isa. 11 :9.

COMMITTEE WORK

Appoint a Foreign Mission Committee, to report on the theme, "What Our Denomination Is Doing in the Foreign-Mission Field." (Assign different countries to different members of the committee.)

THE LAW OF LOYALTY TO THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY
ENTERPRISE

We believe that the carrying of the gospel of Jesus Christ into all the earth is the great central task of the Church, and that it ought to be the aim of every worthy individual to help in this great cause. Therefore:

1. We will give a portion of our income to the support of the foreign-mission work.

2. We will try to lead others to take an interest in this great cause.

3. We will consider earnestly the work of the foreign mission field as a life work to which we may be called of God.

CHAPTER XIX

WHO IS JESUS?

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

John 1:1-5; I John 1:1-4; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:1-4

When Jesus had stilled the waves and the wind on the Sea of Galilee, his disciples said to one another in awed voices, "Who then is this?" As we draw near to the close of our study of the life of Jesus, it is fitting that we ask ourselves this question which the disciples asked one another, "Who, then, is Jesus?" Is he just a man, or is he something more than man? In this lesson we are to consider some of the personal testimonies concerning him which are found in the New Testament.

The Testimony of Jesus Himself. Matt. 11:27. There can be no doubt that Jesus claimed to stand in a unique relationship to God. He spoke frequently of himself in a way that shows this. He said that he and the Father were one and that anyone who had seen him had seen the Father. He often spoke of himself as God's Son and he declared that the Father had given all power into his hands. He said that no one knew the Son save the Father, and that no one knew the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willed to reveal him. On trial for his life before the high priest and under oath, he said that he was the Messiah and the Son of God. These words of testimony from Jesus are in perfect harmony with his character. He never said or did anything that could give any just grounds for a denial of his claims. On the other hand all his acts and his teachings and his influence in the centuries go to show that he spoke words of truth when he claimed to be God's Son.

The Testimony of the Apostle John. John 1:1-5; I John 1:1-4. John begins his gospel with the sublime

words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not."

John means to tell us that Jesus is God's Son; that he has existed with God the Father eternally; that Jesus, as well as God the Father, is Creator of all things; and that in some way surpassing our understanding God the Father and Jesus the Son are one. John says that Jesus is the source of life and light and that his light has been shining through all the past darkness, only the darkness has been unconscious of it.

At the beginning of his first Epistle John says something very like that which he says at the beginning of his Gospel. Moreover, he tells us in the Epistle how he had gained his knowledge concerning the personality of Jesus through close fellowship. He had heard Jesus. He had heard the very tones of voice and the very accents with which Jesus told the story of the Prodigal Son and with which he prayed the wonderful prayer recorded in the Gospels. He had seen Jesus with his own eyes. He had seen him moved with compassion for a leper and healing the unfortunate man with a touch. He had seen Jesus with little children in his arms and with his hands in blessing upon their heads. He had seen Jesus crowned with thorns and lifted on the cross. He had seen him in his resurrection beauty. He had touched Jesus and his hands had handled him. He had leaned back upon the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper. He had felt the pressure of the Master's hand and a hand-clasp can often express truths too deep for words. John had seen Jesus, heard him, touched him, lived with him on most intimate terms for years, and what is his verdict? His verdict is that Jesus is the eternal life of God made manifest to the eyes of men, so that they see God when they see Jesus, hear God when they hear Jesus, touch God when they touch Jesus.

The Testimony of the Author of the Epistle to the



HOLMAN HUNT

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Hebrews. Heb. 1:1-4. We do not know just who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. Some Bible scholars think that Paul wrote it; others do not. It does not matter greatly, however, who wrote the letter. We know that whoever wrote it had a wonderful grasp of the facts connected with the Jewish religion and likewise a profound knowledge of Christianity. This unknown author finds in Jesus the complete fulfillment of the law, the prophetic writings, and the psalms. Like the apostle John he believes Jesus to be the eternal Son of God. He calls Jesus the effulgence of God's glory and the express image of God's substance.

John has ascribed to Jesus the creative power which belongs to Deity. The author of this Epistle ascribes to Jesus the preserving power which is also an attribute of Deity. He says that Jesus upholds all things by the word of his power. He adds also, "When he had made purification of sins." Perhaps he means that sin is the great force of dissolution and destruction and that by purification of sins Jesus sustains the universe which God has brought into existence by the word of his power.

The Testimony of the Apostle Paul. Col. 1:15-17. Paul had probably not seen Jesus in the flesh, but he saw the light of his presence and heard his voice on the Damascus road. Paul had been a persecutor of the Christians. He had been trained as a Pharisee. As a young man he had gone about the country hunting down Christians and compelling them to blaspheme; that is, he probably tried to compel them to say that Jesus was not the Messiah and the Son of God. He must have been familiar with every possible argument against the claims of Jesus and his followers. But Paul came to believe in Jesus just as the apostle John did. He said that Jesus was "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist."

The Testimony of Other New Testament Writers.

What is true of the New Testament writers we have mentioned is true of all the other persons who took part in the writing of the New Testament. Matthew evidently wrote his Gospel primarily to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God. Luke shows us the humanity and the universal sympathy of Jesus, but he begins his Gospel narrative with the fullest account we have concerning the supernatural origin of the Saviour of the world. Mark's narratives are full of the power which Jesus constantly manifested and which mere man never possessed. When the New Testament writers call Jesus "Lord," they are using a term which indicates that they recognized his deity. So we see that there is not a writer of the New Testament who does not bear testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ.

More Than Ordinary Human Testimony. We believe that the New Testament is a part of the inspired Word of God. We believe that its authors wrote under God's direction and that their conclusions as to religious truth are infallible because they were directed by the Spirit. We have gathered then some valuable testimony which ought to be considered when we come to answer our question, "Who is Jesus?" However, we have not yet summoned all the important witnesses. In our next lesson we shall consider the testimony of a few of the witnesses of Christ who have lived since New Testament times.

NOTEBOOK WORK

Suitable pictures for the notebook: St. John the Evangelist by Carlo Dolci (278 Wilde); St. Paul, by Bartolommec (452 Wilde).

SUNDAY SESSION

WITNESSES WHO HAVE BELIEVED ON JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD THROUGH THE WORD OF HIS DISCIPLES AND THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES

John 17:20; 7:14-18

In that wonderful prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, Jesus prayed for all who should believe

on him through the word of his disciples. Since Jesus uttered these words, the number of people who believe on him as God's Son and the Saviour of the world has been constantly increasing. They have now grown to be a multitude of many millions and they are scattered over all the earth. Out of this cloud of witnesses we shall choose a few who have thought about the character of Jesus as it is pictured in the Gospels and have come to know him through their own spiritual experiences. We shall consider what answer they made to the question, "Who is Jesus?"

The Witness of One Who Had Known the Apostle John. John lived to be a very old man. Many of the later years of his life were spent at Ephesus. He made frequent trips to various parts of Asia Minor and on one of these journeys he became acquainted with a young lad named Polycarp whose home was in Smyrna. Polycarp was a Christian boy and he grew up to be one of the great leaders of the Christian Church in Asia Minor. When he was an old man, a great persecution of the Christians arose. Polycarp was seized and brought before the Roman authorities. The Romans had determined to destroy every trace of Christianity and they were putting to death all who would not worship Cæsar and reproach Christ.

The Roman proconsul tried to persuade Polycarp to swear by Cæsar and deny his faith in Jesus. "Swear, and I will set thee at liberty," he urged. "Reproach Christ, and you shall live." Polycarp replied, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me an injury; how, then, can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour."

The Testimony of Napoleon Bonaparte. We are not accustomed to think of Napoleon Bonaparte as a religious man. His wars were waged, in large part, because of selfish ambitions, and he plunged all Europe into sorrow and suffering. But after Napoleon had met his defeat at Waterloo and had been banished to the lonely island of St. Helena, he began to think on matters of religion. He read the New Testament, discovered its wonderful message and its wonderful central Person.

He thought of the kingdom he had won and lost and of the Kingdom of Christ in comparison with it. He saw how temporary and unsatisfying had been his own triumphs, how enduring had been the triumphs of Jesus. His empire was gone from him forever, but the empire of Jesus was increasing always and destined to cover all the earth. He saw that men had obeyed him through fear, or through self-interest, and that now his summer friends had all disappeared in the time of his greatest need. He saw that men obeyed Christ and were willing to die for him because they loved him. Talking with his few companions about the character of Jesus, Napoleon said: "Everything about him amazes me. I know men, and I tell you that Jesus is something more than a man."

The Testimony of Abraham Lincoln. We are glad to know that Abraham Lincoln has left on record his answer to the question, "Who is Jesus?" Lincoln had a wonderful mind, or perhaps we ought rather to say that he had a wonderful soul. He did not possess great learning, but he had the ability of a Hebrew prophet to read the signs of his time and to see God's hand in it all. Long before anyone else had come to such a conclusion, he declared that our country could not continue to exist half free and half slave. In the dark and troubled years just preceding the Civil War, Lincoln expressed his faith in God and Christ in the following words: "I know there is a God, and that he hates the injustice of slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that his hand is in it. If he has a place and a work for me, and I think he has, I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know I am right, because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God."

The Testimony of Daniel Webster. Daniel Webster has left his answer to the question we are considering. Carved on his tombstone in the old Winslow burying ground at Marshfield, Massachusetts, are the following words: "Philosophical argument, especially that drawn from the vastness of the universe in comparison with the apparent insignificance of this globe, has sometimes shaken my reason for the faith that is in me; but my heart has always assured me and reassured me that the

gospel of Jesus Christ is a divine reality. The Sermon on the Mount cannot be a merely human production. This belief enters into the very depth of my conscience; the whole history of man proves it."

The Testimony of Sidney Lanier. This gifted southern poet had a soul peculiarly responsive to the beauties of nature and to all that is pure and noble in human personality. A stretch of dreary-looking marsh which others might consider a most desolate place was a wonderland of beauty and delight to Sidney Lanier. The marsh-hen building her reedy nest and flying in all the spaces between the earth and the sky had a spiritual message for the poet leading him to resolve that he would build him a nest "on the greatness of God." What would such a soul give as an answer to the query, "Who is Jesus?" Fortunately the poet has answered the question for us. In a poem called "The Crystal," Sidney Lanier reviews some of the greatest persons of history. He speaks of Shakspeare, Homer, Socrates, Milton, and several others. He recognizes their qualities of greatness, but finds in each some imperfection. He closes the poem with a tribute to Jesus as the perfect One:

But Thee, but thee, O sovereign Seer of time,
 But thee, O poet's Poet, Wisdom's Tongue,
 But thee, O man's best Man, O love's best Love,
 O perfect life in perfect labor writ,
 O all men's Comrade, Servant, King, or Priest—
 What if, or yet, what mole, what flaw, what lapse,
 What least defect or shadow of defect,
 What rumor, tattled by an enemy,
 Of inference loose, what lack of grace
 E'en in torture's grasp, or sleep's, or death's—
 Oh, what amiss may I forgive in Thee,
 Jesus, good Paragon, thou Crystal Christ?

The Testimony of the World's Greatest Artists. Not all the testimony concerning the greatness of the character of Jesus and the uniqueness of his personality has been what we may call "word of mouth" testimony. The painters of the pictures which are recognized as the world's masterpieces have in their way paid tribute to Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

Of the twelve paintings most often recognized as the greatest pictures in the world, all but one represents some event in the life of Jesus. What is true of painting is true in other forms of art. The most sublime songs are those in which both the words and the melody were produced under the inspiration which comes from contemplating the perfections of the character of Jesus. "Rock of Ages," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Sun of My Soul, Thou Saviour Dear," and many other hymns are evidences of the influence of Jesus over the hearts and minds of his followers. They express the answers which some of the world's greatest souls have given to the question, "Who is Jesus?"

The Testimony of Millions of Witnesses for Nearly Two Thousand Years. We might go on setting down the testimony concerning Jesus until we had a volume written. Indeed, the testimony would fill so many volumes that it is hard for us to tell how many there would be, for the witnesses have been numbered by millions and they have been present in every generation for nearly two thousand years. At the close of John's Gospel there is a significant statement. He has given in this wonderful little account of Jesus, which has been called the most beautiful book in the world, his testimony concerning Jesus, or at least a small part of his testimony. He goes on to say, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." John 21:25. If this was true in John's time, how much more evident is it in our day that if all the witnesses of Jesus who live to-day or have lived in the past, should write down all that Jesus has done for them and all that he has been to them, the world would not be large enough to contain the books that should be written.

If such a volume of testimony could be written and gathered, the testimony of each individual would differ from that of each other individual in some respects, because God has never created any two people exactly alike. However, there would be a general agreement running through the testimony of all who have come

truly to know Jesus through the testimony of his disciples and through personal experience. We have a splendid statement of what this agreement is concerning Jesus and his relation to God and human redemption. It has come down to us through nearly two thousand years and it is known as 'The Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven; and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Something Besides Evidence Necessary for Real Faith in Jesus. If the evidence for the deity of Jesus and the proofs of his Saviourhood are so vast and so evident, why do not all who have ever heard of him believe on him? For the simple fact that something more than evidence is necessary for a real faith in Jesus as God's Son and the Saviour of the world. The scribes and Pharisees had evidence enough, but they did not believe. Jesus told them why they did not believe him and his teaching in the following straightforward statement: "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." John 7:16, 17. People to-day who have heard of Jesus and who do not believe on him are in a state of doubt, not because of the lack of evidence, but because they are unwilling to do the will of God as it is revealed in Jesus Christ his Son.

THE LESSON PRAYER

O God, our Father, give us honest hearts and willing minds that we may believe all the messages of truth which thou hast given us in Jesus Christ, thy Son. Teach

us day by day to know him and love him, for in knowing him we come to know thee and in loving him we are loving thee. We ask thy pardon for our sins of neglect and for the thoughtfulness which makes us often act as unworthy children of thine. Teach us the more perfect way. Develop within our souls moral earnestness, compassion for all in distress, high life purposes. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

Immortal Love, forever full,
 Forever flowing free,
 Forever shared, forever whole,
 A never-ebbing sea!

We may not climb the heavenly steeps
 To bring the Lord Christ down;
 In vain we search the lowest deeps,
 For him no depths can drown:

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
 A present help is he;
 And faith has still its Olivet,
 And love its Galilee.

The healing of his seamless dress
 Is by our beds of pain;
 We touch him in life's throng and press,
 And we are whole again

“The Hymnal” (Revised), No. 540.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

THE CHOICE OF JESUS AS SAVIOUR AND LORD: A DECISION DAY SERVICE

Matt. 16:15-17; I Kings 18:20, 21; John 6:66-69;
 Rom. 10:9, 10

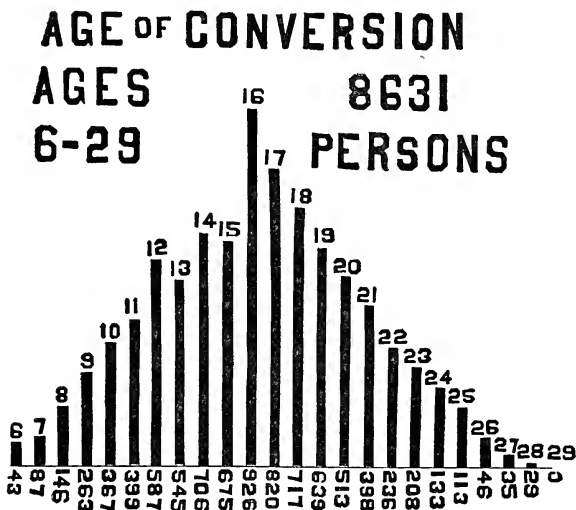
We have now spent several months studying the life and the teachings of Jesus. When anyone studies God's Word with an honest heart, God sends his Holy Spirit

to guide that person into the way of truth. Pupils who have studied these lessons will be brought face to face with Jesus' question, "Who say ye that I am?" This is a question which each one of us must answer and answer for ourselves. No one can answer it for us. Our answer to this question is the most important of all the great decisions of life. Upon its answer depends our future not only for the years of this life but for an endless existence. Most people answer this question before they are sixteen years of age. The chart on page 244 is based on a study of 8631 cases of conversion; that is, it shows the age at which these people answered for themselves the question of Jesus, "Who say ye that I am?" All of these 8631 persons answered Jesus' question in much the same way that Peter answered it: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." More of them gave this answer at the age of sixteen than at any other age, but many gave this noble answer when they were fifteen, fourteen, thirteen, or younger. Indeed, among young people who have been well taught at home and in church, the greater number answer the question before they are twelve. The age of sixteen stands highest in this study because our homes and churches are not always doing well their task of religious instruction, and also because young people often delay their answer to the question of Jesus.

Don't Go "Limping Between the Two Sides." One of the passages chosen for our study in this lesson tells of Elijah's heroic admonition to the Hebrews of his day. A great conflict was on between two types of religion, between the worshipers of Jehovah and the worshipers of Baal. Many people had become enthusiastic worshipers of the pagan idol, Baal. Idol worship laid no moral restriction upon them and they liked that kind of religion. There were a very few who were still devout worshipers of Jehovah. But perhaps the majority of the people were neither wholly on the one side nor wholly on the other. Elijah called upon them to make that day a day of decision: "How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The same conflict is still on between

good and evil, between Christ and Baal, the antichrist. No one can afford to become a person who goes "limping between the two sides" in this great conflict.

Don't Be Among Those Who "Also Go Away." It will be remembered how Jesus, when the multitudes were forsaking him, turned to his twelve disciples and said, "Will ye also go away?" This same question is before many young people who have studied these lessons. They are children of the covenant. Christian



parents have dedicated them to God in their infancy and caused them to be baptized as lambs of the flock. They have become disciples of Jesus by the choice of their parents who have taught them religious truth at home and caused them to be enrolled in Sunday school. These are Christ's own. They have now reached an age when many of their companions who have not been blessed with Christian parents will be dropping from the Sunday school and ceasing to attend church, falling away into a lifelong neglect of that which is their most precious possession, selling the soul's birthright for the mess of

the world's pottage. To these the spirit of Jesus says, "Would ye also go away?" Happy is the boy or girl of the Christian family who has heroism enough to stand up for Jesus under the circumstances, and if necessary to stand alone, who answers in Peter's noble fashion: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."

How a Person Becomes a Christian. Many little children are true disciples of Jesus because, as we have said, their parents have made the choice of discipleship for them. As they grow into manhood and womanhood they have to decide whether or not they are going to remain disciples. They must come to know and accept Jesus for themselves and not for another. The way in which anyone becomes a personal follower of Jesus and enters into the Christian life is very simple. About all we need to know is mentioned in the few words which we have chosen from Paul's letter to the Romans, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." To confess Jesus as Lord means that we believe him to be God's Son and that we pledge our allegiance to him as our Master and Guide. We must believe in Jesus with a definite faith which goes so far as to accept as true the story of his resurrection.

THE LAW OF ALLEGIANCE TO JESUS AS LORD

(To be subscribed to by all who have heretofore become Christians or who now make the decision for the Christian life.)

We believe that the Bible and the events of history teach that Jesus is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Therefore:

1. We accept Jesus as our Lord and Master.
2. We pledge allegiance to Jesus and to his Kingdom.
3. We will strive to do what Jesus would have us do and to be what he would have us be.

CHAPTER XX
THE MATCHLESS CHARACTER OF JESUS
WEEK DAY SESSION

SOME OF JESUS' PERSONAL TRAITS OF CHARACTER
AND HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS FELLOW MEN

It is not possible for us to make a list of all the qualities which entered into the personality of Jesus. Neither is it possible for us to trace all the many ways in which these qualities were combined in his perfect character. The making of even a partial list of the qualities which are manifest in the character of Jesus may, however, be helpful to us. It is good for us to be able to recognize and name the virtues he possessed.

A Perfectly Balanced Personality. As a child Jesus "grew, and waxed strong, becoming full of wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." Luke 2:40, and margin. In other words he had a perfect physical, intellectual, and spiritual development.

As a young man "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." These words give us a picture of ideal youth. Youth ought to be a time of intellectual, physical, religious, and social progress. Jesus as a young man advanced in wisdom. He was diligent in study so that he knew the Bible in a wonderful way and was able to silence his critics in every one of the numerous conflicts he had with them. He knew how to guide his disciples and how to open unto them the Scriptures. He advanced in stature. Jesus must have had great physical strength. He made long journeys on foot. He worked far into the night and on the following morning arose a great while before day. He could speak to vast multitudes by the sea, or on the mountain side, a task requiring great vigor and a voice of unusual power. Jesus increased in his religious life. He had a constantly growing consciousness of his re-

lationship to God. Jesus increased in favor with men. He was no recluse like John the Baptist. He moved among men and shared their joys and their sorrows. What a perfect ideal for every youth: a body strong and vigorous, a mind keen and powerful, a spirit responsive to all that is good and pure, a social nature tenderly sympathetic with every type of humanity!

Jesus in His Relationships to Other People. What we are is manifested clearly in the attitude we habitually maintain toward the people with whom we come in contact from day to day. Let us now consider very briefly the attitude which Jesus constantly maintained in his dealings with people:

1. **He was cheerful.** His enemies found fault with him because he and his disciples seemed to be having a good time together. He did not deny the charge, but said that his little company was indeed like a bridal party. He felt at times the burden of the world's sins. He knew how to weep with those who wept, but through all his life he kept up his cheerfulness. In the darkest hour he could say to his followers, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33b.

2. **He was optimistic.** We do not find in any utterance of his any suggestion that he ever felt doubt as to the ultimate outcome of the great mission he had undertaken. His eyes could see the white harvest fields when all others were saying, "There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest." John 4:35.

3. **He was friendly.** His friendship was so wide that it included publicans, Samaritans, lepers, and moral outcasts of many kinds. His enemies reproached him for the wideness of his social sympathies, sneeringly calling him "a friend of publicans and sinners," Luke 7:34. When a Roman captain came and told Jesus about his servant being sick, Jesus answered instantly, "I will come and heal him." Matt. 8:5-7.

4. **He was democratic.** Jesus refused to bring his conduct into harmony with the caste systems of his day. He talked with the woman of Samaria. He chose a publican to be a disciple. Matt. 9:9-13. He told his disciples to carry his gospel to all the nations. Matt. 28:19.

5. **He was sympathetic.** He was moved with compassion at the sight of a man afflicted with the leprosy. Mark 1:40-42. He had that great kind of pity which goes out not only to individuals but to multitudes. Jesus was moved with compassion at the spiritual need of the multitudes, for he saw that they were like sheep without a shepherd. Matt. 9:36, 37. He was moved with compassion when he saw their physical needs. Matt. 15:32. He had compassion on the blind. Matt. 20:34.

6. **He was tolerant.** Great wisdom sometimes makes its possessor intolerant toward the opinions of other people. Jesus never showed any trace of intolerance. When his disciple John told of rebuking a certain person who had been casting out demons in Jesus' name, because that person was not one of the regular disciples, Jesus said, "Forbid him not." Mark 9:38-40.

7. **He was generous.** Jesus said, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." Matt. 5:42. Many little incidents help us to know that Jesus practiced the generosity which he preached. On a certain occasion he said a few words to Judas, the treasurer of the company. His disciples saw him speak to Judas and they supposed that he asked Judas to give something to the poor. John 13:29.

8. **He was thoughtful concerning the comfort of others.** When he had brought the little daughter of Jairus back to life, he asked them to give her something to eat. Luke 8:55. He did not wish to send the multitudes away fasting because some of them had come from far and he feared that they might faint by the way. Mark 8:1-4.

9. **He was kind.** Most of the healings of Jesus were primarily acts of kindness toward those in distress. He was kind to a poor woman whom the Jews thought ought to be stoned. John 8:1-11. He was kind to little children. Mark 10:13-16.

10. **He was tactful.** He handled skillfully a delicate situation which had risen among the disciples and which might have led to lasting ill will and permanent division among them. Mark 10:35-45.

11. **He was humble.** Possessing wisdom and power

he was yet as he said of himself, "meek and lowly in heart." He took on himself the form of a servant. Matt. 11:29.

12. **He was courteous.** He laid down the fundamental law of courtesy in the Golden Rule and he lived in perfect harmony with that precept. On one occasion he evidently changed his plans and gave up his work for a time in Judea because he realized that his successes were making problems for John the Baptist. John 4:1-3.

13. **He was chivalrous.** Jesus was a defender of women and children in an age when such chivalrous conduct was not common. He seems to have had tender compassion for the widows and the fatherless. Perhaps his mother had been a widow during much of the time when Jesus lived at Nazareth. Jesus defended Mary when she was being censured by Judas and the other disciples for what they regarded as extravagance. Matt. 26:6-13.

14. **He was calm and self-possessed under the most trying circumstances.** When falsely accused and shamefully mistreated he either answered nothing, or his replies were such as to show that he was free from all anger and resentment. John 18:19-24.

15. **He was patient.** Jesus' dealings with his disciples during the whole time that they were with him is a continuous illustration of his unvarying patience. They learned but slowly, but their Teacher was patient. Patience shows even in the instances when he found it necessary to reprove them. He always seemed to take into consideration that "the spirit . . . is willing, but the flesh is weak." Mark 14:38.

16. **He was wholly sincere.** Absolute sincerity was evident in all that he said and did. His yea always meant yea and his nay always meant nay. He could not bear insincerity in any form. He detected it in the almsgiving of his day and in the prayers of the leaders of the Jewish religion. One of his great objectives seems to have been to eradicate every form of insincerity from the lives of his apostles. Matt. 6:2-15.

17. **He was diligent.** His life during his ministry of

only about three years was full of constant and earnest endeavor. He worked late into the night and rose early in the morning and gave up much needed rest to help the multitudes. Well might he say, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." Impending disasters could not discourage him or cause him to slacken his efforts. "We must work for the works of him that sent me, while it is day," said Jesus; "the night cometh, when no man can work." John 9:4. On another occasion he said "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." John 4:34.

18. **He was loyal.** Jesus was loyal to the religion of the Hebrews and to the Hebrew nation. He told his disciples that not one jot or tittle should pass from the law until all should be fulfilled. He told them to obey the scribes and Pharisees, as the rightful leaders of the Hebrew religion; but he warned them against the evil doings of these hypocritical people. He loved Jerusalem as the city chosen of Jehovah and wept over it when he thought of its ultimate fate. Luke 13:34.

19. **He was courageous.** Nearly every utterance of Jesus is an evidence of lofty moral courage. He dared to challenge the evil practices and the false standards of his day, even though he saw from very early in his ministry that this course would bring disastrous consequences to him personally. His enemies could not intimidate him. They could not frighten him out of the country. They could not cause him to be silent, or to modify his message to suit the conditions of the day. When the time came he set his face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem. Single-handed he drove a multitude of money changers and sellers of doves and oxen from the Temple courts. Matt. 21:12, 13.

SUNDAY SESSION

JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD AND TOWARD
HIMSELF

Matt. 5:45; 6:25-34; John 6:35-51

In our last lesson we studied Jesus' attitude toward the people he met. But there are other and even more important relationships than those which we have with our fellow men. We must each of us maintain some sort of relationship toward God. It may be an attitude of neglect, but even neglect is an attitude. In this lesson we wish first of all to discover what sort of attitude Jesus maintained toward God.

THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS TOWARD GOD

Nothing is more fundamental in the character of any person than the attitude that a person maintains toward God. If a person's attitude toward God is not right his attitude toward his fellow men cannot be right. At first thought, it may seem to us that Jesus cannot be our model in this matter as he is in other matters. He was God's Son and he stood in a unique relationship to God. And yet as we study the life of Jesus, we see that he lived as a man while he was on earth. He met the same temptations we meet. He refused always to use his divine powers to help himself and to escape from the experiences which are common to mankind. Hence he is our model in his attitude toward God quite as truly as he is our model in his attitude toward men.

Jesus Felt God's Presence in All His Works. He thought of God as the Father in heaven who feeds the birds and who notices the fall of every sparrow. To Jesus, God was the Author of all that is good and beautiful. He has given the lily that beauty which is above the glory of Solomon. Matt. 6:29. It is God who clothes the grass and who causes the sun to shine upon the evil and the good and who sends the rain on the just and the unjust. Matt. 5:45. It was probably this sense of fellowship with God in his works that led Jesus to go

apart so often into the mountains and to be often alone under the stars and by the sea at night.

Jesus' Attitude Toward God Was That of an Obedient Child to a Parent. In Old Testament times people had thought of God chiefly as a ruler. He was the Sovereign King. His power was to be feared. Before his fierce anger none could stand. It is true that a few prophetic souls caught other visions of Jehovah. They conceived of him as a good shepherd who led his flock beside the still waters, but they thought of him more as the Shepherd of the nation than as the Shepherd of individuals. Great prophets like Hosea came to understand something of God's fatherly love and compassion for his chosen people. But it remained for Jesus to reveal and teach the fatherhood of God for all of the children of men. John says that Jesus revealed the God of light in whom is "no darkness at all." I John 1:5. Paul says in his letter to the Romans, "Ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Rom. 8:15. In his letter to the Galatians Paul also says, "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. 4:6.

Jesus tried to lead his disciples to think of God as a Father. He told them that God knew all about their needs and that they need not be anxious about such things as food and clothing, because the Father knew that they needed these things. He urged them to ask large things from God. He said to them, "And of which of you that is a father shall his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11:11, 13.

Jesus Lived in Constant Fellowship and Communion with God. He spent whole nights talking with God. Before his manifestation of divine power at the grave of Lazarus, he paused and spoke with his Father. John 11:41, 42. He prayed at his baptism and at his trans-

figuration. Luke 3:21; 9:29. He prayed with his disciples in the upper room.

Jesus Was Constantly Thankful to God. He gave thanks before partaking of food or drink. Luke 22:17. When the twelve disciples returned from their successful campaign of healing and preaching, Jesus was glad with a great and deep joy. His first impulse was one of gratitude to God for this first fruits of the movement for the building of a Kingdom by his followers under his guidance. His prayer is like a shout of glad and enthusiastic thanksgiving, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight." Matt. 11:25, 26.

THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS TOWARD HIMSELF

Perhaps the pupils who study these lessons have never thought of the importance of the attitude which a person maintains toward himself. And yet this is one of the matters of utmost importance, for it determines, to a marked degree, our character. What should a person's attitude be toward himself? This question is nowhere answered more fully and more satisfactorily than in the life of Jesus.

Jesus Was Not Self-Centered. Many lives are largely spiritual failures because they are essentially self-centered. When the test comes and the deeper motives are laid bare, it is revealed that the supreme objective of the life is self-glory. Self-centered people never make a supreme sacrifice for a great cause. They make no great renunciations. How different it was in the life of Jesus! From first to last as we study his life we are conscious that he is wholly free from self-centeredness. What his enemies said of him as he hung on the cross, "He saved others; himself he cannot save," was true, though not in the way they intended it. He could not save himself and accomplish his task; he could not save himself and save the world, so he gave himself up to be crucified.

Jesus Possessed Self-Reverence. This is not saying that he had any quality of character at all like what we call self-conceit. It means that he was free from that kind of false humility which is really self-depreciation and mistrust of oneself. He had that in his character which made him spurn anything that was in the least tainted with impurity and evil. It was this quality which helped him to gain the victory in every temptation. The evil in the Tempter's suggestions was hard to detect, but Jesus felt its presence and the utter incompatibility of any contaminated act with his perfect character. For want of a better name we call this quality self-reverence.

Jesus Possessed Self-Confidence. He never doubted at all the ultimate outcome of his labors. The words he spoke were life and truth; they would be spread abroad over all the earth. The Church he was establishing was being builded on a rock and the gates of Hades should not prevail against it. But the self-confidence of Jesus was based on a deep consciousness of his perfect harmony with the purposes of God. That is the kind of confidence we ought to have. The self-confidence which is based on a consciousness of harmony with God's plans, and on a sense of right relationships with him, is a self-confidence which is free from egotism. It is the kind of humble confidence which Joseph had when he stood before Pharaoh and said, "It is not in me: God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Gen. 41:16.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father, we thank thee for the life of Jesus. Give us that hunger for his perfect righteousness which will make us earnest seekers after truth and valiant soldiers in the battle against evil. Give us right attitudes toward our companions, the inmates of our homes, and toward all the people we meet from day to day. Develop within us that spirit of kindness, courtesy, fidelity, and perseverance found in Jesus thy Son. Teach us to see new beauty in his perfect life and to desire strongly to be like him. We ask in his name. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

O could I speak the matchless worth,
 O could I sound the glories forth
 Which in my Saviour shine,
 I'd soar and touch the heavenly strings,
 And vie with Gabriel while he sings
 In notes almost divine.

.
 I'd sing the characters he bears,
 And all the forms of love he wears,
 Exalted on his throne:
 In loftiest songs of sweetest praise,
 I would to everlasting days
 Make all his glories known.

“The Hymnal” (Revised), No. 159

See “The Story of the Hymns and Tunes,” by Brown and Butterworth, page 136.

 EXPRESSSIONAL SESSION

THE GOAL FOR CHRISTIAN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

I John 3:2, 3; II Cor. 3:18; Phil. 4:8

In the New Testament the character of Jesus is declared to be the model character and the goal toward which every follower of Jesus ought to be moving. Paul declares that in the face of Jesus Christ, God has caused the light of his glory to shine forth, and that in beholding that light we are transformed “into the same image from glory to glory.” II Cor. 3:18; 4:6. He urges his Philipian friends to think on the things that are honorable, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. Phil. 4:8. All the qualities which Paul mentions in this noble admonition are found in perfection in the character of Jesus.

John the beloved disciple has some statements on the same subject. His profound mind was ever inclined to go back to the beginning and forward to the endless eternity. He was impressed by the possibilities for measureless development in character for those who are

children of God through Jesus Christ "Beloved, now are we children of God," says he, "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, and margin.

There is no true, deep, and abiding joy and satisfaction which exists independently of what we are, or in other words, which is not the result of purity and nobility of character. Therefore the choice of Jesus as Lord is the choice of a path which leads to the truest and most abiding happiness. The greatest joys of life come to us incidentally; that is, they come to us while we are giving ourselves in unselfish service. They come in this way because unselfish service builds character, and happiness is a by-product of noble character-building. The deeper joys and abiding satisfactions of life are never experienced by the mere pleasure seeker, because pleasure-seeking makes for selfish and shallow character and in the very nature of things such a character cannot know great and deep joys.

A life cannot be truly and widely useful unless it is linked with greatness of character. What we are determines what we will do and what we can do. Every worthy boy and girl dreams of accomplishing great things in life. Whether or not the dream shall come true does not depend on accidental circumstances and the presence or absence of suitable opportunities. There will be opportunities enough. Whether or not the dream comes true depends primarily on what each boy or girl chooses to become. "Have thy tools ready; God will find thee work," is an ancient and true adage. A choice of Jesus Christ as Lord is therefore a choice of the path which leads up to highest usefulness.

BIBLE VERSES

Matt. 25:31-46; John 10:27, 28; 12:25; 17:1, 2; Rom. 6:23; Phil. 3:8, 9; Eph. 3:14-17.

STUDY TOPICS

1. Development of Peter's Character Under the Influence of Jesus.

2. Transformations in the Life of Paul Due to the Influence and Power of Jesus.

3. Changes in the Character of the Apostle John Due to the Power and Influence of Jesus.

4. How Levi the Publican Became Matthew the Disciple.

5. How Jesus Changes the Character of His Followers To-Day.

(Illustrate by the story of John B. Gough, Jerry McAuley, and others. See "Twice-Born Men," by Harold Begbie.)

6. Why Character Is Worth More Than Material Riches.

7. A Runaway Slave Who Became the Beloved and Faithful Helper of the Apostle Paul. Philemon; Col. 4:9.

8. How the Character of a Publican Was Changed Through A Few Hours Fellowship With Jesus. Luke 19:1-10.

9. How Young People of Intermediate Age May Become More Like Jesus in Character.

10. Why Many Professed Christians Fail to Grow More and More Like Jesus in Character.

THE LAW OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The character of Jesus as shown in the Gospels is of matchless beauty and perfection. Therefore:

1. We will take his perfect character as our life goal.

2. We will strive earnestly and perseveringly to become like him.

3. We will endeavor to know him better from day to day, through the study of his life and through personal experience, trusting that thus our ideals as to life and duty may be constantly lifted and strengthened.

CHAPTER XXI
THE KINGDOM OF JESUS
WEEK DAY SESSION

A WORLD-WIDE DOMINION OF BROTHERHOOD AND
SERVICE

Psalm 72; Isa. 11:1-9; Matt. 13:31-33, 44-46

Many of the Jewish people would not accept Jesus as the Messiah because he was unwilling to set up the kind of kingdom they desired and because he refused to be the kind of king they thought the Messiah ought to be. These people were right in their expectation that the Messiah would be a king and that he would set up a kingdom. Jesus came to build a Kingdom and to be a King, but his plans and purposes were far above the plans and purposes of his fellow countrymen in these matters. The Jewish patriotism of the time of Jesus was narrow, selfish, and revengeful. With this spirit Jesus could not have fellowship and coöperation. He had come to accomplish the glorious destiny of the Jewish race so long foretold, to make of that race a blessing to all the nations of the earth. If Jesus had yielded to the popular demand and set up the kind of kingdom the people wished, the promises which God had given in the Old Testament could not have been fulfilled. A brief study of a few Old Testament passages will show why this is true.

An Old Testament Song of Hope. Psalm 72. This psalm expresses the hopes and the longings of righteous people in Old Testament times and God's gracious assurances to them that their highest hopes and their deepest longings would be answered in due time. We should remember that the psalms are songs and that psalms like this were sung for hundreds of years in the stately services of the Temple, in the simpler, but no less spiritual, services of the synagogues, and around the firesides of thousands of Jewish homes. This song pictures an ideal

king and a perfect kingdom. The king is absolutely just: "He will judge thy people with righteousness." The king is perfect in mercy. His chief concern is not for himself, nor for those who are high in positions of authority and power. He is concerned for the welfare of the poor and the children of the needy.

"He will come down like rain upon the mown grass,
As showers that water the earth."

The kingdom over which this ideal king is to reign is to be universal:

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, And
from the River unto the ends of the earth."

The kingdom is to be everlasting. Men are to be his subjects.

"While the sun endureth,
And so long as the moon, throughout all genera-
tions."

All mankind is to be blessed in this king and he is to receive their homage forever.

A Prophet's Vision of the Golden Age. Isa. 11:1-9. These words of Isaiah tell of the ideal king and of his reign of universal peace. Similar passages are to be found in the written words of nearly every one of the prophets. Beyond the wars and commotions of the times in which the prophets lived they were led of God to see a time when wars should be forever ended; when men should "not hurt nor destroy" in all the holy mountain of God and the earth should "be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

The New Testament Reaffirms the Promises of the Old Testament. Luke 1:32, 33; Matt. 3:1-12. The promise of an ideal king and an everlasting kingdom which is so clearly promised in the Old Testament is carried over into the New Testament without any loss of emphasis. The angel messengers spoke of the Christ-child as one who should occupy "the throne of his father David," and who should "reign over the house of Jacob for ever." John the Baptist went forth preaching that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand. To John the Messiah was to be a conquering King, one who

should "cleanse his threshing-floor" and burn up the chaff "with unquenchable fire." The twelve apostles became followers of Jesus fully expecting that a kingdom was to be established forthwith. The multitudes thronged about Jesus awaiting the moment when the kingdom should be proclaimed and the standard of revolt raised against the Romans.

Jesus and the Kingdom. Mark 1:14; Matt. 13:31-33; 6:10; John 18:33-38. Jesus began his ministry with the proclamation that the Kingdom of God was at hand. He meant that the kingdom of which the prophets had spoken and of which the preceding generations of the Jewish people had sung was about to begin. Even before he began to preach, Jesus must have thought long and deeply about the nature of the Kingdom he was sent to establish on the earth. Should he use the methods which kings had always used? Should he have a standing army, a capital city, a court with high officials of state? Should he use his divine powers to enforce obedience and to overthrow the evil opposition of his enemies? When he returned from the wilderness he had settled these problems, for all time. He would not use force to establish his Kingdom in the world. He would not use his divine power to save himself, but to save others. He would depend upon the less spectacular and the less rapid forces. He would teach. He would persuade. He would use spiritual means rather than material means for the building of a spiritual Kingdom.

As we consider the things which Jesus said concerning the Kingdom of God, we come to see that he brought to light the deepest truths of the Old Testament on the subject, truths which had been lost to sight in the narrow and selfish conceptions of the times. Jesus believed in a world-wide kingdom. When his followers were only a little group of hardly more than a dozen people, and when everything seemed to point to a speedy dissolution of the movement which he had begun, Jesus spoke of the time when his gospel should be preached in all the world. His last charge to his disciples was to go and make disciples among all nations.

Jesus believed in an everlasting kingdom. He said

that he was building on a rock and that the gates of Hades could never overthrow the structure whose foundations he was laying. Jesus believed in a spiritual kingdom. He told Pilate that his Kingdom was not of this world. Did he mean that his Kingdom was not to be set up in this world, but only in heaven? Evidently not. His Kingdom was to be in the world, but not of the world. It was not to be of a kind like the other kingdoms of the earth. It was to be made up of all who give obedience to Jesus as their King, not from outward compulsion, but from an inner impulse of love and gratitude.

The Kingdom of Jesus in the World of To-Day. The Kingdom of God which Jesus organized has been growing through the centuries. Its citizens now number many millions. Thousands of missionaries are toiling year after year to spread the boundaries of the Kingdom out to include all the earth. Jesus' prediction that his gospel should be preached in all the earth is being fulfilled. Other world religions like Mohammedanism and Buddhism are on the decline. Christianity is increasing in the number of its believers and in its power over the life of the world. Jesus will surely become King over all the earth.

"The City of God." Early in the fifth century there was living in northern Africa one of the great men who are known as "The Fathers of the Christian Church." His name was Augustine. It was a time of great uncertainty and of world-wide unrest. The Romans had ruled the world for many centuries. Their great capital, Rome, had held sway over large portions of the earth for a thousand years. The Romans and many other people had come to believe that this city by the Tiber was forever established as the mistress of the world. They called Rome "The Eternal City." But toward the close of Augustine's life Rome was tottering. Hordes of northern barbarians were pushing southward and the very existence of "The Eternal City" was endangered. During these years Augustine wrote a book in the Latin language. He called it "De Civitate Dei," the "Of the City of God." In this book he argued that the Christian religion and not Rome is the true "Eternal City."

If we are followers of Jesus Christ we have become citizens of this "City of God." It is our duty and our opportunity to extend its borders and perpetuate its blessings. Many noble followers of Jesus have labored to build this city and the Master gave his life for it. Yet we each have a part in the great task; we are coworkers with the heroes of the faith in past centuries. God has provided that apart from us and those who follow us, the work of his faithful ones of the past shall "not be made perfect."

SUNDAY SESSION

A DOMINION OVER THE WHOLE OF LIFE

I Cor. 15:20-28

At one time Jesus said to the Pharisees, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: . . . for . . . the kingdom of God is within you." In his teaching Jesus recognized two characteristics of the Kingdom of heaven. It was a force in the world and it was a new life in each individual who believed in him as the Son of God. In both of these spheres the Kingdom grows. It spreads abroad over the earth in a territorial expansion. It grows within the soul of each believer, bringing every thought and motive into subjection to Christ and building a soul character which is modeled after his likeness. In our Scripture lesson Paul says that Jesus must reign until he has put all things under his feet. This complete reign of Jesus is not yet perfect in any individual, in any community, in any nation; but it is coming to be more nearly perfect year by year and century by century.

King of Our Lives. The dominion of Jesus within the life of the individual is a matter of utmost importance for it is the foundation of his dominion in the world. He rules the world only as he rules individual lives. His dominion within the life of the individual varies greatly. Some have only begun to know what it means to have Jesus reign within and reign alone. Some are much farther along the road of discipleship. Their lives are coming more and more largely under the control of the ideals Jesus taught, conforming more and more closely

to the perfect life he lived. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is like the growth of a plant; that it is "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."

It is a very great mistake for us to think of only a few of our acts as having religious significance. If we think of going to church, praying, and reading the Bible, as a list covering the chief items of religious activity, we have a very inadequate conception of what the religion of Jesus really means. The Christian religion, if it is to be real and potent must express itself in the whole of life. It must govern us in every relationship with our fellow men. Jesus interpreted religion in terms of fellowship with God and with men; in terms of service, justice, and mercy. The scribes and Pharisees kept a small compartment of their lives with great care for in it they imagined they held secure and safe all there was of religion. Jesus made the whole of life a matter of religion. If we are to be Christians worthy of the name we bear, we must have a conception of religion like that of our great Leader.

King in the Home. The religion of Jesus is just as important in the home as it is in the Church. Perhaps we should say that it is more important in the home than it is in the Church, because we spend so much more time at home than we do at church. The home is the most important organization in the world. When the homes of a nation are brought into harmony with the ideals of Jesus, the civilization of that nation grows great and strong and its spiritual welfare is assured. The Christian home is a place of worship. If there are no family altars in the homes of a nation, there will be no real altars of worship in the churches of the nation. The Christian home is the most important agency of religious education. Home influences have the first chance to mold the characters of children and for the first five or six years of life home influences are practically without competing influences. Thus when Jesus is King in the home, he touches life at its very beginning.

King in Our Schools. Charles Dickens wrote a novel in which he pictured the condition in certain schools of his day. Many of the schools of that time must have

been places where children were oppressed and tormented. Even some of our parents can remember the time when the schools of our country were dreary and dreaded child prisons rather than places of happy activity. To-day our schools are becoming more and more attractive. Children who dislike to go to school are now the exception. Most children find the school-room a happy place to be. These changes in our schools are due almost wholly to the influence of Jesus in education. Our schools have become Christianized, to a larger extent than they used to be. When Jesus is made King in our schools, in the classroom, and on the playground, the spirit of kindness, diligence, and true enjoyment governs the whole institution.

King in the Business World. Jesus is not yet King in the world of business as he is in our Christian homes and in our best schools. Too often we find in business the spirit of selfishness which is the very opposite of the spirit of Jesus. Employers and employees often regard one another as enemies. The employer sometimes tries to get as much labor out of his employees as he can and to pay as low wages as he can. The employee sometimes aims to get as high wages as he can and to do as little as he can to earn the wages he receives. We have said that these conditions sometimes exist. It is good to remember that they do not exist everywhere in the world of industry and that more and more the Golden Rule of Jesus is being recognized in business. Business men and men who labor with their hands are slowly learning that the teachings of Jesus apply in every phase of industry and that a lasting and satisfactory industrial system cannot be built on any other foundation.

King of the Nations. The relations which exist between nations have only begun to feel in any large way the influence of the teachings of Jesus. Until very recently the nations of the earth have maintained an attitude of armed neutrality toward one another, even in times of peace. They have fortified their frontiers with great guns and spread mines of high explosives over the floors of their harbors. The rule of might has been proclaimed as the highest law of nations in certain circles

and it has prevailed to an alarming extent in all international relationships.

These conditions have existed because the nations, as such, have not been Christianized. Many of the nations have contained many Christian people and have been called Christian nations, but in their attitudes toward one another they have been governed by pagan standards rather than by the standards of Jesus. The World War came because the nations of the earth were not dealing with one another in the way Jesus taught.

Just as Jesus had become King in the Christian home, and just as he is becoming King in the Christian school, so he must become King in all industrial matters and in all international matters. This is one of the great tasks for the years just ahead. It is one of the greatest tasks Christianity has ever undertaken.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we can never repay thee for thy great gift in Jesus, thy Son. We can never lay hold upon all the truth which thou hast revealed unto the world through his teaching and his life, for that truth is beyond the power of man's mind to fathom. We know, however, that we can be ever growing in our love for thee and in our gratitude to thee. We know that we can be forever learning lessons of truth in thy Son. We would therefore be continually thankful and unfailingly loyal. We would take thy Son as our King and Teacher. We would grow more and more like him in character. We would have him rule our thoughts and words and deeds. Teach us how to exalt him in our homes, in our schools, in our communities, in our nation, and in all the nations of the earth. We ask in his name. Amen.

THE LESSON HYMN

Rejoice, the Lord is King:
 Your Lord and King adore;
 Rejoice, give thanks and sing,
 And triumph evermore:
 Rejoice, again I say, Rejoice.
 Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;

.

His Kingdom cannot fail,
 He rules o'er earth and heaven;
 The keys of death and hell
 Are to our Jesus given:
 Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:
 Rejoice, again I say, Rejoice.

He sits at God's right hand
 Till all his foes submit,
 And bow to his command,
 And fall beneath his feet:
 Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
 Rejoice, again I say, Rejoice.

“The Hymnal” (Revised), No. 143.

EXPRESSIONAL SESSION

CITIZENS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Eph. 4:11-16, 25-32

Paul wrote the words of our Scripture lesson to certain citizens of Ephesus. The people to whom he wrote, however, had lately become citizens in a kingdom of another sort than that of the city of Ephesus. They had become citizens of the Kingdom of Christ. Some of the things Paul wrote to these Ephesian Christians are well worth our study, for they are just as important for the Christians of to-day as they were for the Christians of some two thousand years ago.

Mutual Helpfulness. Vs. 11, 12. In these verses Paul speaks of a kind of division of labor which is to exist among the followers of Christ. Some are to be evangelists, some apostles, some pastors, some teachers. Selfish personal ambitions are eliminated, for all these various activities are to be for the building up of each citizen of Christ's Kingdom into the fullness of Christ. Unselfish service is a distinguishing characteristic of the true citizens of the Kingdom.

Perfect Unity. Vs. 13-16. Paul compares the followers of Jesus to the physical body of an individual. Each part of a person's body exists to help each other part. No part can be severed from the other parts without suf-

fering loss or destruction. This unity of interests and feelings and purposes is one of the characteristics of citizens of the Kingdom.

Perfect Truthfulness. V. 25. Sir Francis Bacon said that "where there is no regard for the truth, there can be no safe communication between man and man." Where there is not a perfect regard for truth, there can be no Christian unity and this is why Paul urges the Ephesian Christians to put away all falsehood and speak nothing but truth "each one with his neighbor."

Perfect in Self-Control. Vs. 26, 27. Anger is a dangerous emotion because it often leads us to say sinful things and do sinful acts. Paul does not condemn anger in itself, but he urges Christians to be angry and sin not. Anger against evil things is at times helpful for the Christian. Anger long continued is a smoldering fire which spoils one's disposition and is apt to break out into disastrous conflagrations at unexpected times. Hence Paul advises that anger be quickly terminated: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Perfect in Honesty and Industry. V. 28. There can be no Christian unity where there is no regard for personal rights in property, so Paul commands the Ephesian Christians to eliminate every form of theft and to labor patiently and diligently so that each may have enough for himself and the means of helping others who fall into misfortune.

Perfect in Speech. Vs. 29-32. The words which we speak are evidences of what we are. Speech is a mighty agency for either good or evil. Hence it is not strange that Paul writes to his Ephesian converts warning them against "corrupt" speech and admonishing them to speak those things which are "good for edifying." He likewise goes down to the soul sources which determine what we say. He urges the Ephesians to purge themselves of all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, railing and malice, and to cultivate a spirit that is kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving. The boy or girl, man or woman, who is able to live up to these splendid admonitions will be a worthy citizen of Christ's Kingdom.

BIBLE VERSES

Matt. 7:21; Luke 9:61, 62; John 3:3; Matt. 18:1-3; Acts 14:21, 22; Rom. 14:17; James 2:5.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What kind of kingdom did the Jews expect the Messiah to set up?

2. What kind of kingdom had the prophets foretold?

3. Name some of the parables of the Kingdom and show what each was intended to teach.

4. In what respects were Jesus' conceptions of the Kingdom of heaven above those of other people of his day?

5. What means did Jesus use for building up his Kingdom?

6. Why do we believe that the Kingdom of Jesus will conquer the earth and last forever?

7. Is Jesus less truly, or is he more truly, a king than any other monarch who has ever lived? Why?

8. After the whole world has heard of Christ and all people have become followers of him, what work will yet remain to be done?

9. What changes will the full dominion of Jesus have upon present methods in the business world?

10. How will the teachings of Jesus affect the relationships of nations to one another?

STUDY TOPICS

1. The Democracy of the Kingdom. James 2:1-9.

2. Citizens of the Kingdom and Their Blessings. Matt. 5:3-12.

3. Are There Limits to the Per Cent of Profit Which a Christian Can Justly Derive from His Business?

4. Causes Which Led to the World War.

5. Was Our Nation Guided by Christian Principles When It Returned the Boxer Indemnity to China? Why?

6. Do Christian Principles Lay Any Restrictions on the Kind and the Amount of Tariff We Impose on Foreign Goods? Why?

7. Ways in Which We Can Make Jesus King of Our Homes.

8. Ways in Which We Can Make Jesus King in Our Schools.

THE LAW OF ALLEGIANCE TO CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Jesus came to earth to establish a world-wide and everlasting dominion over the souls of all mankind. Therefore as citizens of his Kingdom:

1. We will strive to obey our King at all times and in every way.

2. We will try to make his dominion perfect in our homes, our communities, and our nation.

3. We will help to extend his Kingdom into all the earth.

