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Preparations for
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THE BIBLE STUDY UNION LESSONS
SENIOR GRADE

PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTIANITY

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.

	Pages
Character and Contents of the Course	iii-v
Directions for Study	vi

THE LESSONS.

Part 1. Israel's Religion to the End of David's Reign.

Lesson 1. The Old Semitic World	1
Lesson 2. Religion of the Ancient Egyptians	9
Lesson 3. Religion of the Ancient Babylonians	15
Lesson 4. Hammurabi's Standards of Justice	22
Lesson 5. Religions of Ancient Palestine	27
Lesson 6. Primitive Hebrew Forms of Worship	32
Lesson 7. Influence of the Exodus on Israel's Faith	38
Lesson 8. Israel's Faith in the Mosaic Age	45
Lesson 9. Israel's Faith during the Settlement	51
Lesson 10. Early Records of the Hebrews	56
Lesson 11. Religious Phases in the Establishment of the Kingdom	62
Lesson 12. Growth of Israel's Faith under the Early Mon- archy	69
Lesson 13. Abiding Ideas in the Early Religions. Review	75

CHARACTER AND CONTENTS OF THE COURSE.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

Note 1. Purpose. The purpose of this course is to survey those religious ideas which unfolded during the pre-Christian era, served as a preparation for Christianity, and finally received their fullest expression and realization in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Note 2. Scope. The course begins with a sketch of the old Semitic world, of which the Hebrew people constituted a part, traces the rise and development of characteristic features of the religion of Israel, and concludes with a review of the fundamental religious teachings of Jesus.

Note 3. Method. The course is divided into four parts. Each deals with a specific period of historical and religious development.

Part I describes the religions of ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Palestine (as introductory to the Biblical records of Israel's faith), primitive forms of Hebrew worship, the influence of the exodus upon their religious life, the early religious literature of the Hebrews, and concludes with a study of the religious aspects of David's career.

Part II begins with a study of Solomon's institution of the temple service, notes the character of the religious life of Israel during the period of the divided kingdom, and examines the religious content of the earlier prophetic utterances, carrying the course forward to the time of the exile.

Part III covers the religious developments of the exilic and post-exilic periods, special attention being given to the later prophetic writings, the establishment of Judaism under priestly auspices, and the religious temper of Israel under the Maccabees.

Part IV shows how the religious ideas developed in the Old Testament period were enlarged and spiritualized in the teachings of Jesus.

The whole study thus leads naturally to the second year course of the Senior department, which covers the establishment of organized Christianity by the Apostles and gives a brief account of the leading events in the history of the church down to the present time.

Note 4. Longer and Shorter Courses. Classes wishing a six months' course can take either Parts I and II or Parts III and IV, while Parts I, II, and III make an appropriate nine months' course. Part IV is so based upon Part III that it cannot be studied to the best advantage without a previous study of the latter.

LESSON TITLES AND SUBJECTS.

(Subject to revision.)

PART I. ISRAEL'S RELIGION TO THE END OF DAVID'S REIGN.

- Lesson 1. THE OLD SEMITIC WORLD. Its Physical Features and its Peoples.
- Lesson 2. RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS. Its Origin and Characteristics.
- Lesson 3. RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT BABYLONIANS. Its Beliefs and Ceremonies.
- Lesson 4. HAMMURABI'S STANDARDS OF JUSTICE AND MERCY. Selections from the Babylonian Code.
- Lesson 5. RELIGIONS OF ANCIENT PALESTINE. The Baalim, and the Worship at the High Places.
- Lesson 6. PRIMITIVE HEBREW FORMS OF WORSHIP. Sacrifices, Sacred Rites and Ceremonies.
- Lesson 7. INFLUENCE OF THE EXODUS ON ISRAEL'S FAITH. Jehovah's Power Demonstrated.
- Lesson 8. ISRAEL'S FAITH IN THE MOSAIC AGE. Jehovah's Sovereignty Accepted.
- Lesson 9. ISRAEL'S FAITH DURING THE SETTLEMENT. Blending of the Faiths of the Desert with those of Palestine.
- Lesson 10. EARLY RECORDS OF THE HEBREWS. Their Dependence on Tradition.
- Lesson 11. RELIGIOUS PHASES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM. The Influence of Samuel.
- Lesson 12. GROWTH OF ISRAEL'S FAITH UNDER THE EARLY MONARCHY. Religious Aspects of David's Career.
- Lesson 13. ABIDING IDEAS IN THE EARLY RELIGIONS. Review of Lessons 1-12.

PART II. ISRAEL'S RELIGION FROM SOLOMON TO THE BEGINNING OF THE EXILE.

- Lesson 14. EARLY MORAL AND RELIGIOUS STANDARDS. Israel's Legal Institutions.
- Lesson 15. THE RELIGIOUS VALUE OF RITUAL. Solomon's Enlargement of the Temple Service.
- Lesson 16. ISRAEL'S UNIQUE RELATION TO JEHOVAH. Theocratic Protests against the Monarchy.
- Lesson 17. POPULAR RELIGION IN THE DIVIDED KINGDOM. High Places, Sacrifices, Festivals, etc.
- Lesson 18. THE CONFLICT WITH BAALISM. The Crisis in the Days of Elijah.
- Lesson 19. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. The Preaching of Amos.
- Lesson 20. THE DIVINE JUSTICE AND LOVE. Hosea's Message to a Faithless People.
- Lesson 21. THE HIGHER IDEA OF GOD. Influence of the Prophets in Attaining a Truer Faith.
- Lesson 22. THE MORAL DEMANDS OF RELIGION. The Insufficiency of Ceremonies.
- Lesson 23. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY. Teachings of Isaiah and Jeremiah.
- Lesson 24. THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW. The Great Reformation under Josiah.
- Lesson 25. THE NEW COVENANT. Jeremiah's Messianic Conceptions.
- Lesson 26. THE TEACHINGS AND WORK OF THE EARLY PROPHETS. Review of Lessons 14-25.

PART III. ISRAEL'S EXILIC AND POST-EXILIC RELIGION.

- Lesson 27. **THE BABYLONIAN EXILE.** Its Effect on Israel's Life and Faith.
- Lesson 28. **JEHOVAH EVERYWHERE PRESENT.** Ezekiel's Comforting Messages to the Exiles in Babylonia.
- Lesson 29. **JEHOVAH'S CHARACTER AND ISRAEL'S DESTINY.** God's Plan for the Gentiles.
- Lesson 30. **THE IDEAL SERVANTS OF JEHOVAH.** Their Vicarious Suffering as Instruments of Redemption.
- Lesson 31. **THE PRIESTLY LAW.** Its Development in Babylon.
- Lesson 32. **THE FOUNDING OF JUDAISM.** Nehemiah's Enforcement of the Law in Jerusalem.
- Lesson 33. **ISRAEL'S NARROWNESS AND JEHOVAH'S LOVE.** Teachings of the Book of Jonah.
- Lesson 34. **THE MACCABEAN STRUGGLE.** Its Effect on Israel's Character and Faith.
- Lesson 35. **THE KINGDOM OF GOD.** Messianic Visions of Jehovah's Reign.
- Lesson 36. **LATER DEVELOPMENTS OF JUDAISM.** Rise of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- Lesson 37. **THE FAILURE OF JUDAISM.** The Insufficiency of the Law a Preparation for Christ.
- Lesson 38. **OTHER PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTIANITY.** How Greece and Rome Paved the Way for its Rapid Spread.
- Lesson 39. **THE PROGRESSIVE NATURE OF DIVINE REVELATION.** Review of Lessons 27-38.

PART IV. CHRISTIANITY THE FULFILMENT OF ISRAEL'S FAITH.

- Lesson 40. **THE OLD TESTAMENT RELIGION PASSING INTO THE NEW.** The Preaching of John the Baptist.
- Lesson 41. **JESUS' MISSION IN THE WORLD.** The Establishment of the Kingdom of God
- Lesson 42. **JESUS THE GREAT TEACHER.** His Relation to the Old Testament Religion.
- Lesson 43. **JESUS' TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIMSELF.** His Relation to the Father and to the World
- Lesson 44. **JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING GOD.** The Divine Fatherhood.
- Lesson 45. **JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING MAN.** Human Sonship and Brotherhood.
- Lesson 46. **JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING SIN.** Its Essence Found in Selfishness.
- Lesson 47. **JESUS' WAY OF SALVATION.** Redemption from Sin through Faith and Obedience.
- Lesson 48. **JESUS' LAW OF LOVE.** The Unselfishness of a Good Life.
- Lesson 49. **JESUS' TEACHING IN REGARD TO THE FUTURE LIFE.** Its Contrast with Old Testament Beliefs.
- Lesson 50. **JESUS' ABIDING PRESENCE.** The Mission of the Holy Spirit.
- Lesson 51. **CHRISTIANITY FOR THE WORLD.** The Great Commission.
- Lesson 52. **CHRISTIANITY THE FINAL RELIGION.** Review of Lessons 40-51.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY.

Students are advised to use in connection with this course the American Revised Version of the Bible, which is undoubtedly the best.

Note carefully the subject and scope of each lesson as given in the title and as expanded in the "Object of the Lesson," Note 1.

Read the Scripture passage indicated at the head of the lesson, and consider its bearing on the subject in hand.

Read all the lesson "Notes," pausing after each one to let the mind dwell on its contents. Look up the Scripture references. Until this has been done do not look at the "Questions on the Lesson."

Under each of the "Questions on the Lesson" write a brief answer. Whoever fails to do this will miss one of the most helpful features of these lessons. If the class come with the answers carefully prepared and written out, this part of the lesson can be passed over rapidly.

Study for yourself some particularly interesting point suggested by the lesson. This may be a belief, a religious rite, a custom, a temple, a heathen deity, a biography or some historic event. Whatever it is, study it carefully. Make this course contribute to your fund of general knowledge by a good use of whatever libraries may be within reach.

Make note of one or two of the most interesting questions that come to mind as you study the lesson, and bring them up for discussion in the class. If no questions come, study the lesson again, and think harder.

Keep note-book and pencil in hand both when studying the lesson at home and when going over it in the class. In the note-book write (1) what you have to say on the several points indicated under "Note-book Work"; (2) any special assignment made to you; (3) interesting results of investigations, or questions that arise in private study or in the class. Such use of the note-book is indispensable if the best results are to be attained.

Read these suggestions frequently, and with each lesson put them into practice.

Preparations for Christianity

PART I

ISRAEL'S RELIGION TO THE END OF DAVID'S REIGN

Preliminary. Before beginning the study of the lessons, read the "Introductory Notes" and the outline of the course as presented in the "Lesson Titles and Subjects." Finally, read the "Directions for Study," and follow them closely.

The First Five Lessons. These are introductory to the entire course. While they do not deal directly with the faith of the Hebrews, they are designed to throw light on the religious and social environment in which that faith grew up, and upon the influences, mostly for evil, with which it had to contend during the long period of its development.

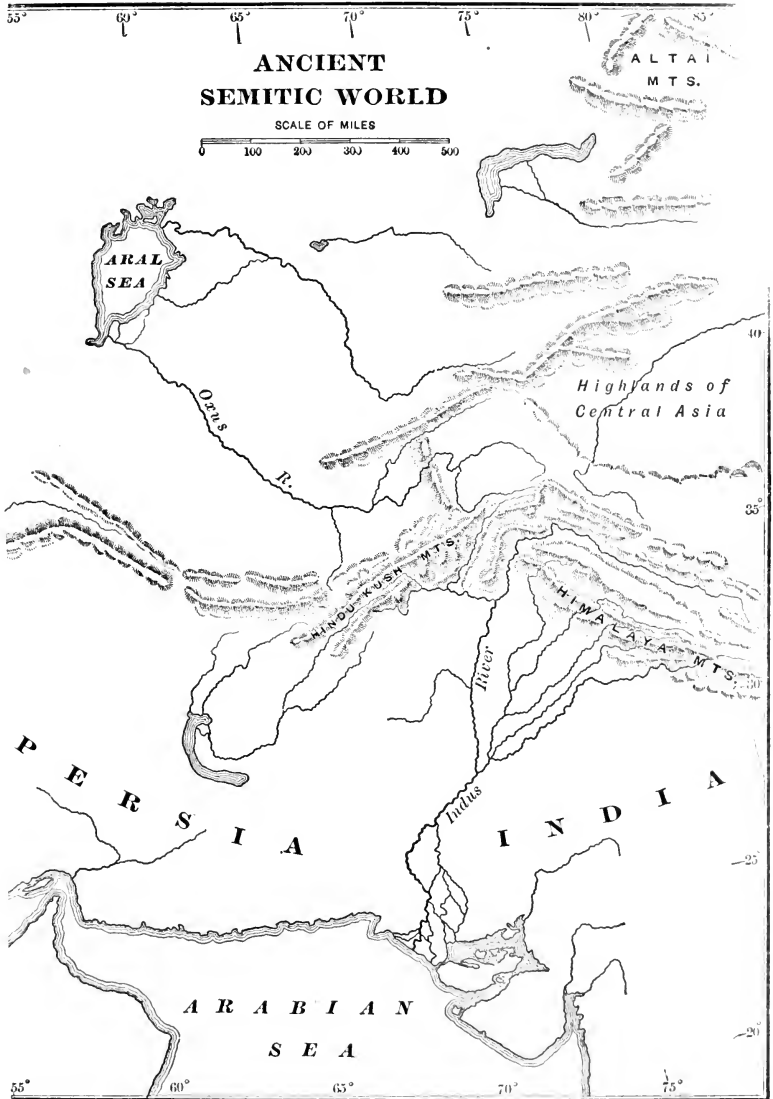
Lesson 1. THE OLD SEMITIC WORLD. Its Physical Features and its Peoples.

Scripture Reading: One of the Semitic Accounts of Creation. Gen. ch. 1.

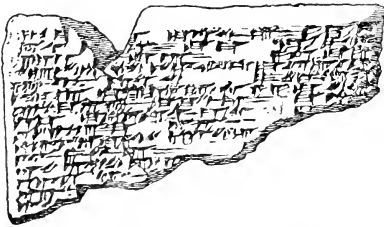
Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To trace to its early beginnings the history of the Hebrew people, through whom God carried out His plan of salvation for the world.

Note 2. How we Get our Knowledge of the Old Semitic World. Few stories are more fascinating than those which tell how the buried cities of ancient Babylon and Nineveh have been discovered, the palaces of mighty kings dug from the vast mounds of rubbish which mark the city sites, and whole libraries, containing narratives of conquests and kingly achievements, brought to light after having been buried from twenty-five hundred to five thousand years. Until recently almost the only knowledge we had of those cities, their people and their kings was gathered from a few references in the Bible and from the writings of Xenophon (about 400 B. C.). But in 1842, M. Botta, the French consul at Mosul, while digging into one of the large mounds on the opposite bank of the Tigris river, uncovered what proved to be a fortress, palace and temple of Sargon, Assyria's greatest king. In it he came upon a hall or large room lined with slabs covered with





sculptured figures, and long lines of closely chiseled characters, evidently an illustrated narrative. The writing, called cuneiform because made up of innumerable



First Babylonian Creation Tablet.
Now in the British Museum.

arrow-like strokes, had been known of for some time, but had remained undeciphered.

A few years later Layard, an Englishman, uncovered the ruins of Nineveh, and brought to light the now famous library of Ashurbanipal, written upon thousands of small clay tablets in the same characters which Botta had noted. These tab-

lets, most of them more or less imperfect, chipped, or broken to bits, are of various sizes, the smallest being not over an inch long, and the largest approximately nine inches by six. The writing is on both sides, and sometimes so minute as to necessitate the use of a reading glass.

This great library, together with similar important Babylonian finds, constituted a source of information much older than any other previously known. But no living man knew the language or the writing in which they were inscribed. A few scholars, however, were daring enough to undertake the seemingly impossible task. The first clue to their decipherment had been obtained about 1839 by a German scholar named Grotefend. He went to work on a series of inscriptions from Persepolis, each written in three columns. He proved, first, that each column represented a different form of inscription, and therefore a separate language, so that if one could be deciphered it would give a key to the others. One of these, which contained only forty different signs, he concluded must be alphabetic. By long study and happy guesses he proved that a set of frequently recurring signs stood for "Darius." Next the royal names of Xerxes and Artaxerxes were deciphered, and from this beginning the entire alphabet was determined and the inscription translated. To decipher the inscriptions in the other columns was now only a matter of time and patience.

The value of these discoveries is due to the light they throw on ancient customs, laws, and religious beliefs. Among the tablets are works on mathematics, astronomy, religion, law, civil contracts, and governmental reports from the provincial rulers. Hence an immense amount of historical material is now available, much of it exceedingly valuable as supplementing the Biblical narratives, and furnishing the means of a better appreciation of their nature and value. Discoveries

similar to these by the Tigris and Euphrates have been made in Egypt and other parts of the East, and from these we get much of our knowledge concerning Egyptian and extra-Biblical Palestinian history.

Note 3. The Lands in which the Semites Lived. The two great rivers of southwestern Asia, the Euphrates and the Tigris, run in somewhat parallel courses until they empty into the Persian Gulf. The region between them divides itself naturally into two portions, the southern, variously known as Akkad, Shinar, Chaldea, or Babylonia, and the northern, known as Mesopotamia or Assyria. Chaldea is a vast low plain formed in the course of ages by the soil carried down by these rivers and filling up this area. Three or four thousand years ago it was one of the garden spots of the world, but to-day, owing to long neglect and lack of drainage, it is mostly a great swamp. Mesopotamia, on the contrary, the lower edge of which is about a hundred miles above the site of Babylon, is a table-land, its southern part largely desert; but the northern part, when under irrigation, was capable of sustaining a flourishing population. It had only one great city, Nineveh on the Tigris.

East of Assyria lay Media, and to the west Aram and Canaan. Chaldea, or Babylonia, was a meeting ground for peoples from the east and southwest, both streams of migration attracted by the fertility of the soil and the advantage of trade. Assyria, properly speaking, occupied only the northern part of Mesopotamia. But, as in the case of Babylonia, the name covered, as one empire or the other was supreme, the entire region drained by the Euphrates and the Tigris.

Canaan, the modern Palestine, is associated in popular thought with the Hebrew branch of the Semitic people. Unlike Mesopotamia, it was a naturally productive and even beautiful country. The plain which fringed the eastern shores of the Mediterranean was named by early Greek traders Phœnicia. Where the plain ran inland among the central highlands it afforded excellent grain fields and pasture land, while the wooded hills of the middle country provided safe retreats from invading forces. Still farther to the east was the Jordan valley, with a narrow strip of fertile plain on either side.

Note 4. The Semitic Peoples and their Civilization. The cradle of the human race has long been thought to have been in the mountainous regions of central Asia, possibly in the Altai mountains to the far northeast of Chaldea. From this source probably came the Semites who in early times were apparently confined chiefly to the Arabian peninsula. Thence they repeatedly made incursions along the shores of the Persian Gulf into Chaldea, where they seem constantly

to have gained in numbers and importance until they became dominant and established themselves as the Chaldeans or Babylonians. This was doubtless as early as 4000 B. C.

As the Semitic people realized the vast fertility of the land under proper cultivation, they gradually gave up their nomadic life and settled down to agriculture. A fixed life led to established governments and the cultivation of arts and industries. Learning soon flourished, and the Babylonian scholars became adepts in mathematics and astronomy. They understood the nature of eclipses and the movements of the planets, and calculated the year of 365 1-4 days. They gave the world the circular measure of degrees, minutes and seconds, and told time by the sun-dial. The great deposits of clay led to the manufacture of brick and pottery. While the scarcity of stone and metals precluded much use of these materials, the Babylonians worked well with what they had. The remains of their civilization which still lie scattered over the Chaldean plain show how great were their attainments as early as the fourth millennium B. C. Between 2500 and 2000 B. C., the rise of Babylon into prominence was very rapid, and under king Hammurabi the ascendancy of Babylon over the other states of Babylonia was firmly established, and the empire extended as far as the Mediterranean. It was from the sacred and one-time royal city of Ur that the first Hebrews migrated into the region of Haran, whence Abraham and his tribal family moved into Canaan. While the Hebrews came out of a highly civilized country they seem not to have been progressive in developing a civilization of their own, their unique contribution to the world being in the field of religion.

Note 5. The Religious Temper of the Semites. The primitive inhabitants of Babylonia were a markedly religious people, and in large measure their religious ideas were accepted by the Semites who later gained control of the country. Each city and town had its own god, who ranked according to the size of the place where he was worshipped. When leading cities became jealous for the honor of their respective deities, these were sometimes acknowledged to be of equal honor and power. Every important city built a temple to its deity, and generally the temple was rivaled in size and splendor only by the palace of the ruler. Many of the mounds referred to above (Note 2) are the remains of these temples.

Still another evidence of the piety of these people is to be found in the prayers and religious hymns which have come down to us. Though addressed to local deities they sometimes present thoughts strikingly similar to those found in later Hebrew writings. This sketch

of the early Semitic world may be appropriately closed by a quotation from one of the hymns to the sun used among the Chaldeans:

“O sun, I have called unto thee in the bright heavens.
In the shadow of the cedar art thou.
Thy feet are on the summits.
The countries have wished for thee, they have longed for thy coming.
O Lord! Thy radiant light illumines all countries.”

Additional Reading References.

(1) Interesting sketches of ancient Chaldea. Ragozin: *The Story of Chaldea*. (2) How Babylon has yielded her secrets. Delitzsch: *Babel and Bible*. (3) What has been found in Assyria, Babylonia, Palestine and Egypt. Hilprecht: *Explorations in Bible Lands during the Nineteenth Century*.

Preliminary Questions.

1. What is the purpose of this course? 2. State the scope of it. 3. Give the limits of each of the four parts into which the course is divided. 4. Which of the “Directions for Study” do you consider most helpful? Why? 5. What is the subject of to-day’s lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. Where has extensive information about the ancient world recently been found? (Note 2.)
2. Tell what you can about Layard’s discovery.
3. How was the first clue to the meaning of the arrowhead inscription found?
4. What is the value of these archæological discoveries?
5. Describe the two great divisions of the region lying between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. (Note 3.)
6. What is the general character of Palestine?

7. Tell what you can of some of the earliest migrations of the human race. (Note 4.)
8. Describe the civilization of ancient Babylonia.
9. When and by whom was the empire established?

10. What was the religion of Babylonia? (Note 5.)

11. What evidences remain of the religious temper of these early Semites?

Questions for Consideration.

1. In view of the advanced state of society in the fourth and fifth millenniums B. C., what value has Archbishop Usher's chronology, which is printed in many Bibles, and which dates the creation 4004 B. C.?
2. What interest has the recovery and decipherment of the cuneiform inscription for Bible students?
3. Would the value of the religious teachings in the Bible be lessened if it should be found that the Hebrews derived the germs of them from their early Semitic ancestors?

Note-book Work.

1. Draw a map of the ancient world larger than the one here provided (pp. 2, 3), and insert it in the note-book. From time to time add to the map the names of new places mentioned in the lessons.
2. Begin a "Chart of Religious Developments" arranged in four columns. The chart with its entries for the first lesson would be somewhat as follows:

Chart of Religious Developments.

<i>Les. No.</i>	<i>Approximate Dates B. C.</i>	<i>Historical Events</i>	<i>Religious Developments</i>
1	6000 and later	Earliest known migration in Northern Africa and Syria, Semitic peoples in Chaldea, Arabia and Syria.	Many gods. Local deities. Religion prominent but largely mythological. The more important a city, the more important its god.

Bible Text. "And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar [Babylon]; and they dwelt there." Gen. 11:1, 2.

Lesson 2. RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS. Its Origin and Characteristics.

(Read "Directions for Study" in Introduction.)

Scripture Reading: An Oracle concerning Egypt. Is. ch. 19.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To point out some of the prominent features in the ancient Egyptian religion, and to show why the Hebrews were so little influenced by it.

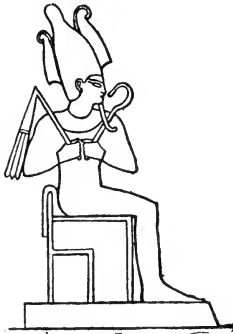
Note 2. Origin of the Egyptians. Long before the dawn of history Egypt seems to have been peopled by a white race. Owing to the extraordinary fertility of the Nile valley these earliest inhabitants soon attained an advanced civilization. Then from the desert highlands of Arabia, probably by way of the Isthmus of Suez, came a great invasion of Semites. After a time the two races became completely blended, the Africans adopting the language of the invaders, but impressing upon it the stamp of their own tongue; while the Asiatics accepted the higher civilization of the natives.

Note 3. Complexity of the Egyptian Religion. Egypt never had a generally accepted system of religious belief. In the earliest times every city, town or village had its own god or gods who in return for food, drink and clothing bestowed by the people dispensed to them such favors as health, long life, prosperity, good crops, and victories over enemies. These almost innumerable gods were gradually reduced in number as the gods of the great cities with their splendid temples crowded out the town and village gods, or led to the uniting of several of them into groups or families. But as the Egyptians seemed incapable of rejecting any idea that had ever occurred to them, it followed that old ideas and new, no matter how contradictory, continued to exist side by side. The result was an almost endless complexity and confusion. Many of the local gods with different names had in general a similar character, so that an entire group of deities can be gathered around a single idea, as in the case of the sun-god.

Note 4. The Chief Gods of Egypt. The Egyptians held that in the beginning there existed only a great sea or ocean (chaos), upon which in course of time appeared a lotus flower out of which sprang the sun-god, the source of light and life. To the sun-god as worshiped in various places different names were given; thus Chepara was the god of the rising sun, Horus, the sun mounting up into the sky; Ra, or Re, was the sun-god in his midday splendor; and Tum or Atum the god of the setting sun. From himself the sun-god created the gods Shu

and Keb, and the goddesses Tefnut and Nut. Keb and Nut, representing the earth and the sky, begot the gods Osiris and his sister-wife Isis and Set and his sister-wife Nephthys. This family of deities constituted the Great Ennead (group of nine) of Egypt. Other enneads were afterwards formed around other gods.

Osiris, a righteous king of Egypt, was slain by his wicked brother Set.

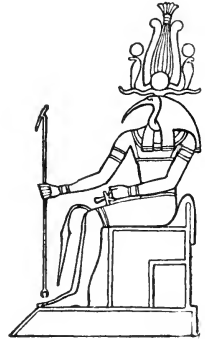


Osiris.



Ra.

Egyptian Gods.



Thoth.

Isis by powerful charms reanimated his body, but, unable to resume his life on earth, he passed into the underworld, where he became king of the dead.

Thoth, the moon-god, who represented Ra at night, was regarded as having appointed the seasons and the order of nature. He was the god of truth, the inventor of writing, arithmetic and measures.

Hathor, at first a sky-goddess, became later the goddess of love and pleasure, and was the favorite deity of women. She had innumerable temples.

Ptah was the divine sculptor who gives all things their shape, and as such was the patron of artists and artisans. In a great temple at Memphis he was supposed to be incarnated in a succession of living bulls, worshiped under the name of Apis.

Among the countless other gods of Egypt, mention may be made of Anubis the guardian of the dead and of the frog-headed goddess Hekt who played some part in the resurrection.

Note 5 Temples and Priests. The piety of the Egyptians showed itself in the vast number of sanctuaries which filled the land, some of which were magnificent temples on which successive kings

lavished the treasures of the kingdom. These sanctuaries were supposed to be the dwelling-places of the gods to whom they were dedicated. They contained either an image of the deity richly adorned with gold, silver and precious stones, or a living animal in which the god was supposed to have embodied himself. The worship consisted in ceremonial dances, with music, and in presenting such food and costly garments as the god was supposed to enjoy. To this end each important temple had a body of priests, presided over by a high priest. Over all the high priests stood the Pharaoh as the supreme mediator between the gods and men.

Note 6. Existence after Death. The religion of Egypt culminated in its conception of a future life. Here again one finds all kinds of contradictory ideas, apparently without evidence that they were ever arranged into a consistent system.

Corresponding to the upper world of light and life ruled by the sun-god Ra is an underworld ruled by Osiris, the sun at night. Into this dark realm the souls of the dead pass through the same opening in the west that receives the setting sun. As the dead man draws near to the Hall of Justice he raises his hands in adoration and says to Osiris: "Hail to thee, mighty God, lord of truth. . . . Behold me, I have come to thee, I bring the truth to thee, and I will put aside all lying." Then he begins a confession which he repeats later when he enters the hall: "I have not done evil to any man; I am not one of those who put to death their kindred; I am not one who tells lies in place of truth; . . . I have not caused men to suffer; I have not diminished the temple offerings; . . . I have not diminished the grain measure; I have not used false measures and weights; I have not snatched away the milk from the mouth of children." At the end he exclaims, "I am pure, I am pure, . . . let no harm come to me in the Hall of Justice." Then Anubis, the jackal-headed guardian of the dead, leads him into the hall, into the awful presence of Osiris, and of the forty-two demons who devour the guilty. Before him hangs a great pair of scales; in one of the scales he now sees his heart and in the other the goddess of justice. He cries out to his heart to come back to him and not accuse him. Then he calls on each one of the forty-two demons to bear witness that he has not committed any one of the forty-two sins that would make him their victim. During this confession Thoth, the god of truth, has been weighing the heart and reports the result to Osiris. If the man is blameless, Osiris utters the decree: "Let him go forth victorious, to enter every place he pleases, and be with the spirits of the gods." In all this we can see a lofty idea of divine justice struggling

for expression side by side with the common practice of buying priestly charms and formulas warranted to blind the eyes of the gods and to guarantee a triumphant passage through the Hall of Justice.

Note 7. Care of the Dead. Those whom Osiris acquitted were supposed to begin a new life very much like the first. They needed, however, as before, food, drink, clothing, pleasures, and services, without which they would suffer extreme torment, or even perish. Provisions might be laid beside the body, but could be supplied equally well by pictures painted on the inner walls of the tombs, or even by the mere repetition of a magic formula wishing for the departed an abundance of all good things. The Egyptians held also that the survival of the spirit after death was connected with the preservation of the body. Hence embalming was carried to such perfection that even to this day Egypt contains an almost incredible number of well-preserved mummies. For the safe keeping of these, especially those of royal personages, massive and costly tombs were constructed. The most stupendous of these are the great pyramids at Gizeh, built about 2900 B. C. In later times long galleries ending in numerous chambers excavated deep into mountain sides received the royal mummies, after which the entrance was carefully sealed up.

Note 8. Possible Impressions on the Hebrew Faith. From the time of Abraham to that of Christ the Hebrews came into frequent and at times close relations with Egypt. When Moses appeared they had spent a long period, possibly centuries, in the Nile Valley. It is still an open question whether Egypt left a single trace on their religion. Possibly they may have derived the practice of circumcision from the Egyptians either after Abraham's visit (Gen. 12:10-20; 17:9-14), or during Israel's long sojourn among them (Josh. 5:5). A breastplate similar to that worn by Aaron (Ex. 28:13-30) seems also to have been worn by Egyptian high priests. But even if these and some other external practices were derived from them, the general fact remains that their fantastic beliefs and elaborate ceremonies left no deep or lasting impressions on the faith of the Hebrews. The natural antagonism between the two religions, to say nothing of that between the two races, was too strong to permit their blending. The fact that the Israelites grew from a family into a nation amidst the repelling grossness of the Egyptian religion rather than among the more nearly related and far more seductive faiths of Canaan, may have been what saved Israel's faith from extinction during this formative period of the national history. In later Græco-Roman times the worship of Osiris spread

over Europe, and by its doctrines of a life after death, a future judgment, and endless blessedness for the righteous helped to prepare the world for the similar teachings of Christianity.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Naville: *The Old Egyptian Faith*. (2) Sayce: *The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*. (3) Steindorff: *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*. (4) "Early Religion" (ch. 4) in Breasted's *History of Egypt*. (5) Articles on Egypt in encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was the subject of the previous lesson? 2. What is now our main source of information concerning the ancient Semitic world? 3. What lands did the Semites occupy? 4. How far did the early Semites develop their civilization? 5. What showed their religious temper? 6. What is the subject of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What seems to have been the origin of the Egyptians? (Note 2.)

2. Explain why it is so hard to give an orderly outline of the Egyptian religion. (Note 3.)

3. Mention some of the aspects under which the sun-god was worshiped. (Note 4.)

4. What were some of the other leading gods?

5. How did the Egyptians show their reverence for their gods? (Note 5.)

6. By whom were the temple services conducted?

7. How did the Egyptians think the fate of men is determined after death? (Note 6.)

8. How did they think they could delude their gods into pronouncing them blameless in spite of all evil doings?

9. Why did the Egyptians take extraordinary pains to preserve the body after death? (Note 7.)

10. What possible traces may the contact of the Hebrews with the Egyptians have left on the former? (Note-8.)

11. Why did a religion so powerful as that of Egypt leave such faint impressions on the Hebrew faith?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Why did nearly all primitive peoples make the sun their chief deity?

2. What ideas of their gods must the Egyptians have had in thinking that they could so easily be cheated into giving false verdicts?

3. Mention some elements of truth presented in the Egyptian religion.

4. Would this religion be likely to be a help or a hindrance to the introduction of the Christian faith?

Note-book Work.

1. Write a brief description of some one of the great temples of Egypt.

2. On the chart note the approximate date, the purpose, and the name of the builder of the great pyramid.

Bible Text. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Rom. 1:22, 23.

Lesson 3. RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT BABYLONIANS. Its Beliefs and Ceremonies.

Scripture Reading: The Story of the Deluge. Gen. 6:5—9:17.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To note some of the leading features of the religion of Babylonia, with which that of the Hebrews had many remarkable points of contact.

Note 2. The Babylonian Flood Story. The recovery by George Smith in 1872 of this story, which dates from about 3000 B. C., created a deep sensation on account of its striking similarities to the Bible narrative. A brief summary of this story gives a fair starting point for a study of the Babylonian gods and their functions.

The story of the flood is represented as told by Ut-napishtim, the Biblical Noah, to Gilgamesh, who is probably identical with Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10). To Ut-napishtim the god Ea reveals the purpose of the great gods Anu, Bel, Ninib and Ennigi to send a great flood over the earth. He commands Ut-napishtim to build a great ship, which he does with the help of the god Shamash.

Then six *sars* of bitumen I smeared over the outside.
Three *sars* of bitumen I smeared over the inside.
(Comp. Gen. 6:14, 15.)

When all was ready, he laid in a great quantity of provisions, and carried all his possessions, silver and gold, into the ship. Furthermore,

All the living creatures of all kinds I loaded on it.
I brought on board all my family and household;
Cattle of the field, beasts of the field, craftsmen, all of them I brought
on board.
At the time appointed I entered in and shut the door.
(Comp. Gen. 7:13-16.)

Then a terrific storm was raised by Adad, Nabo, Marduk, Nergal and Ninib, so fierce that soon the gods retreated to the highest heaven of Anu, where they "cowered like dogs." "Ishtar screamed like a woman in travail" when she saw the destruction of mankind, and the other gods wept with her. On the seventh day, when the tempest had ceased, Ut-napishtim opened the windows, looked out and saw only corpses floating on the waters. The next day he saw land and steered the ship to it. A day later it grounded, and

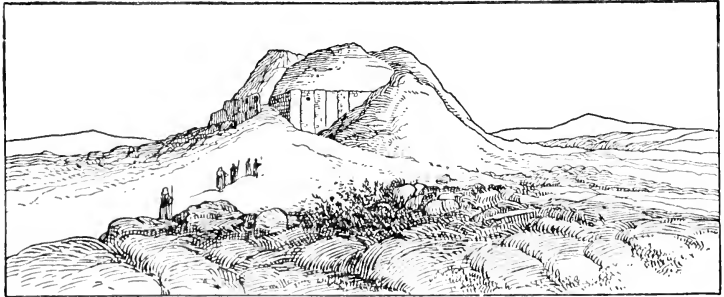
When the seventh day arrived,
 I sent forth a dove and let it loose.
 The dove went forth but came back;
 Because it found no resting place it returned.

Then a swallow, which did the same, and lastly a raven, which fed on the carrion and did not return (comp. Gen. 8:6-11). Thereupon the animals were sent forth, and a sacrifice was offered (comp. Gen. 8:20, 21).

The gods inhaled the sweet odor,
 The gods gathered like flies above the sacrifice.

When Ishtar approached she lifted up the great necklace (the rainbow) which Anu had prepared for her. When Bel discovered that some men had escaped the flood he became furious, but was pacified by Ea, who reproached him for wishing to destroy the righteous with sinners. Bel then made a covenant with Ut-napishtim saying that he and his wife should thenceforth dwell among the gods.

Note 3. The Babylonian Gods. The flood story shows that the Babylonians worshiped a multitude of gods. The relative rank and significance of the chief gods were as follows: At their head stood the great triad consisting of ANU, the god of heaven; BEL, the god of the



Ruins of the Temple of the Moon-god Sin, in Ur.

earth and air, and EA, the god of the oceans and the great deep. Ea was the wise one who knew the causes of diseases and how to cure them. He was the good god, who loved the children of men. Bel, as the patron god of the city of Babylon, gradually took a sovereign position among the gods. On a level with these the Babylonians placed the goddess ISHTAR, who represented the life-producing power of the world without which heaven, earth and water would be a desolate waste.

To her the vegetable and animal worlds owed their existence, and she was the mother of the human race. Later she became also the great war-goddess whom Hammurabi (Note 3, Lesson 4) represented as standing by his side in every battle and helping him win his victories.

Immediately below the great triad and the mother-goddess stood SIN, the moon-god, and Shamash, the sun-god. From the earliest times the Babylonians gave the greater prominence to the former. The reason seems to have been because the Semites of Arabia, from whom the Babylonians came, usually moved their camps during the cool night when the moon was an invaluable aid; and because the short periods of lunar changes were better suited for the calculation of time than those of the sun. Sin was also the lord of wisdom.

SHAMASH, NINIB and NERGAL represented different aspects of the solar deity. Shamash was regarded as a son of Sin, the moon-god, because he rose from the dark realm over which the moon held sway. Ninib personified the morning and spring sun. He was worshiped, accordingly, as the god of agriculture who presided over fields and was looked to for good harvests. Nergal originally represented the blazing noon-day and summer sun whose fierce heat destroyed vegetation. He symbolized the destructive powers of the world, such as war and pestilence. Later Babylonian thought made Nergal, like Osiris, the ruler of the dead in the underworld.

MARDUK, or MERODACH, was at first a sun-god worshiped at Babylon, but when this city became the metropolis of the empire Marduk rose to corresponding dignity, and was given even greater authority than Bel. In hymns and prayers he is often addressed as if he were the sole god of the universe, thus foreshadowing a later monotheistic faith. NEBO was a son of Marduk, and like Ea and Sin, a god of wisdom. He was the messenger of the gods, the inventor of writing, and the god of fire.

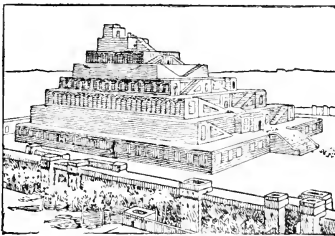
Note 4. Belief in Demons. The Babylonians peopled the world with a vast number of demons to whose malignant power they ascribed most of the ills of life. To counteract their influence or to drive them out of human beings in whom they were causing all manner of diseases the priests provided incantations, magic formulas, or symbolic rites. One incantation for dispelling demons, omitting several repetitions, was as follows:

Away, away, far away, far away!
 For shame, for shame, fly away, fly away!
 Round about face, go away, far away! . . .
 Out of my body, far away! . . .

Into my body do not return!
 To my body draw not nigh! . . .
 My body torture not!
 By Shamash, the mighty, be forsworn!
 By Ea, the lord of everything, be forsworn!
 By Marduk, the chief exorcizer of the gods, be forsworn!
 From the fire-god, who consumes you, be forsworn!

The vast number of similar inscriptions that have been recovered show how much thought and effort were expended by the people in warding off the attacks of demons, who were supposed to be largely controlled by sorcerers and witches.

Note 5. Babylonian Worship. The worship of the great gods centered in the temples of the chief cities. In these temples the deities



Babylonian Temple Tower, Restored.

were supposed to have taken up their dwelling. They were built on great platforms of solid earth and brickwork which rose above the surrounding marsh, and thus furnished a firm foundation for the divine abode. Successive platforms, each smaller than the preceding, resulted at last in a terraced tower, or *ziggurat*, which became the characteristic feature of Babylonian temples. Each temple

supported a large body of priests, and these were at times powerful enough to dictate the succession to the throne. Offerings of the first-fruits of all cultivated lands were made to the gods, as well as sacrifices of animals. Furthermore, a tenth of all the lands produced was theirs, and this went to the support of the temples and the priests. This tenth was paid even by the king himself. Numerous religious festivals were observed, foremost among which was that of the new year. Elaborate rituals and ceremonies characterized the temple services.

Note 6. The Underworld. The Babylonians called the realm of the dead Aralu, and thought of it as a vast, dark cavern in the interior of the earth, ruled over by Nergal and his consort Eresh-kigal, "the lady of the nether world." In a poem which described the descent of Ishtar into Aralu she is said to go through seven gates

To the house whence those who enter do not return,
 To the road from which there is no path leading back,
 To the house in which those who enter have no light,
 Where dust is their nourishment, clay their food.

They do not see light, they dwell in darkness. . . .
On door and lock dust has settled.

In this land of darkness and silence all the dead, the righteous and the wicked, the king and the beggar are in the same condition, deprived of strength and power, inactive, hardly conscious, without cheer and without hope of change.

Note 7. Babylonian Prayers and Hymns. Full of crude superstitions and vulgar magic as the Babylonian religion was on its lower side, it exhibited on its higher side a noble spirituality. Surrounded as men were by evil powers against which they were defenseless, the outlook would have been dark indeed if they could not have fallen back on the protection and help of the gods. But this protection and help related only to this life, since in view of their ideas of Aralu they were not needed there. Out of innumerable recorded prayers, one addressed to Marduk by Nebuchadrezzar on ascending the throne (604 B. C.) may serve as a noble example:

O eternal ruler, lord of everything, grant that the name of the king whom thou lovest, whose name thou hast proclaimed, may flourish, as seems pleasing to thee. Lead him in the right path. I am the prince who obeys thee, the creature of thy hand. Thou hast created me, and hast entrusted to me sovereignty over mankind. According to thy mercy, O lord, which thou bestowest upon all, may thy supreme rule be merciful! The fear of thy divinity implant in my heart! Grant me what seems good to thee, for thou art the one who hast given me my life.

The high moral character of Shamash as a lover of justice, a protector of the oppressed and a destroyer of the wicked is emphasized in nearly all the hymns addressed to him. One of the finest contains these lines:

Every one wherever he may be is in thy care.
Thou directest thy judgments, the imprisoned dost thou liberate.
Thou hearest, O Shamash, petition, prayer, and appeal,
Humility, prostration, petitioning, and reverence.
With loud voice the unfortunate one cries to thee.
The weak, the exhausted, the oppressed, the lowly,
Mother, wife, maid, appeal to thee.

A still higher level of spirituality is reached in the psalms of petition. Note this example of appeal to Ishtar:

Dissolve my sin, my iniquity, my transgression and sin.
Forgive my transgression, accept my supplication.
Guide my steps that I may walk gloriously among men.

Command, and at thy command may the angry god be appeased!
 And may the angry goddess turn towards me!
 May the dark smoking brazier flame up again!
 My extinguished torch be relit!

Hundreds of quotations, similar to those given above, show that the religion of the early Babylonians, while on the one hand conceiving of a multitude of gods and retaining many debasing superstitions, advanced, on the other hand, to conceptions of the evils of sin, the need of repentance and personal purity, and a reverence for and dependence on the heavenly powers that were surpassed by no religion of early antiquity. To this crude faith the Hebrew religion of a later day was indebted to no small degree.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Sayce: *The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*. (2) The Babylonian stories of the creation and of the deluge are given and discussed in chs. 3 and 4 of Clay's *Light on the Old Testament from Babel*; also in Appendix to Kent's *Beginnings of Hebrew History*. (3) The best up-to-date discussion of the Babylonian religion is found in the Extra Volume to Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* (5 vol. ed.), pp. 531-584.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was the subject of the last lesson? 2. Why is it so difficult to give a clear description of the religion of ancient Egypt? 3. Mention some of the chief gods of Egypt. 4. What were some of the Egyptian beliefs as to the life after death? 5. Why did they embalm their dead? 6. What is the subject of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What is the approximate date of the Babylonian flood story? (Note 2.)

2. Give a brief summary of the flood story.

3. What were the four leading Babylonian gods and their characters? (Note 3.)

4. What were the three next in rank?

5. Why did the moon-god rank higher than the sun-god?
6. What superstitious practices had a strong hold on the people? (Note 4.)
7. Describe the usual form of a Babylonian temple. (Note 5.)
8. How was the worship of the gods sustained?
9. What ideas did the Babylonians hold respecting the condition after death? (Note 6.)
10. At what points did the Babylonian religion reach its highest expressions? (Note 7.)

Questions for Consideration.

1. How shall we account for the absence of heathen ideas in the Hebrew story of the flood?
2. To what extent do superstitious notions still survive among ourselves?
3. Considering the religious light that Nebuchadrezzar had, what would be your estimate of his prayer?

Note-book Work.

Write out in parallel columns the points of similarity between the Babylonian and the Hebrew flood stories. Make a brief statement of the leading characteristics of the Babylonian religion. On the chart insert the approximate date of the Babylonian flood story, and of the beginning of Nebuchadrezzar's reign.

Bible Text. "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me."
Ps. 40:17.

Lesson 4. **HAMMURABI'S STANDARDS OF JUSTICE.** Selections from the Babylonian Code.

Scripture Reading: An Exhortation to Obey God's Law. Deut. 4:1-14.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show the nature of an early Babylonian code which may have helped to shape the laws of Israel.

Note 2. The Discovery of Hammurabi's Law-book. The decipherment of certain Babylonian inscriptions had shown that important Babylonian monuments had been carried away to Susa, or Shushan, the city of Nehemiah and Esther, and the ancient capital of Elam. Susa was situated in southwestern Persia. Acting on this hint, a French explorer, de Morgan, began excavating the ruins of Susa, and in December, 1901, and January, 1902, discovered the three pieces of a highly polished black stone monument. The pieces were easily fitted together, and made a pillar nearly seven and a half feet high. A large part of the surface was covered with a finely engraved cuneiform inscription, the longest that has yet been discovered. It was one of several copies of a legal code which Hammurabi had put up in various parts of his empire so that the people might know the laws.

Note 3. The Oldest Law-book in the World. Hammurabi ruled in Babylon about 1900 B. C. Many distinguished scholars have identified him with Amraphel (Gen. 14:1), but this is not entirely certain. As a warrior, statesman, patron of literature, repairer and builder of temples, and upholder of justice he was one of the great kings of the world. He describes himself as "a ruler who was to his people like the father who begot them," and as one who "delighted the heart of Marduk his lord, and granted happy life to his people forever." His code is more than a thousand years older than any other known body of laws. At the top of the



The Upper Part of the Monument Containing the Code of Hammurabi.

front side of the pillar is a bas-relief which represents him as receiving his code from Shamash, the sun-god. Beneath the bas-relief are sixteen columns of writing. Originally there were five more, but these have been erased.

On the back are twenty-eight columns, the whole containing about 4,000 lines. The remaining columns contain 247 sections of laws, which throw a strong light on the commercial, social, domestic and moral life of that early time. They reveal a highly developed civilization, and compare most favorably with the legal systems of Greece and Rome.

Note 4. Scope of Hammurabi's Code. The code is distinctly civil, since it contains no religious or ceremonial regulations. It covers a great variety of topics. Among them we find thirty-five sections devoted to marriage, divorce, and various immoral relations; twenty-two to inheritance; twenty to the rights and duties of workmen; twenty to offenses against life and limb; nineteen to liabilities for various kinds of neglect; eighteen to slaves; seventeen to rented and cultivated farm lands; sixteen to thefts and robberies; twelve to rented animals; eleven to fees to surgeons for successful operations, and liabilities for unsuccessful ones; ten to foster and adopted children; and eight to merchants. Penalties ranged from fines to death by drowning or burning. Some punishments which we would pronounce barbarous, such as cutting off the tongue, ears or hands, must be judged by the spirit of those times. The primitive character of the laws is seen in the fact that so many of the penalties are simply retaliatory, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

Note 5. Laws from Hammurabi's Code. The first section discourages bringing false charges.

§ 1. If a man has accused a man and laid (a charge of) death upon him and has not justified it, he that accused him shall be put to death. (Comp. Deut. 19:16-19.)

The penalty of stealing from the gods, or from the king, who represented them, was similar to that in Israel for taking a thing devoted to Jehovah.

§ 6 If a man has stolen the goods of temple or palace, that man shall be put to death. (Comp. Josh. 6:17-19; ch. 7.)

The penalty for looting was calculated to deter any one tempted to do it.

§ 25. If in a man's house a fire has been kindled, and a man who has come to extinguish the fire has lifted up his eyes to the property of the owner of the house, and has taken it, that man shall be thrown into the fire.

Sections 168, 169 forbid a father disinheriting his son without sufficient cause, which must be established before a court; even when sufficient misconduct has been proved, the son shall not be disinherited except upon repetition of the offense.

Note the following checks on carelessness:

§ 218. If a doctor has treated a nobleman for a severe wound with a lancet of bronze and has caused him to die, or has removed a cataract of the eye for a nobleman with the bronze lancet and has caused the loss of his eye, one shall cut off his hands.

§ 229. If a builder has built a house for a man and has not made strong his work, and the house he built has fallen and he has caused the death of the owner of the house, that builder shall be put to death.

§ 230. If he has caused the son of the owner of the house to die, one shall put to death the son of that builder. (Contrast Deut. 24:16.)

With the following sections compare the corresponding Hebrew enactments:

§ 14. If a man has stolen the son of another he shall be put to death. (Comp. Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7.)

§§ 196, 197. If a man has caused the loss of a nobleman's eye, one shall cause his eye to be lost; or shattered his limb, one shall shatter his limb. (Comp. Ex. 21:24; Deut. 19:21.)

§ 206. If a man has struck a man in a quarrel and has caused him a wound, that man shall swear, "I did not strike him knowingly," and shall bear the expense of a doctor. (Comp. Ex. 21:18, 19.)

§ 244. If a man has hired an ox or an ass, and a lion has killed it in the open field, that loss is for its owner. (Comp. Ex. 22:10, 13.)

§ 252. If an ox kill a nobleman's servant, the owner shall pay one-third of a mina of silver. (Comp. Ex. 21:32.)

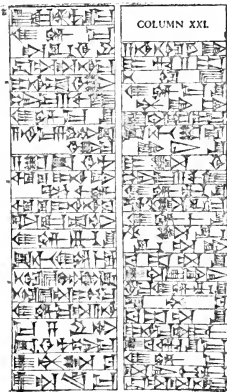
§ 266. If in a sheepfold a stroke of God has taken place or a lion has killed, the shepherd shall declare his innocence before God, and the owner of the fold shall face the accident to the fold. (Comp. Ex. 22:10, 11.)

Similarly, if a man rented land, and a storm destroyed the harvest, he was not liable for the rent (§ 45).

The more humane provision of the Hebrew code is seen by comparing Deut. 23:15, 16 with Hammurabi's:

§ 16. If a man has harbored in his house a manservant or a maidservant, fugitive from the palace, or from a poor man, and has not produced them at the demand of the commandant, that householder shall be put to death.

Note 6. Hammurabi's Code a Compilation of Yet Older Laws. Some of the sections in the code may record the decisions of Hammurabi himself, but as a whole the code is older than his time. The civilization then existing in Babylonia was already far advanced and quite complex. Complications arising from an extensive commerce, con-



Extract from the Code of Hammurabi.

Drawn by Prof. Robert F. Harper. Used by permission.

tracts, ownership of property, slaves, domestic relations, inheritance, and crimes demanding a variety of penalties, must have required for their settlement courts of justice from an early date. Hammurabi gathered together and classified for popular use the laws that had long been current. To assist in memorizing them, many are arranged in pentads (groups of five) or decads (groups of ten), so as to count them off on the fingers of one hand or both.

Note 7. Religious Significance of the Code. Though Hammurabi's law-book deals exclusively with civil and criminal laws, the bas-relief at the head shows that the laws were regarded as having been received from Shamash the sun-god. In ancient times the king was regarded as semi-divine, the representative of the gods to his subjects. The gods spoke through him, and his words expressed their will, and became the law of the land. Laws, therefore, were considered as of divine origin. The same conception appears in Ex. 20:1, where the words, "And God spake all these words, saying," precede the Ten Commandments. In Deut. 4:1-6 Moses is represented as claiming divine authority for all the statutes and ordinances which he gave to Israel.

Extraordinary interest attaches to the Babylonian code from its many resemblances to Old Testament laws and practices. The resemblances are so close as almost to compel the conclusion that in many instances the former served as a basis for the latter, especially for the ancient code in Ex. 21:1—23:19, known as the "Book of the Covenant" (Ex. 24:7). Where the codes differ it is interesting to note the higher moral character of the Biblical enactments, and their almost uniform effort to soften the harsher provisions of the earlier Babylonian laws. The latter represent the earliest known expression of that sense of justice which throughout subsequent ages in rising stages found its final expression in the ethical teachings of Jesus and in the institutions inspired by Him.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Kent: *The Civil Code of Hammurabi*. *Biblical World*, March, 1903. (2) Duncan: *The Code of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi*. *Biblical World*, March and April, 1904. (3) Cook: *The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi*. (4) "Code of Hammurabi" in Extra Volume of Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* (5 vol. ed.) pp. 584-612, contains a full translation of the code and a valuable discussion. (5) A large number of articles on the code appeared in reviews and magazines during 1903 and 1904.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was the subject of the previous lesson? 2. Mention some of the leading Babylonian gods. 3. What were some of the baser elements in the Babylonian religious beliefs? 4. What were some of the nobler elements? 5. What is the subject of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What led to the recovery of Hammurabi's code? (Note 2.)
2. Describe the form of his law-book. (Note 3.)
3. Mention some of the matters treated of in this body of laws. (Note 4.)
4. What was the nature of the penalties imposed?
5. What seemed to be the lawmaker's purpose in decreeing such severe penalties, as, *e.g.*, those affixed to looting and carelessness? (Note 5.)
6. Mention some similarities to the later Hebrew codes.
7. What seems to have been the origin of Hammurabi's code? (Note 6.)
8. In ancient times what was regarded as the ultimate source of all laws? (Note 7.)
9. How does the spirit of Hammurabi's code compare with that of Moses?

Questions for Consideration.

1. What does the high state of civilization in Hammurabi's time suggest as to the time required for its development?
2. Why is the "divine right of kings" seldom pressed to-day?
3. Does excessive severity in punishing crime deter men from it?

Note-book Work.

Write in your own words a brief account of the recovery and contents of the oldest law-book in the world. On the chart insert the probable date of Hammurabi's reign.

Bible Text. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and the commandment, which I have written, that thou mayest teach them." Ex. 24:12.

Lesson 5. RELIGIONS OF ANCIENT PALESTINE. The Baalim and the Worship at the High Places.

Scripture Reading: Israel among the Native Races of Palestine. Jud. 3:1-11.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show the nature of those native religions of Palestine with which the religion of Israel had to struggle for existence and over which it won a final victory.

Note 2. The Native Races of Palestine. Palestine was the name given by the Greeks and Romans to the land called Canaan by the inhabitants themselves and by the writers of the Old Testament. Canaan lay midway between the great valleys of the Euphrates and the Nile. Over it ran the highway of commerce between the empires that sprang up in these valleys, and its lowlands became the battlefields on which they repeatedly struggled for supremacy.

The early inhabitants of the country (4000-2000 B. C.) were Amorites who occupied the highlands west of the Jordan. Some Egyptian inscriptions dated several centuries later speak of the Canaanites as occupying the plains along the Mediterranean coast, which agrees with the statement in Num. 13:29 that the Amorites dwelt in the hill-country and the Canaanites by the sea. Still later, the two races blended so that the names became practically synonymous. Other Semitic tribes kept pouring in so that at the time of the Hebrew conquest the land

was occupied by a dozen or more tribes, most of them restricted to small territories.

Note 3. The Baalim. Though each Palestinian community or tribe had its own god or gods, the dominant Amorite-Canaanite civilization tended to impress a degree of similarity on all these local forms of worship. The underlying idea was suggested by the fact that the people cultivated the soil. Each productive field was regarded as the personal property of a local god, who was its guardian, and who made it fertile. This god was the Baal, which means "owner" or "lord," of the land, to whom tribute or rent was paid in the form of worship and sacrifices. There were as many local Baals as there were cities, villages, communities or tribes, each one known by a distinctive name. This might be derived from the place where he was worshiped, as Baal-meon, the Baal revered at Meon, or Baal-peor, the Baal revered at Peor. Again, a tribe occupying a large territory might have a common name for its several local Baals, *e. g.*, the Baal of the Ammonites was Milcom (1 Ki. 11:5) and of the Moabites, Chemosh (Num. 21:29). When several communities formed a political union, usually ratified by a solemn covenant, their gods coalesced into one, as in the case of the god of Shechem, who was known as Baal-berith, that is, Baal of the covenant. Furthermore, the god of a rich and powerful city, like Tyre, would also have a distinctive name, the Tyrian Baal being known as Melkart. In Babylonia, through the consolidation of numerous cities and peoples into a great empire, it was an easy matter for the patron-god of the capital to supersede all local deities and become a national god. But in Canaan, where the tribes retained their independence, such a process was impossible. Hence we find the local gods retaining their dignity side by side, and collectively known as the Baalim (Jud. 3:7).

Note 4. The Ashtaroth. As Baalim is the plural form of Baal so Ashtaroth is the plural of Ashtoreth. This name at once recalls that of Ishtar, the great goddess of the Babylonians (Note 3, Lesson 3), whose attributes were essentially the same. As stated above, the Canaanites regarded Baal as a god of fertility who presided over the reproductive processes of nature. But since the reproduction of terrestrial life, vegetable, animal and human, requires the co-operation of male and female, it was easy for the Canaanites, through Babylonian influence, to adopt Ashtoreth-Ishtar as the consort of Baal. The result was about as many Ashtaroth as Baalim, the most conspicuous being the patron-goddess of Sidon (1 Ki. 11:5).

Note 5. The High Places. Until the time of Josiah, near the close of the seventh century B.C., the high places were the recognized places of worship in Israel. In all but a few instances they had probably been adopted from the Canaanites and adapted to Jehovah worship. Though usually situated on hilltops or other elevated ground, they were also found within the cities or villages to which they served as local sanctuaries. The recently uncovered high place at Gezer was even situated in a depression between two elevations. Every

high place had an altar of hewn stone. Beside this altar stood one or more sacred stone pillars. Those at Gezer were originally ten in number, and ranged in height from five and a half to ten feet. In addition to these pillars every high place had one or more sacred trees, which were usually only posts or poles planted in the ground. According to early beliefs, the gods took up their abodes



Courtesy of "Palestine Exploration Fund."

The High Place at Gezer.

in stones or trees. The pillars at the high places, accordingly, represented the local Baal or Baalim, while the sacred poles, substitutes for the sacred trees revered in earlier times, represented Asherah (plural in A. R. V. "Asherim" or "Asherath," and in A. V. "groves"), an ancient Canaanite goddess who was gradually displaced in popular esteem by the more powerful Ashtoreth. The high places were, then, the local sanctuaries at which the Canaanites worshiped the Baalim and the Ashtaroth (Jud. 10:6). One other feature invariably connected with these sacred sites, so far as observed, is a hole or channel leading from a depression in the top of the altar down into a cave underneath supposed to be an abode of underground gods.

Note 6. The Worship at the High Places. The Canaanites lived on good terms with their gods. On the great feast days they assembled at the local high places and ate, drank and made merry with the deities who were invited to join in the sacrificial meal and the attendant revelry. The sacrifices and ceremonies were in charge of a regular priesthood. The sacrificial animals were slain on the altar, the blood running down into the cave, apparently as a libation to the underground gods. On the top of the altar the sacred feast was spread and eaten by the worshipers and the gods. While the official, or

priestly, religion may have accorded equal reverence to Baal and Ash-toreth, recent excavations have revealed such vast preponderance of cheap representations of the latter as to indicate that she was far more popular with the masses than her consort. At the high places her worship was conducted with revolting licentiousness. It is also a well-established fact that the Canaanites offered human sacrifices. Evidence from the excavations at Gezer seem to show that such horrors took place at the high places. At the same site a large number of jars were found in the earth around the stone pillars. They contained skeletons of infants never over a week old. Whether these were sacrifices of the first-born, or burials near the gods, who might facilitate a rebirth of souls thus prematurely cut off, is not yet clear. In any event, the worship at the high places was indescribably shocking. Although the Israelites in taking over these high places substituted the worship of Jehovah for that of the Baalim and the Ashtaroah, yet so many corrupting practices survived as in the course of a few centuries to make the religion of Israel seem unadulterated heathenism, and to call out vehement denunciations from the prophets (Deut. 12: 2, 3).

Additional Reading References.

Luckenbill: *The Early Religion of Palestine*. *Biblical World*, May and June, 1910. *Bible Dictionaries*, articles on "Amorites," "Canaanites," "Baal," "Ashtoreth," "High Places," "Pillars" and "Groves."

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was the subject of the last lesson? 2. When and where was the code of Hammurabi recovered? 3. Mention some examples of Babylonian justice as presented in it. 4. What relation may it have sustained to the later Hebrew codes? 5. What was the character of the civilization represented by it? 6. What is the subject of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. Describe the situation of Palestine in relation to Egypt and Babylonia. (Note 2.)

2. Who occupied Palestine before the Hebrews?

3. What attributes were ascribed to Baal? (Note 3.)

4. What were the Baalim?
5. What powers were attributed to Ashtoreth? (Note 4.)
6. Where were the high places ordinarily found? (Note 5.)
7. What constituted the furniture of an ordinary high place?
8. Describe the worship at the high places. (Note 6.)
9. How was it regarded by the prophets of Israel?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Why did ancient peoples deify the powers of nature?
2. Why were hilltops selected as the sites for sanctuaries?
3. What led to the offering of human sacrifices?

Note-book Work.

Write a brief outline of the Canaanite beliefs and forms of worship, and the reasons why it was so vehemently denounced by the Hebrew prophets. With the help of a concordance find further reference to high places and the gods worshiped there, and note any further information concerning them so gained.

Bible Text. "O Jehovah, the God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and art not thou ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? and in thy hand is power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee." 2 Chron. 20:6.

Lesson 6. PRIMITIVE HEBREW FORMS OF WORSHIP. Sacrifices, Sacred Rites and Ceremonies.

Scripture Reading: The Sacrifice of Isaac. Gen. 22: 1-19.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show the nature of the religious beliefs and practices existing among the Hebrews before the time of Moses.

Note 2. Cautions to be Observed in this Investigation. It would be easy to give an account of the early religion of the Hebrews if careful study permitted one to take the narrative in Genesis just as it reads. This narrative conveys the impression that a virtually full-fledged religious system existed from the very beginning of human history. It represents Jehovah worship with sacrifices as known and used by Cain and Abel, and altars by Noah (Gen. 4:3; 8:20); ceremonial distinction between clean and unclean beasts as having been made before the building of the ark (Gen. 7:2), and God as establishing His covenant with Noah after the flood (Gen. 9:9). Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are as far advanced in their religious ideas as their descendants a thousand years later. A closer examination shows, however, that this portrayal conflicts with a multitude of incidental Biblical statements which prove conclusively that the religion of the early Hebrews had, like every other, developed from crude and simple ideas (see Note 2, Lesson 9). These conflicting representations are due to the fact that the writers of the ninth century B. C., who compiled the earliest histories of Israel, carried back their own religious ideas into primeval and patriarchal ages. At the same time, they were not careful to eliminate from the early traditions the dim recollections embodied in them of a wholly different condition of things. It is from these earliest recollections, rather than from the narrative as a whole, that we must reconstruct as far as we can the beliefs and usages that prevailed in the earlier ages.

Note 3. Primitive Hebrew Ideas of God. The usual designation for God in patriarchal times was *Elohim*. The plural form is generally explained as a "plural of majesty," like the "we" which royal personages use in speaking of themselves. The singular *Eloah* is of rare occurrence, and is found only in later literature. Another early name is *El*, meaning probably "the Mighty One." It occurs also with certain descriptive titles, as *El Elyon*, "God Most High" (Gen. 14:18), and *El Shaddai*, "God Almighty" (Ex. 6:3). *El* in cognate forms is found in several Semitic languages as the common name for God, e.g., *Ilu* in Assyrian and Allah in Arabia. Whether

the name Jehovah was in use among the Hebrews before the time of Moses, or was first introduced by him, is an open question in view of the conflicting evidence (compare Ex. 6:3 with Gen. 4:26).

Precisely what ideas of God were entertained by the early Hebrews is shown very imperfectly. No doubt they thought of Him as a Being clothed in human form and endowed with human attributes (Gen. ch. 18; 32:24, 30). The spiritual ideas of Israel's later prophets had not been reached at that early stage. As the name *El* emphasized the mighty power which made Him Master over nature, so *El Elyon* and *El Shaddai* may have emphasized His superiority to all other gods. *Elohim*, at first a title of honor, and only later used as a proper name, may have suggested the reverence and obedience which were His due. Like all the surrounding nations, the early Hebrews thought of their God as a local deity, who revealed Himself by preference in connection with certain sacred places, trees, pillars, or springs (Gen. 12:6, 8; 13:18; 21:15-19, 31-33; 28:18, 22; 35:7; Josh. 24:26). It should be noted that from the time of the patriarchs there is no trace of the Hebrews worshipping more than one God, except as they fell into the idolatries of other peoples.

Note 4. Primitive Hebrew Worship. In early times, when men thought of their deities as magnified human beings with superhuman powers, it was also natural to think of them as subject to human needs such as hunger and thirst, and as angered by neglect and propitiated by offerings. One of the primary ideas underlying offerings and sacrifices was, therefore, the supplying of things which the gods were supposed to need. Homer speaks of the gods as living on the smoke of the sacrifices. The showbread which was placed on a table before Jehovah (1 Sam. 21:6) carries us back for its meaning to this early time when the gods were thought to be nourished by material food. The pouring of oil on a sacred stone (Gen. 28:18; 35:14) and water on the ground (1 Sam. 7:6) were drink offerings or libations to the deity. Furthermore, just as Jacob sought "to appease" (literally, "to cover the face of") Esau by means of the presents he sent in advance (Gen. 32:20), and as Oriental kings always had to be approached with presents, so men sought to win favor from the gods by pleasing them with gifts. The ancient tradition preserved in Gen. 8:21 represents Jehovah as soothed and pacified by the sweet savor of Noah's sacrifice.

Ministering to the appetites of the gods offered, however, only a partial explanation of the ceremonies connected with sacrifices. One of the most important parts of ancient worship, practised by the

Hebrews as well as by the surrounding nations, was the observance of sacred festivals held at the great sanctuaries at various seasons of the year, and largely characterized by feasting. By means of these sacred feasts the worshipers established, as they thought, a vital communion between themselves and their deity. To eat and to drink "before Jehovah" was a practice that survived a long time after the settlement in Canaan (Jud. 20:26; 1 Sam. 9:12, 13). The sacrificial blood, which was regarded as the seat of life, and by means of which the communion with deity was effected, was in part consumed by the worshipers and in part poured out as a libation (Note 6, Lesson 5). A trace of this custom, in a greatly modified form, survived in the covenant feast described in Ex. 24:5-11.

Circumcision was a religious rite of extreme antiquity, as shown by the use of flint knives in its performance (Josh. 5:2, 3). Primarily it seems to have meant consecration to a tribal god, and was retained by the early Hebrews as a tribal mark. In the later Jehovah religion it became a sign of inclusion in the Israelitish community.

That a belief in the value and efficacy of human sacrifices was held by the early Hebrews is seen in the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and thus prove his devotion (Gen. 22:1-19). That such sacrifices were peculiarly acceptable to the deity was an idea received no doubt from heathen ancestors, and strengthened by contact with the Canaanites, whose gruesome practices in this respect have been revealed in a startling manner by recent excavations in Palestine.

Traces of other primitive beliefs and practices survived in later times. The belief, for example, that a sight of Jehovah would prove fatal (Ex. 19:21; Jud. 6:22; 13:21, 22; 1 Ki. 19:13) was certainly an inheritance from pre-Mosaic ages. The requirements to go bare-foot in holy places (Ex. 3:5; Josh. 5:15) and to wash one's person and garments before coming into the presence of God (Ex. 19:10) seem also to have been derived from similar practices among the heathen Semites, who, when approaching the supposed habitations of gods or demons, sought by such external purifications to guard themselves against their anger.

Note 5. Morality in Pre-Mosaic Israel. Moral conduct was that which conformed to custom, immoral conduct that which transgressed custom. To do what everybody did was right, to do otherwise was wrong. Abstract moral principles were practically unknown. Lying, cheating, or stealing were wrong when practised on the members of one's own tribe, but not when practised on strangers. Abimelech blamed Abraham, not for lying, but for doing

toward him what "ought not [that is, is not wont] to be done," and by this violation of custom bringing "a great sin" on his kingdom (Gen. 20:9). Even in David's time the severest condemnation pronounced on a wicked deed was that "no such thing ought [is wont] to be done in Israel" (2 Sam. 13:11; comp. Jud. 19:30). The fear of consequences, if one acted contrary to custom, was the chief restraint on conduct.

Note 6. The Religious Value of Israel's Early Faith. The results reached by the above examination show that while Israel's religion in the patriarchal age was rudimentary, it embodied elements which were capable of being expanded into the pure and lofty teachings of Israel's later prophets. We see that the early Hebrews had already ceased offering worship to many gods and had centered it upon a single deity. While their designation of God as *El* or *Elohim* still retained the ideas of might and majesty associated with the powers of nature and with the heavenly bodies, yet their God was no longer a mere deification of these powers, as among the surrounding nations. Already the Hebrews had begun to discern those moral qualities which set Him apart from the heathen gods. The story of Abraham's sacrifice points back, indeed, to a time when even among the Hebrews human sacrifices were supposed to be acceptable to Him. But the countermending of the sacrifice also points back to a time when such offerings were abandoned because of worthier ideas of God.

No religious act could be nobler in spirit than Abraham's willingness to give God his very best possession, even the son in whom all his hopes were centered, and it teaches an impressive lesson for all time. Eating and drinking before God and sharing with Him the sacred meal were crude forms of worship, but behind this sensuous expression we see an effort to establish personal communion with God. In the statements that God directed Abraham and Jacob to make their homes elsewhere (Gen. 12:1; 31:3) we have a strong belief in the reality of divine guidance. Laying aside one's sandals when on holy ground, or purifying oneself on approaching God, emphasized the importance of deep reverence for Him. Morality may not have been formulated into abstract principles, but the law of custom held men in a grip fully as rigid. No doubt Israel's early religion was imperfect, but it was one of the stages through which God was leading men toward the recognition of those sublime truths which received their most perfect expression in the teachings of Jesus and which are now shaping the destinies of the human race.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Primitive forms of Semitic religion. Addis: *Hebrew Religion*, pp. 15-52. (2) Traces of a pre-Mosaic religion of Israel. Kautzsch: Extra Volume of Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* (5 vol. ed.), pp. 613-624. (3) Religion in the patriarchal age. Wade: *Old Testament History*, pp. 84-97. (4) On the divine names, see Bible dictionaries, article "God"; any modern treatise on the theology of the Old Testament.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What were the Baalim? 2. What were the Ashtaroth? 3. For what purpose were the "high places" used? 4. Mention some features of Canaanite worship. 5. How did Israel's religious leaders regard this worship? 6. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What impression of the religion of the early Hebrews is given by superficial reading of the Biblical narratives? (Note 2.)

2. What means do these narratives themselves furnish for correcting these impressions?

3. What were some of the early Hebrew names for God? (Note 3.)

4. What ideas were entertained respecting God?

5. What ideas were associated with offerings and sacrifices? (Note 4.)

6. How did worshipers try to enter into communion with God?

7. What seems to have been a primitive meaning of circumcision?

8. How were human sacrifices regarded?

9. What traces of other primitive beliefs and practices appear in later times?

10. What determined the morality or immorality of an action? (Note 5.)

11. Wherein lay the religious value of those rudimentary ideas and practices? (Note 6.)

Questions for Consideration.

1. What reasons can be given why the Hebrews advanced beyond other peoples in religious thought?
2. Is the human mind able to conceive of God except as a person?
3. In what respect is a system of morality defective which rests merely on the law of custom.

Note-book Work.

In the column of "Approximate Dates" put 1900-1300 B. C. In the column under "Historical Events," put "Pre-Mosaic Period of Hebrew History," and note that in view of the uncertainty of the date of Abraham and that of the exodus no exact length can be given. Under "Religious Developments" state some of the leading features of the early Hebrew religion as noted in the lesson.

Bible Text. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." Heb. 1:1, 2.

Lesson 7. INFLUENCE OF THE EXODUS ON ISRAEL'S FAITH. Jehovah's Power Demonstrated. Ex. chs. 1-15.

Scripture Reading: A Song in Praise of Jehovah's Power. Ex. 15:1-18.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the early faith of Israel was modified by the departure from Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, and the experiences of the wilderness.

Note 2. The Egyptian Sojourn and Oppression. The seventy Israelites who went down into Egypt because of the famine in Canaan increased rapidly in numbers (Gen. chs. 42-47). How long after the death of Joseph the "new king" (Ex. 1:8) arose who began to oppress the Israelites we do not know. By compelling them to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses for the storage of grain, he hoped to check the rapid increase which would have made them a dangerous foe had they chosen to rebel. All the cruel measures he adopted for this purpose failed (Ex. 1:9-22). While this oppression was in progress, Moses was born, and by a series of providential events saved from the fate of other Hebrew male



Mummy of Rameses II.

infants and trained for his great mission as deliverer of his enslaved countrymen. This training he received partly at the Egyptian court as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and partly in Midian where, as a fugitive from Egypt, he became a member of the family of Reuel (or Jethro, Ex. 3:1), perhaps a priest of Jehovah (Ex. ch. 2). After a time he heard of the death of the Pharaoh of the oppression, probably Rameses II (about 1292-1225 B. C.). In a vision at the burning bush, Jehovah commissioned him to return to Egypt and in His name demand from the reigning Pharaoh a permit for the Hebrews to go into the wilderness to hold a feast to Jehovah. Pharaoh's reply was an insolent challenge of Jehovah. Who was he, the unknown god of a horde of slaves, that he should assume to dictate to a ruler who claimed kinship with the mighty gods of Egypt? To show his contempt for him, Pharaoh ordered the burdens of the Israelites to be increased (Ex. chs. 3-5).

Note 3. Pharaoh's Conflict with Jehovah. Pharaoh's contemptuous refusal to recognize Jehovah's authority was followed by displays of His power that brought Egypt to the brink of ruin. The plagues of frogs, lice, flies, boils, hail, locusts, etc., culminating in the pestilence which slew the first-born, were primarily natural phenomena which in

a less severe form were not uncommon in Egypt. The narrative gives only a little of its meaning to one who sees in it merely the record of a trial of strength between Moses and a despotic king. Its religious significance lies in its portrayal of a conflict between Jehovah and the gods of Egypt (Note 4, Lesson 2). Each judgment humbled the pride of Pharaoh and his people, and was a blow at their confidence in the deities to whom they looked for help and protection. Osiris and his wife Isis were the most generally worshiped of all the gods. The fructifying waters of the Nile, on which Egypt depended for its very life, were the gift of Osiris, and those were smitten with defilement (Ex. 7:14-25), and bred a plague of frogs, sacred to the frog-headed goddess Hekt (8:1-15). The hallowed dust of the land bred vermin and swarms of stinging flies (8:16-32). The cattle, protected by Isis, whose symbol was the cow, and by Apis, the sacred bull, were smitten by pestilence, and the persons of the Egyptians by boils (9:1-12). From the abode of the gods descended terrible hailstorms and swarms of locusts (9:13—10:20), and Ra, the sun-god, was extinguished in the darkened sky (10:21-27). In each of these calamities the power of Jehovah stood out as supreme in contrast with the impotence of the Egyptian gods. The preparatory events which broke the pride and obstinacy of Pharaoh and paved the way for the exodus, could not fail to inspire the Israelites with confidence in Jehovah's power. This God, before whom the mighty gods of Egypt were helpless, was surely One whom they could trust for deliverance and guidance.

Note 4. The Passover Feast and the Flight from Egypt. We have already had occasion to notice how popular were social and religious feasts among the Semitic peoples (comp. Lessons 5 and 6). It was doubtless one of these feasts which the Hebrews wished to observe in the wilderness. Whatever its origin or its significance before the exodus, its occurrence coincided with the divine command to lead Israel out of Egypt to the mount of God in Midian (Ex. 3:1, 10-12). The warnings of Moses were unheeded by Pharaoh, and the Israelites were kept hard at their tasks. The evening of the feast was at hand. The organization of Israel into tribes, families, and households made possible the rapid passing of the word from Moses that the feast that evening must be eaten by every one equipped and ready for a hasty departure.

When all was in readiness, the feast was spread and quickly eaten in ten thousand anxious households. In the meantime, the final affliction had befallen the Egyptians, "and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." At

midnight Pharaoh sent in haste for Moses and Aaron, and in terror bade them and Israel go and serve Jehovah. The Hebrews at once took up their march, and by the mellow light of a full moon hopefully set their faces toward the wilderness.

It is not surprising that the feast to Jehovah, celebrated under such impressive circumstances, should have been made a memorial of the exodus. As such it became a symbol of Jehovah's mercy toward Israel, and ever afterwards remained the most important of the Hebrew feasts. It was Israel's first national religious institution, the symbolic act in which the nation on the threshold of a great destiny recognized Jehovah's special care and protection.

Note 5. The Passage of the Red Sea. The Israelites having assembled at Rameses, perhaps the modern Tel-el-Kibir, made a hurried



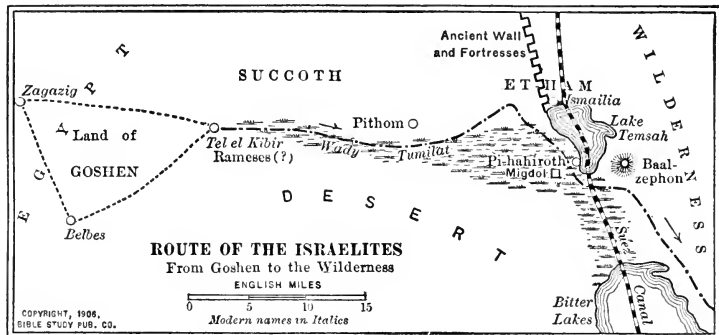
Brick Store Chambers of Pithom, a City Built by Hebrew Bondsmen.

From a stereograph copyrighted by Underwood & Underwood, New York.

march toward Pithom about twenty miles eastward in the district of Succoth by way of the Wady Tumilat, which afforded abundance of pasturage (Ex. 12:37). Near Pithom they paused to rest their flocks and herds, and to bake the unleavened dough brought from Rameses (Ex. 12:34-39). Here other households from that region may have joined them. In the hope of escaping into the wilderness, they now turned northward toward Etham at "the edge of the

wilderness" (Ex. 13:20). At this point they turned southward to escape the line of fortifications which guarded the entrance to Egypt. There is some reason to believe that at the time of the exodus the Gulf of Suez extended fifty miles farther north than at present, thus connecting by shallow straits its deeper basins which remain to this day as Lake Tamsah and the Bitter Lakes. The Israelites seem to have hoped that one of these straits might be shallow enough for them to ford. Their perplexity was reported to Pharaoh, who, having recovered in some measure from his terror, and angered at the flight of his slaves, set out in hot pursuit. When the Israelites halted between Migdol and Pi-hahiroth, they perceived the unfordable sea in front, the desert on either side, and the approaching Egyp-

tians behind (Ex. 14:1-14). Providentially a strong east wind arose and blew so violently all night as to drive back the waters of the sea, leaving the sand firm and hard. Quick to take advantage of this phenomenon, which has been observed in recent times in the same region, the Israelites crossed to the other side. The Egyptians fol-



Map of the Route of the Israelites.

lowed, but the storm had spent its fury, and the returning waters overwhelmed chariots, drivers, and horses. The exodus had been accomplished. A singular gateway had been opened to let the people pass out of Egypt, and now they stood on the eastern shore of the sea, with the waters behind them and the desert in front, ready to begin their journey to Sinai, or Horeb, as it is sometimes called, whither Jehovah had told Moses to lead the people for purposes of worship.

Note 6. The Exodus a Proof of Jehovah's Power. As in the narrative of the plagues, so in the account of the crossing of the Red Sea and the subsequent journey to Sinai, even a casual reading shows that the writer's interest lay rather in the religious significance of the story than in historical details. The disappearance of old landmarks and the changed topography of the Isthmus of Suez have made it difficult to trace the exact route of the exodus. Whether Moses led the people to some mountain at the southern point of the Sinaitic Peninsula, or took them by the usual caravan route eastward toward the land long inhabited by the Midianites, were questions of little interest to the writer.

During the long sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt their original ancestral faith seems to have weakened in contact with the strong beliefs and highly developed worship of Egypt. In their affliction the

God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob seemed to have forgotten them, or to have shown weakness in comparison with the gods of their oppressors. Moses' mission, accordingly, was not merely to free his countrymen from a cruel bondage, but to revive their faith in Jehovah, the God of their fathers (Ex. 3:6-15), as superior to all other gods and as worthy of their utmost loyalty and devotion. That the name Jehovah was known before the exodus is proved by the fact that Jochebed, the name of Moses' mother (Ex. 6:20) is in part made up of it. Whatever the origin (comp. Ex. 6:3 with Gen. 4:26), true form, or primary meaning of the name, it is certain that at the time of the exodus it took on a higher value to Israel than ever before (Ex. 3:14). Moses' father-in-law was a priest of Midian, and may have been a worshiper of Jehovah. If so, it is possible that during Moses' long sojourn with him his own faith in Jehovah was so revived and strengthened as to prepare him to go back to Egypt, and in His name undertake the deliverance of Jehovah's people. This explains why Moses makes all his demands of Pharaoh in the name of Jehovah; why, when the people complain, he goes to Jehovah for counsel; why he urges the people to wait and see the deliverance of Jehovah; and why, when the Red Sea has been crossed, and Jehovah's power shown, he takes up the song of praise:

"I will sing unto Jehovah, for he is greatly exalted:
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

The period during which the Israelites journeyed to Sinai was a season of constant teaching by Moses. The day was near at hand when the people were to be asked to review their spiritual blessings under Jehovah's guidance ("I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt") and to enter into perpetual covenant with Him. For this great occasion the Egyptian sojourn, the exodus, and the ministry of Moses were the providential preparations.

Additional Reading References.

Look up one or more of the following topics in a good Bible dictionary, in a history of the Jews, in an Old Testament history, an encyclopedia, or other work of reference: "Egypt," "Pharaoh," "Rameses II," and "Merneptah" (Meneptah), "Exodus," "Red Sea," "Pithom," "Manna," "Moses," "Jethro," "Midian."

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was the subject of the previous study? 2. Tell what you can of the origin of the primitive forms of Hebrew worship. 3. Mention several of the earliest religious feasts. 4. What were some other

very early rites? 5. What religious, or semi-religious holidays, among us are related to the seasons? 6. What is the subject of the present study? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What led to the oppression of the Hebrews in Egypt? (Ex. 1:7-14, 22; Note 2.)

2. What were the leading events of Moses' career until his call to deliver Israel? (Ex. ch. 2.)

3. What was the immediate occasion of the exodus? (Ex. 3:1-10.)

4. How did Pharaoh respond to the demands of Moses? (Ex. 5:1-9.)

5. What was the real significance of the plagues? (Note 3.)

6. What effect would the plagues have on Israel's faith in Jehovah?

7. What can you say of the origin of the passover feast? (Note 4.)

8. How did the passover feast become a permanent part of Israel's religious life? (Ex. 12:21-27.)

9. What other religious feast was connected with the exodus? (Ex. 13:3-10.)

10. Tell what you can of the journey to the Red Sea. (Note 5.)

11. Describe the perplexity of the Hebrews and their deliverance.
12. What is the writer's primary interest in the narrative of the exodus and the wilderness journey? (Note 6.)

13. What was the religious value of the Egyptian sojourn, the exodus, and the ministry of Moses?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Which is the more important, the name by which God is addressed or the conception we have of Him? Why?
2. Was Jehovah a new deity for the Hebrews to worship, or a new name for the deity whom they had long worshiped?
3. Has man's conception of God developed gradually? Has yours?
4. What evidence of divine guidance in the exodus is given by its influence on Israel's faith?

Note-book Work.

1. Write a sketch of Rameses II.
2. In writing the chart for this lesson note particularly the following points:
 - 1580? Expulsion of the Shepherd Kings who had reigned in Egypt about 200 years, and under whom the Israelites may have entered Egypt.
 - 1375-1358. Reign of Amenhotep IV under whom some scholars place Israel's entrance into Egypt.
 - 1292-1225. Oppression of Israel by Rameses II.
 - 1210? The exodus. Exact date very uncertain.
3. Either one of the first two items above may represent the approximate date of Israel's entrance into Egypt. Each receives support from the evidence thus far in hand. If the reign of Amenhotep is accepted, it would seem to agree with Gen. 15:16; Ex. 6:16-20. If the earlier date is accepted, it would seem to agree with Gen. 15:13; Ex. 12:40 (comp. Gal. 3:17).

Bible Text.

"Jehovah is my strength and song,
 And he is become my salvation;
 This is my God, and I will praise him;
 My father's God, and I will exalt him."

Ex. 15:2

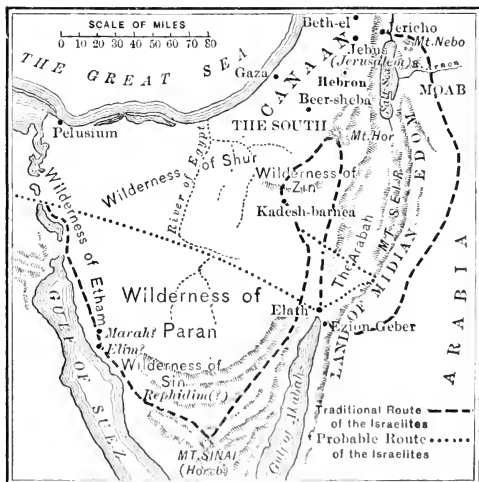
Lesson 8. ISRAEL'S FAITH IN THE MOSAIC AGE. Jehovah's Sovereignty Accepted.

Scripture Reading: The Covenant at Sinai. Ex. 20:1-17; 24:3.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To point out the causes which led to a rapid growth of the religion of the Hebrews during the wilderness wanderings, and the significance of the changes then introduced.

Note 2. The Exodus, the Birth of a Nation. Though the Hebrews during their sojourn in Egypt had greatly increased in numbers, they remained a body of loosely connected families and tribes. In their shepherd life no event had occurred to call for united action until the exodus. The fugitives who then escaped from bondage into the free air of the desert speedily became conscious of their own significance as a distinct people with a new destiny. This consciousness developed new needs political and religious. Who save Moses could assist the people to meet these needs? The influence which he had acquired by the successful conflict with Pharaoh and the triumphant departure from Egypt had prepared the people to accept a leadership to which he gave evidence of having been divinely called, and for which he was marvelously equipped.

Note 3. The Journey to Sinai-Horeb. The general belief that the Israelites in going from Egypt to Canaan made a long journey in an almost opposite direction into a barren region occupied by strong Egyptian garrisons rests entirely on the tradition that Mount Sinai, or Horeb, was situated in this region. This tradition, however, goes back only to the third or fourth century of the Christian era. The Old Testament, on the contrary, very clearly connects Sinai-Horeb with some peak in



Map of Sinaitic Peninsula.

Showing both the traditional and the probable routes of the Israelites through the wilderness.

Mount Seir, the range northwest of the Gulf of Akabah (Deut. 33 :2; Jud. 5:4, 5). If it was situated there, the Israelites would most likely have followed the direct caravan route across the peninsula to the land of Midian. At Rephidim at the suggestion of Jethro a beginning was made toward a judicial organization of the people. From Rephidim Moses led them to the foot of Sinai-Horeb, where they encamped. These events may be placed about 1200 B. C.

Note 4. The Covenant at Sinai. In the ancient world a covenant was the strongest form of compact known to individuals or tribes. It implied the acceptance of mutual obligations and was ratified by solemn ceremonies, often a sacrifice and feast at a neighboring sanctuary. The early Semites believed that the gods also would enter into covenant with their followers. In the earliest traditions of the Hebrews we find again and again this idea of God establishing covenants with their ancestors. The chief of these covenants was that made with the nation at Sinai. This "mountain of God" was regarded as Jehovah's sacred abode, and no other place could be so fitting for this august transaction. The primary purpose of the covenant was to bind the Israelites to Jehovah as their one and only God, but incidentally it also bound the tribes one to another, and thus established their national unity on a religious basis. That a covenant of this kind was established at Sinai, that upon the mountain there rested a thick cloud which sent forth lightnings and thunder, that the terms of the covenant were ten in number, and that they were inscribed on two tables of stone is the unanimous testimony of all the Biblical records.

Note 5. The Terms of the Covenant. The ten "words," or commandments, which constitute the terms of the covenant are known as the Decalogue. Its more familiar form is that given in Ex. 20:3-17. As there stated they are probably somewhat expanded, since the original form would more likely be short and easily remembered, as in the following arrangement.

FIRST TABLE

- I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- II. Thou shalt not make unto thee a carved image.
- III. Thou shalt not speak lightly the name of Jehovah.
- IV. Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.

V. Honor father and mother.

SECOND TABLE.

- VI. Thou shalt not kill.
- VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- VIII. Thou shalt not steal.
- IX. Thou shalt not lie.
- X. Thou shalt not covet.

The narrative in Ex. 34:10-28 also represents Jehovah as making a covenant with Israel, but the decalogue here given differs greatly from that in ch. 20. Like the latter it seems originally to have consisted of ten brief laws which in later times were expanded by editorial additions. These laws were as follows:

FIRST TABLE.

- I. Thou shalt worship no other god.
- II. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.
- III. The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep.
- IV. Every first-born is mine.
- V. Six days shalt thou work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest.

SECOND TABLE.

- VI. Thou shalt observe the feast of weeks and the

feast of ingathering at the year's end.

- VII. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifices with leaven.
- VIII. The sacrifice of the feast of the passover shalt thou not leave over until the morning.
- IX. The best of the first-fruits of thy ground shalt thou bring unto the house of Jehovah thy god.
- X. Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

A third decalogue, in general resembling the above, seems to be preserved in Ex. 20:23, 24; 22:29-31; 23:12, 15, 16, 18, 19.

Note 6. The Two Decalogues. The most obvious difference in the above decalogues appears in the character of each. The former is wholly religious and moral, while the latter is mainly ceremonial. They agree in binding Israel to the exclusive worship of Jehovah, and to an observance of the Sabbath. In view of the fact that ancient religion consisted in the observance of rituals rather than conformity to abstract principles, many scholars regard the decalogue in Ex. ch. 34 as the older, and that in Ex. ch. 20 as a late priestly compilation of fundamental religious and social principles. The two, however, are by no means opposed to each other: nor is it incredible that Moses, having given the people one set of commandments dealing mainly with forms of worship to be observed by the people at large, should supplement these with another set dealing with personal obligations toward God and one's fellow men.

Note 7. The Religious Demands of the Decalogues. The Hebrews believed in more gods than one. The first commandment simply insisted that Israel should regard Jehovah as first and foremost among the gods of the nations. This belief apparently continued as the faith of Israel till the time of the major prophets. The second prohibition seems to have referred chiefly to images, such as in Egypt were employed as symbols of deity, rather than to the figures, household gods, charms and amulets which were in common use among the Israelites till long after Moses' day, and which were condemned only by the more spiritual prophets. But if the second commandment is regarded as strictly prohibiting all idolatry then Israel's violation of it was practically continuous throughout her history till the time of Jesus.

In ancient times a person's name and the person himself were supposed to be mysteriously and vitally connected. The Egyptians, for example, believed that so long as a man's name survived on monuments or in human speech, so long the dead man continued to live in the other world. To misuse the name, therefore, was equivalent to abusing him who bore it. Irreverence in respect to Jehovah's name was irreverence toward Jehovah Himself.

The law which set aside the Sabbath day as sacred seems to have had its origin in the worship of the moon-god (Note 4, Lesson 2; Note 3, Lesson 3). Each new phase of the moon was regarded as marking a holy day, that is, a day set apart for the service of the gods, and this implied rest from labor. Where the Hebrews originally got their idea of Sabbath observance is not clear, but its strong hold upon them in the time of Moses is shown by its inclusion in the covenant law. This laid the foundation for those high social and humanitarian teachings respecting it which were developed by the later prophets and in the New Testament.

Among the Hebrews respect for parents was regarded not only as a domestic duty but as a religious obligation. Honor to parents was akin to honor to God.

Other religious requirements relate to feasts, offerings, and various points of ritual.

Note 8. Moses as a Religious Teacher. Moses was the mediator of the covenant established at Sinai between Jehovah and Israel. The high religious value of the covenant code then proclaimed and adopted is seen when its provisions are compared with the thought and customs then current. In an age when all surrounding nations believed in a multitude of gods, often cruelly lustful and vindictive, Moses estab-

lished in Israel the worship of Jehovah as the one national God, whose supreme characteristic was moral righteousness. In an age when the worship of idols was universal he forbade the representation of Jehovah by means of graven images. He made the Sabbath sacred to Jehovah and a day of rest to men. In an age that regarded ceremonies as the substance of religion, and that failed to co-ordinate moral conduct with religion, he introduced a code that disregarded ceremonies, and that prohibited selfishness in thought as well as act. These were the creative ideas that he stamped on the entire future development of the social, moral, and religious life of his people.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Biography of Moses. Rawlinson, in *Men of the Bible* series. (2) The records of the Mosaic legislation. Wade: *Old Testament History*, ch. 5. (3) The religious work of Moses. Kent: *Heroes and Crises of Early Hebrew History*, pp. 187-203. (4) Sinai, the law, and the desert wanderings. Sayce: *The Early History of the Hebrews*, pp: 188-245.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What led to the oppression of the Hebrews in Egypt? 2. How was Moses trained to become their deliverer from Egypt? 3. How was the power of Jehovah shown in the deliverance of the Hebrews from their bondage? 4. What two feasts, commemorative of the exodus, were thenceforth incorporated into the religious life of the nation? 5. What impression were the incidents of the exodus likely to make on the Israelites in respect to Jehovah? 6. What is the title of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. How were the Israelites in the desert affected by their new sense of freedom? (Note 2.)

2. What route did they probably take to reach Sinai? (Note 3.)

3. What important advice did Jethro give to Moses? (Ex. 18:19-23.)

4. What momentous transaction took place at Sinai? (Note 4.)

5. On what terms might the Israelites become Jehovah's people? (Ex. 20:2-17; see shortened form in Note 5.)

6. What other covenant with Israel was made by Jehovah? (Ex. 34:10-28; Note 5.)

7. How do these decalogues differ in character? (Note 6.)

8. Why is the second regarded as the older?

9. State the chief religious demands contained in them. (Note 7.)

10. What great contributions did Moses make to the religious thought of the world? (Note 8.)

Questions for Consideration.

1. Does the question as to the location of Sinai have any bearing upon the religious value of the Decalogue? Why?
2. What gives the Bible its religious value?
3. Are men to-day inspired by God?
4. In what sense may my life be an inspired life?
5. Which commandment reveals a great insight into human nature, and why (Ex. 20:17)?

Note-book Work.

1. Write out the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:3-17) in your own words, avoiding as far as possible the Biblical phraseology.
2. The chart entries should not overlook (a) the date, 1200; (b) the reorganization of Israel's judicial system; and (c) the names of Jethro, Aaron, and Joshua. Under "religious developments" state briefly the elements in the covenant which were a step forward in Israel's spiritual growth.

Bible Text. "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. 6:4, 5.

Lesson 9. ISRAEL'S FAITH DURING THE SETTLEMENT.**Blending of the Faiths of the Desert with those of Palestine.**

Scripture Reading: Israel's Choice of Jehovah Renewed. Josh. 24:1-24.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Israel's faith as developed during the wilderness wanderings was modified by the settlement in Canaan.

Note 2. Israel's Faith in Process of Growth. Every religion, like a living organism, is subject to the law of growth, expanding naturally from the simplest and crudest ideas to the most lofty and complex. The notion that in Eden God communicated to Adam an entire system of Calvinistic theology is derived from Milton, not from the Bible. The Biblical narrative frankly shows that God's revelation of Himself has been progressive—that it has advanced step by step only as men were prepared to receive the higher truth. The ancestors of Israel, we are told, "dwelt of old time beyond the River, . . . and they served other gods" (Josh. 24:2). Aaron's attempt to represent Jehovah under the form of a golden calf (Ex. 32:4, 5) was doubtless a survival of some such primitive Semitic worship. According to Ex. 6:3 Abraham, Isaac and Jacob worshiped God as *El Shaddai* (God Almighty), but not as Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel. In fact, the vitally important historical element in the Old Testament is the record of the growth, under divine guidance, of a crude tribal religion into those pure and lofty teachings of the prophets which paved the way for Christianity.

The modifications of Israel's faith during the settlement in Palestine were largely due to close contact with the Canaanites whom they either dispossessed or absorbed, and whose religious beliefs and practices they appropriated even when they clashed with loyalty to Jehovah.

Note 3. The Transfer of Jehovah's Abode from Sinai to Canaan. Sinai-Horeb was "the mountain of God" (Ex. 3:1) where Moses received his commission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt that they might "serve God upon this mountain" (Ex. 3:12). Here they entered into covenant to worship Him only. Sinai-Horeb, therefore, was up to that time Jehovah's recognized abode. But according to the belief then current a people and their God could not be separated. Israel was Jehovah's people, Canaan was His gift to them, and of necessity He also must make it His dwelling-place (Ex. 15:17). He had promised to go before them and drive out the inhabitants of the land (Ex. 3:8). The violation of the covenant in the worshiping of the golden calf is represented as having so angered Him that He threatened to remain at

Sinai, a threat which Moses' intercession caused to be set aside. Jehovah accordingly transferred His abode from His ancient dwelling-place and made Canaan His home. Henceforth Jehovah Himself, His people and His land became united in a close religious bond.

Note 4. The Conflict between Jehovah Worship and Baalism. When the Israelites entered Canaan they found the land already occupied by a large population. These Canaanites were skilled agriculturists and devoted worshippers of Baal (see Lesson 5). Agriculture and Baalism were intimately connected, since the Baalim were regarded as the deities who, each in his own district, watered and fertilized the soil, and to whom therefore all the produce of the fields and the vineyards were due. The Israelites, on the contrary, were shepherds reared in the desert where they had been accustomed to wander far and wide in search of pasture. Their adoption of settled life in Canaan compelled them to abandon their former nomadic life and take to the cultivation of the soil. This industry they were obliged to learn from the Canaanites, and thus were easily enticed to take part in the vile debaucheries of the sacred festivals at the high places (Notes 5, 6, Lesson 5). Moreover, the meaning of the word *baal*, "owner" or "lord" of the land, made its application to Jehovah natural, and His identification with Baal easy. The evil influences of the native religion, accordingly, were felt from the first (Josh. ch. 24), and at times reduced the religious life of the new comers to a very low ebb. But Israel's religious leaders were outspoken in their condemnation of Baalism. While their words often passed unheeded by the people, they succeeded in maintaining the supremacy of Jehovah, so that whenever the nation was plainly confronted with the alternative of serving Jehovah or some other god, it unhesitatingly chose Jehovah.

Note 5. Transfer of the High Places to Jehovah. As fast as the Israelites subjugated the Canaanites and appropriated their land, so fast Jehovah was regarded as having overcome Baal and dispossessed him of his sanctuaries. The high places, accordingly, which were found in every town and almost in every village, were taken over by the conquerors for the service of their own God. Little change was made in them. That the sacred stone pillars, representing the Baalim, were retained as symbols of Jehovah is shown by the repeated condemnation of them in later times. The sacred poles or trees, representing the Ashtaroth, were also kept and worshipped (Jud. 3:7). Naturally many of the former religious practices would still cling to the high

places and exert a fatal fascination over the Israelites. It was against the adoption of these revolting practices of the Canaanites that the later lawgivers and prophets protested, and not against the high places themselves, which continued for many centuries to be the recognized shrines for the worship of Jehovah.

The worship at the high places, especially at the more noted, as Shechem, Shiloh, Gilgal, Gibeon, Ramah and Beersheba, called for a more completely organized priesthood than had been needed during the desert wanderings. Prophets also, or seers, a class of religious enthusiasts, arose from the ranks of the people, and endeavored more or less conscientiously to lead Israel aright.

Note 6. The Use of Images. In addition to the sacred pillars and trees which constituted a part of the regular furniture of every high place, and which were taken over by the Israelites (Josh. 24:23), it seems that here and there at least direct representations of Jehovah were made for local shrines. Such was the image of Jehovah made for Micah, and afterwards set up in the sanctuary of Dan (Jud. 17:1-4; 18:27-31). That the ephod also was at first an image of Jehovah, appears from the story of Gideon's making one from seventeen hundred shekels of gold (Jud. 8:22-28). This interpretation explains such references as we find in 1 Sam. 21:9; 23:6; 30:7, 8.

Besides these images others called teraphim were widely used among the Hebrews as portable household gods (Jud. 17:5; 18:14). They were usually small figures varying apparently from a few inches to several feet in length, as is shown in the story of Laban's teraphim which Rachel hid under a saddle (Gen. 31:19, 30-35), and the teraphim which Michal used to conceal David's flight (1 Sam. 19:11-16). This is spoken of in such manner as to suggest that every household had its teraphim. The fact that almost every occurrence of the word "teraphim" puts it in close connection with magic and sooth-saying suggests that these images were used for the purpose of obtaining oracular responses. This again shows that the Hebrews of that early time, like all the nations around them, practised magical arts.



Teraphim.
From a terra cotta figurine of Assyrian date in the Louvre.

Note 7. Summary of the Situation. (1) *The increasing power of religion as a bond of tribal union.* The conquest of Canaan extended over a long period. After the initial victories the several

tribes settled down to the pursuit of their own interests, and in this divided condition became an easy prey to the Canaanites who would naturally attempt to regain the territories wrested from them. That the pressure of a great danger could rally them to united action is seen, however, in their response to the summons of Deborah and Barak. The splendid victory won under their leadership showed the necessity of subordinating tribal feelings to common interests, and thus paved the way for the monarchy. But even more than this, it revived the faith in Jehovah, who had now, as in the exodus, shown His power as a Deliverer. This faith became a great unifying religious force.

(2) *The corrupting influence of the native religions.* The conflict with the native faiths of Canaan began when the Israelites crossed the Jordan. These unspeakably corrupt but alluring cults began almost at once to exercise a disastrous influence over the purer faith of the Israelites, who in taking over the Canaanite sanctuaries took over also much of the debasing worship connected with them. What saved Israel's faith from extinction were those repeated deliverances from their enemies which recalled the people from their waning allegiance to Jehovah.

(3) *Varying moral ideals.* The absence of fixed moral codes left every man to do "that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 17:6) except as he was restrained by the law of custom and the fear of consequences (Note 5, Lesson 6). Close contact with the native races brought about a general corruption of Israel's conduct as well as faith. Even a devout Jehovah worshiper, like Samson, showed the pernicious influence of Canaanite customs. And yet despite his low morality, and his flagrant disregard of truth and justice, his daring exploits made him a popular hero. On the other hand, the persistence of those high and noble ideals which even then constituted Israel's distinguishing glory is seen in such leaders as Deborah and Barak.

Additional Reading References.

In Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, or histories of Israel look up the following topics: "Ephod," "Images," "Sanctuaries," "Feasts," "Judges," "Prophets," "Priests," and "Teraphim."

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. For which of its features was the Hebrew faith indebted to Moses?
2. What was the basis of the covenant at Sinai?
3. What relations did the first table of the covenant establish between Jehovah and Israel?
4. How does Moses rank among the religious teachers of the world?
5. What is the subject of to-day's lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. In what respect is religion in general related to the evolutionary process? (Note 2.)

2. What shows that the religion of the Bible was from the first a progressive revelation? (Josh. 24:2, 14; Ex. 6:3.)

3. How was the idea of Jehovah's dwelling-place affected by Israel's settlement in Canaan? (Note 3.)

4. In what condition did the apostasy at Sinai threaten to leave Israel, and how was Jehovah's wrath averted? (Ex. 33:1-3, 12-14.)

5. What religious conflict ensued in consequence of Israel's gradual appropriation of the land in Canaan? (Note 4.)

6. By whom was Jehovah worship successfully defended?

7. How did the Israelites provide themselves with places of worship in Canaan? (Note 5.)

8. To what corrupting influences did the Israelites expose themselves?

9. What use seems to have been made of images of Jehovah? (Note 6.)

10. What were the teraphim, and for what were they used?

11. What, in general, were the religious and moral characteristics of these times? (Note 7.)

Questions for Consideration.

1. Have your own religious beliefs remained stationary, or have they experienced a gradual enlargement?
2. In what respects, and by what means have they been modified?
3. How should we regard the imperfect religious beliefs of the Hebrews?
4. In what respects are some Christians enslaved by superstition?
5. What sort of idolatry creeps into many a modern life?

Note-book Work.

1. Fill in the several columns of the chart. The dates are 1400 or 1200 B. C. to 1050 B. C., thus including the period of the judges and the Canaanite wars.

2. Sketch briefly what you can learn concerning the "high places" from the following references: Gen. 12:8; 22:2, 14; 1 Sam. 9:12; 1 Ki. 3:2, 4; 11:7, 8; 12: 31-33; 14:22, 23; Num. 22:41; 2 Ki. 23:4, 8, 9.

Bible Text. "Now therefore put away, said he [Joshua], the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, Jehovah our God will we serve, and unto his voice will we hearken." Josh. 24: 23, 24.

Lesson 10. EARLY RECORDS OF THE HEBREWS. Their Dependence on Tradition.

Scripture Reading: Joshua and the Law of Moses. Josh. 8:30-35.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the earliest Biblical narratives were gathered, and what their value is for the present age.

Note 2. The Nature and Variable Worth of Tradition. In early times, when the knowledge of writing was a comparatively rare acquisition, accounts of historical events were handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Such narratives are called traditions. But a tradition must not be confused with fiction. Fiction makes no claim to be historically true. Tradition, on the contrary, may be wholly true, or partly true and partly false, or wholly false. A record, as distinguished from a tradition, is a written document. But when a written document merely records a tradition, it

obviously has no greater historical value than the tradition which it records. In the nature of the case practically all of Genesis was tradition when it was written down, but this fact affirms nothing as to its real trustworthiness. Tradition, whether oral or written, must always be rigidly scrutinized in order to determine its historical value. If we find a tradition of creation mingling certain important religious truths with very primitive and unscientific ideas, we should accept the religious teachings for the sake of which the tradition was preserved, and not reject the whole story because it is not history. If tradition gives us an account of a certain king, the tradition should be accepted as historical if it is found to be consistent with all known facts. In this frame of mind we can sympathetically approach the study of early Hebrew literature.

Note 3. The Early Materials for History. So long as the Hebrews remained a nomadic people they were in no position to develop a written literature. Accounts of memorable events, stories of remote ancestors, legends descriptive of the origin of things, songs of love and war, were told or chanted around the camp-fires or in the seclusion of the harems. Great numbers of such stories and songs were no doubt, then as now, committed to memory by professional story-tellers and handed down in an almost stereotyped form from age to age. Furthermore, the priests at holy places associated with distinguished names would naturally collect and preserve the narratives connected with them, as of Abraham at Hebron and Beersheba, Deborah at Bethel, Eli at Shiloh and Nob, and Samuel at Ramah and Gilgal. That there were some written records even in this period of prevailing tradition seems well established. That the ten words of the covenant were inscribed on tables of stone (Ex. 31:18) is confirmed by the numerous later references to the ark which contained them. Joshua is said to have written "the law of Moses" on stones (Josh. 8:32), even as Hammurabi centuries earlier did his code (Note 2, Lesson 4). Though the record itself is of late date, there is no valid reason why it should not be regarded as resting on a trustworthy tradition.

All this varied material, however, did not constitute history, but only the sources from which history might be constructed. No attempt to sift out the significant facts and arrange them in a systematic order was likely to be made until the settled life of the Israelites in Canaan had become sufficiently organized to call for special classes devoted to this kind of work. This seems not to have occurred until the rise of the prophetic order under Samuel, when the schools of the

prophets found it for their interest to trace out the past history of Israel for the sake of emphasizing its religious teachings. At first only separate stories, poems, songs, or oracles would be written down, after which the next step naturally would be the gathering of these records into more or less comprehensive collections. With the establishment of the monarchy arose a demand for the keeping of state records and for persons trained for this task. The first official scribe appears in the reign of David (2 Sam. 8:17).

Note 4. The First Connected Histories. That the later historical books of the Old Testament were compiled from previously existing documents is frankly stated by the authors themselves. The writer of Kings, for example, tells us that he took his material from the "Book of the Acts of Solomon" (1 Ki. 11:41), the "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" (not the "Chronicles" of our Bible), the "Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah," and probably many other sources then current. Nearly all modern scholars are now convinced that the earlier books, from Genesis to Joshua, inclusive, were compiled in a similar way from earlier documents which in turn had been compiled from the still earlier collections of oral or written tradition described in the preceding note. These books, then, are really in their present form the finished products of centuries of literary activity. The very earliest documents which enter chiefly into their construction are the following:

(a) *The Early Judean Prophetic.* This is made up of interesting stories told in a vivid, simple, childlike style, arranged in a roughly chronological order. They tell of the creation of the world, the early history of mankind, the origin of the Hebrews, and their fortunes until they were settled in Canaan. The document is characterized by an almost exclusive use of Jehovah as a name for God. It appears to have been compiled about 850 B. C. by a prophetic writer in the southern kingdom of Judah, reflects the Judean point of view, and is therefore designated by the letter "J."

(b) *The Ephraimite Prophetic.* About a century later (750 B. C.) another prophetic writer in the northern kingdom, called by the prophets Ephraim, undertook to prepare a similar history of Israel from materials which came largely from the northern sanctuaries. Naturally his document would deal more with the northern tribes. Its distinctive marks are a fine literary style, a greater interest in the religious meaning of his stories than in their antiquity, and a careful use of the name Elohim for God until, according to its teaching, the name Jehovah was revealed to Moses at Mount Horeb. Partly on

this account, but more accurately because of its Ephraimite origin and leaning, this document is designated by the letter "E."

Sometime after the fall of Northern Israel, a third prophetic writer, seeing how each of these documents, "J" and "E," supplied information lacking in the other, undertook (about 700 B. C.) to combine them into a single continuous narrative. While many parallel narratives were eliminated from one or the other, there seems to have been little effort to harmonize them where they differed, since various conflicting statements remain. This combined narrative is known as "JE." These three documents, "J," "E," and "JE," with their various enlargements, constituted, then, the first connected histories of the Chosen People.

Note 5. Religious Ideas in Early Hebrew Literature. The earlier creation story (Gen. 2:4-25), notwithstanding its childlike conceptions of the way in which the world and the human race came into existence, embodies a wealth of religious instruction. It teaches that God is the Maker of all things; that He is the Source of life; that man lives by the breath of God; that all things necessary for the sustenance of man's physical life come from God's hand; that disobedience to God's command subjects man to death; and that marriage, union of one man to one woman, is a divine institution. Similarly the story of the deluge, freed from the gross and polytheistic dress of the Babylonian version, emphasizes the supreme value of religion in human life in showing how Noah was saved because of his piety; and Jehovah's pleasure in the sweet odor of Noah's sacrifice shows that God is pleased with expressions of gratitude for mercies experienced.

These and subsequent narratives from the same early sources are marked throughout by very primitive conceptions of the deity. Jehovah is said to see, to feel, to touch, and to smell. Like a skilful workman, He constructs man from the dust of the ground. In the cool of the evening He walks in the garden to escape the noonday heat. He converses with men, as one man with another; He loves and hates, blesses and curses. He comes down to see the tower by which men are trying to reach heaven (Gen. 11:5, 7), and to see if the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are as wicked as they have been reported (Gen. 18:21). These descriptions show that, like children, the early Hebrews, or at least their Semitic ancestors, did not think of God as a spirit, but as a Being in human form with superhuman powers. Later God appears to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3:2), and when the covenant is ratified at Sinai, He comes down upon the mount in fire (Ex. 19:18). That Jehovah's presence was regarded as con-

nected with the sacred ark appears from the superstitious use made of it in time of war to insure victory (1 Sam. 4:1-5).

Crude as these ideas are, they embody profound religious truths. God, as pictured in them, is not an impassive nature force, but a Person, who reveals Himself to men in such ways as they are best able to think of Him, and who enters into the closest relations with them. If Jehovah is described as pleased or grieved, as loving or hating, as gracious or angry, such terms, however inadequate, convey the idea that He is a moral Being whose nature is moved by the thoughts and conduct of men. If He is spoken of as transferring His abode from Sinai to Canaan, this is only a childlike way of saying that He is always near to those who worship Him. When the early Ephraimite narrative represents Jehovah as speaking to Moses "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Ex. 33:11), what is this but a primitive expression for what we now speak of as "fellowship with God"? All these early records show how deeply the Hebrew mind was impressed with a sense of the nearness of God, and of the continuous revelation of Himself in all the ordinary phenomena of nature as well as in the lives of men and of nations.

Additional Reading References.

(1) On the rise of Hebrew literature. Kent: *Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives*, pp. 3-9. (2) Literary evolution of the Old Testament. Metcalf: In *Biblical World*, September, 1909, pp. 173-179. (3) The nature and grounds of the documentary theory of Genesis—Joshua. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, either edition, art. "Hexateuch"; or Bennett and Adeney: *Biblical Introduction*, pp. 22-59. (4) The Old Testament in the light of present knowledge. Sanday: *The Oracles of God*.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What shows that Israel's religion was progressively apprehended? 2. What change in the popular thought respecting Jehovah's dwelling-place attended the settlement in Canaan? 3. How were the Israelites affected by the Canaanite worship? 4. How did the Israelites in Canaan procure sanctuaries for the worship of Jehovah? 5. What is the subject of to-day's lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What is tradition? (Note 2.)

2. On what does the value of a recorded tradition depend?
3. What were the earliest sources for Hebrew history? (Note 3.)
4. What conditions had to be realized before history could be written?
5. What theory of the origin of the first six books in the Old Testament is now widely held? (Note 4.)
6. When, where, and how does the earliest connected history of Israel seem to have appeared?
7. When, where, and how did the second appear?
8. How was a complete history formed than is presented in either of these narratives?
9. What are some of the religious ideas presented in the earliest of the creation stories? (Note 5.)
10. What teachings are presented in the flood story?
11. What primitive ideas of God are presented in the early Hebrew records?
12. What high conceptions of God are embodied in these crude ideas?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Is all Scripture of equal historical value? Why?
2. Is all Scripture of equal religious value? Why?
3. What bearing would the early or late date of a book have on the question of its inspiration?
4. Can a sentimental or merely devotional interest in the Bible serve as a substitute for diligent and intelligent study of it? Why?

Note-book Work.

1. In the note-books write down in parallel columns the two Scriptural accounts of creation in Gen. 1:1—2:3 and 2:4-25, according to the order of events as narrated in them.

2. The chart entries for this lesson should be as follows. Dates: 850 B. C. for early Judean narrative; 750 B. C. for early Ephraimite narrative; about 700 B. C. for the union of "J" and "E." Literary development: From oral traditions to written records, and from these to the first compilations of history.

Bible Text. "No prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." 2 Pet. 1:21.

Lesson 11. RELIGIOUS PHASES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM. The Influence of Samuel.

Scripture Reading: Saul Anointed as King. 1 Sam. 9:10—10:1.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To note certain developments in Israel's religion during the establishment of the monarchy.

Note 2. The Samuel Stories. Even a casual reader of the early chapters in the First Book of Samuel, which tell of the founding of the kingdom, must be struck by the conflicting representations there given. In one place (1 Sam. 9:16) Jehovah Himself takes the initiative, just as in the deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 3:7, 8). The kingdom is His free gift to Israel. In another place the people take the initiative, and the establishment of the kingdom is represented as a long step in Israel's apostasy from Jehovah (1 Sam. 8:4-7). Furthermore, according to 1 Sam. 9:15—10:16, Samuel ardently favors the kingdom and does all he can to promote its establishment; while according to 1 Sam. 8:5 and 12:17 he is bitterly hostile to it. These differences, and many others of similar character,

show that the book in its present form, like the Pentateuch, contains narratives from various sources. Furthermore, a careful study will show that one group of passages constitute a narrative favorable to the kingdom, because written (about 850 B. C.) while the benefits of the monarchy were still conspicuous; and that the other group constitute another narrative written probably about 650 B. C. when the evils of despotism were felt, and the prophetic office was magnified above the kingly. The compiler of the book took both narratives (about 600 B. C.) as he found them, and combined them as best he could. It is important, therefore, to distinguish the early from the later story, and to note that the former is probably the more historical, and that the chief aim in the latter is to emphasize certain religious teachings which were of vital import in the later period. The prophets were preachers and teachers rather than historians.

Note 3. Preparations for the Kingdom. During the settlement, also known as the period of the judges, each tribe was struggling for its own rights, its own territory, and its own interests. This failure to recognize common interests as superior to those of the tribe laid the people open to a series of petty wars, and to repeated oppressions by the surrounding peoples. They served the king of Mesopotamia eight years (Jud. 3:8), the king of Moab eighteen years (3:14), the king of Canaan twenty years (4:3), the king of Midian seven years (6:1), and so on throughout the period of the judges. These were hard experiences, but they showed the tribes the necessity of standing together for the common good, and of establishing a strong central government. The disastrous end of the kingdom which Abimelech, the son of Gideon, tried to set up (Jud. ch. 9) seems to have checked for a time the growing desire for reunion. It required one more severe experience before the people could bring themselves to forego the tribal liberties of desert life and accept the limitations of more stable and efficient government. This experience came in connection with the Philistine war, and the succeeding period of oppression.

The Philistines, migrating possibly from Crete or Asia Minor, seem to have entered southwestern Palestine about the time that the Hebrews left Egypt, and to have become firmly established by the time Israel sought a home in Canaan. From the first they appear to have recognized that the Hebrews were their chief rivals. The Samson stories reveal the nature of the border warfare (Jud. 13:1, 25; 14:4; 15:19, 20). It continued through the period of the settlement, and reached its climax in the defeat of Israel and the

capture of the ark (1 Sam. ch. 4). This calamity involved not only Israel's political independence but Israel's faith, since it seemed to show either that Jehovah was inferior to the Philistine gods and unable to help His people, or else that He no longer cared for them.

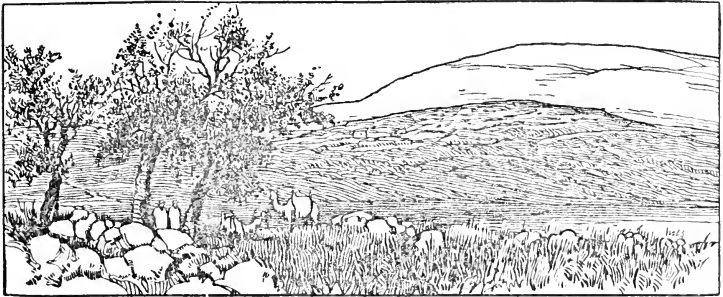
Note 4. Samuel's Influence in the Forward Movement. In the early narrative the true character of the times is clearly revealed. The Philistine oppression had been keenly felt for years before Samuel's influence became pronounced. His work at first seems to have had little or no effect upon the political situation. At last the nation began to recognize its need of some efficient central authority. Samuel, too, with profound insight realized the same need. A divine revelation assured him that Jehovah would raise up a king to rule over Israel (1 Sam. 9:15, 16). The day following this revelation Saul visited Samuel, and before the former took his departure the latter privately anointed him king and told him of the kingdom. In 1 Sam. 11:1ff the same early narrative continues the story of Saul by showing how he won a notable victory over the Ammonites in Gilead. This victory won the applause of Israel, "and all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before Jehovah in Gilgal." This beginning of the kingdom may be dated about 1037 B. C.

The rest of the early narrative makes little or no mention of Samuel, but from the prominence given him in the later narratives there can be little doubt that after Saul's election to the kingship, the prophet continued to exercise considerable influence in Israel. His advancing years would naturally lessen his public activities, the political disturbances rather than religious interests would hold the attention of the people, and Samuel's activities would henceforth be of a religious rather than of a political character. It is not surprising, therefore, that an admirer of the kingdom should fail to continue the Samuel story after the choice of a king, or that an admirer of the prophetic office should continue to emphasize the activity of Samuel in the early kingdom (1 Sam. 7:2ff; 15:1ff).

Note 5. Religious Gains through the Kingdom. Israel was Jehovah's people, and He was their God. The setting up of a monarchy, therefore, could not fail to have a large significance religiously as well as politically. The early narrative with truth represents the establishment of the kingdom as a long forward step, taken under direct divine guidance. With all his faults Saul was

a brave and ardent patriot. Notwithstanding the internal feuds that grew out of his suspicious temper, the constant and in the main successful wars which he waged with enemies on every side helped to consolidate the national spirit as nothing had ever done before. But for the foundations that Saul laid, the glorious work of David and Solomon might never have been achieved. In consequence of this political unification Israel experienced a great strengthening of the religious life. Jehovah worship was lifted out of a chaotic mingling with Baalism, and from being a really disintegrating force under the wicked sons of Eli, it became a powerful bond of union.

We note, furthermore, the religious importance of the king. He is chosen by Jehovah, is anointed for his sacred office by Jehovah's



Hill and Ruins at Shiloh.

prophet, and becomes Jehovah's representative before the people. As soon as he is consecrated he joins the sons of the prophets, and becomes "a new man" (1 Sam. 10:9-13). In building an altar to Jehovah (14:32-35) or offering sacrifice (13:9) he acts as the high priest of the nation, even as did Solomon at the dedication of the temple. One of the main duties of the king was to protect and enforce the national religion, and this Saul did, though often in a rough and blundering way, by giving to Jehovah worship, especially in the early years of his reign, the aid of his royal example. By this regard for religion, coupled with his sympathetic interest in the priesthood and in the prophetic schools, Saul did much to realize for Israel a political unity prophetic of future strength.

In spite of the mental distemper that overshadowed his later years, the disastrous termination of his reign, and its eclipse by the brilliant career of David, it would be unjust to deny to this first Hebrew king large credit for the religious developments that resulted from the

establishment of the monarchy. Sympathetically he co-operated with Samuel for the enrichment and deepening of Israel's religious life. The local sanctuaries seem to have increased in number, and those at Shiloh and Gilgal to have acquired a larger importance. The royal prerogative in determining the religious polity of the nation was strengthened, more definiteness was given to the forms and ceremonials of worship, and Jehovah worship was more firmly established as the popular religion. Saul, however, was too much a soldier to be also a successful religious leader. The most obvious source of his failure lay in his leaning toward superstition rather than sincere faith. This made him incapable of understanding that higher destiny which even then was shaping Hebrew history, and of which the prophets were gaining an increasingly clear vision.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Kennedy: *The New Century Bible, 1 and 2 Samuel.* (2) Sinker: *Saul and the Hebrew Monarchy*, in "Temple Series of Bible Characters." (3) Kirkpatrick: *Cambridge Bible, 1 Samuel.* (4) Kent: *History of the Hebrew People, The United Kingdom*, pp. 101-135. (5) Kent: *Founders and Rulers of United Israel*, pp. 63-120. (6) McFadyen: "The Character of Saul." *Biblical World*, February, 1905, pp. 103-116. See also in Bible dictionaries articles on "Books of Samuel," "Samuel," "Saul," "Philistines."

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What is meant by tradition? 2. On what does the historical value of a record depend? 3. What were the materials from which the earliest Hebrew histories were constructed? 4. What were the earliest documents? 5. What ideas of God are presented in these early narratives? 6. What is the religious value of these ideas? 7. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lessons.

1. What peculiarities are noticeable in the Bible stories about Samuel? (Note 2.)

2. What does this show respecting the composition of First Samuel?

3. Describe the condition of Israel during the times of the judges. (Note 3.)

4. Who were the Philistines?

5. When did Israel's conflicts with the Philistines begin?

6. What great calamity befell Israel at the close of Eli's judgeship?

7. To what new political movement did this calamity lead?

8. What other situation contributed to this movement? (Note 4.)

9. How was the election of the first Hebrew king brought about?

10. How did the election of a king affect Samuel's position?

11. How did the setting up of a kingdom affect the religious life of Israel? (Note 5.)

12. How was the religious importance of the kingly office shown?

13. What developments in Israel's faith and worship took place during the reign of Saul?

14. To what may we attribute the failure of Saul?

Questions for Consideration.

1. How can you justify the version of Hebrew history given by the late prophetic writer in First Samuel (Note 2)?

2. How would such a use of historical material be looked upon to-day?

3. To what extent does God now choose the leaders of men? ministers? governors? presidents? kings? political bosses?

4. What benefit did Israel reap from the harsh experiences of the early years in Canaan? Of what blessing to me have the hard experiences of life been?

5. Why are those in public office peculiarly responsible for the religious life of the people? What persons may be dependent upon me for their living of an upright life?

Note-book Work.

1. Draw a map of Palestine, showing the region possessed by Philistines. Also locate on the map the tribal boundaries and the towns of Shiloh and Gilgal.

2. Beneath the map or on the opposite page write a paragraph about the Philistines from such material or articles as you can find for yourself.

3. The information for the chart for this lesson will be readily obtained from the lesson notes. The dates should be approximately 850 and 650 B. C. for the appearance of the earlier and later Samuel stories, and 600 B. C. for their first compilation into a single narrative, while 1037 B. C. will mark the accession of Saul to the throne.

Bible Text. "And Samuel said. . . . Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." 1 Sam. 15:22.

Lesson 12. **THE EARLY MONARCHY. ISRAEL'S FAITH UNDER THE EARLY MONARCHY. Religious Aspects of David's Career.**

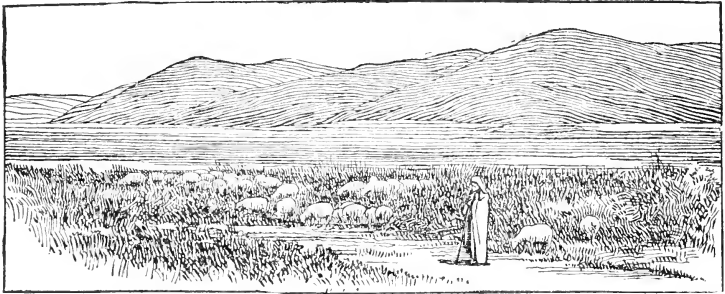
Scripture Reading: An Early Psalmist's Prayer. Ps. 4.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how David contributed to the development of Israel's faith, and how the religion of the nation was further unified and centralized during his reign.

Note 2. How the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were Written. The interesting stories of Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon, and priceless historical records of Judah and Israel are found in six Old Testament books, *viz.*, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, and First and Second Chronicles. The first four constitute in reality a continuous history of the Hebrew people from the time of Samuel to the Babylonian exile. It seems to have been compiled for the most part about 600 B. C. (Note 2, Lesson 11), while Jerusalem was still standing, and to have been completed in its present form by another hand about 550 B. C. The Chronicles are a second continuous history of Israel, written about 250 B. C. They begin with Adam and bring the history down to the close of the Babylonian exile. References are made to about fifteen documents from which the compiler drew his materials.

The main purpose in both histories is not the recording of history for its own sake, but for the religious lessons conveyed by it. Nevertheless, the historical material in Samuel-Kings is for the most part trustworthy, since the compiler either lived near the events, or used records contemporary with them. The Chronicler, on the contrary, reconstructed this history in order to conform it with the theory of his own age that the elaborate temple service as he knew it originated in the glorious reigns of David and Solomon. This theory controlled not only the selection but the treatment of his material. Narratives which discredited these kings were suppressed, as, for example, the stories of Bathsheba and Uriah, the rebellion of Absalom, the flight of David, the intrigues for the throne, Solomon's marriages with foreign women, and his idolatries. On the other hand, everything which was to their credit was set in the strongest light, even to the extent of contradicting the clear testimony of the older narrative. For this reason the Chronicler's picture of the reigns of David and Solomon, except where he repeats Samuel-Kings, must be used with care.

Note 3. David and his Time: Saul became king over Israel until his tragic death on Mount Gilboa, wars with the Philistines, Amalekites, and other surrounding nations, dissensions and jealousies among the tribes, religious problems, and the deep melancholia which darkened his later years, filled his reign with turmoil, strife and suffering. In the meantime David, the son of Jesse, a Bethlehemite, had risen rapidly in favor at Saul's court and had become his armor-bearer and son-in-law. His sterling manhood, winning disposition, and victories over the Philistines won him popular applause, but at the same time so aroused the morbid jealousy of Saul that he was forced to flee for his life. He became an outlaw, the leader of a band of freebooters, and at length, to escape the unremitting pursuit of Saul, was forced to take refuge among the Philistines. At the death of Saul he was anointed king over Judah. He now faced a situation fully as embarrassing as that which at the first confronted Saul. The Philistine victory at Mount Gilboa put the tribes west of the Jordan again under the yoke of their old enemy. Over the tribes east of the Jordan, Ishbosheth, probably Saul's youngest son, had been made king. During Saul's entire reign one of the outstanding problems had been how to strengthen the union between Judah and the northern tribes. The feeling between them had never been warm. Now the strain was more tense than ever. This state of things continued for seven years. At the end of this time David's kingship over all Israel was made complete (2 Sam. 3: 1; 5: 3). He was now in a position to begin the career that made his name illustrious in the history of the nation. Foreign problems he met by vigorous and decisive action, resulting in the re-establishing of Israel's independence, and the



The Mountains of Gilboa.

From a photograph.

subjugation of the surrounding nations. Jerusalem, which never before had been held by the Israelites, was captured and made the political and religious capital of the nation. His power increased with the years. But the latter part of his reign, like that of Saul, was clouded with trouble—a national pestilence (2 Sam. 24:11ff), David's great sin (2 Sam. 11:2ff), and homicide within the royal family (2 Sam. 13:23-36). Absalom's rebellion, temporarily successful (2 Sam. 15:1—18:32), and the rebellion of the northern tribes under Sheba (2 Sam. 20:1ff) revealed the growing dissatisfaction among the people, and the lack of cohesion among the several parts of the kingdom. When David was almost on his death-bed, a wretched quarrel over the succession marred his peace (1 Ki. 1:1-47). Amidst such scenes of war and dissension, during a period of nearly fifty years, Israel's faith struggled for a clearer and nobler self-expression.

Note 4. David's Contributions to Hebrew Religion. In the character of David are strangely mingled the strength, the impetuosity, and the crude barbarity of an outlaw chief and the rectitude, gentleness, and regal bearing which mark one of God's true noblemen. In the frank piety of his nature, his unflinching trust in Jehovah, and his genuine understanding of the spiritual life, he made valuable contributions to the religious thought of his day.

From his youth David evinced a deeply religious nature (1 Sam. 16:13; 17:36, 37) and even in his life of outlawry sought to guide his actions by the will of Jehovah (1 Sam. 22:3; 23:2, 10ff; 30:8, etc.). Shortly after he had made Jerusalem his capital, amid great rejoicings the ark was brought into the city, and placed within a tent (2 Sam. 6:1-15). The transfer to Jerusalem of this sacred emblem of Jehovah's presence resulted in Zion becoming the chief sanctuary of the nation. This was a great step forward. Many of the local sanctuaries began to lose their prominence, while only a few increased in importance. Even Hebron and Gibeon were eclipsed.

Again, David's personal loyalty to Jehovah served as a stimulating example to Israel. His trust in Him was so complete that he avoided taking the life of king Saul (1 Sam. chs. 24, 26), held no malice against Abner, who placed Ish-baal (*i.e.*, man of Baal), or Ish-bosheth (man of shame) as he was designated by the later scribes, on the throne of Israel (2 Sam. 1:8, 9; comp. 3:20, 21), and avenged the assassination of Ish-bosheth his enemy (2 Sam. 4:1-12). He felt that his success was assured by the will of God rather than by com-

passing the death of those upon whom God had seemed to set His signal approval (1 Sam. 26:23, 24). His loyalty to the memory of such, combined with his tenderness of heart, led him repeatedly to honor in death those who in life had sought his ruin. (Read the following: 2 Sam. 1:1-26; 3:31-34; 4:12*b*; 21:12-14.) To serve Jehovah with his whole heart and according to the best light that he had was the ruling purpose of David's life. It was this, and not his shortcomings and failures that made him a man after God's own heart. His sterling qualities were all his own, while his faults were mainly those of his time.

David's exquisite ode over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:19-27) exhibits a rare power of poetic expression. This, with the description of David in 2 Sam. 23:1 as "the sweet psalmist of Israel," suggests that some psalms may have come from him. When we turn to the Psalter we find a large number credited to him. All the superscriptions, however, being apparently of late date, give little help in deciding which are really his. Moreover, the tradition which made him the founder of the temple psalmody comes from the Chronicler (1 Chron. 23:5; 25:1-7; 2 Chron. 7:6) who regards the fully developed institutions of his own day as dating from the period of David (Note 2, above). To pick out any that are certainly his, is therefore well nigh impossible, and must be largely a matter of internal indications and personal choice. On the ground of dignity, originality, and poetic power Psalms 3; 4; 7; 8; 11; 15; 18; 19:1-6; 24:7-10; 29; 32 and 101 have been ascribed to him. So far as David's psalms are found in the Psalter, they are probably included here.

Note 5. Popular Faith during the Early Monarchy. A time of war, such as the early part of David's reign, is not likely to encourage progress in religious matters. But Israel did not go backward. Aside from some apostasy to Baal worship, and possibly some union of Baal worship and Jehovah worship in the earliest part of the period, Jehovah became more and more exalted in the mind of the people. He was given full credit for the national victories under Saul and David. They were the "wars of Jehovah." It was He who plagued the Philistines when they carried off the sacred ark. But at the same time He was credited with being the source of evil, for the stubbornness of Eli's sons, the melancholy of Saul, the death of Uzzah, the pestilence in Israel, and the plagues upon Bethshemesh are all said to have been His work, while the immolation of seven of Saul's sons showed a survival of the belief that Jehovah could not be appeased except by such sacrifices (2 Sam. 21:1-9). Again,

while the national trust in Jehovah was greatly strengthened, the use of the ephod for divining, the employment of Urim and Thummim, and reverence for the teraphim seem to have undergone little or no abatement. While the priestly office was not strictly limited to Levites (2 Sam. 8:18; 20:26), the priesthood was more firmly established. This was in part due to the territorial conquests of Israel and the increase of religious services throughout the land. In part also it was due to the growth in importance of several sanctuaries, noticeably that established at Jerusalem. To render the service more impressive, David probably elaborated the ritual. Nevertheless, religious worship remained relatively simple, and was chiefly connected with agricultural and family life. Of the four religious feasts enjoined in the decalogue of Ex. ch. 34 only two are recorded to have been observed during this period—suggesting that the emergencies of war had precluded any such importance being attached to them as was later the case.

A further development of the period is seen in the higher level of public and private morality. To this result the Hebrew religion contributed greatly, since its moral code demanded a purity of life strikingly in advance of that demanded by the social standards of surrounding nations. The prophets, too (Nathan, for example), did much to lead Israel to a recognition of the intimate relation of religion to morals. A study of this period shows us that God was by degrees, and in His own way, making Himself known. Israel's history was one chapter in "the divine education of our race."

Additional Reading References.

(1) For commentaries and historical works see "Additional Reading References" in Lesson 11. (2) Brief but admirable sketch of a great character. Little: *David, the Hero-King of Israel*, in the "Temple Series of Biblical Characters." (3) Look up in a Bible dictionary or other reference work the following: "Absalom," "Nabal," "Bathsheba," "Nathan," "Abner," "Joab," "Jonathan," "Shiloh," "Hebron," and "Gibeon."

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What reasons have we for thinking that two sets of Samuel stories have been woven together in First Samuel? 2. What conditions led Israel to ask for a king? 3. What part did Samuel take in the selection of Saul? 4. How did Saul contribute to the establishment of Jehovah worship? 5. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What six books of the Old Testament furnish us with continuous narratives of Israel's history? (Note 2.)

2. What motives appear to have controlled the compilation of Chronicles?

3. Why are Samuel-Kings generally regarded as giving more trustworthy historical information than the books of Chronicles?

4. Describe the last years of Saul's reign. (Note 3.)

5. Briefly tell the story of David's life until he became king.

6. Sketch the career of David from the time he became king until his death.

7. How was Jehovah worship greatly strengthened under David? (Note 4.)

8. How did David show his trust in Jehovah?

9. Mention some psalms which may have been written by David.

10. Describe the popular religion of his time. (Note 5.)

11. What influence did the Hebrew faith have upon public and private morality?

Questions for Consideration.

1. What internal conditions that contributed to the weakness of Israel during the early monarchy, weakened the Christian church to-day?

2. Was David's threatened vengeance on Nabal justified by the morality of that time? How would such conduct be judged to-day?

3. In what sense was David a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14)?

4. If David, with his comparatively feeble religious light, labored zealously to establish religion on a stronger basis, what may God reasonably expect of us?

Note-book Work.

1. Write out what you regard as the six most important developments in Hebrew religion as studied thus far.

2. Material for chart entries will readily be gathered from the lesson notes. The dates for David's reign should be from about 1017 B. C. to 977 B. C.; for the first compilation of Samuel-Kings about 600 B. C., for its completion about 550 B. C., and for Chronicles about 250 B. C.

Bible Text.

"Thou art my hiding-place; thou wilt preserve me from trouble;
Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

Ps. 32:7.

Lesson 13. ABIDING IDEAS IN THE EARLY RELIGIONS. Review of Lessons 1-12.

Scripture Reading: A Psalmist's Trust in God. Ps. 3.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To recall some of the religious beliefs and practices which were current among the early Semites and other nations, and which have won a permanent place in the best religious thought of the world.

Note 2. A Spiritual World. A survey of the religions of the ancient Egyptians, of the Babylonians, of the Canaanites, and of the ancestors of the Hebrews shows that they held certain features in common. The most obvious of these was a belief in a world of spiritual beings whose existence could not be perceived by the human senses, but whose power over human life could be detected in every good or evil fortune. The forces and phenomena of the natural world, as well as the various activities of men, were the agencies through which they exercised their influence. Sun, moon, and planets, sky, earth and ocean, the changing seasons, rain and tempests, reproduction and destruction of life, agriculture, sports and war—all these manifestations of power were taken as unanswerable proofs of the existence of these invisible beings—gods, demons, or spirits of the dead. This belief in a realm of spiritual beings lies at the basis of all religion. It assumes an infinite variety of forms ranging all the way from the crudest superstitions of savages to the loftiest ideas of Christianity.

Note 3. Worship. This universal belief in a spiritual world finds expression in worship. In its most general sense worship is homage rendered to a deity. It embraces all gifts, rituals, ceremonies, and forms of conduct which are supposed to be pleasing to it. The underlying aim in primitive worship was to supply the gods with those things of which they stood in need, such as food, drink, clothing, shelter, entertainment, etc. Gifts of this kind, by winning their favor or appeasing their anger, were thought to bring prosperity or avert calamity. Men imagined that by means of sacrificial feasts they could enter into a vital communion with the gods. The sacrifice became a bond of union between the worshiper and his god. The two parties could even establish solemn covenants with each other by means of the blood, which was regarded as the seat of life. Prayer also was believed to be a potent means of influencing the divinities, and obtaining their protection. From such beliefs and practices, for the most part crude, imperfect, and materialistic, worship gradually rose into purer and more spiritual forms as men acquired worthier ideas of the deity, until in its highest and final form it realizes the thought of Jesus, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jo. 4:24).

Note 4. Morality. In ancient times the duties of man to man were regulated by custom (Note 5, Lesson 6). To do what men

were not accustomed to do was to act wickedly. In a simple nomadic life such customs were correspondingly simple and easily remembered. But with advancing civilization life also became more complex and practices often so conflicting that it was found necessary to decide what was the right thing to do. As such decisions increased in number they were gradually gathered into codes, and these, to give them greater sanction, were invested with divine authority. Thus Hammurabi's code was ascribed to Shamash the sun-god, and the Mosaic decalogues to Jehóvah. It was a recognition, or revelation, of the great truth that the moral character of human conduct must be determined by divine standards.

Note 5. Existence after Death. That the human spirit in some form survives death was universally believed in the ancient world. The condition of the dead was not clearly defined. Probably many ideas prevailed. Among the Semites it was held that between the righteous and the wicked no distinction would be made, since rewards and penalties were limited to this life only. The Egyptians, however, had developed the doctrine of a future judgment in the hall of Osiris. Such teachings, with their later developments, formed stepping-stones toward the teachings of Jesus, "who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Note 6. The Higher Character of Israel's Religion. While the early Hebrews held many beliefs and practices in common with the surrounding nations, in many important respects these beliefs and practices stood on a higher plane. When the Hebrews first appeared in history they were already so accustomed to the worship of a single deity that at Sinai they readily accepted Jehovah as national God to the exclusion of all others. In the exodus and in the conquest of Canaan He showed His superiority to the gods of these lands. In moral and spiritual character He rises high above the best of the surrounding deities. He is a righteous God who demands righteousness of His people. His worship, when uncorrupted by foreign practices, is free from the licentiousness inseparable from the worship of other gods. From the first the religion of Israel set its face against human sacrifices, and from the first, too, it repressed idolatrous tendencies by forbidding the use of images in the worship of Jehovah. Even in these early stages of Israel's faith and practice one can easily discover the germs which under the fostering Spirit of God developed into the noble ideals of the later prophets and reached their full expansion in the matchless teachings of Jesus.

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What fundamental belief appears in all the religions studied in the earlier lessons of this quarter? (Note 2.)

2. How was this belief consistent with a worship of material objects?

3. What form does this belief take in Christianity?

4. What is worship? (Note 3.)

5. What common forms does worship assume?

6. What prompted men in early times to make offerings to their gods?

7. What is the final and perfect form of worship?

8. How did laws for regulating human conduct originate? (Note 4.)

9. What primitive ideas respecting the future destiny of man have taken a larger form in revealed religion? (Note 5.)

10. In what important respect did the Hebrew religion conspicuously differ from other early religions? (Note 6.)

11. How did the God of the Hebrews differ from other gods?

12. What was the power that directed these early, as well as the later, developments of Israel's faith?

THE BIBLE STUDY UNION LESSONS
SENIOR GRADE

PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTIANITY

BY
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.

	Pages
Character and Contents of the Course	iii-v
Directions for Study	vi

THE LESSONS.

Part II. Israel's Religion from Solomon to the Beginning of the Exile.

Lesson 14. Early Moral and Religious Standards	79
Lesson 15. The Religious Value of Ritual	85
Lesson 16. Popular Religion in the Divided Kingdom	92
Lesson 17. The Conflict with Baalism	98
Lesson 18. Social Justice and Righteousness	104
Lesson 19. The Divine Justice and Love	110
Lesson 20. The Higher Idea of God	116
Lesson 21. The Moral Demands of Religion	122
Lesson 22. Individual Responsibility	126
Lesson 23. Israel's Unique Relation to Jehovah	132
Lesson 24. The Deuteronomic Law	137
Lesson 25. The New Covenant	143
Lesson 26. The Teachings and Work of the Early Prophets. Review	148

CHARACTER AND CONTENTS OF THE COURSE.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

Note 1. Purpose. The purpose of this course is to survey those religious ideas which unfolded during the pre-Christian era, served as a preparation for Christianity, and finally received their fullest expression and realization in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Note 2. Scope. The course begins with a sketch of the old Semitic world, of which the Hebrew people constituted a part, traces the rise and development of characteristic features of the religion of Israel, and concludes with a review of the fundamental religious teachings of Jesus.

Note 3. Method. The course is divided into four parts. Each deals with a specific period of historical and religious development.

Part I describes the religions of ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Palestine (as introductory to the Biblical records of Israel's faith), primitive forms of Hebrew worship, the influence of the exodus upon their religious life, the early religious literature of the Hebrews, and concludes with a study of the religious aspects of David's career.

Part II begins with a study of Solomon's institution of the temple service, notes the character of the religious life of Israel during the period of the divided kingdom, and examines the religious content of the earlier prophetic utterances, carrying the course forward to the time of the exile.

Part III covers the religious developments of the exilic and post-exilic periods, special attention being given to the later prophetic writings, the establishment of Judaism under priestly auspices, and the religious temper of Israel under the Maccabees.

Part IV shows how the religious ideas developed in the Old Testament period were enlarged and spiritualized in the teachings of Jesus.

The whole study thus leads naturally to the second year course of the Senior department, which covers the establishment of organized Christianity by the Apostles and gives a brief account of the leading events in the history of the church down to the present time.

Note 4. Longer and Shorter Courses. Classes wishing a six months' course can take either Parts I and II or Parts III and IV, while Parts I, II, and III make an appropriate nine months' course. Part IV is so based upon Part III that it cannot be studied to the best advantage without a previous study of the latter.

LESSON TITLES AND SUBJECTS.

(Subject to revision.)

Part I. ISRAEL'S RELIGION TO THE END OF DAVID'S REIGN.

- Lesson 1. THE OLD SEMITIC WORLD. Its Physical Features and its Peoples.
- Lesson 2. RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS. Its Origin and Characteristics.
- Lesson 3. RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT BABYLONIANS. Its Beliefs and Ceremonies.
- Lesson 4. HAMMURABI'S STANDARDS OF JUSTICE AND MERCY. Selections from the Babylonian Code.
- Lesson 5. RELIGIONS OF ANCIENT PALESTINE. The Baalim, and the Worship at the High Places.
- Lesson 6. PRIMITIVE HEBREW FORMS OF WORSHIP. Sacrifices, Sacred Rites and Ceremonies.
- Lesson 7. INFLUENCE OF THE EXODUS ON ISRAEL'S FAITH. Jehovah's Power Demonstrated.
- Lesson 8. ISRAEL'S FAITH IN THE MOSAIC AGE. Jehovah's Sovereignty Accepted.
- Lesson 9. ISRAEL'S FAITH DURING THE SETTLEMENT. Blending of the Faiths of the Desert with those of Palestine.
- Lesson 10. EARLY RECORDS OF THE HEBREWS. Their Dependence on Tradition.
- Lesson 11. RELIGIOUS PHASES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM. The Influence of Samuel.
- Lesson 12. GROWTH OF ISRAEL'S FAITH UNDER THE EARLY MONARCHY. Religious Aspects of David's Career.
- Lesson 13. ABIDING IDEAS IN THE EARLY RELIGIONS. Review of Lessons 1-12.

Part II. ISRAEL'S RELIGION FROM SOLOMON TO THE BEGINNING OF THE EXILE.

- Lesson 14. EARLY MORAL AND RELIGIOUS STANDARDS. Israel's Legal Institutions.
- Lesson 15. THE RELIGIOUS VALUE OF RITUAL. Solomon's Enlargement of the Temple Service.
- Lesson 16. POPULAR RELIGION IN THE DIVIDED KINGDOM. The Setting up of the Golden Calves.
- Lesson 17. THE CONFLICT WITH BAALISM. The Crisis in the Days of Elijah.
- Lesson 18. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. The Preaching of Amos.
- Lesson 19. THE DIVINE JUSTICE AND LOVE. Hosea's Message to a Faithless People.
- Lesson 20. THE HIGHER IDEA OF GOD. Influence of the Prophets in Attaining a Truer Faith.
- Lesson 21. THE MORAL DEMANDS OF RELIGION. The Insufficiency of Ceremonies.
- Lesson 22. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY. The Religious Estimate of the Individual.
- Lesson 23. ISRAEL'S UNIQUE RELATION TO JEHOVAH. Theocratic Protests against the Monarchy.
- Lesson 24. THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW. The Great Reformation under Josiah.
- Lesson 25. THE NEW COVENANT. Jeremiah's Messianic Conceptions.
- Lesson 26. THE TEACHINGS AND WORK OF THE EARLY PROPHETS. Review of Lessons 14-25.

PART III. ISRAEL'S EXILIC AND POST-EXILIC RELIGION.

- Lesson 27. ISRAEL AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM. How this Catastrophe Affected its Life and Faith.
- Lesson 28. COMFORTING MESSAGES TO THE EXILES. Ezekiel's Work in Babylonia.
- Lesson 29. JEHOVAH'S CHARACTER AND ISRAEL'S DESTINY. The Rebuilding of the Temple.
- Lesson 30. THE IDEAL SERVANTS OF JEHOVAH. Their Vicarious Sufferings as Instruments of Redemption.
- Lesson 31. THE RISE OF JUDAISM. Nehemiah's Enforcement of the Law in Jerusalem.
- Lesson 32. THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRIESTLY LAW. Ezra and the Great Assembly.
- Lesson 33. ISRAEL'S NARROWNESS AND JEHOVAH'S LOVE. Teachings of the Book of Jonah.
- Lesson 34. THE MACCABEAN STRUGGLE. Its Effect on Israel's Life and Faith.
- Lesson 35. THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Messianic Visions of Jehovah's Reign.
- Lesson 36. LATER DEVELOPMENTS OF JUDAISM. Rise of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
- Lesson 37. THE RELIGION OF THE LAW. What it Accomplished, and wherein it Fell Short.
- Lesson 38. OTHER PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTIANITY. How Greece and Rome Paved the Way for its Rapid Spread.
- Lesson 39. THE PROGRESSIVE NATURE OF DIVINE REVELATION. Review of Lessons 27-38.

PART IV. CHRISTIANITY THE FULFILMENT OF ISRAEL'S FAITH.

- Lesson 40. THE OLD TESTAMENT RELIGION PASSING INTO THE NEW. The Preaching of John the Baptist.
- Lesson 41. JESUS' MISSION IN THE WORLD. The Establishment of the Kingdom of God.
- Lesson 42. JESUS THE GREAT TEACHER. His Relation to the Old Testament Religion.
- Lesson 43. JESUS' TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIMSELF. His Relation to the Father and to the World.
- Lesson 44. JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING GOD. The Divine Fatherhood.
- Lesson 45. JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING MAN. Human Sonship and Brotherhood.
- Lesson 46. JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING SIN. Its Essence Found in Selfishness.
- Lesson 47. JESUS' WAY OF SALVATION. Redemption from Sin through Faith and Obedience.
- Lesson 48. JESUS' LAW OF LOVE. The Unselfishness of a Good Life.
- Lesson 49. JESUS' TEACHING IN REGARD TO THE FUTURE LIFE. Its Contrast with Old Testament Beliefs.
- Lesson 50. JESUS' ABIDING PRESENCE. The Mission of the Holy Spirit.
- Lesson 51. CHRISTIANITY FOR THE WORLD. The Great Commission.
- Lesson 52. CHRISTIANITY THE FINAL RELIGION. Review of Lessons 40-51.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY.

Students are advised to use in connection with this course the American Revised Version of the Bible, which is undoubtedly the best.

Note carefully the subject and scope of each lesson as given in the title and as expanded in the "Object of the Lesson," Note 1.

Read the Scripture passage indicated at the head of the lesson, and consider its bearing on the subject in hand.

Read all the lesson "Notes," pausing after each one to let the mind dwell on its contents. Look up the Scripture references. Until this has been done do not look at the "Questions on the Lesson."

Under each of the "Questions on the Lesson" write a brief answer. Whoever fails to do this will miss one of the most helpful features of these lessons. If the class come with the answers carefully prepared and written out, this part of the lesson can be passed over rapidly.

Study for yourself some particularly interesting point suggested by the lesson. This may be a belief, a religious rite, a custom, a temple, a heathen deity, a biography or some historic event. Whatever it is, study it carefully. Make this course contribute to your fund of general knowledge by a good use of whatever libraries may be within reach.

Make note of one or two of the most interesting questions that come to mind as you study the lesson, and bring them up for discussion in the class. If no questions come, study the lesson again, and think harder.

Keep note-book and pencil in hand both when studying the lesson at home and when going over it in the class. In the note-book write (1) what you have to say on the several points indicated under "Note-book Work"; (2) any special assignment made to you; (3) interesting results of investigations, or questions that arise in private study or in the class. Such use of the note-book is indispensable if the best results are to be attained.

Read these suggestions frequently, and with each lesson put them into practice.

PART II

ISRAEL'S RELIGION FROM SOLOMON TO THE BEGINNING OF THE EXILE

LESSON 14. EARLY MORAL AND RELIGIOUS STANDARDS. Israel's Legal Institutions.

Scripture Reading: The Book of the Covenant. Ex. 20:22—23:33.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To call attention to some of the laws by which the Hebrews regulated social conduct and religious practices after the settlement in Canaan.

Note 2. "The Book of the Covenant." The laws in Ex. 20:22—23:19 are universally conceded to be among the oldest survivals of Hebrew literature. Their primitive character is shown by the use of rudimentary altars (20:24-26), the bringing of judicial cases directly to God (21:6; 22:8, 9), the granting of asylum (21:13, 14), the retaining of "tit for tat" punishments (21:23-25), not eating animals killed by wild beasts (22:31), and other archaic practices. These laws were adapted to a simple condition of society, and for people mainly engaged in agriculture. These facts suggest that they may have assumed substantially their present form and arrangement when the Israelites had ceased to be mere wandering shepherds and had become settled farmers, but before they had developed the complex conditions of the late monarchy. Many of the regulations no doubt give legal expression to long established customs, and some of them may go back to the decisions which Moses gave when acting as a judge in the wilderness (Ex. 18:13-27). New laws were added as occasion required, the whole being still permeated by the spirit of the great lawgiver, and naturally retaining the old name, "The Law of Moses." They represent a growth extending over the period from about 1200 to 750 B. C. Probably most of them were in force during the days of David and Solomon. In 24:3 this code is described as "the words of Jehovah" and "the ordinances." The latter term applies specifically to the civil laws beginning at 21:1, and the former term to the religious regulations in 20:22-26; 22:18-24, 28; 23:1-3, 6-19. The title "The Book of the Covenant" was probably used as a designation for the entire code, but originally it may have been applied only to "the words of Jehovah"—"all that Jehovah hath spoken"—which the people bound themselves to obey.

Note 3. Decalogues in the Book of the Covenant. Attention has already been called to two decalogues (Note 5, Lesson 8), which are represented as embodying the terms of the covenant which Jehovah established with Israel. They show the early custom of arranging laws in groups of ten (decads), and with subordinate groups of five (pentads), a device no doubt suggested by the ten fingers, five and five, and used in childlike fashion as an aid to memory. It need occasion no surprise, therefore, to find that the primitive code in Ex. 20:22—23:19 is largely made up of decalogues, each embracing ten generally related topics, and divided into pentads in which the relation is closer still. In some cases the two parts of a decalogue have been separated, and in one case at least several missing links seem to have been preserved in a corresponding pentad in Deuteronomy. Nine decalogues have been found in these chapters, five of them containing civil and criminal laws, or "ordinances," and four, religious and humane laws, or "words of Jehovah." The former, like the code of Hammurabi (Lesson 4), state each case as a supposition, "if a man," while the latter use direct address, "thou shalt," or "thou shalt not."

Note 4. The "Words of Jehovah." The first half of the first of the religious decalogues is given in Ex. 20:23-26; the second, which seems to have been displaced, occurs in Ex. 22:28-31. The general subject is

DUTIES TOWARD GOD.

A. *Worship.*

- I. Thou shalt make no other gods with me.
- II. Gods of silver and gods of gold thou shalt not make unto thyself.
- III. An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen; in every place where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.

IV. If thou make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stones; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

V. Thou shalt not go up by steps unto mine altar; that thy nakedness be not uncovered thereon.

B. *Loyalty.*

- VI. Thou shalt not revile God, nor curse the ruler of thy people.
- VII. Thou shalt not delay to offer of thy harvest,

and of the outflow of thy presses.

VIII. The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.

IX. Thou shalt give to me the first-born of thine oxen, and of thy sheep: seven days shall it be

with its dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me.

X. Ye shall be holy men unto me: therefore ye shall not eat any flesh that is torn by beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.

The administration of impartial justice in Oriental courts has always been attended with difficulty. The temptation through malice or greed to raise false reports against innocent persons, the abundance of witnesses who for pay will swear to anything, or who can be intimidated by the crowd to suppress their own convictions, and the rarity of judges who will not accept bribes, make it no easy matter for a poor man to obtain justice, no matter how righteous his cause. Against such iniquitous proceedings the decalogue in Ex. 23:1-3, 6-8 seeks to provide.

PERVERSIONS OF JUSTICE.

A. *By Witnesses.*

- I. Thou shalt not raise a false report.
- II. Thou shalt not conspire with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.
- III. Thou shalt not follow the multitude to do evil.
- IV. Thou shalt not so bear witness in a case as to prevent justice.
- V. Thou shalt not favor a poor man in his cause [because he is poor].

B. *By Judges.*

- VI. Thou shalt not pervert

the justice due to thy poor in his cause.

- VII. Thou shalt put far from thee every false accusation.
- VIII. Thou shalt not condemn to death the innocent and righteous.
- IX. [Thou shalt] not justify the wicked.
- X. Thou shalt take no bribe: for a bribe blindeth them that have sight, and perverteth the cause of the righteous.

Two other decalogues belonging to this general class appear in the following passages:

KINDNESS.

A. Toward Men.

- (I) Ex. 22:21; (II) 22; (III) 23a; (IV) 25b; (V) 26.

B. Toward Animals.

- (VI) Ex. 23:4 [Deut. 22:1; (VII) 2; (VIII) 3] (IX) Ex. 23: 5 [Deut. 22:4; (X) 6, 7].

SACRED SEASONS.

A. Command to Observe them.

- (I) Ex. 23:10, 11; (II) 12; (III) 15a; (IV) 16a; (V) 16b.

B. How to Observe them.

- (VI) Ex. 23:17; (VII) 18a; (VIII) 18b; (IX) 19a; (X) 19b.

Note 5. The "Ordinances." The four decalogues which seem to have entered into the construction of this civil and criminal code are as follows:

RIGHTS OF SLAVES.

A. Males.

- (I) Ex. 21:2; (II) 3a; (III) 3b; (IV) 4; (V) 5, 6.

B. Females.

- (VI) Ex. 21:7; (VII) 8; (VIII) 9; (IX) 10; (X) 11.

ASSAULTS.

A. Capital Offenses.

- (I) Ex. 21:12; (II) 13; (III) 14; (IV) 15; (V) 16.

B. Minor Offenses.

- (VI) Ex. 21:18, 19; (VII) 20; (VIII) 21; (IX) 26; (X) 27.

LAWS REGARDING DOMESTIC ANIMALS.

A. Injuries by Animals.

- (I) Ex. 21:28; (II) 29; (III) 30; (IV) 31; (V) 32.

B. Injuries to Animals.

- (VI) Ex. 21:33, 34; (VII) 35; (VIII) 36; (IX) 22:1; (X) 4.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROPERTY.

A. Property in General.

- (I) Ex. 22:5; (II) 6; (III) 7; (IV) 8; (V) 9.

B. Property in Cattle.

- (VI) Ex. 22:10, 11; (VII) 12; (VIII) 13; (IX) 14; (X) 15.

The second half of a fifth decalogue relating to social purity and apostasy is given in Ex. 22:16-20, while the first half seems to have been preserved in Deut. 22:13-27.

Note 6. Elevated Morality of the Hebrew Code. A comparison of this remarkable series of laws with corresponding regulations in other ancient codes reveals high moral standards that could not have been reached except on the basis of a highly developed religion. While some of the prescribed penalties still conform to primitive Semitic customs in that they are vindictive rather than compensatory, nevertheless the code as a whole displays a striking solicitude for an impartial administration of justice, for the protection of the poor, the weak, and strangers, for a merciful treatment of slaves and animals, and for the preservation of the purity of the family at any cost. The injunctions to return to one's enemy his ox or ass that has strayed, and to help him raise up his beast that has fallen under a heavy burden, do not indeed attain to the Christian standard of loving one's enemy (Mt. 5:44), but they certainly rise far above the natural impulse to do him all the harm one can. In the East a poor man's outer garment is still his bed, and therefore the prohibition against keeping it over night as a pledge (Ex. 22:26) is a humane provision worthy of the highest praise. Such also is the command not to charge interest on money loaned to a poor man who may be on the verge of ruin. Taken all in all, these early Hebrew standards, despite crudities not yet outgrown, teach a spirit of rectitude and mercy, a subduing of personal hatreds, and an exercise of self-denial for which one looks in vain in the laws of the surrounding nations. The most probable reason for this higher moral attainment is that the Israelites after their settlement in Canaan came to think of Jehovah less as a God of war, and more as a righteous King who loved justice and mercy.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Bennett: *New Century Bible, Exodus*, pp. 167-196. (2) Early Decalogues in Ex. chs. 20-23. Kent: *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, pp. 26-28. (3) Justice in the Law-books. Kent: *Founders and Rulers of United Israel*, pp. 220-222. (4) Morality of Hebrew Code Compared with Hammurabi's. Kent: *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, pp. 24, 25. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, extra vol., p. 664. Wade: *Old Testament History*, pp. 160-163.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What religions, noted during the first quarter, influenced more or less the development of Israel's religion? 2. What period of religious development was covered by the lessons of that quarter?

3. What period is covered by the lessons of this quarter? 4. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. To what period of Hebrew history may we ascribe the code in Ex. 20:22—23:19? (Note 2.)

2. Into what two classes of laws is the code divided?

3. What title was given to the entire code?

4. What smaller and earlier groups of laws formed the basis for this code? (Note 3.)

5. How many of these smaller groups have been discovered in the code?

6. What general topics are covered by the decalogues in the "Words of Jehovah"? (Note 4.)

7. What social conditions called for the laws respecting witnesses and judges?

8. What general topics are covered by the decalogues in the "Ordinances"? (Note 5.)

9. Mention some particulars that illustrate the high moral and humane ideas in the Hebrew code. (Note 6.)

10. How did the Hebrews attain these elevated moral ideas?

Questions for Consideration.

1. How does the administration of justice affect the welfare of a community?
2. Why are witnesses sworn "to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth"?
3. To what extent is it right to try to influence the action of a judge or jury, and when does such attempt become wrong?
4. Why should we render help to an enemy in need?

Note-book Work.

On the chart indicate the approximate period covered by the early development of Israel's laws (Note 2), and in the column of religious developments indicate for the same period the change in Israel's conception of Jehovah (Note 6).

Write out in full in the note-book one or more of the decalogues indicated by references in Notes 4 and 5.

Bible Text. "Blessed are they that are perfect in the way,
Who walk in the law of Jehovah." Ps. 119:1.

Lesson 15. THE RELIGIOUS VALUE OF RITUAL. Solomon's Enlargement of the Temple Service.

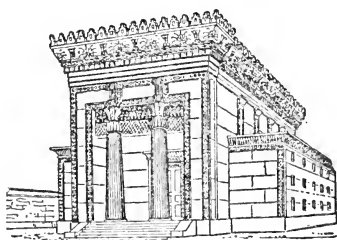
Scripture Reading: The Building of the Temple. 1 Ki. ch. 6; 7:13-51.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the building of the temple in Jerusalem in time gave a great impetus to the centralization and to the ceremonial interpretation of religion.

Note 2. The Kings as Patrons of National Worship. In the ancient world no distinction was made between church and state. The two were inseparable, and the king was the recognized head of both. He was regarded as semi-divine, and his will as an expression of the will of the gods. The nation was as responsible for the support of public worship as for that of the army. As the revenues of the state were almost wholly under the control of the king he naturally directed the building and maintenance of the chief national sanctuaries. A very large part of the inscriptions made by Babylonian and Assyrian kings is devoted to accounts of their pious and patriotic activities in building and restoring the temples of the national gods.

Naturally the rulers of Israel also came to be regarded as Jehovah's representatives, and as the chief patrons and protectors of His worship. Accordingly, when David established his capital at Jerusalem, it was one of his first and most obvious duties to take under his immediate care Jehovah's ark, the sacred symbol of His presence. This transfer of the ark may have implied a further purpose to build a temple in which to keep it. The account of this plan is regarded, however, by some writers as coming from a later tradition. In any case, the plan was not realized until the beginning of Solomon's reign.

Note 3. Solomon's Temple and its Original Purpose. Solomon's reign, which began about 977 B. C., was idealized by later generations and regarded as the culmination of Israel's political glory. In contrast with the simplicity of David's rule, its external aspects were magnificent, but its internal condition foreboded ruin. It began with high religious ideals and ended in virtual apostasy. Solomon's ambition to rival the architectural achievements of other Oriental despots made him the greatest builder among the Hebrew kings. Foremost among the structures on which he lavished the revenues of



Solomon's Temple.
Restored according to Stade.

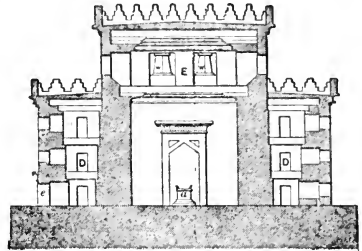
his kingdom were his palace and the temple in Jerusalem. The fourth year of his reign, in which the temple was begun, ever after marked an epoch in Israel's history. Seven and a half years were spent in building it, while thirteen were required by the royal residences. It is highly improbable that Solomon himself attached to the temple the enormous importance which it had naturally acquired when the books of Kings and Chronicles were written (Note 2, Lesson 12). Originally it seems to have been designed merely as the royal chapel, and erected as much to gratify Solomon's pride as for Jehovah's honor. But being the royal sanctuary, and sheltering the sacred ark, it was inevitable that it should gradually overshadow the other sanctuaries in the land and eventually lead to their suppression. That it was a beautiful and costly structure cannot be doubted; but the statement (1 Chron. 22:14) that David had gathered \$5,000,000,000 for its erection probably reflects the idealizing tendency of a period seven centuries later.

Note 4. Site, Dimensions, Arrangements and Utensils. Solomon's temple was situated near the top of Zion, the eastern ridge included within the present walls of Jerusalem. It faced toward the east. Below it, on the southern slope of the ridge, lay the royal buildings.

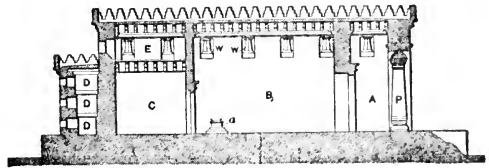
As the temple was not intended as a gathering place for worshippers but as a house for Israel's God, its dimensions were quite moderate—the interior being ninety cubits in length, twenty in width, and thirty in height. To this must be added the thickness of the walls as an allowance for the roof. Whether Solomon's builders used the short cubit of seventeen and a half inches, or the long cubit of twenty and a half is not known. In front of the house was a porch, and on each of the other three sides, rising in three stories, were small chambers for the priests.

A partition divided the house into two rooms, known in later times as the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, or

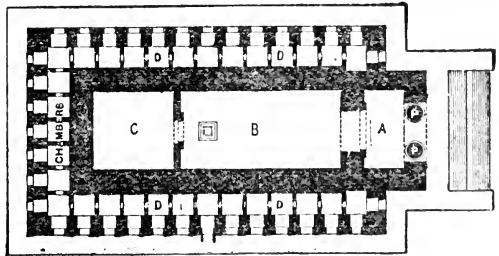
Oracle. Doors of olive wood afforded communication between them. The Oracle was a cubical chamber, absolutely dark, and containing only the ark, which was overshadowed by the wings of two large cherubim. The exact form of these imaginary creatures is not



Cross Section of the Temple.
After Stade.



Longitudinal Section of the Temple.
After Stade.



Ground Plan of Temple. After Stade.

EXPLANATION OF THE CUTS. P. The bronze pillars—"Jaehin" and "Boaz" (1 Ki. 7:21). A. The porch (1 Ki. 6:3). B. The Holy Place, or "the house" (1 Ki. 6:16, 17). C. The Most Holy Place, or "oracle" (1 Ki. 6:16, 17). D. The side-chambers (1 Ki. 6:5, 6). E. Upper Chambers, over the Most Holy Place (2 Chron. 3:9). W. Windows for lighting the Holy Place (1 Ki. 6:4). a. Altar of incense.

certain. The idea of them may have been derived from the huge composite figures which stood at the entrances to many ancient temples and palaces, and which had the body of a lion, or bull, the head of a man, and the wings of an eagle. They were symbolic guardians of the divine or royal presence. In the Holy Place, in front of the door to the inner shrine, stood the table of showbread, a survival, no doubt, of the primitive idea that the gods needed offerings of food (Note 4, Lesson 6). Whether the two brazen pillars stood within the porch or detached from the building is uncertain.

In the great court which surrounded the temple, and just in front of the porch, on the highest point of the ridge, was the place of sacrifice, where stood (possibly not until after Solomon's time) the great altar of burnt offering. Over this spot stands now the Dome of the Rock, or Mosque of Omar. On the surface of the exposed rock a channel is visible which may have conveyed the blood of the sacrifices to an underground cavern. In the southeastern part of the court stood the huge "molten sea," and ten similar, but smaller, lavers on wheels were moved about as needed. Solomon, moreover, prepared a multitude of minor utensils for the use of the priests in the performance of their duties.

Note 5. The Enlargement of the Temple Service. If the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem furnished an occasion for national joy, numerous sacrifices, dancing, shouting and music (2 Sam. 6:12-15), much more would the dedication of the temple justify the most elaborate ceremonies that the culture of his day could devise. When, however, the Chronicler transfers to this occasion a perfected ecclesiastical system with its courses of priests, Levitic choirs, priestly trumpeters, and other ministers, we can hardly fail to see in this description a picture of what he thought the dedication would have been had it taken place in his own day. But while it is true that the early records in Kings give us few details respecting the changes that took place, there can be no question that the completion of the most magnificent sanctuary in Israel witnessed a great extension of the ceremonies hitherto employed in the humbler sanctuaries. In view of the close relation then existing between religion and secular affairs, the enormous development of Solomon's court suggests a somewhat similar development of the service in the temple which was an adjunct of the palace. Solomon himself, as Jehovah's representative, performed the duties of the chief priest of the nation. Other leading priests were appointed by him, and were given the rank of royal counselors (1 Ki. 4:4, 5). The number of ordinary priests must have

been greatly enlarged, and their duties more clearly defined. Even if we do not accept the Chronicler's point of view, it is altogether reasonable to suppose that not a little of the complicated and ostentatious worship which grew up around the temple, and of which the later records give abundant evidence, must be traced back to Solomon's reign.

Note 6. The Significance and Value of Ritual. In primitive times worship consisted almost wholly in the performance of certain rites by which it was supposed that the favor of gods or demons could be won, or their displeasure turned aside. Set forms of words were devised, and certain lines of action or conduct prescribed, in order to attain this end. When good results followed the recitation of a formula or the performance of a ceremony, it was taken as proof of its efficacy (comp. Note 4, Lesson 3); when the desired result did not follow, this was attributed to some error in the recitation or mistake in the ceremony. As sanctuaries increased in importance it was manifestly for the interest of the priests to magnify their office as far as possible by making the ritual impressive and spectacular. In the course of time these ceremonies came themselves to be regarded as sacred, so that any variation from the established form was considered gross wickedness. As long as religion continued to be thought of as a matter chiefly of outward performances, so long rituals continued to flourish. But as soon as men began to see that true religion is primarily a matter of the inward life, the use of rites and ceremonies in connection with worship began to decline, and in some instances they have been almost wholly abandoned. That our Lord did not abolish ritual when He said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jo. 4:24), is seen in the retention of a weekly day of rest and in the institutions of baptism and the Lord's Supper. To these have been added the almost universal observance in Christian lands of Christmas and Easter. Religious ceremonies in their simplest form assist in giving expression to inward feelings, as of reverence by bowing the head during public prayer; or, in their more spectacular form, to impart dignity and impressiveness to worship, as in the Catholic ritual of the mass. "Without such institutions, religion might be preserved, indeed, by a few of superior understanding and of strong powers of reflection, but among mankind in general all traces of it would soon be lost. When the end for which they are appointed is kept in view, and the simple examples of the New Testament are observed, they are of vast importance to the production both of pious feelings and of virtuous

conduct." It is of the utmost importance, therefore, never to forget the deeper spiritual truths of which the ceremonies are but the symbols, and that religion is a personal attitude toward God that has to be expressed in life and service as well as in formal worship.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Solomon's motive in building the temple. Kent: *Founders and Rulers*, p. 198. (2) For further information respecting the site of the temple, its dimensions, the exterior and interior arrangements, furniture, etc., see Bible dictionaries, article "Temple," and commentaries on 1 Ki. chs. 6, 7. (3) The religious influence of Solomon and the temple. G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, vol. ii, pp. 78-82.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What part of the book of Exodus is known as "The Book of the Covenant"? 2. What two classes of laws are contained in it? 3. How many decalogues, in whole or in part, have been found in it? 4. In what respects was this code superior to the known laws of surrounding nations? 5. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. In the ancient world, what was the religious position of the king? (Note 2.)

2. What bearing did this have on the erection of a temple at Jerusalem?

3. What was the general character of Solomon's reign? (Note 3.)

4. What was his purpose in building the temple?

5. Where was it situated? (Note 4.)

6. What were its internal measurements?

7. Describe its two main chambers.
8. What were the chief contents of the great court?
9. What effect did the building of the temple have on previous forms of worship? (Note 5.)
10. What was the chief feature in primitive worship? (Note 6.)
11. How were rites and ceremonies affected by a higher idea of religion?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Can all rites and ceremonies in connection with religious worship be abolished?
2. If this were possible, would it be advisable?
3. What is the common effect of a ceremonial worship on the religious life of a people?

Note-book Work.

1. On the chart note the epoch-making date when the building of the first temple was begun.
2. From the description in 1 Ki. 6: 2-9, 16, 17, and supposing that the builders used the long cubit (Note 4, above), figure out in feet and inches the approximate interior measurements of the temple, and of the Oracle and the Holy Place.

Bible Text. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."
Ps. 51: 17.

Lesson 16. POPULAR RELIGION IN THE DIVIDED KINGDOM. The Setting up of the Golden Calves.

Scripture Reading: The Kingdom Divided. 1 Ki. chs. 12, 14; 2 Chron. chs. 10-12.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show what led to the disruption of Solomon's kingdom, and to the immediate deterioration of the national worship.

Note 2. Causes Leading to the Division of the Kingdom. The Hebrews, like many other Semitic peoples, never showed an aptitude for political concentration. From the beginning of the settlement in Canaan a cleavage appeared between the northern and southern tribes. This increased until nothing but the danger of complete subjection by their Philistine foes could drive them into even an imperfect union under Saul. This union was strengthened by the victories of David, but it took all his prestige and power to quell the fierce rebellions that broke out toward the end of his reign. For a time Solomon's magnificence dazzled the people; but when the northern tribes discovered that Solomon, instead of favoring them as David had done, merely used their unrequited toil to advance his ambitious schemes for beautifying and strengthening Jerusalem, the sectional feeling revived, and needed only the insolence of Rehoboam to plunge the ten tribes into open rebellion (937 B. C.).

While political and other considerations had widened the breach between the northern and southern tribes, the worship of Jehovah had been the one unifying force. Israel was Jehovah's people, and He was their God. It is not surprising, therefore, that Solomon's introduction of numerous idolatrous worships (1 Ki. 11:1-13) became almost as effective in disrupting the kingdom as his despotic treatment of tribes that clung tenaciously to the freedom and independence which they had enjoyed since their life in the desert. According to the customs of the times, a toleration of these worships was required by his foreign alliances and his marriages with foreign princesses, each one of whom claimed the right to retain her ancestral religion. While Solomon himself seems never to have apostatized from the God of his fathers, yet his open toleration of abominable heathen practices not only shocked the followers of Jehovah, but tended to degrade Him in the estimate of the people to the level of other gods. The story of Ahijah's announcement to Jeroboam of his future kingship over ten tribes (1 Ki. 11:29-39) reveals the deep hostility of the prophets toward Solomon's religious policy. It shows, furthermore, that in their eyes the rending asunder of the

kingdom, fatal as that would be to any possible continuance of Israel's national glory, was regarded as a smaller evil than the threatened destruction of Israel's faith. Their only hope of saving the latter was by sacrificing the former. The story of Shemaiah's checking of Rehoboam's attempt to recover his authority over the revolted tribes (1 Ki. 12:21-24) still further emphasizes the attitude of the prophets toward the division of the kingdom. "It was of the Lord." To this influence of the prophets we must probably add that of the priests at the ancient high places in the northern tribes. Jealousy of what they doubtless regarded as the upstart sanctuary at Jerusalem naturally inclined them to favor the insurrection.

Note 3. Jeroboam's Religious Policy. From the first the gorgeous temple in Jerusalem attracted an increasing number of pilgrims from all parts of the land. But if the prophets of Jehovah saw in the corrupting worships which Solomon permitted in the neighborhood of the temple so grave a menace to Israel's faith as to justify them in promoting the political disruption of the kingdom, much more would they oppose the religious union maintained by these pilgrimages. In bringing about a religious separation from Judah they would naturally act through the king, who felt that the stability of his own authority depended on a severance of all relations with the southern kingdom. If those pilgrimages were allowed to continue, his people might in time return to their former allegiance, and put him to death. In establishing a separate worship in Northern Israel, Jeroboam did not need to create new sanctuaries. Some of the oldest and most venerated shrines in Palestine lay within his own territory. At Bethel, twelve miles north of Jerusalem, God had twice appeared to the patriarch Jacob (Gen. 28:11-19; 35:9-15), in the early days of the settlement it had been the home of the ark (Jud. 20:26-28), and it had been included in the circuit of Samuel's yearly visits (1 Sam. 7:16). Near the northern border lay the holy city of Dan, where an image of Jehovah had been served by the lineal descendants of Moses since the days of the judges (Jud. 18:30, 31). Both of these venerable sanctuaries appealed to the popular imagination and loyalty quite as deeply as the newly created temple at Jerusalem. The golden calves which Jeroboam set up in these places were, like Aaron's calf in the wilderness (Ex. 32:1-6), symbols, not rivals, of Jehovah. This act was not an intentional apostasy from Israel's God. "Behold thy God (*Elohim*, Note 3, Lesson 6), who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Ki. 12:28) was an appeal to religious con-

servatism, as against Solomon's numerous innovations. This action was probably taken with the full approval of the prophets. Neither Elijah nor Elisha had a word of condemnation of these sanctuaries or the worship conducted in them. Furthermore, Jeroboam did not make priests "of the lowest of the people" (A. V.), which would have been contrary to his own interests, but "from among all the people" (A. R. V.), that is, from all classes, and not from the tribe of Levi exclusively. This seems to have been according to the common custom of that time.

Note 4. Wherein Jeroboam Sinned. Jeroboam never forsook the worship of Jehovah, nor did he lead his people into idolatry, and yet he is repeatedly referred to as the king above all others "who made Israel to sin." It is probable that he never dreamed of such a result from his new worship at Bethel and Dan. On the other hand, it is also probable that his attitude toward the worship of Israel's God was never prompted by personal devotion. His religious policy was dictated by selfish and worldly considerations. If the Jehovah religion could be made a means of strengthening his position on the throne, he would gladly use it for that purpose. But he would have been equally ready to support any other worship that might have accomplished the same end. At this time the cherubim, probably similar in form and symbolism to the golden calves at Bethel and Dan, were found even in Jehovah's temple at Jerusalem. Jeroboam's act probably did not at all disturb the consciences of the people. His sin was the constantly recurring one of clinging to antiquated ideas and usages when God was revealing some better thing to the race. Every age brings new visions of truth which it is our duty to accept. To reject them, and to cling blindly to creeds and forms that, however useful in their day, have served their purpose is to repeat "the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and wherewith he made Israel to sin."

Note 5. The Later Condemnation of Jeroboam. To the writer of the Book of Kings, five hundred years later, Jeroboam seemed the fountain-head of all subsequent calamities. But in estimating the value of their judgments on him several things must be taken into consideration. They wrote from the point of view of the southern kingdom, after centuries of mutual jealousy and warfare. They judged him by the standards of their own time, which in many respects were widely different from those of his own. They failed to see that a perpetuation of Solomon's toleration of heathen religions would eventually have undermined Israel's faith. In

looking back to that distant past they were dazzled by Israel's glory under the united monarchy. For the revolt which destroyed this unity and made the recovery of this glory forever impossible they blamed the ambition of Jeroboam rather than the despotic measures of Solomon and the youthful bravado of Rehoboam. They forgot that the breaking away from the mixed worships in Jerusalem was a conservative measure taken in order to save the ancestral religion; and that, in setting up the golden symbols of Jehovah at Bethel and Dan, Jeroboam seemed to have had the approval of the prophets of his day.* They saw only the gradual corruption of this worship. In the light of later and fuller revelations of Jehovah's spirituality they attributed this corruption and the final disappearance of the northern kingdom to Jeroboam's attempt to represent Jehovah, a Spirit, by means of material images.

Note 6. Rehoboam's Religious Policy. Little wisdom or strength of character could be looked for in a youth reared in the pestilential atmosphere of an Oriental harem, surrounded by flattery and adulation, and unchecked by wholesome discipline. It is little wonder that the vast constructive work of David and the ambitious schemes of Solomon to make Israel a world-power were wrecked by his arrogance and indiscretion. Nor could better results be looked for in his administration of the religious affairs of the kingdom. The corruptions introduced by Solomon remained unchanged. According to the Chronicler, Rehoboam seems for a time to have remained at least a nominal worshiper of Jehovah (2 Chron. 11:17). But presently the heathen training which he had doubtless received from his Ammonite mother resulted in his complete apostasy from the national faith, and in his introduction of the worst abominations practised by the surrounding Canaanites. Mischievous as Jeroboam's introduction of the golden calves turned out to be after the lapse of centuries, his policy at the outset was conservative as compared with the ruinous conduct of Rehoboam (1 Ki. 14:22-24). The result was that the religious condition of the southern kingdom speedily sank to as low a level as that of its northern rival. In Judah, however, the first rapid decline was checked by repeated reformations which, notwithstanding grave relapses, not only kept the national faith alive but gave it strength to pass triumphantly through the disasters that swept away the kingdom.

*The prophecy pronounced against the altar at Bethel (1 Ki. 12:33-13:34) and the doom pronounced on Jeroboam by Ahijah (1 Ki. 14:8-16) bear strong indications of coming from late prophetic sources.

Additional Reading References.

(1) The mutual relations of the two kingdoms, their internal condition, and Asa's reformation. Wade: *Old Testament History*, pp. 314-327. (2) The real causes of the disruption of Solomon's kingdom. Kent: *The Divided Kingdom*, pp. 18-23. (3) Character of Jeroboam's reign. Kent: *Kings and Prophets*, pp. 6, 7. (4) Jeroboam's religious innovations. Farrar: *Expositor's Bible, Kings*, vol. i, pp. 286-291.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was Solomon's primary purpose in building the temple?
2. How was the temple related to the rest of the palace buildings?
3. What were the main divisions of the temple? 4. What did the Oracle contain? 5. What was the probable form and significance of the cherubim? 6. How did the temple affect the external forms of Jehovah worship? 7. What is the title of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. How had the northern and southern tribes of Israel long shown their lack of unity? (Note 2.)

2. How did Solomon's religious policy affect Jehovah's prophets?

3. What was the probable attitude of the northern priests toward a united monarchy?

4. What reasons led to the establishment of a separate worship in Northern Israel? (Note 3.)

5. Why should Jeroboam be regarded as a religious conservative rather than an innovator?

6. What was Jeroboam's policy in making priests?

7. What was Jeroboam's personal attitude toward Jehovah worship? (Note 4.)

8. What was the underlying motive in Jeroboam's religious policy?

9. Why was Jeroboam condemned by later writers? (Note 5.)

10. What political disaster was precipitated by Rehoboam? (Note 6.)

11. How did Rehoboam influence the religious life of the southern kingdom?

Questions for Consideration.

1. In what respects was the rending asunder of Solomon's kingdom a calamity, and in what respects was it a blessing?

2. To what extent should Jeroboam be held responsible for the unforeseen consequences of his religious policy?

3. When is it wrong to cling to the ideas and usages of past ages?

Note-book Work.

1. On the chart note the date of the revolt of the ten northern tribes, and the division of Solomon's kingdom.

2. In the column of religious developments mention the erection of the golden calves by Jeroboam, and the swift religious decline in Judah under the reign of Rehoboam.

Bible Text.

“Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous;
But the way of the wicked shall perish.”

Ps. 1:6.

Lesson 17. THE CONFLICT WITH BAALISM. The Crisis in the Days of Elijah.

Scripture Reading: Jehovah's Superiority over Baal Shown. 1 Ki. chs. 17-19.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the royal patronage of Baalism in Israel and Judah threatened the supremacy of Jehovah worship, and how the danger was averted by the work of Elijah and Elisha.

Note 2. Summary of Events between 920 and 875 B. C. Immediately after the disruption of the kingdom Rehoboam assembled his army for the purpose of re-establishing his authority over the rebellious tribes. A conflict was averted by the prophet Shemaiah, who in Jehovah's name forbade the attempt (1 Ki. 12:21-26). For a time the two kings contented themselves with fortifying their respective frontiers against each other, and against other foes. In strengthening his southern border against Egypt, Rehoboam was not yielding to groundless fears, since in the fifth year of his reign Shishak invaded Palestine with an immense army, captured Jerusalem, robbed the temple of its treasures (1 Ki. 14:25, 26), and seems to have plundered the cities of both kingdoms with entire impartiality. After Rehoboam's death fierce wars were waged for more than a generation between Israel and Judah, but gradually hostility gave way to mutual forbearance and helpfulness.

During this time the internal history of Israel was marked by rapid dynastic changes, usurpations, dethronements and murders. Out of this confusion and strife the strong hand of Omri (887-875 B. C.) brought order and stability. He founded and fortified the city of Samaria, and made it his capital. With Judah and Syria he seems to have made peace on the best terms he could, and so to have ended the vexatious wars that had exhausted the kingdom. These important services prepared the way for the epoch-making reign of Ahab (1 Ki. 16:23-28).

In Judah the successors of Rehoboam retained the city and throne of David. For three years Abijah (920-917 B. C.) continued the heathenizing policy of his father. The long reign of Asa (917-876 B. C.) was marked by zeal in purifying the land from the worst of the abominations introduced by previous kings (1 Ki. 15:9-15). His military ventures, aside from repelling another invasion from Egypt (2 Chron. 14:9-15), seem to have been unfortunate.

Note 3. Ahab's Reign and the Growth of Baalism. The twenty-two years of Ahab's reign (875-853 B. C.) covered a period in which

Israel attained great material prosperity. Its records are unusually full, crowded with stirring events, and invested with absorbing interest. Omri, in making peace with Syria, had been forced to accept the overlordship of Benhadad of Damascus. Ahab thus came to the throne as a vassal to Benhadad, to whom he paid tribute until his demands became so intolerable as to force him to armed resistance. In the campaigns which ensued, Ahab, aided by Jehovah's prophets, inflicted defeats on Benhadad that compelled him under the most humiliating conditions to sue for peace. The leniency with which the victorious king treated his foe was bitterly denounced by the prophets. It may have been prompted by Ahab's desire to enlarge Israel's commercial relations, and to bring about an alliance with Benhadad for mutual defense against the rising power of Assyria.

Early in his reign Ahab formed an alliance with Phœnicia, and cemented it by a marriage with Jezebel, princess of Tyre. She, taking advantage of the protection for her own worship which this alliance afforded, bent all the energies of her powerful personality to the task of blending the worship of Jehovah with that of Melkart, the Tyrian Baal. She wanted to place Baal on an equality with Jehovah. This scheme permitted Ahab and the mass of the people to retain a nominal allegiance to Jehovah, but it dethroned Him from His unique position as Israel's one and only God. Jezebel's scheme was in full harmony with Ahab's policy of making Israel a strong nation commercially and politically. That this policy won the general approval of Jehovah's prophets seems probable from the fact that four hundred of them encouraged Ahab to undertake his last military expedition (1 Ki. 22:5-8). The more enlightened among them, who saw the religious peril involved in this scheme and who were bold enough to protest against it, were persecuted or slain. This was the situation when Elijah appeared.

Note 4. Elijah's Conflict with Baalism. The struggle between the court and the true prophets of Jehovah came to a head when Elijah, the most extraordinary figure among the prophets of Israel, abruptly confronted Ahab as the champion of Israel's God. Of his previous history nothing is known beyond the probability that he was a native of Tishbe, an obscure village east of the Jordan. Elijah saw with absolute clearness that Ahab's secular policy involved far more important consequences than a mere strengthening of the kingdom and a widening of commercial relations. Jezebel's fanatical zeal in establishing the worship of the great Tyrian Baal, and the building of a temple in Samaria in his honor was something distinctly different

from the respect paid at the high places to the comparatively insignificant local Baals who did not compete with Jehovah for equal rights. Jezebel, on the contrary, aimed at a complete union on equal terms of Phœnician Baalism with Israelitish Jehovah worship. Elijah saw that between two religions so fundamentally opposed in nature and principle no union was possible. If Jehovah was Israel's God at all, He was so in a sense that left no room for a divided authority. Ahab's policy, however wise from a secular point of view, would, if continued, prove the undoing of Israel's religious destiny. To preserve Israel's distinctiveness was Elijah's mission.

When Elijah, as Jehovah's representative, announced to Ahab the terrible calamity of a three years' drought, to end only at the utterance of his prophetic word, he threw out a challenge from Jehovah that neither the king nor the nation could misunderstand. In the ancient world the giving of rain, on which all material prosperity depended, was regarded as the supreme test of divine power. If Baal was what his followers claimed, he could easily overrule Jehovah's threat. The result showed Baal's impotence, and prepared the nation for the next dramatic trial of strength on Carmel, the outcome of which so unanswerably proved Jehovah's power as to force the great assembly to proclaim Him as the true God. Though Baal's prophets were slain, Jezebel, their patroness and protector, still lived to delay for a time the destruction of Baalism in Israel.

Note 5. The Final Suppression of Baalism in Israel and Judah. Elijah's task was inherited by Elisha his servant and successor in the prophetic office. Their denunciation of the house of Ahab because of the wickedness of Jezebel resulted in the anointing of Jehu as king in place of Jehoram, son and successor of Ahab. Jehu understood what he was expected to do, and set about it with such energy that in a little while he had exterminated not only the entire royal family, but the prophets of Baal as well. Ahaziah, king of Judah, son of Athaliah and grandson of Jezebel, who was visiting the northern court at the time, was mortally wounded and died before he reached Jerusalem. This ended the conflict with Baalism in Northern Israel.

Through the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram with Athaliah, Jezebel's daughter, Phœnician Baalism was introduced into Judah, where, however, it was only a quickly passing episode. In her effort to secure herself on the throne after the death of her husband and her sons, Athaliah murdered all the descendants of the house of David on whom she could lay hands. Only the infant Joash escaped to perpetuate the Davidic dynasty. Finally an insurrection headed by

the priests of Jehovah led to her overthrow, the restoration of the throne to the house of David, and the suppression of Baalism in Judah also.

Note 6. The Distinctive Work of Elijah. Against the heathen leaven which had already mixed with Jehovah worship, and against Jeroboam's calves and symbols of Jehovah, Elijah appears to have spoken no word of protest. In neither case was Jehovah's position as Israel's one and only God questioned. Nor did Ahab's policy contemplate a general apostasy from Israel's God. The religious crisis which he brought upon the nation was due to his failure to see not only the danger but the impossibility of trying to blend two systems of worship that rested on absolutely contradictory principles. Baal was a mere nature-deity, destitute of moral character. Jehovah, on the contrary, was a God of inflexible righteousness. Any attempt to unite such opposing ideas must have ended in the extinction of the higher and nobler. Elijah, therefore, set himself with all his might to resist a tide of heathenism that would have swept away all distinctions between Jehovah and the Tyrian Baal. Neither he nor Elisha scrupled at the means to be employed. If wholesale massacres were needed, then massacres were welcomed as a justifiable means. Elijah's mission was to set in motion forces that would root out all alien worships and bring his countrymen to an uncompromising acknowledgment of Jehovah as their sole God. The purification of Israel's worship from long existing heathen contaminations was left for the great moral prophets of the next century.

Additional Reading References.

(1) For commentary on the Elijah and Elisha narratives, see Skinner, *New Century Bible*, 1 and 2 Kings. (2) On Elijah and Elisha, see articles in Bible dictionaries. (3) For a brilliant characterization of the persons and events covered by this lesson, see Stanley, *History of the Jewish Church*, vol. ii, pp. 313-376; also Kent's *The Divided Kingdom*, pp. 35-54, 61-69, 120, 121.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. Mention some of the causes that led to the division of Solomon's kingdom. 2. How did Jeroboam try to bring about a religious separation between the northern and southern kingdoms? 3. Why did he wish to separate them? 4. Wherein did Jeroboam sin in setting up golden symbols of Jehovah? 5. How did later writers regard his action? 6. What was Rehoboam's religious policy in the southern kingdom? 7. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What relations did the kingdoms of Israel and Judah sustain to each other between 920 and 875 B. C.? (Note 2.)

2. What was the internal condition of Israel during this time?

3. What was the condition of Judah?

4. Describe briefly the outcome of Ahab's early wars with Syria. (Note 3.)

5. What were the immediate consequences of Ahab's alliance with Phœnicia?

6. What was the fatal defect in Ahab's secular policy? (Note 4.)

7. What announcement did Elijah make to Ahab at his first interview with him? (1 Ki. 17:1.)

8. What did Elijah's announcement mean to the king and the nation?

9. What demand did Elijah make of Ahab at his second interview with him? (1 Ki. 18:17-19.)

10. Mention briefly the main points in the dramatic scene on Mount Carmel. (1 Ki. 18:20-46.)

11. How was Tyrian Baalism finally suppressed in Northern Israel? (Note 5.)

12. How was Baalism introduced and suppressed in Judah?

13. Why was the attempt to unite Baalism with Jehovah worship ruinous and impossible? (Note 6.)

14. What was the distinctive work of Elijah?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Why were many of the Israelites so readily persuaded to accept the worship of a foreign god?

2. What are some reasons why men dislike the service of God to-day?

3. Why does God claim the supreme place in our affections?

4. To what extent is a scene like that on Mount Carmel likely to bring about a true conversion?

Note-book Work.

1. In the column of dates enter the reigns of Omri, Abijah, Asa, and Ahab.

2. In the column of historical events, note the attempt of Jezebel to blend Baalism with Jehovah worship, and the conflict with Baalism begun by Elijah and completed by Elisha.

3. In the column of religious developments note the resulting uncompromising recognition of Jehovah as Israel's one and only God, whose authority could not be shared by any heathen deity.

4. Write a brief sketch of the life of Elijah.

Bible Text. "How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." 1 Ki. 18:21.

Lesson 18. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. The Preaching of Amos.

Scripture Reading : God's Judgments on Israel. Amos 2:6—3:15.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how effectively Amos denounced the social crimes and hypocrisy of Israel, and proclaimed Jehovah's justice.

Note 2. Israel's Political Degradation and Recovery. The writer of the books of Kings devotes large space to his account of the bloody revolution in which Jehu seated himself on the throne and suppressed Baalism in Israel. The remainder of his reign of twenty-eight years (842-814 B. C.) is dismissed in a few words of general condemnation (2 Ki. 10:29-33).

At the very outset of his reign, as stated on the "Black Obelisk" set up by Shalmaneser II of Assyria to commemorate the victories of his reign, "Jehu the son of Omri" paid him tribute, and Jehu's ambassadors are pictured in the second row from the top as bringing their gifts of silver and gold. If this tribute was paid to purchase protection against Hazael of Syria, Jehu was disappointed, since Shalmaneser after a few years retired and left Hazael free to inflict terrible cruelties on Israel and to seize much of her territory. During the reign of Jehu's son, Jehoahaz (814-797 B. C.), the Israelites were reduced to a pitiful state of degradation and suffering by the aggressions of Syria (2 Ki. 13:3, 7). With the accession of Jehoash (797-781 B. C.) came a turn in the tide. In three campaigns he defeated the Syrians and recovered many of the cities captured by them (2 Ki.



The Black Obelisk.

Now in the British Museum.

13:4, 5, 24, 25). He also inflicted a crushing defeat on Amaziah of Judah (796-782 B. C.), who made an unprovoked attack upon him. Jehoash was followed by Jeroboam II (781-740 B. C.), under whose government the northern kingdom reached its highest power. Uzziah of Judah (782-737 B. C.) was also an able monarch until disabled by disease. These two kings reconquered nearly all the territory over which David had reigned. These successes were made possible by the fact that a northern Aramean king about 800 B. C. had broken the power of Syria and captured Damascus, thus giving a free hand to Israel and Judah in and around Palestine.

Note 3. Social Corruption and Religious Security in Israel.

The military successes of Jeroboam II were followed by a long period of peace and of material prosperity that made his reign the most brilliant in the annals of the northern kingdom. Tribute flowed in from the conquered states; the highways of commerce were re-opened when merchants could be reasonably secure in their journeys; agriculture flourished when the farmers themselves would reap the harvests, and not plundering enemies. Wealth increased rapidly, and in such measure as had not been witnessed since the golden days of Solomon. On every hand arose palaces that seemed marvels of magnificence. Articles of ease and luxury increased to an unprecedented extent.

This prosperity was enjoyed, however, only by the king and the nobles, the capitalists, merchants and moneyed classes. These grew richer day by day, while the poor grew poorer and poorer. Flagrant dishonesty, cruel injustice, and wanton oppression abounded on every hand. The poor husbandman who could not repay a small loan was dispossessed of his land, and for a trifling debt a rapacious money-lender would sell into slavery a man whom he had got into his hands. It was at this time of the highest political and material prosperity that the northern kingdom touched the lowest level of social unrighteousness.

At first sight it seems strange that this time of moral degeneracy should have witnessed a remarkable outburst of enthusiasm for Jehovah. It extended, to be sure, only to the externals of religion—crowding His sanctuaries, presenting offerings and sacrifices, and giving scrupulous attention to rites and ceremonies. The reasons were not far to seek. Had not Jehovah established an inviolable covenant with Israel? Was it not absurd to imagine that He would ever permit a heathen nation to conquer and destroy them? Had he not saved them from their recent oppressors and delivered these oppressors themselves into their hands? Was He not showing His delight in His people by showering prosperity upon them? Did not their past history, now studied and recorded as never before, reveal His constant care and His purpose to make Israel the chief nation of the world? Could not every one see that this purpose was now in process of fulfilment? Was not the power of Syria broken and the great Assyrian empire rent with internal troubles? They failed to see that Assyria was merely slumbering, and that the overthrow of Syria was the destruction of the last barrier between themselves and a more dangerous foe. Only nineteen years (722 B. C.) after the death of Jeroboam II the Assyrians captured Samaria and extinguished the northern kingdom of Israel.

Note 4. Amos, a Preacher of the Moral Law. Such was the situation when Amos, about 750 B. C., appeared at the royal sanctuary in Bethel and denounced Jehovah's judgments on the nation. He was the first of the prophets whose messages have come down to us in a written form. There was a reason for this new literary activity. Elijah, Elisha, and the prophets before them accomplished their mission, not so much by preaching as by revolutionary actions that affected the entire nation. The records tell what they did rather than what they said. Amos and his successors, on the contrary, were, first and foremost, preachers of righteousness, whose success depended on the number of people whom they could impress by their message. But since the living voice could reach only a few, they took to writing down their messages so as to give them wider currency and greater permanency.

It is possible that Amos's occupation as a wool-grower may have taken him annually through the markets of the land, and thus have given him that intimate knowledge of the immoral civilization of the cities which is reflected on every page of his prophecy. He saw the avarice, pride, arrogance, idleness, luxury, drunkenness, impurity, lying and trickery of the privileged classes, and heard the cry of the downtrodden masses whose burdens were increased by the prosperity of the rich. He saw, furthermore, that the zeal of Jehovah was inspired by purely selfish considerations, and that in the name of religion the vilest immoralities were practised at His sanctuaries. On the other hand, he saw also, as no previous prophet had, that Jehovah is a God of inexorable righteousness, and that He is the God of all nations and not of Israel alone. Amos, accordingly, was in a position to emphasize, as it never had been emphasized before, the inexorable claims of divine righteousness as expressed in those moral laws which are binding on the whole world. From His abode in Zion, Jehovah, like a lion springing upon its prey, "roars" His judgments upon the sinful nations, and from these judgments Israel, by reason of its unique relation to Him, is not exempt (Amos 1:1—2:16). So far from freeing Israel from moral obligations this relation to Jehovah laid upon the people a heavier burden of responsibility (3:2). Jehovah's first demands were for righteousness, justice and mercy. When these were wanting, sacred feasts, tithes, offerings, sacrifices and elaborate rituals were in His eyes abominations (5:21-25) that could only provoke swifter and heavier punishments (2:13-16 3:11-15; 4:2, 3). Since famines, droughts, pestilences, and wars had not sufficed to turn the nation from its evil ways (4:6-11), Jehovah in His anger will use Assyria, the resistless and rapacious empire beyond Damascus,

to carry Israel into captivity (5:27; 6:14; 7:17; 8:9-12; 9:8-10). Such was the startling message that Amos hurled into the midst of a people demoralized by wealth and luxury, and lulled into false security by their belief that the national welfare was independent of moral law.

Note 5. New Ideas in the Preaching of Amos. (1) *Jehovah is God of the whole earth, overruling all events and nations.* Down to the time of Amos, Jehovah was thought of as the God of Israel only. His power was not supposed to extend beyond the boundaries of His own people. Even Elijah, while resisting with all his might the extension of Baal's authority over Israel, did not deny his existence. Amos, however, had so powerful a conviction of Jehovah's greatness and omnipotence as to leave in his mind no room for other gods.

(2) *Jehovah demands that men shall live up to their privileges.* Jehovah had bestowed special favors on Israel, but these favors were of a moral nature, and implied increased moral responsibility. Israel's failure to live up not only to their unique privileges but even to those moral laws which are binding on all nations, would surely bring the heavier punishment.

(3) *Jehovah is a God of uncompromising righteousness.* Jehovah expects righteousness in His worshipers. Any worship of Him, unaccompanied by a recognition of social justice and purity, is worse than useless, since it only provokes His hot anger.

(4) *National existence is dependent on righteousness.* Israel had complacently supposed that the very existence of Jehovah was bound up with their own. He could not therefore, out of regard for Himself, permit their destruction by any heathen nation, however powerful. Amos shattered this delusion by declaring Jehovah's absolute independence of Israel, and Israel's national existence as dependent on the maintenance of the covenant with Jehovah. This covenant rested exclusively on moral and religious grounds. When these were removed by sin, the covenant was canceled and the way cleared for national dissolution.

The recognition and proclamation of these original and eternally valid truths placed Amos among the greatest of the prophets, and made his ministry a turning-point in the religious history of the human race.

Additional Reading References.

(1) For recent commentaries on Amos, see Horton in *New Century Bible, Minor Prophets*, vol. i; Driver in *Cambridge Bible, Joel and Amos*, and George Adam Smith in *Expositor's Bible, The Book of the Twelve Prophets*. (2) On the political situation and the new type

of prophet, see Kent's *The Divided Kingdom*, pp. 70-82. (3) On the literary prophets in general and Amos in particular, see Addis, *The Hebrew Religion*, pp. 135-163. (4) Articles in Bible dictionaries on "Amos," "Jeroboam II."

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What means did Ahab employ for promoting the material prosperity of his kingdom? 2. How did his marriage with Jezebel affect the religious situation in Israel? 3. What was Elijah's first step in preparing the nation for a suppression of Baalism? 4. How did he prove the superiority of Jehovah over Baal? 5. By whom, and how, was Baalism finally destroyed in the northern kingdom? 6. What is the title of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. To what condition was Israel reduced during the reigns of Jehu and Jehoahaz? (Note 2.)

2. To whom, and to what, was Israel's recovery due?

3. What was the immediate effect of military successes and a long period of peace? (Note 3.)

4. How did material prosperity affect the moral condition of the people?

5. Why was this period marked by a revival of enthusiasm for Jehovah?

6. What fatal mistake did the leaders of the nation make?

7. Who was Amos? (Amos 1:1.)

8. What did Amos say concerning himself when told to go back to His own land? (Amos 7:10-15.)

9. How did Amos and the later prophets differ from the earlier? (Note 4.)

10. What was the moral situation in Northern Israel as Amos saw it?

11. How did Amos's conception of Jehovah affect his preaching?

12. What did he say of a merely external devotion to Jehovah's worship?

13. What doom did Amos announce upon Israel?

14. State briefly the original and permanent truths in the preaching of Amos. (Note 5.)

Questions for Consideration.

1. Mention some respects in which social conditions now are similar to those in the time of Amos.

2. What is the value of a civilization that does not rest on morality and religion?

3. What is likely to be the effect on the religious life of an excessive devotion to ritual?

Note-book Work.

1. Write in the column of dates those of the kings of Israel and Judah in Note 2 of the lesson.

2. In the column of religious developments insert those indicated in Note 5.

3. Make a short statement of the few facts that are known about Amos the man, the reasons that led him to write his prophecies, and some of the points wherein his message was an advance on the messages of earlier prophets.

Bible Text. "Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live." Amos 5:6.

Lesson 19. THE DIVINE JUSTICE AND LOVE. Hosea's Message to a Faithless People.

Scripture Reading: Israel's Lack of True Repentance. Hos. ch. 6.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Hosea, by emphasizing Jehovah's love for Israel, sought to bring the nation back from its apostasy.

Note 2. The Last Years of the Northern Kingdom. The reign of Jeroboam II was the last flicker of a dying ember. Two causes now combined to carry the northern kingdom with swift strides to its final overthrow.

(1) *The reawakening of Assyria.* In 745 B. C. a usurper named Pul seized the throne of Assyria, took the name of Tiglath-pileser (III), and with extraordinary energy and success built anew the fortunes of the decadent empire. The early years of his reign were spent in restoring order in the eastern parts of the empire. He then turned his attention to the West, and by 740 B. C., about the time that Jeroboam II died, he had conquered all of northern Syria. The small kingdoms along the Mediterranean, including Israel and Judah, became alarmed and formed a confederacy for mutual defense. The leaders were quickly beaten, and the rest hastened to offer submission and pay the tribute imposed upon them. Rebellion soon broke out, however. In 733 B. C. Damascus was taken after a three years' siege, and Syria made a dependent province. Israel was invaded, stripped of nearly all its territory, and escaped destruction only by renewed submission and a crushing tribute. But on the death of Tiglath-pileser in 727 B. C. the old spirit of independence, stirred up by promises of help from Egypt, led to a final breaking of faith with Assyria, to the capture of Samaria, and to the end of the northern kingdom in 722 B. C.

(2) *Anarchy in Israel.* 2 Ki. 15:8-27. Jeroboam II was succeeded by his son Zechariah, a weakling, who after a reign of only six months, was slain by Shallum, one of his military officers. With him ended the dynasty founded by Jehu. A period of complete anarchy now began. Shallum, after reigning only a month, was slain by Menahem, who died about 736 B. C. His son Pekahiah (736-735 B. C.) was quickly removed by a revolution. Pekah (735-734 B. C.) who succeeded him was put to death by Tiglath-pileser during his campaign against Damascus. The leading inhabitants of the upper part of the kingdom were carried as captives into Assyria, and Hoshea (734-722 B. C.) was made governor over the remnant that remained. Groaning under the exorbitant tribute laid upon

them by their rapacious conquerors, and encouraged by Egypt, this wretched remnant withheld the tribute, and thus invited the final catastrophe.

Note 3. Increasing Moral Degeneracy. The political anarchy just described was accompanied by a similar demoralization in all classes of the community. The evils against which Amos had preached continued with such added forms of social violence as to force from Hosea still more sweeping indictments. False swearing, treacherous dealings, highway robbery, murder, theft, adultery, crimes of violence and bloodshed seemed everywhere to have taken the place of honesty, truth, justice and mercy (Hos. 4:1, 2; 10:4; 11:12). The blame for this state of things Hosea places not so much on the common people as on their religious leaders, the priests and the prophets, who have proved false to their high calling as servants of Jehovah. The true meaning of the obscure passage in 4:4 seems to be: "Let no man strive with or blame the people for this shameful state of things; for the people only follow the teachings and examples of the priests." These greedy priests, instead of giving the people a saving knowledge of Jehovah's law, had themselves become leaders in iniquity (4:6); instead of restraining the ordinary citizens from lust and crime, they actually encouraged them to sin that they might enrich themselves by exacting fines and sin-offerings. The masses were thus left without religious and moral control. They lost faith in Jehovah who seemed unable to save them from their foes, and began to look to other gods for help. Naturally they drifted into the revolting immoralities practised at the heathen shrines. They failed to see that they were madly rushing on to ruin (4:3, 11-14; 5:8-14).

Note 4. Hosea the Man. Hosea's prophetic activity seems to have begun shortly before the close of the reign of Jeroboam II, and to have covered a period of about sixteen years (750-734 B. C.). The statement in the title of his book that he prophesied "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" seems to come from a later hand. Little is known of Hosea's personal life. His father's name was Beerî. Unlike Amos, he was almost certainly a citizen of the northern kingdom, for which almost every sentence reveals a loyal love. His intimate knowledge of the misdeeds of the priests have led some to suspect that he might have been a priest as well as a prophet. His mission seems to have put him in antagonism to all the religious leaders of his nation (Hos. 9:7, 8).

The first three chapters in his book give a pathetic insight into the

tragedy of his domestic life. A deep and true love, which seemed to have the approval of Jehovah led him to marry Gomer, who, though chaste when he married her, was led astray by the wild licentiousness of those times, and soon revealed a shocking unfaithfulness. Her children were not his. Hosea's first impulse was to drive her from his home and cancel the marriage bond, as he would have been justified in doing by all the social laws and customs of his time. Whether he did this, or whether she herself ran away with one of her lovers, is not clear. But when, after a course of open shame, she was put up to be sold as a common slave, his former love triumphed over all the agony she had inflicted on him, and, paying a slave's price for her, he brought her back to his home again. Here he hoped that stern discipline would bring her to a sense of her guilt, to a true repentance, and to an appreciation of the greatness of his own love. How he succeeded is not told.

Note 5. Hosea the Prophet. Hosea's public ministry was closely connected with the bitter experiences of his private life. Through these he caught a vision of great spiritual truths. The tragedy of his wedded life became a symbol of the relations between Jehovah and Israel. As he had married Gomer and cherished her with a strong and loyal love, so Jehovah had loved Israel from its early youth and bound it to Himself by a covenant as sacred as a marriage bond. But as Gomer in going after her lovers had spurned a pure and holy love and had turned away from the high privileges of a faithful wife, so also had Israel acted toward Jehovah in following after the Baalim and attributing to them the blessings received from Him (Hos. 2:5c). Apparently Hosea became a prophet before he discovered the true character of his wife, since the name he gave her first son, Jezreel, gives no hint of her infidelity, but merely foreshadows Jehovah's judgments on the guilty nation because of the massacres perpetrated by Jehu (2 Ki. 10:11). The symbolic names given to the younger children, "Unpitted" and "Not-my-people," while they carry still further the announcement of doom, suggest perhaps a knowledge of Gomer's baseness. In the love which had prompted him to take back his prodigal wife and to try by severe discipline to awaken in her a penitent response, he saw a picture of that divine love which Israel's sins could not extinguish, and which the more keenly it suffered the more eagerly it sought the restoration of the fallen.

The book of Hosea's prophecies contains two parts, chs. 1-3 and chs. 4-14. The former, which deals mainly with the prophet's wrecked domestic life, was probably written subsequent to the latter,

though it tells of earlier experiences. It was now seen that the impulse to marry Gomer, which had been so marvelously overruled to the widening of Hosea's spiritual horizon, was, in the prophetic language of that day, a word of the Lord (1:2). The second part consists, in the main, of short, disconnected sections of which no analysis is possible. Unsparing denunciations of the prevailing social and political corruptions mingle with tender pleadings and impassioned entreaties. All the passages that speak of Judah are probably insertions by a later hand. As these chapters contain no references to the closing scenes in the nation's life, it is probable that the prophet's voice was silenced by despair or martyrdom before the final blow came.

Note 6. New Ideas in the Preaching of Hosea. (1) *Jehovah is Israel's husband.* The Semites were accustomed to think of their gods as the Baals, or "owners" of the land over which they presided, and as married to it. All increase in harvests, flocks or families was ascribed them. It was this sexual idea that plunged Semitic worship into gross licentiousness. Hosea, by representing Jehovah as the "owner," or husband, not of the land, but the people, lifted the union from physical into purely moral and spiritual relations.

(2) *Jehovah's unwavering love.* It was because Jehovah had from the first loved Israel that He had, in the wilderness, betrothed the nation unto Himself as a bridegroom weds a chaste and innocent maiden. All subsequent waywardness and depravity, instead of quenching the divine love, had only brought out more clearly its strong and enduring quality.

(3) *Jehovah's grief over human sin.* The unspeakable shame and pain endured by Hosea because of the misconduct of his faithless wife was but a faint symbol of the suffering inflicted by human sin on the heart of the loving God.

(4) *Jehovah's efforts to redeem.* Israel's disregard of all obligations toward Jehovah had been so flagrant and persistent as to justify Him in casting off His people forever. And yet His love had never wearied. He had sought by blessings and by punishments to win back their love. Discipline is a proof of His love.

(5) *Jehovah's readiness to forgive.* No matter how far men wander or how deeply they fall, God is ready to forgive and welcome back. But only on condition of a genuine repentance. In God's mercy restoration to divine favor is possible for every sinner, but it can never take place without an abandonment of sin and return to righteousness.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Horton in *The New Century Bible, The Minor Prophets*, vol. i, pp. 9-76. (2) G. A. Smith, in *Expositor's Bible, The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. i, pp. 234-240, discusses ably and convincingly the question whether the story of Hosea's relation to Gomer is an allegory or a page from his own life. (3) Kent, *Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah*, pp. 80-102. (4) Articles in Bible dictionaries on "Hosea."

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was the political condition of Northern Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II? 2. What contrast was presented in the social conditions? 3. What false security was felt in respect to Jehovah? 4. What did Amos especially emphasize in his preaching? 5. What were some of the new ideas he advanced? 6. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. State briefly how the reawakening of Assyria affected the political situation in Northern Israel. (Note 2.)

2. What was the political condition within the kingdom after the death of Jeroboam II?

3. What was the moral condition? (Note 3.)

4. To what was this social demoralization due?

5. What is known respecting Hosea's life? (Note 4.)

6. Describe briefly the unhappiness into which his marriage brought him.

7. How did Hosea's strong love show itself in spite of his wife's baseness?

8. What aspect of Israel's history was forcibly brought home to Hosea by the bitter experiences of his wedded life? (Note 5.)

9. What was symbolized by the names given to Gomer's three children?

10. What great lesson respecting Jehovah's love was Hosea taught?

11. What are the main contents of the first part in the book of Hosea's prophecies?

12. What, in the second part?

13. On what aspect of God's character did Hosea put special emphasis? (Note 6.)

14. Mention some of the ways in which the greatness of God's love is shown.

Questions for Consideration.

1. Whether the story of Hosea and Gomer presents an allegory or actual fact.

2. Whether a preaching of divine love that does not also emphasize divine law is likely to be effective in turning men from sin to righteousness.

3. Whether, in view of the present proclamation of the universal reign of law, it is still possible to believe in repentance and forgiveness.

Note-book Work.

On the chart insert in the column of dates the time covered by the reigns of Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria; Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea of Israel; and the dates for the destruction of Damascus and Samaria by the Assyrians.

In the column of religious developments note the leading new ideas preached by Hosea.

Write a brief sketch of Hosea's ministry from such material as may be at hand.

Bible Text. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." Hos. 14:4.

Lesson 20. THE HIGHER IDEA OF GOD. Influence of the Prophets in Attaining a Truer Faith.

Scripture Reading: Jehovah's Yearning over Sinful Israel. Hos. ch. 11.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Amos and Hosea rose to higher ideas of the sovereignty, righteousness, and love of God.

Note 2. Errors respecting Jehovah Current in the Eighth Century B. C. The Israelites, during their close contact with the Canaanites after the conquest, gradually drifted away from the nobler ideas of Jehovah that had been presented by Moses. The masses of the people began to think of Him as like, though superior to, the other gods of the land. He became to them, like the Baals, a mere deification of the powers of nature, an agricultural deity, or a god of war. Under the name of Jehovah, they are worshiping the old native gods. This naturally begot other fatal delusions respecting His person, His character and His worship. Among them were the following:

(1) *That Jehovah's glory was bound up with Israel's prosperity.* Amos 5:18; Hos. 6:1, 2; 8:2. The covenant between Him and His people was supposed to rest on natural, not moral grounds. For His own credit He was regarded as under obligations not to abandon Israel to its heathen foes.

(2) *That Jehovah was indifferent to idolatry.* Hos. 2:7, 8, 13; 4:12, 13. By idolatry is meant, not a complete turning away from Jehovah as Israel's national god, but a toleration of the worship of

other subordinate gods. Jehovah was unquestionably regarded as Israel's supreme God, but not in any such exclusive sense as to justify a complete disregard of the local Baals.

(3) *That Jehovah cared mainly for ceremonies and offerings.* Hos. 5:6. When Jehovah's moral character was forgotten, religion came naturally to be regarded as a matter of mere outward observances. The performance of prescribed rites and the presentation of abundant offerings were supposed to be all that He could reasonably require.

(4) *That Jehovah could be acceptably served by immoral practices.* Amos 2:8; 4:4; Hos. 4:13. When men regarded Jehovah, not as a righteous God, but merely as chief among the Baals, they naturally thought that He would be pleased with the same licentious worship as flourished at the Canaanite high places.

(5) *That Jehovah showed His favor by giving prosperity and His anger by withholding it.* Amos 4:4-11; 6:1-8. Plenteous harvests of corn, oil, and wine, and victories over surrounding nations, such as those won by Jeroboam II, were interpreted as tokens of Jehovah's pleasure in His people. On the other hand, droughts, famines, and defeats were taken as signs of His displeasure. The people, having no idea of the righteousness of God, understood sin, not as transgression of moral law, but as a mere failure in ritual or offerings. Hence they saw no way of regaining divine favor except through increased zeal in a hollow service that only widened the breach between Jehovah and themselves.

(6) *That Jehovah did not insist on social or private morality.* Amos 2:6-8; Hos. 4:1, 2, 6; 8:2. The fact that lying, cheating, robbery, oppression of the poor, perverting justice by bribery, drunkenness, and shameless immorality went hand in hand with loudest professions of loyalty to Jehovah and of zeal in His service was possible only because the people had entirely failed to understand His true moral character.

Note 3. Effect of the Assyrian Conquests on the Faith in Jehovah. When the early line of prophets, from Samuel to Elisha, delivered their messages, Israel had come into direct conflict only with the smaller nations that surrounded it. The popular conception of Jehovah as a God whose power extended only over the territory occupied by His people, and who, within these limits, was fully able to protect them from neighboring foes, sufficed to meet all the problems that confronted them. But when Amos began to prophesy, the great Assyrian world-power was already pressing hard on the coun-

tries bordering on the Mediterranean. The fact that Jeroboam II. had been victorious in the long warfare with Syria was only because its power had been broken by a "saviour" (2 Ki. 13:5). A recently found inscription has shown that this saviour was an Aramean king who rose to power at the beginning of the eighth century B. C., and who conquered Damascus. But now Assyria was again entering on a career of conquest. When Damascus was swept away, Israel for the first time faced a foe with whom it would have been sheer suicide to contend. The only way of escaping national extinction was by unconditional surrender and the yearly payment of a crushing tribute.

This raised the question of Jehovah's power to save. His failure to do so could be explained according to the old theory only on the ground of His inability to do so. But if Jehovah was unable to save His people from being destroyed by the Assyrians; did not this prove, according to the religious beliefs of those times, that the Assyrian gods were mightier than Israel's God (comp. 2 Ki. 18:29-35)? Would it not be wiser to abandon the worship of such a God and honor the superior gods of Assyria? This is what the great majority of the Northern Israelites eventually did, with the result that they disappeared from history.

Note 4. The Wider Outlook of Amos. Amos was the first of the prophets who grappled with this new problem. He had so strong a faith in the abiding reality of Jehovah's being that he could not for a moment believe that His existence was bound up with the fate of any nation. But, if this were true, then Jehovah's sovereignty must extend beyond all national boundaries. In following out this thought, the sublime truth was borne in upon the prophet's mind that Jehovah is the God of the whole earth, a God in whose hands is the providential ordering of all human events. Assyria, therefore, as well as Israel, was a mere instrument for the fulfilment of His beneficent purposes. With such a conviction as this Israel might perish, but faith in Jehovah would live.

But could Israel perish utterly? Had not Jehovah established His covenant with His people, and would not His faithfulness be impugned by their destruction? So the people firmly believed, and so it would have seemed if the covenant had been based on pure partiality or capricious choice. But for the God of the whole world to act from partiality or caprice was unthinkable. To do justice to all men His dealings with them must be determined by fixed moral principles. He must be a God of perfect righteousness. The cove-

nant with Israel must rest, therefore, not on favoritism, but on moral considerations. Israel's fate, accordingly, depended not on an arbitrary exercise of divine power, but on conformity to the standards of divine righteousness. So long as the people lacked this, the most zealous performance of empty religious ceremonies could only arouse Jehovah's indignation and loathing. The only thing that could save the nation and make the covenant effective was an embodiment of justice, integrity, and purity in all relations toward God and men. These were the considerations that made Amos an inexorable preacher of the moral law.

Note 5. Hosea's Emphasis on the Divine Love. The revelation of Jehovah's righteousness came to Amos through a religious interpretation of the social and political movements of his time. The revelation of Jehovah's love came to Hosea through the pitiful experiences of his own domestic life. As the prophet's steadfast love for his prodigal wife led him to deal righteously with her, so Jehovah's righteousness was but a way in which His love for transgressing Israel was forced to express itself. Hosea saw that the sinner needs not only condemnation for his failures, but sympathy and tenderness, a gentle encouragement that gives new strength to those bending under the heavy burdens of life. He showed how in the early days Jehovah had cared for Israel as a loving father cares for and guides his stumbling child; and he showed too, how, when the nation in its maturity and strength had deserted Him, His heart was still full of compassion and readiness to forgive. On these grounds Hosea with infinite tenderness called on his people to turn away from their impotent idols, to abandon their senseless sacrifices, to return to Jehovah in true repentance, and to trust in the greatness and steadfastness of His love. In Hosea's message the Old Testament revelation strikes its highest note—a note which is echoed in the culminating declaration of the New Testament that "God is love."

Note 6. The Religion of the Prophets an Ethical Spiritual Monotheism. Until the rise of the great prophets of the eighth century B. C., the Israelites had believed in and worshiped Jehovah as their national God. But that the existence of other gods was freely conceded was shown in the constant tendency to mingle their worship with that of Jehovah. Even Elijah demanded of the people merely that they should choose the service of Jehovah or of Baal and not go limping between the two. Amos and Hosea, on the contrary, insisted not only on Jehovah's right to Israel's exclusive service, but founded this demand on Jehovah's universal sovereignty. While

the non-existence of heathen gods is not explicitly affirmed, this new conception of Jehovah is such that He cannot possibly be thought of as sharing His sovereignty with other gods. Here, then, for the first time in the history of religious thought we encounter a genuine monotheism—a belief in the one and only God. The prophetic condemnations of the use of images in connection with the worship of this one and only God—a condemnation which we now likewise encounter for the first time—gave to the world a purely spiritual monotheism. Finally, the uncompromising emphasis on the moral perfection of Jehovah's character as a standard for human conduct gave to mankind that ethical spiritual monotheism which still remains the world's highest conception of deity.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Popular and prophetic religion. Kent, *Divided Kingdom*, pp. 92-97. (2) The unity and spirituality of God as conceived by Amos and Hosea. Piepenbring, *Old Testament Theology*, pp. 92-99. (3) Prophetic views of Jehovah's nature. Addis, *Hebrew Religion*, pp. 145-156. (4) The source of prophetic monotheism. Marti, *Religion of the Old Testament*, pp. 136-148.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What three causes led to the swift downfall of the northern kingdom? 2. What is known about Hosea? 3. In what respect did his preaching differ from that of Amos? 4. What sad experience gave him his profound insight into Jehovah's love for Israel? 5. Mention briefly some of the new ideas in Hosea's preaching. 6. What is the subject of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What false sense of security had been encouraged by the old idea of Jehovah's relation to Israel? (Note 2, 1.)

2. Mention some of the ways in which the current idea of Jehovah's character affected worship. (2, 3, 4.)

3. What erroneous view of Jehovah's attitude toward men did it strengthen? (5.)

4. How did it affect social life and private conduct? (6.)

5. How did the Assyrian conquests tend to undermine the popular faith in Jehovah? (Note 3.)

6. What new idea of Jehovah did Amos present as the basis of a firm faith in Him? (Note 4.)

7. On what idea of Jehovah's character did Amos condition the fate of Israel?

8. What lofty idea of Jehovah was emphasized in Hosea's preaching? (Note 5.)

9. What three exalted ideas of God marked the religious teachings of these two prophets? (Note 6.)

10. How, then, may this new development of Israel's religion be described?

Questions for Consideration.

1. What reception may we suppose the people gave to the new truths preached by Amos and Hosea?
2. Why is it that in every age even good men are slow in accepting larger interpretations of religious truths?
3. What should be our attitude toward the new views of the Bible and of Christian doctrine that are so plentifully propounded by reputed scholars in our times?

Note-book Work.

Read again carefully the notes in Lessons 9-12 that set forth the main features of Israel's early religious beliefs; then write for the note-book a brief summary of these beliefs, and by comparison show in what respects the teachings of Amos and Hosea presented truer and worthier ideas of God.

Bible Text. "He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought; that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth—Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name." Amos 4:13.

Lesson 21. THE MORAL DEMANDS OF RELIGION. The Insufficiency of Ceremonies.

Scripture Reading: Formalism Condemned. Is. 1:1-20.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the prophets of the eighth century sternly denounced the hypocrisy and stupidity of those who tried to reconcile immoral acts with true religion.

Note 2. The Prophets of the Eighth Century B. C. In the preceding lessons, 18-20, the messages of Amos and Hosea have been considered so far as they emphasized certain new or neglected aspects of Jehovah's character, such as His universal sovereignty, His perfect righteousness, and His steadfast love. This higher idea of the divine character naturally, as we have seen, had some relation to the kind of worship which He demanded. But in the main the messages of these prophets culminated in an announcement of Israel's doom, which, in the absence of any sincere turning to Jehovah, was seen to be advancing with rapid strides. The failure of the people to respond to the call of Jehovah through His prophets ended the life of the northern kingdom in 722 B. C. The center of prophetic activity had already passed over to the southern kingdom, which now had fallen heir to all that the northern prophets had wrought and taught.

Conditions in Judah during the long and prosperous reign of Uzziah were politically, socially and religiously quite similar to those in Israel during the contemporaneous reign of Jeroboam II (Notes 2, 3, Lesson 18). Both of these great kings died about the same time, 740 B. C. That year was made memorable, furthermore, by the beginning of Hosea's prophetic work in the northern kingdom (Hos. 1:1; Note 4, Lesson 19), and by that of Isaiah in the southern kingdom (Is. 6:1). In the sixth chapter of his book Isaiah tells of his call to the prophetic office. His description in vs. 9, 10 of the effect of his preaching suggests that this account was written some years after the event, when his counsels had been spurned by the king and the people. At the time of his call Isaiah was a young man, a resident, if not a native, of Jerusalem, probably an aristocrat,

and possibly related to the royal family. He seems to have been intimately acquainted with the leading men of the nation, to have had free access to the court, and to the successive monarchs who reigned during his time. Nothing is told of his family except that his father's name was Amoz (not the prophet Amos), that he was married, his wife being called "the prophetess," and that he had two sons to whom he gave symbolic names (Is. 7:3; 8:3). His ministry seems to have extended from 740-701 B. C., or perhaps a few years longer. During this period Jerusalem was the scene of his labors. Isaiah was not only the greatest of the Hebrew prophets, but a statesman whose inspired vision embraced and correctly interpreted the momentous political movements of his time, and whose wisdom prescribed the only safe courses of action.

Micah was a younger contemporary of Isaiah. The beginning of his prophetic work is variously dated from 745 to 710, and the close about 700 B. C. Isaiah surveyed the needs of his time from the point of view of an aristocrat and statesman. Micah looked at them from the point of view of the common people. To him the worst sin of the nation was the heartless oppression of the poor. So fearless was he in rebuking the leaders of the people and in pronouncing doom on Jerusalem that, according to Jer. 26:17-19, he was saved from death only because his friends stood up for him.

Note 3. The Divorce between Morality and Religion. The lofty teachings of Amos respecting Jehovah's righteousness made a profound impression on the prophets who succeeded him. Amos himself had denounced not only the prevailing social iniquities of his time, but also the worship offered at the great sanctuaries for the sole purpose of purchasing Jehovah's favor (Amos 3:14; 4:4; 5:4, 5; 8:13, 14). With equal sternness Hosea had reproved the unchecked vices of his day. On the popular worship of the golden calves he heaped unmeasured scorn, and declared that such worship, even when offered in the name of Jehovah, was no satisfactory substitute for love and a knowledge of God (Hos. 6:6; 8:5, 6; 13:2). Isaiah's position in this matter is still more outspoken. In his first chapter, which summarizes his essential teachings, he pictures the pitiable state into which the social organism in Judah had fallen: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and fresh stripes" (vss. 5, 6). This deplorable condition is due entirely to the divorce between religion and morality. Untiring zeal in respect to outward religious rites is sheer hypocrisy

when dissociated from inward righteousness. The sanctuaries were trampled by throngs of worshipers, the altars groaned under a wealth of sacrifices, the sky was darkened by clouds of incense. Never before had the nation been more assiduous in the practice of religiousness, and never had there been a greater absence of real religion. The offerings were the fruits of oppression and injustice, of a robbery of the fatherless and widows, and the hands of those who so confidently and ostentatiously brought the offerings were red with innocent blood (vss. 10-15). The only remedy was to "cease to do evil" and "learn to do well." Wickedness and worship cannot be combined.

Note 4. "The Greatest Saying of the Old Testament." It remained for Micah to give the most remarkable expression to be found in the Old Testament to the insufficiency of ceremonies, and to the necessity of recognizing the moral demands of religion. Amidst the errors and crimes of his age the passage (Micah 6:1-8) shines as a beacon-light in a dark night. In vss. 1, 2 the prophet calls on the mountains, the hills, and the foundations of the earth to listen as Jehovah comes down from His judgment-seat to argue the question as to what constitutes true religion. In vss. 3-5 Jehovah does not begin by recounting His people's sins, as one would expect, but asks instead if in any wise His requirements have been too severe; then He shows that so far from being an exacting task-master, He has from the first been their Helper and Deliverer. To this, in vss. 6, 7, the people reply humbly by asking what kind of worship they shall offer in order to please their God. Shall they bring such extraordinary sacrifices as Solomon gave at the dedication of the temple? Shall they even go so far as to present as burnt offerings their first-born in order to win Jehovah's favor, as Ahaz had tried to do (2 Ki. 16:3)? The prophet ends the debate in vs. 8 by declaring that Jehovah has made no such demands, that His whole requirement of man is "to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God." This is the sum and substance of true religion in every age. Mistaken views of God's character and of His requirements have always tended to make religion a useless, burdensome and mechanical performance. God Himself ever seeks to make it an inspiration and joy to the soul.

Additional Reading References.

(1) The most illuminating commentaries on Isaiah and on Micah are those by Prof. George A. Smith in the *Expositor's Bible*. Those

by Whitehouse on Isaiah and by Horton on Micah in *The New Century Bible*, are also up to date and exceedingly helpful. (2) On the attitude of the prophets toward sacrifice, see Marti, *Religion of the Old Testament*, pp. 148-152.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. Mention some of the popular errors respecting Jehovah that were current in the time of Amos and Hosea. 2. How did the threatening power of the Assyrian empire affect faith in Jehovah? 3. What larger view of Jehovah's sovereignty did Amos preach in order to strengthen faith in Jehovah? 4. On what ground did Amos denounce the social evils of his time? 5. On what aspect of Jehovah's character did Hosea lay stress? 6. In what sense was the religion of the prophets an ethical monotheism? 7. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What events made the year 740 B. C. memorable? (Note 2.)
2. Mention the main known facts respecting Isaiah.
3. What were the date and place of his ministry?
4. What are the main facts respecting Micah?
5. What attitude did Amos and Hosea take toward the popular worship? (Note 3.)
6. How did Isaiah describe the effect on the nation of an exclusive regard for ritual?
7. How did the people profess their regard for Jehovah?

8. What was the character of those who offered this worship?

9. What did Micah represent Jehovah as testifying in His own behalf? (Note 4.)

10. How did the people answer Jehovah's appeal?

11. How did Micah define true religion?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Why does God value justice and mercy above offerings and sacrifices?

2. Why is true religion always rational?

3. What is the surest proof a man can give that his life is truly religious?

Note-book Work.

Copy in the note-book the leading passages in the prophets of the Assyrian period that speak of the value of being right with God rather than being zealous in matters of outward ritual. Such passages are Amos 5:4, 5, 14, 15, 21-24; Hos. 6:6; 8:4, 5; Is. 1:11-17; Micah 6:6-8.

Bible Text. "What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8.

Lesson 22. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. The Religious Estimate of the Individual.

Scripture Reading: "The Soul that Sinneth, it Shall Die." Ezek. 18:1-20.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the prophets gradually grasped the thought of the moral responsibility of the individual.

Note 2. The Slight Importance of the Individual in Ancient Thought. Christianity places a high value on the individual man.

It was the one lost sheep for which the shepherd left the ninety and nine and hunted over the mountains until he found it. It is over the single repenting sinner that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God. In view of this exalted appreciation of the individual man, as shown in the divine care for him, we find it hard to understand how small a place the individual filled in ancient thought. The smallest social units were the families. These coalesced into the larger unit of the tribe, and the tribes again into a nation. Ancient law regarded a man's wife and children as his property, and, as it held him responsible for their conduct, so in certain cases it included the whole family in the punishment for his wrong-doing. An instructive example is given in the case of Achan, whose sons and daughters, probably as innocent as his oxen, his asses, and his sheep, were included with them in the punishment inflicted on him (Josh. 7: 24, 25). When the earth opened to engulf Dathan and Abiram, it swallowed up likewise "their wives, their sons, and their little ones" (Num. 16: 27b, 32). The same merging of the individual in the family is seen in the execution of Saul's sons to avenge his attack on the Gibeonites (2 Sam. 21: 1-9). No one apparently thought of asking what relation the punishment had to those relatives of the real offenders. The idea of the unity or solidarity of the family blinded men to individual rights.

Note 3. The Religious Undervaluation of the Individual. The same tendency to lose sight of the individual was seen in religious as in social relations. The god whom the individual worshiped was not his own personal god, but the god of the family, the tribe, or the nation. It was the duty of the family, the tribe, or the nation to look out for his interests. When a man brought offerings to the sanctuaries, he did so not in his own behalf, but as a member of the group to which he belonged. Sacrifices at the high places, accordingly, were family or communal feasts (Jud. 9: 26, 27; 1 Sam. 9: 12-25; 20: 6). But as time passed on and clans and tribes disappeared in the larger national unity, so also the local gods gave way before the national god, and religion widened out into a national concern. In the same proportion the importance of the individual decreased. In the estimate of the deity the individual was of small account, the nation was everything. It was with Israel as a whole that Jehovah had established His covenant. When religion was a matter that did not concern itself with personal conduct, but with abundant harvests, protection from national calamities and success in war, why should the individual trouble himself as to his private life? It was the busi-

ness of the priests to administer the public worship, and to keep the deity satisfied with material offerings. Hence the divorce between morality and religion noted in the previous lesson.

Note 4. The Growing Appreciation of the Individual. The great truth that Jehovah deals with individual souls rather than with organic masses was only dimly apprehended by the earlier prophets. Amos shared the prevailing idea of his time that Jehovah dealt only with Israel as a whole, and hence his preaching was not directed to individuals. It was only when he reflected on the obvious fact that there were many who did not join in the drunken revelry, who did not get rich by oppression, and who had been forced into silence by the evil-doers in authority, that it dawned on his mind that the whole of Israel could not be Jehovah's people. The first intimation of this clearer idea of the moral value of the individual man is where he asks, "Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?" (Amos 3:3)?

While Hosea's preaching was also addressed to the people as a whole, yet the experiences on which it rested were most personal and tender. He nowhere gives explicit expression to the fact of individual responsibility, but his language foreshadows it. So far as his appeals received any response, it must have been from the personal conscience. Furthermore, his lofty idea of the sacredness of marriage must have helped to prepare the way for the admission that each woman-soul is as precious in God's estimate as the soul of the individual man.

Isaiah's mind was so occupied with national problems that he had little to say about personal responsibility. He looked at sins such as drunkenness, lying, stealing, and immorality as symptoms of social disease (Is. 1: 5, 6) rather than personal evils, and he denounced them because of their effect on the community. Yet even Isaiah was beginning to catch a glimpse of the larger truth. When in the eleventh chapter (vss. 1-5) he makes a coming prince the medium through whom divine wisdom and righteousness are brought to the people, he certainly sees that this result can be reached only as one individual soul is quickened by the divine Spirit. So, too, Isaiah's own personality, his wife, his sons with their symbolic names, the little company of his disciples, are gradually detaching themselves from the general mass.

Note 5. Individual Responsibility Clearly Discerned by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The doctrine of personal responsibility was

not clearly expressed and forcibly applied until the shadow of the Babylonian exile fell over the southern kingdom. The first to state it in unmistakable terms was Jeremiah, who prophesied from the thirteenth year of Josiah (626 or 625 B. C.) until some time after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. During almost the whole of this long period Jeremiah was the central figure in the prolonged agony that attended the dissolution of the kingdom and the beginning of the exile. Gifted with a gentle, retiring, sensitive disposition, hating strife, and loving his nation with passionate intensity, yet he was forced to live in bitter contention with all classes in the community (Jer. 1:17-19) and was assailed as a traitor. After the death of Josiah he was compelled to discourage every patriotic hope, to antagonize the popular side of every question, and to be the prophet of defeat and disaster. His advice fell on unwilling and rebellious ears, and his efforts to save his people proved a failure. It was this destruction of the state that brought into clearer light than ever before the religious importance of the individual. The nation was no longer the religious unit with which Jehovah could deal. If Israel's faith survived at all, it must survive without the state and the temple ritual. From his own experience Jeremiah had learned that faith could thus survive; that the religious unit with which Jehovah deals is the individual man, and that a vital personal relation to Jehovah must be the foundation of all true religion. That there had been much speculation at that time about the justice of punishing children for the sins of the fathers (Ex. 20:5) is suggested by the currency of the proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer. 31:29). In combating this popular error, Jeremiah announced the great moral principle, "Every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge" (31:30).

This principle was elaborated by Ezekiel in the eighteenth chapter of his prophecy. Ezekiel was one of the leading Jews carried into exile with Jehoiachin in 597 B. C. (2 Ki. 24:8-14). At Tel-abib in Babylon he lived in a house of his own (Ezek. 3:24), and continued to encourage and comfort his fellow exiles for at least twenty-two years (1:2; 29:17). Of his personal history little is known. He belonged to a priestly family, was educated by the priests in the temple, and he thus acquired that priestly cast of mind which is more prominent in him than in any of the other prophets. He, too, quotes and combats the above popular proverb (Ezek. 18:2). The exiles were explaining the calamities that had come upon them as judgments for the sins of their ancestors, and that under these judg-

ments they were hopelessly crushed. Against this discouraging conclusion Ezekiel argues that each Israelite stands alone in his relations to Jehovah. If he does right, the guilt of his ancestors does not fall on him. On the contrary, if he sins, he will not be saved from punishment because of their righteousness. God judges each man according to his own deserts. Neither guilt nor merit is hereditary (Ezek. ch.13; 33:1-20). In taking this position Ezekiel brought clearly into the light the fundamental truth of religion that a man's destiny is not determined by his surroundings, but by his free moral choice.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Suffering for the sins of one's ancestors. Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 282-287. (2) The religion of the individual. Skinner, *Expositor's Bible, Ezekiel*, pp. 143-158. (3) On Jeremiah and Ezekiel, see Bible dictionaries. (4) On the importance of the individual, see Wade, *Old Testament History*, pp. 442-444.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What is known about the personal life of Isaiah? 2. What, about Micah? 3. What fatal mistake were the people making in regard to the sufficiency of religious forms? 4. How did Micah define true religion? 5. What is the subject of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. How was the social importance of the individual lost sight of in the ancient world? (Note 2.)

2. Give some illustrations from the Old Testament.

3. How was the estimate of the individual affected by tribal and national religions? (Note 3.)

4. How did morality come to be separated from religion?

5. What was the position of Amos in respect to personal responsibility? (Note 4.)

6. What was the position of Hosea?

7. What was the position of Isaiah?

8. When and by whom was the principle of personal moral responsibility first clearly apprehended? (Note 5.)

9. What were some of Jeremiah's experiences in connection with the overthrow of the Jewish state?

10. How did these experiences affect his belief in the importance of the individual?

11. As a result of his opposition to a popular error, what great moral principle did he evolve?

12. Who was Ezekiel?

13. What was his teaching in respect to personal responsibility?

Questions for Consideration.

1. To what extent is it true that men suffer only for their own sins?
2. To what extent are character and destiny determined by heredity and environment?

Note-book Work.

In the column of dates enter the ministries of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

For the note-book, write a summary of the trespass and punishment of Achan (Josh. ch. 7), and follow it with the higher estimate of the individual given in Jer. 31:29, 30.

Bible Text. "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Ezek. 18:20.

Lesson 23. ISRAEL'S UNIQUE RELATION TO JEHOVAH. **Theocratic Protests against the Monarchy.**

Scripture Reading: The Evils of the Monarchy. 1 Sam. ch. 8.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the prophets in the later period of the monarchy came to regard it not as a gift from Jehovah, but as a failure to recognize His sole sovereignty over Israel.

Note 2. The Stories of the Establishment of the Kingdom. No more conclusive proof of the composite character of the books of Samuel is needed than the double account of the founding of the Hebrew monarchy given in 1 Sam. chs. 8-12. Each narrative is complete in itself. According to that recorded in 9:1-10:16; ch. 11, Samuel, a comparatively unknown seer, in compliance with instructions received from Jehovah, anoints Saul to be Israel's leader against the Philistines. Saul's subsequent rescue of the men of Jabesh-gilead from the barbarous cruelty of Nahash, the Ammonite, turned the attention of all Israel to him as a heaven-sent military leader, and at Gilgal he is made king by acclamation.

Interwoven with this plain historical narrative we find one which explains in a wholly different way how Saul was made king. According to this narrative, Samuel was a renowned judge who not only had inflicted a crushing defeat on the Philistines (ch. 7), but who had ruled over all Israel with consummate wisdom until the weakness of age forced him to relinquish his duties to his sons. Their misconduct, combined with Samuel's infirmity, led the people themselves to go to Samuel with a demand that he should give them a king so that they might be like the surrounding nations. Samuel was greatly displeased, but at Jehovah's advice tries to dissuade them from their purpose by picturing in the darkest colors the evils of an Oriental despotism, the only form of monarchy then known. When the peo-

ple persisted in their demand, Jehovah tells Samuel to yield. Saul is thereupon elected king, and Samuel in a solemn address lays down his own office in his favor.

Note 3. The Late Prophetic Narrative. So long as it was supposed that the compiler of the books of Samuel presented in chs. 8-11 a single story of the founding of the kingdom, interpreters were greatly puzzled how to make of it a single self-consistent narrative. All difficulties were removed, however, when it was discovered that we have here an early Saul narrative, written while the events were fresh in mind and therefore historically trustworthy, and also another narrative of a wholly different type which originated in the schools of the prophets several centuries later. In looking back over the history of the nation they projected their own ideas on that distant past. They conceived of Samuel as a great prophet, like Elijah or Elisha, who ruled the people as the direct representative of Jehovah, Israel's true and only King. They failed to see that the monarchy was the only thing that could have saved Israel from complete destruction as a result of internal anarchy and external oppression. Even the glory of the early monarchy was overshadowed by the evils inflicted by later kings. That an institution so lending itself to tyranny and idolatry could have been the gift of a righteous God seemed to the prophets unthinkable. It must, therefore, have originated in the depravity of the people. That Samuel could have yielded without a solemn protest to a demand that must have seemed to him like rebellion against Jehovah, appeared equally unthinkable. If Jehovah granted and Samuel yielded to the popular demand, it could only have been as a punishment for the people's sins. In thus transferring to the past their own ideas of what must have taken place the prophets did not consciously or deliberately pervert history. Their purpose in writing history at all was only for the sake of the religious instruction conveyed by it. Of the value of history for its own sake they appear to have had no idea. To present the course of events in such manner as to yield the most forcible lessons for the people whom the prophets addressed seemed to the prophets the most laudable use that could be made of the history. While, then, these later prophetic narratives do not give an accurate account of the establishment of the Hebrew kingdom, they are of incalculable value in reflecting the thought of the age in which they were written.

Note 4. The Idea of the Theocracy. The word "theocracy," or "rule by God," was coined by Josephus when he was trying to ex-

plain to his Gentile readers the nature of the political constitution given them by Moses. This he describes as a government in which the rule and power was exercised by God. But, as a matter of fact, Moses did not establish any form of government that included the several tribes. From the time of the exodus, and all through the period of the judges, when the theocracy was supposed to have flourished, each tribe lived its own life independent of the others, except as a desire for conquest or the necessity of self-defense drove them into united action. But in all such cases they were dependent on human leaders. The fact that David and other pious kings acknowledged their dependence on Jehovah and sought to fulfil His will did not realize the theocratic ideal. Assyrian and Babylonian kings regarded themselves as standing in the same relation to their gods, but this did not make their empires theocracies in any sense. The conception of a direct divine rule over Israel, in the sense in which Josephus used the word "theocracy," never came within the range of Hebrew thought until the times of the prophets. From this point of view Israel's early history seemed to be the ideally perfect period, when the people lived peacefully and happily under the direct and benevolent rule of Jehovah.

Note 5. The Growth of the Theocratic Ideal. It is possible that the first germ of the theocratic idea, so fully wrought out in I Sam. 8:4-18 and ch. 12, is found in Hosea's conception of Jehovah as Israel's husband (Hos. 2:19, 20). As no husband will tolerate an intermediary in his love for his wife, so Jehovah could not be regarded as looking favorably on the interposition of a human kingship between Himself and His people. Nowhere in the utterances of Amos and Hosea appears an echo of the early sentiment that the kingdom was a blessing bestowed by Jehovah. It was impossible for them to regard the kings who, from Jeroboam down, had gained the throne by rebellion as representatives of Israel's righteous King. With many of them, the prophets came into distinct conflict. To Jehu's frightful massacres Hosea (1:4) traced the impending downfall of the northern kingdom, and to the unatoned wickedness of Manasseh a later prophetic writer traced the doom of Judah (2 Ki. 23:26, 27; 24:2-4). Perhaps the story of Samuel's solemn protest against the kingdom may have originated during or shortly after the reign of Manasseh (684-641 B. C.). Some writers with less probability place it in the ninth or eighth century B. C., when the despotism of Solomon and Ahab had given the people a taste of the very evils that Samuel describes. Others place it with no greater probability as late as the

exile, when the Jewish state had ceased to exist except as a tragic memory.

It was in the exile, however, that the theocratic idea rose into greatest prominence. Ezekiel's program for the restored Israel (chs. 40-48) rests wholly upon it. The nearest approach to a concrete realization of it was seen in the priest-state that after the return from the exile gathered up the remnants of the nation under the rule of a high priest. Whatever mistake the prophets may have made in projecting their idea of a theocracy backwards into the Mosaic age, they made no mistake in confidently predicting its still more glorious realization in the future (Hos. 14:4-8; Is. 2:2-4; Ezek. 34:11-16). In the New Testament kingdom of God, whose advent Christ proclaimed, and whose goal is the doing of God's will on earth as it is done in heaven, the theocratic ideal is fully and gloriously realized (Mk. 1:14, 15; Mt. 6:10; Rev. 21:1-22:5).

Additional Reading References.

(1) On the different narratives of the founding of the kingdom, see recent Bible dictionaries on "Samuel, Books of"; also Kent's *Founders and Rulers*, p. 66, and *Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives*, pp. 12, 13, 65-69. (2) On the origin of the word "theocracy" and its use by Josephus, see Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, extra vol., p. 337.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. Why was the individual so lightly esteemed in the ancient world? 2. Why was so little emphasis placed on the moral conduct of the individual? 3. What led to the elevation of the individual? 4. How was the thought of personal responsibility stated by Jeremiah and Ezekiel? 5. What is the subject of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What are the main points in what appears to be the older story of the establishment of the Hebrew kingdom? (Note 2.)

2. State briefly the main points in the later prophetic narrative.

3. What occasioned the remarkable differences presented in the later narrative? (Note 3.)

4. What controlling purpose led the prophets to write history?
5. Wherein lies the real value of their narratives?
6. What is the meaning and origin of the word "theocracy"? (Note 4.)
7. Why may we not regard Moses as having established a theocratic form of government?
8. When, and how, did the idea first arise?
9. Where do we find the germ of the idea? (Note 5.)
10. What was the attitude of Amos and Hosea toward the monarchy?
11. When may the idea of the theocracy have received the full development presented in the Samuel stories?
12. When did it rise into greatest prominence?
13. Where does it find its fullest realization?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Why are men at all times tempted, like Israel's prophets, to idealize the past as the golden age?

2. Why is it wiser to look for the golden age in the future?

Note-book Work.

On the chart insert the probable date of the later prophetic Samuel stories; and in the column of religious developments the rise of the theocracy.

Write a brief summary of the reasons advanced by Samuel why Israel should not have a king.

Bible Text. "Jehovah is King for ever and ever." Ps. 10:16.

Lesson 24. THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW. The Great Reformation under Josiah.

Scripture Reading: Israel Exhorted to be Faithful to Jehovah. Deut. ch. 6.

Note 1. The Object of the Lesson. To show the causes which led to the epoch-making reformation under Josiah, and the nature of the law-book which inspired it.

Note 2. Manasseh's Reactionary Reign. For a clear understanding of this lesson it should be borne in mind that the ancients knew nothing of our modern distinction between church and state. There was no church. The state was a religious as well as political organization. The two functions went hand in hand. The political differences which divided men into parties were fundamentally religious. Isaiah and Jeremiah were statesmen as well as prophets. When we speak of a prophetic party in Jerusalem we mean those whose devotion to Israel's God and to the higher teachings of the prophets made them not only supporters of a pure worship but advocates of dependence on Jehovah for national prosperity. Their opponents, the heathenizing party, composed of time-serving politicians, resisted religious reform and trusted for national safety to foreign alliances.

During the reign of Hezekiah (715-686 B. C.) the prophetic party, headed by Isaiah and aided by the active sympathy of the king, had become sufficiently powerful to undertake several reforms. When Hezekiah died, he was followed by his son Manasseh (686-641 B. C.) who, being only a boy, was won over by the heathenizing party and became its most energetic supporter (2 Ki. 21:1-18). All the idolatries and superstitious practices that had been introduced

by Ahaz, but suppressed by Hezekiah, were now brought back. Licentious Canaanite worship was revived at the high places. Other foreign worships were introduced and grafted on the popular faith. Jehovah's true prophets were either killed or silenced.

The reasons for this reaction are easily discovered. Reforms undertaken by Hezekiah at the instigation of the prophetic party touched only the external forms of worship. The hearts of the people were unchanged. They did not understand the lofty ideal of divine righteousness preached by the prophets. Their demand for justice and mercy in daily life seemed fanatical to those who profited by extortion and cruelty. The restoration of the old popular forms of worship was welcomed as a return to the religion of the fathers. It left the people free to conduct themselves as they pleased. The grief and indignation of Jehovah's true followers can be imagined as they witnessed this backsliding into the worst evils of heathenism.

Note 3. The Reformation under Josiah. Amon reigned only two years (641-639 B. C.). He walked in the evil ways of Manasseh his father. Josiah, Amon's son, was only a child when he came to the throne. His reign of thirty-one years (639-608 B. C.) marked a new era in the history of religion (Note 6). His pious training made him exceedingly receptive to the teachings of the prophets. The following events combined to pave the way for the great reformation which occurred in the eighteenth year of his reign (621 B. C.). (1) The vast Assyrian empire was now tottering to its fall, and its gods were being discredited. (2) From the eastern part of Europe immense hordes of Scythians had invaded western Asia and were now approaching Palestine. The countries over which they passed were left depopulated deserts. So far nothing had checked their advance. The people of Judah were well-nigh paralyzed with terror. (3) The preaching of the prophets, especially that of Zephaniah, declared that these barbarian hordes were Jehovah's instrument of judgment on sinful Judah (Jer. 6:1; Zeph. 1:14-18). When the Scythians stopped just short of Judah, the joy of the people was as frantic as their terror had been overpowering. The deliverance was at once attributed to Jehovah's care for His land. The prophetic party was restored to popular favor. The first sign of this change of feeling was the cleansing and repairing of Jehovah's house which through long neglect had fallen into sad decay (2 Ki. 22:3-7).

While these repairs were in progress the epoch-making event of Josiah's reign occurred—the finding of the book of the law in

the house of Jehovah. So deep was the impression made upon the quickened conscience of the king and the people that a most thorough-going reformation in accordance with the requirements of the book was at once undertaken (2 Ki. 22:8—23:25). So far as possible all traces of heathen practices were rooted out from the land. The high places which even Hezekiah had spared were swept away, partly because it was seen that the worship connected with them was too corrupt to be retained in even a nominal worship of Jehovah, and partly because the book demanded their suppression in the interest of a single central sanctuary.

Note 4. The Book that Hilkiah Found. That fact that this book was short enough to be read at a single assembly (compare Neh. 8:18) shows conclusively that it could not have been, as was long supposed, the temple copy of the Pentateuch, the so-called five Books of Moses at the beginning of our Bibles. Two portions of the Old Testament are explicitly called the book, or words, of the covenant (Ex. 24:7; Deut. 29:1). The former refers to the body of ancient law contained in Ex. 20:22—23:19 (see Lesson 14); the latter to the whole or to a part of the legislation contained in Deut. chs. 5-26, 28, 29. The fact that Hilkiah's book is also called "the book of the covenant" seems to identify it with one or the other of these codes. The terror which the reading of the temple book inspired was natural, if it contained the terrible curses on disobedience recorded in Deut. chs. 28, 29.

Some of the many reasons for identifying Hilkiah's book with Deuteronomy are the following: (1) Nowhere in the Hebrew literature of the eighth or earlier centuries appears the slightest trace of acquaintance with the distinctive features of Deuteronomy. On the other hand, the writings of the sixth century—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others—contain frequent and unmistakable references to it. This seems to indicate that it originated during the seventh century, which embraced the reign of Manasseh and Josiah's reformation. (2) A careful comparison of the details of this reformation with the requirements in Deuteronomy shows such close correspondence as to make it almost certain that the book which prompted the reformation was none other than our Deuteronomy. (3) No period in the history of Israel was so likely to produce such a book as the dark days of Manasseh. The prophets, suppressed in speech and actions, would naturally take comfort in restating the fundamental principles of Israel's religion, and in re-enforcing the laws of the old "book of the covenant" (Ex. 20:22—23:19), in forms

suitcd to the social and religious conditions of their time. (4) A book, embodying such curses on the conspicuous evils of Manasseh's time as we find in Deut. chs. 28, 29, could not be made public at once without still further endangering the lives of the prophets. What would be more natural than that it should have been hidden away in Jehovah's house to await the coming of a brighter day? (5) Finally, Deuteronomy reproduces in the form of a law-book for the people all the distinctive religious principles which had been emphasized in the preaching of the prophets of the eighth century. These considerations suggest that the book originated about 650 B. C.

Note 5. Contents and Purpose of Deuteronomy. The book consists in the main of three addresses purporting to have been delivered by Moses to the children of Israel shortly before his death. The first (1:6—4:40) outlines Israel's past history; the second (4:44—26:19; 28:1—29:1) elaborates the fundamental religious principles embodied in Israel's national life (chs. 5-11), restates these principles in the form of a code (chs. 12-26), and the third (29:2—30:30) blesses those who obey these laws and curses the disobedient. Ch. 27 seems to be from a later hand. The remainder of the book (29:2—34:12) gathers together a variety of material loosely connected with what precedes. The earliest edition may have contained only chs. 12-26, 28.

Deuteronomy is not a new code, but a revision of Israel's ancient law along the line of the recent prophetic preaching. By combining these teachings with that law it sought to counteract the powerful corrupting influences then at work. Accordingly its chief emphasis is on (1) Jehovah's unity and universal sovereignty (6:4; 10:14); (2) Jehovah's righteousness which calls for national and personal righteousness (15:1-18; 24:10-13; 25:1); (3) Jehovah's love for Israel (7:6-8) which demands love in return (6:5); (4) the destruction of all local idolatrous shrines (7:5; 12:2, 3), and the centralization of worship at a single sanctuary understood to be Jerusalem (12:5, 6, 11-14), including the religious feasts (16:2, 3); (5) the fruits of the land are the gifts of Jehovah, not of the Baalim (ch. 26; comp. Hos. 2:8, 9); (6) and finally, acceptable worship is essentially spiritual (10:12, 13; comp. Micah 6:8).

The ascription of these addresses to Moses was consistent with the then current literary standards, which certainly were not those of our time. The fact that a treatise was based on the principles announced by Moses was for ages regarded as sufficient ground for attributing it to him.

Note 6. The Results of Josiah's Reformation. The application of the Deuteronomic law to the life of the nation made the next twelve years the brightest in the history of the southern kingdom. The destruction of the high places swept away, at least during Josiah's reign, the corrupting influences that had proceeded from them. The centralization of worship at the temple strengthened that popular faith in Jehovah as Israel's sole God which had been undermined by the many local sanctuaries. The compulsory transplanting of the religious feasts from the household or village to the capitol transformed them into national festivals. Josiah's reformation failed to change the religious character of the people, because it had to do only with the outward forms and material symbols of worship. It did not reach the heart. We cannot be surprised, therefore, that after Josiah's tragic death, which was bewailed as an irretrievable disaster, a reaction set in that continued until the overthrow of the nation.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Kent: *Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah*, pp. 195-244, treats fully of the reign of Josiah, the ministry of Zephaniah, the early work of Jeremiah, the history and contents of Deuteronomy. (2) In Bible dictionaries, see articles on "Manasseh," "Josiah," and "Deuteronomy." (3) Recent commentaries on Deuteronomy, such as that in the *New Century Bible*.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was Samuel's attitude toward the kingdom as depicted in 1 Sam. 8:8-18? 2. At what period in the history of the northern kingdom do the prophets seem to have begun their protests against it? 3. What is the meaning of the word "theocracy"? 4. When did the prophets regard the theocratic ideal as having been first realized? 5. Where did they place its complete realization? 6. What is the subject of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What parties were prominent in Jerusalem in the eighth and seventh centuries B. C.? (Note 2.)

2. What was the character of Manasseh's reign?

3. What causes brought about this relapse into heathenism?

4. What three events prepared the way for Josiah's reformation?
(Note 3.)

5. What was the first sign of renewed confidence in Jehovah?

6. What momentous discovery was now made?

7. What resulted from it?

8. With what portion of the Old Testament is the book found in the temple now generally identified? (Note 4.)

9. State some reasons for this view.

10. What are the main divisions of Deuteronomy? (Note 5.)

11. What type of religious teaching does it emphasize?

12. On what ground was the authorship ascribed to Moses?

13. What were some of the permanent results of Josiah's reformation?
(Note 6.)

Questions for Consideration.

1. If the addresses in Deuteronomy were not delivered by Moses, as they are said to have been, why is it wrong for us to call them "forgeries"?

2. Why is a religious or moral reformation enforced by external authority likely to be ineffective?

Note-book Work.

1. Enter on the chart the reigns of Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon and Josiah, the approximate date at which Deuteronomy seems to have been composed, and the date of Josiah's reformation. In the column of religious developments, on a line with the reformation, note the final disappearances of the high places from Israelitish worship, and its centralization at the temple in Jerusalem.

2. Write a brief synopsis of the events in Josiah's reign on the basis of 2 Ki. 22:1—23:30.

Bible Text. "Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. 6:5.

Lesson 25. THE NEW COVENANT. Jeremiah's Messianic Conceptions.

Scripture Reading: A New Covenant to be Made. Jer. 31:31-34.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Jeremiah anticipated the overthrow of the temple and nation, and presented the new ideal of a personal covenant between Jehovah and each of His children.

Note 2. Divine Covenants with Men. The establishment and significance of the covenant at Sinai were considered in Lesson 8, Notes 4 and 5. Its purpose, as there stated, was to bind the Israelites to Jehovah, their one and only God, but incidentally it also bound the tribes one to another, and thus established their national unity on a religious basis. The older of the two decalogues, that in Ex. 34:10-28, which probably was the original basis of the covenant, is mainly ritualistic in its requirements. Accordingly, the relations of the people to Jehovah were supposed to be reflected in their outward conditions. His rewards for keeping the covenant and His punishments for disregarding them were chiefly external. Abundant rains in their

season, great harvests, rich vintage, a goodly increase in the herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, and freedom from disturbance by external foes were the blessings promised to those who kept the covenant (Deut. 28:1-14). On the other hand, the withholding of these material blessings and the resulting calamities were proofs of His anger for disregarding it (Deut. 28:15-68). The covenant at Sinai, accordingly, may be regarded as a constitution intended to define Israel's relation to Jehovah.

In a wider sense the prophets who compiled the early history of their people and of mankind were led to see in every such definition of human relations to Jehovah a covenant established by Him. In this light they interpreted God's dealings with Noah after the flood (Gen. 9:8-17), with Abraham when he received the promise of the land (Gen. 17:1-8), and with Israel through Joshua after the conquest of Canaan (Josh. 24:16-28). Hosea is the first of the prophets who mentions Jehovah's covenant with Israel (Hos. 8:1). Amos, Isaiah, and Micah make no mention of it. But the later prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the author of Is. chs. 40-66 contain frequent references to it.

Note 3. Jeremiah and the Renewal of the Covenant under Josiah. As Jeremiah's ministry began in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (Jer. 1:1, 2), and the great reformation took place in his eighteenth year (2 Ki. 22:3), it must have occurred in the fifth year of Jeremiah's work as a prophet. The fact that he was still a young man may account for his not being mentioned in connection with the reform. There can be no doubt, however, that it made a deep impression on his mind, even if he did not take a prominent part in it. One passage in his book (Jer. 11:1-8) is generally understood to refer to the renewal of the covenant under Josiah (2 Ki. 23:1-3). It seems to imply that Jeremiah, probably in common with many other members of the prophetic order, undertook not only in the streets of Jerusalem but throughout the towns and villages of Judah to persuade men to live according to the requirements of the newly discovered "book of the covenant." That he himself was in the fullest sympathy with the moral demands of the book is seen in all his discourses. Of the effects of the reformation on the religious life of the nation he has nothing to say, probably because he saw before long that, while it changed in some respects the outward forms of worship, it made no fundamental change in the character of the people.

Note 4. The Apparent Failure of the Covenant. Jeremiah

lived during the most momentous crisis that had as yet been experienced by the chosen people. The twelve years that followed the reformation promised a brilliant future. Heathenism had been swept away, and the people were living according to Jehovah's law. The king himself set an example of sincere devotion to Israel's God. The prophets were held in honor. No foreign foe molested the nation, which now seemed to enjoy every desired token of Jehovah's favor. In 608 B. C., Nineveh was besieged by the united forces of the Medes and the Babylonians, and fell two years later. Egypt was quick to take advantage of the situation, and attempted to seize Syria. Josiah probably saw in this movement a menace to his own independence, and, confident that Jehovah would now give His aid to His obedient and loyal people, he tried to oppose the Egyptian advance, and lost his life (2 Ki. 23:29, 30). Alike from a political or religious point of view his death was an irretrievable misfortune. It shattered the popular trust in Jehovah, and bitterly discouraged those who, on the basis of the covenant, had taught the people to expect material prosperity as a reward for obedience. There were doubtless many who in silence had nursed their dissatisfaction, if not anger, at Josiah's destruction of the local sanctuaries, and who now proclaimed his death to be a divine punishment for the sacrilege. Under Jehoiakim's weak and wicked rule (608-597 B. C.) Josiah's policy was completely reversed. The old idolatries and abominations came back in full force and flourished unchecked. The deathblow to the kingdom came in 586 B. C. When Nebuchadrezzar captured Jerusalem and carried the greater part of the Jewish people into captivity in Babylonia, it seemed as if Jehovah had canceled His covenant with Israel, and had retired from His land.

Note 5. The New Covenant Inward and Spiritual. The breaking down of the Jewish state meant the passing away of the old order. Jeremiah's faith, which survived even this calamity, permitted him to see that Jehovah's covenant with Israel was not thereby annulled. Great as the sins of the nation had been, Jehovah's love was still greater. Throughout the dreadful agony that attended the dissolution of the state, Jeremiah's inspired vision saw beyond the present darkness a glorious day, when Israel's sins will be pardoned and the people restored. Legitimate kings of David's line will sit upon the throne, cities and palaces will be rebuilt in greater splendor than ever, joy and prosperity will abound, and Israel will dwell securely under the wing of the Almighty (Jer. 30:1-11, 18-22).

But as the nation after its first birth rested on the covenant made

at Sinai, so the regenerated nation must rest on another and better covenant. The old was obsolete. It had failed to bring about a living relation to Jehovah. The new covenant is not to be, like Hilkiah's law-book, a mere expansion of an ancient contract, but a bond of union that will put the mutual relations of Jehovah and His people on an entirely new basis. The outwardness of the old covenant was symbolized by its being written on tables of stone. The inwardness of the new is shown by its being written on the heart, the very seat and source of human affection. It is to control the life, not by rules and laws enforced by threats and penalties, but by a joyful surrender to the guidance of the indwelling Spirit of God. In that day men will not make long journeys to sacred places where Jehovah is supposed to reveal Himself, nor consult teachers who are able to read His law, since Jehovah will be their Teacher. The realization of this glorious vision will not be hindered by the past sins of the nation, since Jehovah will remember them no more (Jer. 31:31-34; 32:40; 50:5; comp. Is. 55:3; 59:21; Ezek. 16:60-62; 34:25).

It is scarcely necessary to add that this splendid prophecy, that far surpassed even the highest conceptions in Deuteronomy (6:6-8; 30:11-14), was not realized when the Jews returned from their exile in Babylon. The covenant which Ezra and Nehemiah attempted to restore (Neh. chs. 8-10) was the superseded and discarded covenant that Jehovah established with Moses. The time for the new did not arrive until the Son of God by His incarnation and suffering and death introduced a new era in the religious history of mankind (Lu. 22:20; Heb. 8:6-13).

Additional Reading References.

(1) On the Old Testament conceptions of covenants between God and men, see Bible dictionaries, art. "Covenant." (2) On varieties of the covenant, and their moral insignificance, see Davidson's *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 235-248. (3) Why the covenant was made with Israel and no other nation. Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 249-252. (4) The new covenant. Ball, *Expositor's Bible, Jeremiah*, pp. 346-355.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was the character of Manasseh's reign? 2. What were some of the causes that led to the great reformation under Josiah? 3. What were the chief features of this reformation? 4. What

reasons have we for believing that the book found in the temple was our Deuteronomy in whole or in part? 5. What were some of the results of Josiah's reformation? 6. What is the subject of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What was the purpose of the covenant established at Sinai? (Note 2.)

2. How was Jehovah supposed to show His favor to those who obeyed the covenant, and His displeasure on the disobedient?

3. What other covenants were recognized by the prophets?

4. What part does Jeremiah seem to have had in the national renewal of the covenant on the basis of the new law-book? (Note 3.)

5. Why did Jeremiah say so little of this event?

6. What was the character of Josiah's reign after the reformation? (Note 4.)

7. What brought about a relapse into heathenism?

8. How did the destruction of the Jewish state seem to affect Israel's covenant relation to Jehovah?

9. What convictions did Jeremiah hold concerning Israel's future? (Note 5.)

10. What was to take the place of the old covenant?

11. Mention some essential respects in which the new was to differ from the old.

Questions for Consideration.

1. Why were rewards and punishments under the Old Testament covenants limited to this life?
2. What purposes were served by these covenants?

Note-book Work.

In the column of dates insert that of the fall of Nineveh, which marked the end of the Assyrian empire; also the reign of Jehoiakim.

Bible Text. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Is, 55:3.

Lesson 26. THE TEACHINGS AND WORK OF THE EARLY PROPHETS. Review of Lessons 14-25.

Scripture Reading: Jehovah's Righteous Judgments. Ezek. 33: 10-20.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the prophets, during the period of the Hebrew monarchies, by their work and preaching, helped to purify and ennoble Israel's faith.

Note 2. The Suppression of Canaanite Corruptions (Lessons 16, 17, 20, 24). The comparatively pure worship which Israel had cultivated in the desert was greatly corrupted after the settlement in Canaan by contact with the native religions. The old high places were taken over by the newcomers and rededicated to the service of their own God. But in this transfer it was inevitable that many of the Canaanite ideas of the gods as local nature deities, destitute of moral character, would also be transferred to Jehovah, and that the licentious worship connected with the high places would be retained in His service. This familiarity with idolatry, even though practised in the name of Jehovah, made the setting up of Jeroboam's golden calves as representations of Israel's God an easy and popular

innovation, and Jezebel's attempt to place the Tyrian Baal on an equality with Jehovah almost a success. It was the latter policy that aroused the prophets to the necessity of suppressing this foreign worship if Israel's faith were to survive. The first blows were struck by Elijah, and the last by Elisha through Jehu's massacres. But the high places continued to be centers of corruption until the great reformation under Josiah, when the discovery of the prophetic law-book led to the complete suppression of these and all other heathen symbols, at least for a time.

Note 3. A True Estimate of the Value of Ritual (Lessons 15, 21). So long as no distinction was made between church and state, and the support of religion was considered a duty of the nation as much as the support of the army, it followed inevitably that the worship supposed to be acceptable to the deity would consist chiefly in external ceremonies and offerings. The building of Solomon's temple, and its gradual rise from a royal chapel into a national sanctuary, with rich and elaborate ritual, helped to strengthen this idea. In course of time the ceremonies themselves came to be regarded as exceedingly sacred. The conviction became deeply seated in the minds of the people, that as long as they were faithfully observed Jehovah must be well pleased. The great prosperity enjoyed by Northern Israel during the long and brilliant reign of Jeroboam II was interpreted as an infallible sign of Jehovah's favor, and accordingly it led to an extraordinary zeal in the observance of ceremonies and the multiplication of sacrifices. His sanctuaries were crowded by worshipers who thought by such means to reward Him for His good-will, and to purchase its continuance. Against such misconception of the nature of true worship the prophets of the eighth century B. C. uttered the sternest protest. They showed that true religion is not a matter of outward forms, but of righteous conduct toward God and man. The preaching of Amos, Hosea and Isaiah on this point culminated in the great saying of Micah, "What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Note 4. The Importance of Social Morality (Lessons 14, 18, 19, 21). Before Israel's religion had lost its high character through Canaanitish influences, just dealings between man and man seem to have been more general than in the later degenerate times of the kingdoms. The laws by which the early Hebrews regulated social conduct, as embodied in "the book of the covenant" (Ex. 20: 22—23: 19), reveal moral standards that could not have been developed

except on the basis of high religious conceptions. The decalogues contained in this early code teach a spirit of rectitude, mercy, and self-denial not found among the surrounding nations. From these high standards there was an appalling relapse in the later days of the monarchies, when the inordinate increase of wealth, luxury, and greed stimulated the growth of every form of social injustice, and blinded men to human rights. Religion was divorced from morality. The entire social organism fell into an almost hopeless condition of disease and decay. This state of things the prophets met by a hitherto unparalleled emphasis on the righteous character of Jehovah and on His inexorable demand for righteousness in private life and conduct. Without such righteousness the utmost zeal in respect to ritual and offerings was sheer hypocrisy and an abomination to Him.

Note 5. Higher Views of Man (Lessons 22, 25). The tendency of the individual in ancient times to lose his identity in the larger group of the family, the tribe, and the nation led to a similar undervaluation in his religious relations. A tribal or national god made religion a tribal or national rather than a personal matter. But the insistence of the prophets on a social righteousness that could find expression only in personal conduct gave a new importance to the individual. The great truth that Jehovah deals with individuals as well as nations was only dimly apprehended by Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, but by Jeremiah and Ezekiel it was brought into the clear light of day and made fundamental in their teachings. The importance of the individual was still further emphasized when, after the fall of Judah, it was perceived that the religious unit could no longer be the nation, but must be the individual, if Israel's faith were to survive at all. The religious significance of the individual was still further enlarged in Jeremiah's visions of the Messianic future, when Jehovah would substitute for the obsolete covenant established at Sinai a new covenant, inward and spiritual, written on the heart.

Note 6. Higher Views of God (Lessons 18, 19, 20, 23). Hand in hand with these enlarged conceptions of worship, morality, and personal responsibility went the higher prophetic conceptions of the being and moral character of Jehovah. These may be summarized as follows:

(1) Jehovah is the God of the whole earth, and not of a single people. All nations are ruled by Him, and every individual in every nation is under His care.

(2) Jehovah is a God of perfect righteousness. This conception rested now, not on the early demand for social justice, but on the

larger idea of His relation to all men. A tribal or national god must of necessity be thought of as favoring his own people. The Sovereign of the whole earth cannot show partiality nor deal unjustly.

(3) Jehovah's justice is tempered by a never-failing love. This love had been especially revealed in His choice of Israel as His people, not to the detriment of other nations, as one might expect from a merely national deity, but for the final good of all.

(4) Jehovah is not one of many gods, but the one sole God of the universe. He is a Spirit who cannot and must not be represented by material images. The insistence on the perfect moral character of this one and only God gave the world the idea of an ethical monotheism.

(5) Jehovah was Israel's true king. The ideal government is a theocracy. This ideal receives its final realization in the kingdom of God.

Questions on the Lesson.

1. How were Israel's faith and worship affected by contact with the native religions of Palestine? (Note 2.)

2. How did the prophets gradually suppress these evils?

3. What false idea of the value of outward religious forms was held by the people in general? (Note 3.)

4. What did the prophets teach concerning them?

5. What was the character of Israel's early social laws? (Note 4.)

6. When the nation fell away from these standards, how did the prophets meet the situation?

7. What higher views of the value of the individual were introduced by the prophet? (Note 5.)

8. Mention five aspects in which the prophets promoted higher views of the being and character of God. (Note 6.)

THE BIBLE STUDY UNION LESSONS
SENIOR GRADE

PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTIANITY

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.

	Pages
Character and Contents of the Course	iii-v
Directions for Study	vi

THE LESSONS.

Part III. Israel's Exilic and Post-exilic Religion.

Lesson 27. Israel after the Fall of Jerusalem	153
Lesson 28. Comforting Messages to the Exiles	159
Lesson 29. Jehovah's Character and Israel's Destiny	164
Lesson 30. The Ideal Servants of Jehovah	170
Lesson 31. The Rise of Judaism	176
Lesson 32. The Acceptance of the Priestly Law	181
Lesson 33. Israel's Narrowness and Jehovah's Love	187
Lesson 34. The Maccabean Struggle	191
Lesson 35. The Kingdom of God	198
Lesson 36. Later Developments of Judaism	203
Lesson 37. The Religion of the Law	209
Lesson 38. Other Preparations for Christianity	214
Lesson 39. The Progressive Nature of Divine Revelation	221

CHARACTER AND CONTENTS OF THE COURSE.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

Note 1. Purpose. The purpose of this course is to survey those religious ideas which unfolded during the pre-Christian era, served as a preparation for Christianity, and finally received their fullest expression and realization in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Note 2. Scope. The course begins with a sketch of the old Semitic world, of which the Hebrew people constituted a part, traces the rise and development of characteristic features of the religion of Israel, and concludes with a review of the fundamental religious teachings of Jesus.

Note 3. Method. The course is divided into four parts. Each deals with a specific period of historical and religious development.

Part I describes the religions of ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Palestine (as introductory to the Biblical records of Israel's faith), primitive forms of Hebrew worship, the influence of the exodus upon their religious life, the early religious literature of the Hebrews, and concludes with a study of the religious aspects of David's career.

Part II begins with a study of Solomon's institution of the temple service, notes the character of the religious life of Israel during the period of the divided kingdom, and examines the religious content of the earlier prophetic utterances, carrying the course forward to the time of the exile.

Part III covers the religious developments of the exilic and post-exilic periods, special attention being given to the later prophetic writings, the establishment of Judaism under priestly auspices, and the religious temper of Israel under the Maccabees.

Part IV shows how the religious ideas developed in the Old Testament period were enlarged and spiritualized in the teachings of Jesus.

The whole study thus leads naturally to the second year course of the Senior department, which covers the establishment of organized Christianity by the Apostles and gives a brief account of the leading events in the history of the church down to the present time.

Note 4. Longer and Shorter Courses. Classes wishing a six months' course can take either Parts I and II or Parts III and IV, while Parts I, II, and III make an appropriate nine months' course. Part IV is so based upon Part III that it cannot be studied to the best advantage without a previous study of the latter.

LESSON TITLES AND SUBJECTS.

(Subject to revision.)

Part I. ISRAEL'S RELIGION TO THE END OF DAVID'S REIGN.

- Lesson 1. THE OLD SEMITIC WORLD. Its Physical Features and its Peoples.
- Lesson 2. RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS. Its Origin and Characteristics.
- Lesson 3. RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT BABYLONIANS. Its Beliefs and Ceremonies.
- Lesson 4. HAMMURABI'S STANDARDS OF JUSTICE AND MERCY. Selections from the Babylonian Code.
- Lesson 5. RELIGIONS OF ANCIENT PALESTINE. The Baalim, and the Worship at the High Places.
- Lesson 6. PRIMITIVE HEBREW FORMS OF WORSHIP. Sacrifices, Sacred Rites and Ceremonies.
- Lesson 7. INFLUENCE OF THE EXODUS ON ISRAEL'S FAITH. Jehovah's Power Demonstrated.
- Lesson 8. ISRAEL'S FAITH IN THE MOSAIC AGE. Jehovah's Sovereignty Accepted.
- Lesson 9. ISRAEL'S FAITH DURING THE SETTLEMENT. Blending of the Faiths of the Desert with those of Palestine.
- Lesson 10. EARLY RECORDS OF THE HEBREWS. Their Dependence on Tradition.
- Lesson 11. RELIGIOUS PHASES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM. The Influence of Samuel.
- Lesson 12. GROWTH OF ISRAEL'S FAITH UNDER THE EARLY MONARCHY. Religious Aspects of David's Career.
- Lesson 13. ABIDING IDEAS IN THE EARLY RELIGIONS. Review of Lessons 1-12.

Part II. ISRAEL'S RELIGION FROM SOLOMON TO THE BEGINNING OF THE EXILE.

- Lesson 14. EARLY MORAL AND RELIGIOUS STANDARDS. Israel's Legal Institutions.
- Lesson 15. THE RELIGIOUS VALUE OF RITUAL. Solomon's Enlargement of the Temple Service.
- Lesson 16. POPULAR RELIGION IN THE DIVIDED KINGDOM. The Setting up of the Golden Calves.
- Lesson 17. THE CONFLICT WITH BAALISM. The Crisis in the Days of Elijah.
- Lesson 18. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. The Preaching of Amos.
- Lesson 19. THE DIVINE JUSTICE AND LOVE. Hosea's Message to a Faithless People.
- Lesson 20. THE HIGHER IDEA OF GOD. Influence of the Prophets in Attaining a Truer Faith.
- Lesson 21. THE MORAL DEMANDS OF RELIGION. The Insufficiency of Ceremonies.
- Lesson 22. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. The Religious Estimate of the Individual.
- Lesson 23. ISRAEL'S UNIQUE RELATION TO JEHOVAH. Theocratic Protests against the Monarchy.
- Lesson 24. THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW. The Great Reformation under Josiah.
- Lesson 25. THE NEW COVENANT. Jeremiah's Messianic Conceptions.
- Lesson 26. THE TEACHINGS AND WORK OF THE EARLY PROPHETS. Review of Lessons 14-25.

PART III. ISRAEL'S EXILIC AND POST-EXILIC RELIGION.

- Lesson 27. ISRAEL AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM. How this Catastrophe Affected its Life and Faith.
- Lesson 28. COMFORTING MESSAGES TO THE EXILES. Ezekiel's Work in Babylonia.
- Lesson 29. JEHOVAH'S CHARACTER AND ISRAEL'S DESTINY. The Rebuilding of the Temple.
- Lesson 30. THE IDEAL SERVANTS OF JEHOVAH. Their Vicarious Sufferings as Instruments of Redemption.
- Lesson 31. THE RISE OF JUDAISM. Nehemiah's Enforcement of the Law in Jerusalem.
- Lesson 32. THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRIESTLY LAW. Ezra and the Great Assembly.
- Lesson 33. ISRAEL'S NARROWNESS AND JEHOVAH'S LOVE. Teachings of the Book of Jonah.
- Lesson 34. THE MACCABEAN STRUGGLE. Its Effect on Israel's Life and Faith.
- Lesson 35. THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Messianic Visions of Jehovah's Reign.
- Lesson 36. LATER DEVELOPMENTS OF JUDAISM. Rise of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
- Lesson 37. THE RELIGION OF THE LAW. What it Accomplished, and wherein it Fell Short.
- Lesson 38. OTHER PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTIANITY. How Greece and Rome Paved the Way for its Rapid Spread.
- Lesson 39. THE PROGRESSIVE NATURE OF DIVINE REVELATION. Review of Lessons 27-38.

PART IV. CHRISTIANITY THE FULFILMENT OF ISRAEL'S FAITH.

- Lesson 40. THE OLD TESTAMENT RELIGION PASSING INTO THE NEW. The Preaching of John the Baptist.
- Lesson 41. JESUS' MISSION IN THE WORLD. The Establishment of the Kingdom of God.
- Lesson 42. JESUS THE GREAT TEACHER. His Relation to the Old Testament Religion.
- Lesson 43. JESUS' TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIMSELF. His Relation to the Father and to the World.
- Lesson 44. JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING GOD. The Divine Fatherhood.
- Lesson 45. JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING MAN. Human Sonship and Brotherhood.
- Lesson 46. JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING SIN. Its Essence Found in Selfishness.
- Lesson 47. JESUS' WAY OF SALVATION. Redemption from Sin through Faith and Obedience.
- Lesson 48. JESUS' LAW OF LOVE. The Unselfishness of a Good Life.
- Lesson 49. JESUS' TEACHING IN REGARD TO THE FUTURE LIFE. Its Contrast with Old Testament Beliefs.
- Lesson 50. JESUS' ABIDING PRESENCE. The Mission of the Holy Spirit.
- Lesson 51. CHRISTIANITY FOR THE WORLD. The Great Commission.
- Lesson 52. CHRISTIANITY THE FINAL RELIGION. Review of Lessons 40-51.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY.

Students are advised to use in connection with this course the American Revised Version of the Bible, which is undoubtedly the best.

Note carefully the subject and scope of each lesson as given in the title and as expanded in the "Object of the Lesson," Note 1.

Read the Scripture passage indicated at the head of the lesson, and consider its bearing on the subject in hand.

Read all the lesson "Notes," pausing after each one to let the mind dwell on its contents. Look up the Scripture references. Until this has been done do not look at the "Questions on the Lesson."

Under each of the "Questions on the Lesson" write a brief answer. Whoever fails to do this will miss one of the most helpful features of these lessons. If the class come with the answers carefully prepared and written out, this part of the lesson can be passed over rapidly.

Study for yourself some particularly interesting point suggested by the lesson. This may be a belief, a religious rite, a custom, a temple, a heathen deity, a biography or some historic event. Whatever it is, study it carefully. Make this course contribute to your fund of general knowledge by a good use of whatever libraries may be within reach.

Make note of one or two of the most interesting questions that come to mind as you study the lesson, and bring them up for discussion in the class. If no questions come, study the lesson again, and think harder.

Keep note-book and pencil in hand both when studying the lesson at home and when going over it in the class. In the note-book write (1) what you have to say on the several points indicated under "Note-book Work"; (2) any special assignment made to you; (3) interesting results of investigations, or questions that arise in private study or in the class. Such use of the note-book is indispensable if the best results are to be attained.

Read these suggestions frequently, and with each lesson put them into practice.

PART III
ISRAEL'S EXILIC AND POST-EXILIC RELIGION

Lesson 27. ISRAEL AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.
How this Catastrophe Affected its Life and Faith.

Scripture Reading: An Experience of the Captivity. Ps. 137.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To point out some of the immediate effects on Israel's life and faith of the destruction of the temple and the disappearance of the Jewish state.

Note 2. The Scattering of the People. The immediate consequence of the downfall of the Jewish state was a wide scattering of the population. While a sprinkling of Jews was to be found in all the surrounding nations, the main centers were Babylonia, Egypt, and Palestine.

(1) *The Exiles in Babylonia.* When Nebuchadrezzar in 597 B. C. punished the rebellion of Jehoiachin he carried away into Babylonia ten thousand of the best people in the land — Jehoiachin, the young king, the princes, nobles, priests, merchants and skilled artisans of all kinds (2 Ki. 24: 10-16; comp. Jer. ch. 24). Among them was Ezekiel (Lesson 22, Note 5). These were settled in a colony on the river Chebar, or Grand Canal, not far from the city of Babylon. As most of these exiles were heads of households, the entire number may have been forty to fifty thousand. At the destruction of Jerusalem eleven years later three deportations took place which aggregated forty-six thousand (2 Ki. 24: 11-16; Jer. 52: 28-30, where "seventh year" in vs. 28 should probably read "seventeenth year"). The establishment of so large a Jewish community in the heart of the empire, and the privilege accorded the Jews from the first of living according to their own social and religious laws and under the rule of their own elders, saved them from absorption by the surrounding heathen population.

(2) *The Refugees in Egypt.* The constant rivalry between Egypt and the great empires in the Euphrates-Tigris valley made Egypt a natural place of refuge when Assyrian or Babylonian armies invaded Palestine. The country was easy of access and the fugitives were welcomed and protected. The chief Jewish colonies were established at Migdol near the eastern boundary of Egypt, at Tahpanhes in the

northeastern part of the delta of the Nile, at Memphis, or Noph, ten miles south of Cairo, and at Elephantine in the land of Pathros, near the first cataract (Jer. 44:1). Recent excavations at the last named place have revealed the existence in the fifth and sixth centuries B. C. of a large Jewish population.

(3) *The Remnant in Palestine.* As the siege of Jerusalem lasted a year and a half, and as the besieging army must have fed itself by plundering the surrounding country, a large part of the population fled, not only into Egypt, but into other neighboring lands. Notwithstanding the large numbers carried into Babylonia, and the multitudes who sought safety in flight, there can be no doubt that a very considerable number remained (2 Ki. 25:12; Jer. 40:7-10). While Nebuchadrezzar punished rebellion with the utmost severity he was far too wise to leave a depopulated land from which no tribute could be drawn. Moreover, this remnant in the land was soon increased by the return from the adjacent countries of many refugees who would be anxious to recover their homes as soon as the danger was past (Jer. 40:11, 12).

Note 3. The Secular Life of the People. That the first exiles in Babylonia were not inclined to accept patiently the condition in which they found themselves is apparent from the letter sent to them by Jeremiah (ch. 29), in which he warns them not to believe the false prophets and diviners who predicted a speedy return, but, on the contrary, to make the most of the situation, to build houses, to plant gardens, to marry and rear up families, and to recognize that their own welfare was bound up with the welfare of the land which was to be their home for many years to come. The majority of the exiles seem to have followed Jeremiah's good advice, and to have applied themselves to agriculture or engaged in the commercial life of Babylon so successfully as to gain that measure of ease and comfort which later on disinclined them to return to the barren hills and ruined cities of their ancestral land. At the same time the false hopes of a return persistently held out by the false prophets must have made many of the exiles so restless and insubordinate as to bring upon themselves cruel punishments, and to make the condition of those who were peaceably inclined harder than before (Jer. 29:22; Is. 14:3; 47:6).

Many of the Jews who fled to the border cities of Egypt, Migdol and Tahpanhes, went no further because they intended, no doubt, to return to their homeland when conditions became more peaceable. Those who migrated farther into Egypt, especially to Elephantine, nearly fifteen hundred miles up the Nile, must have done so with the

purpose of making it their permanent home. The excavations referred to in the preceding note have uncovered the remains of a temple dedicated to Jehovah. Here in a court surrounded by strong walls daily sacrifices were offered as in the temple at Jerusalem. In Egypt, as in Babylon, the Jews quickly developed an aptitude for trade that before long made them important factors in the commercial life of the day.

After the murder of Gedaliah, whom the Chaldeans had appointed governor of Judah (Jer. chs. 40, 41), there seems to have been no effort made for some time to organize a stable government. The people who remained were in no position to defend themselves against the Bedouin raids that increased in frequency as the power of resistance diminished. Nor were they able to check the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites who pushed into the country from the east and the south. In a few years a large part of Judah's territory was occupied by these intruders. The Jews were crowded into the highlands about Jerusalem and the lower plain of the Jordan. At first it was only with the utmost difficulty that this poverty-stricken and persecuted remnant could wring subsistence from the little soil that was capable of cultivation.

Note 4. How the Popular Faith was Affected by the Fall of Jerusalem. The only thing that saved a people so scattered and broken from complete disappearance was their religious faith. All their national hopes had been shattered. They had believed that even if Jehovah might suffer His land to be overrun by foes, He would certainly keep His abode inviolate (Jer. 26:9). But now not only the Holy City but the temple itself was a heap of ruins. To the exiles in Babylonia it seemed as if Jehovah had utterly abandoned His people and forsaken the land. At first they had comforted themselves with the thought that they were suffering for the sins of the fathers (Ezek. ch. 18); but now, when Ezekiel's predictions had come true, they saw that they were perishing because of their own sins (Ezek. 33:10), and they were plunged into an abyss of despair. They said, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off." The restoration which the prophets had predicted seemed as impossible as the resurrection of a valley of dry bones into an army of living men (Ezek. ch. 37). The refugees who had carried Jeremiah with them into Egypt defiantly rejected his messages, and argued that so long as they had served Ashtoreth, the queen of heaven, they had prospered, but that the service of Jehovah had been rewarded with nothing but misfortunes (Jer. 44:15-19). The Jews who were left

in Palestine did not despair as did those in Babylonia, nor apostatize as did the fugitives in Egypt. Though they were the offscouring of the population and steeped in idolatry and licentiousness, the fact that Jehovah had suffered them to remain in the land led them to boast of their superior qualities, to regard themselves as His favorites, and to heap scorn on those who had been carried away (Ezek. 33: 23-26).

Note 5. The Better Effects that Followed Later. There was, however, another possible interpretation of this fearful calamity. The prophets of Jehovah had persistently foretold the very things that had come to pass. Instead of rejecting their words, might it not be wise to give heed to them? As their predictions of judgment had been confirmed by events, might it not be possible that their predictions of a national restoration might also prove true? Might not the dreadful experiences through which the nation was passing be the discipline which was needed to purify and qualify it for a glorious destiny? Such reflections helped to rekindle faith in the hearts of the better part of the people. The words of the prophets were studied with greater care than ever before. The nation had perished, but its history could be written down and preserved. The temple services had ceased; but if the people were to be brought back to their land, and the temple rebuilt, this was a strong reason why memory of the ritual should be preserved. This deepening interest in Israel's past brought into existence a body of professional students, or scribes, who began to collect, arrange, and codify the records, laws, practices, and traditions which were then current, and which related especially to the religious life of the nation. No doubt the Sabbath came to be observed more strictly than before. Instead of the temple worship, families and small communities would meet to read the law as formulated in the Book of Deuteronomy. Prayer, public and private, became a more marked feature of the religious life, and fasting seems to have taken the place of sacrifice. Thus the very calamities which had threatened to extinguish Israel's faith became the means that stimulated a powerful spiritual development, and marked another epoch in the religious history of the human race.

Additional Reading References.

- (1) Condition of the Jewish exiles in Babylon. Kent, *History of the Hebrew People, Babylonian, Persian and Greek Periods*, pp. 37-44.
- (2) Jeremiah and the refugees in Egypt. Cheyne, *Jeremiah, his Life and Times*, pp. 188-199.
- (3) The Jewish dispersion after the

downfall of Jerusalem. Wade, *Old Testament History*, pp. 389-392.
(4) The Jews in Egypt, Babylonia and Palestine. Kent, *Biblical Geography and History*, pp. 194-199.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What period in the development of Israel's faith was covered by the lessons of the first quarter? 2. What, by the second quarter?
3. What period is covered by the lessons of the present quarter? 4. What is the subject of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What were the three main centers of Jewish population after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C.? (Note 2.)
2. Mention some facts respecting the Babylonian colony.
3. Where did the fugitives into Egypt settle?
4. What are we told respecting those who remained in Palestine?
5. Describe the general condition of those who were carried into Babylonia. (Note 3.)
6. How did some of the Jews in Egypt adapt themselves to their surroundings?
7. What was the condition of those who remained in Palestine?
8. What religious interpretation did the Babylonian exiles put on the calamities that had befallen them? (Note 4.)

9. How did the Egyptian refugees regard the matter?

10. What interpretation was put on these events by those who were left in the land?

11. How did the better portion of the people later on reach a higher conception of these calamities? (Note 5.)

12. Mention some of the good results that followed from this higher view.

Questions for Consideration.

1. How had Israel become useless for the mission for which Jehovah had chosen it?
2. How can we make ourselves fit for God's service?
3. How should we interpret the discipline of life?

Note-book Work.

1. Draw a small outline map of southwestern Asia and northern Egypt, and mark on it the chief centers in the Jewish dispersion that marked the downfall of the Jewish state. Indicate also the line of march taken by the exiles into Babylonia — northward to the Euphrates, then following this river in a southeasterly direction to a point a little east of the city of Babylon.

Bible Text. "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezek. 33:11.

Lesson 28. COMFORTING MESSAGES TO THE EXILES.
Ezekiel's Work in Babylonia.

Scripture Reading: The Healing Waters from the Temple. Ezek. 47:1-12.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Ezekiel revived the hopes of the scattered members of his race, and outlined a program for the restored Israel.

Note 2. General Character of Ezekiel's Ministry. That Palestine was Jehovah's land and that His authority and supervision were limited to it, were ideas too firmly rooted in the popular mind to be dislodged by the larger conceptions of the early prophets. If Ezekiel, like his fellow exiles, had been tempted to believe that he too was far away from Jehovah, his majestic visions of the cherubim, the celestial chariot-throne, and the divine glory (Ezek. 1:1—3:15) showed that Israel's God could reveal Himself to His servants in distant Babylonia as easily as in the homeland. The prophet's mission was to his fellow exiles who, like himself, had been deported before the overthrow of Jerusalem, and to his countrymen in Palestine who felt confident that, whatever their own temporary misfortunes might be, Jehovah would not allow His city and temple to be destroyed. The first half of Ezekiel's book (chs. 1-24) gives an account of his call (593 B. C.) and of the means by which he tried to shake this false confidence and to open the eyes of the exiles to the fact that Jerusalem's sins had made its destruction and Jehovah's departure from the land inevitable. The announcement that Jerusalem had fallen (24:1, 2) brings this period of Ezekiel's ministry to a close, and seals the truth of his message.

In the second half of the book (chs. 25-48) the prophet's theme is no longer judgment but comfort. The blow had fallen, and the exiles, sure that Jehovah had rejected them, sat stupefied with grief and despair. Ezekiel's task henceforth is not to destroy a false confidence in Jehovah, but to build up a genuine confidence in Him by showing that He would not permanently leave His people in the hands of their enemies. This second period of Ezekiel's ministry extended from the time when the news of the capture of Jerusalem reached the exiles (585 B. C.) at least until 572 B. C., the latest date given in the book (40:1). When or where he died is not told.

Note 3. Ezekiel's Conception of the Overthrow of the Heathen. The main portion of the second half of the book of Ezekiel deals with Israel's restoration. But before this could be accomplished the impediments must be removed. The chief of these, since Israel's own

sins would be blotted out by Jehovah's grace, were the hostile nations that surrounded Israel and that had contributed to, or gloried in, its overthrow. During the interval that elapsed between the divine announcement of the fall of Jerusalem (Ezek. 24: 1, 2, 15-27) and the arrival of a fugitive with the news (33: 21, 22), we find, accordingly, a series of prophecies directed, first, against Israel's smaller neighbors in Palestine—Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Philistines (ch. 25)—who are to experience Jehovah's vengeance in return for their vengeful attitude toward His people. Next, Ezekiel's fierce wrath against Tyre receives expression in one of the most brilliant passages in the Old Testament (26: 1—28: 19). After a brief mention of Sidon (28: 20-24), the prophet finally pours the vials of his indignation over Egypt (chs. 29-32), whose coming desolation would be followed by a partial restoration, "a prediction which was literally fulfilled." The reason why Babylon was not included in these denunciations seems to be that at this time Nebuchadrezzar, though temporarily oppressing Israel, was regarded as the instrument by which Jehovah would accomplish the overthrow of the other nations, and so make Israel's restoration possible.

Note 4. Ezekiel's Vision of the Restored Israel. When all obstacles to Israel's restoration have been removed Jehovah will reveal His grace toward His afflicted people. This He will do, not because of any merit in them, but for His own name's sake (Ezek. 36: 32-38). The heathen were saying that He was too weak or too indifferent to protect His own. But when the appointed forty years (4: 6) of the exile were past, Jehovah will arise in His might and majesty and reverse the present condition of His scattered people. The first step toward this grand consummation is the restoration of the monarchy under an ideal king who, as a good shepherd, will care for the flock and not plunder it, as the mercenary kings of the past had done (ch. 34). The next step is the recovery of the ancestral land from the intruding Edomites, its endowment with supernatural fertility, and its purification from ceremonial defilement so that it may become the peaceful and permanent possession of a purified people (chs. 35, 36). The third step is the resurrection of the scattered and seemingly dead Israel to a new national life, and the everlasting reunion of northern and southern Israel under the scepter of a Davidic king (ch. 37). The final step is the assault on Jehovah's kingdom by the heathen world-power, whose defeat and annihilation will usher in Israel's unclouded future (chs. 38, 39). This remarkable prophecy may have been the original conclusion of the book.

Note 5. Ezekiel's Program for the Restored Israel. Now that Ezekiel sees the redeemed Israel restored to the ancestral home, and all enemies destroyed, the further problem arises how the people shall be able to retain Jehovah's favor, so as to insure unbroken peace and unbounded prosperity. How can the Israel of the future be trusted to do any better than the Israel of the past? In the nation itself Ezekiel had even less faith than the earlier prophets. He saw that nothing but a divine grace that completely transformed the moral nature of the people would suffice to keep them in the right way. In order that Jehovah's purpose concerning them may not fail, He says, "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you. . . . And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes" (36: 25-27). This inward transformation leads, furthermore, to an outward transformation of the restored community into a church, or ideal theocracy, in which the temple, to which Jehovah now returns in visible splendor, becomes the center of the national life (chs. 40-43). Its sanctity is to be scrupulously guarded by a pure priesthood and an elaborate ritual that would no longer be an offense to Jehovah and arouse His anger (chs. 44-46). Finally, Jehovah's land, marvelously fertilized by holy waters from the temple, is to be redistributed among the twelve tribes, and the name of Jerusalem is to be "Jehovah is there" (chs. 47, 48).

Note 6. Influence of Ezekiel's Messages. Ezekiel combined in his own person in a conspicuous degree the two offices of prophet and priest. To the former we owe the larger part of his active ministry among the exiles in Babylon; to the latter, the constitution of an ideal ecclesiastical state for the restored Israel. The earlier prophets had insisted on centralizing the worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem in order to do away with the corrupting influence of the high places. Ezekiel did not only this, but planned a system of ceremonial worship that would effectually train the people to a purer service. A multitude of the ideas which he emphasized were taken up and embodied in the later organization of the worship in the second temple and in the social and religious life of the people. Such were his regulations respecting the holiness of the temple, the exaltation of the priests, the distinction between clean and unclean, and the atoning sacrifices. The subordination of the prince into a mere minister of the temple whose main duty was to provide the sacrifices for the nation was realized in the later Jewish church-state in which the high priest took the place of the pre-exilic king. Many of his ideas, especially those

relating to the redistribution of the land, were impracticable and were quietly ignored. That he gave a wholly new turn to Israel's religion is quite apparent, nor can it be denied that, through the large place which he assigns to ritual, the worship of Jehovah was lowered from the high spiritual and ethical standards of the early prophets. Still the emphasis on ritual is not such as to obscure the essentially moral and spiritual elements in religion. It cannot be questioned that his program for an ecclesiastical state mapped out the lines along which the subsequent development of the new Israel moved for many centuries.

Additional Reading References.

(1) In Bible dictionaries, see articles on "Ezekiel." (2) Ezekiel's outline for Israel's future. Kent, *History of the Jewish People, Babylonian, Persian and Greek Periods*, pp. 54-58. (3) Ezekiel's ministry during the exile. H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History*, pp. 301-336. (4) Ezekiel's prophecies and their significance. McFadyen, *Old Testament Introduction*, pp. 162-177.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What were the three chief points at which the Jews were gathered after the destruction of Jerusalem? 2. Describe briefly the condition of those in Babylonia; in Egypt; in Palestine. 3. How was the popular faith of the Jews in each of these places affected by the fall of Jerusalem? 4. How was a renewal of faith brought about? 5. What is the subject of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What was the general character of Ezekiel's work during the earlier part of his ministry? (Note 2.)

2. How was his ministry affected by the fall of Jerusalem?

3. What nations did Ezekiel regard as obstacles to the restoration of Israel? (Note 3.)

4. When were the prophecies against them delivered?

5. Why was Babylon not included in the number?

6. What did Ezekiel regard as the prime reason for Israel's restoration? (Note 4.)

7. What was to be the first step in this restoration? the second? the third? the fourth?

8. How was the new Israel to be kept from repeating the wretched history of the old? (Note 5.)

9. How would the inward transformation of the people affect the outward organization of the community?

10. How are Ezekiel's prophetic mission and his priestly training reflected in his ministry? (Note 6.)

11. Mention some ways in which Ezekiel's ideas influenced later generations.

12. How did Ezekiel's minute regulations for the temple service affect the development of Israel's religion?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Does Ezekiel seem to have regarded his program for the restored Israel as a mere ideal, or as a scheme to be put into actual operation at the close of the exile?
2. How did Ezekiel's ideas pave the way for the transformation of Israel from a state into a church?

3. What transformation was wrought in Israel's religion by Ezekiel's emphasis on ritual?

Note-book Work.

1. On the chart, in the column of dates, insert the years of the beginning and probable end of Ezekiel's ministry.

2. Write a brief sketch of Ezekiel's life, embodying the main facts so far as they can be gathered from his book.

Bible Text. "A new heart . . . will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Ezek. 36:26.

Lesson 29. JEHOVAH'S CHARACTER AND ISRAEL'S DESTINY. The Rebuilding of the Temple.

Scripture Reading: Jehovah's Promises to His Servant Israel. Is. ch. 45.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the Jews in Palestine to rebuild the temple, and how the writer of Is. chs. 40-48, on the basis of Jehovah's incomparable character, announced Israel's glorious restoration and future destiny.

Note 2. The Jewish Community in Palestine. When Cyrus had conquered Babylon in 538 B. C., he permitted the exiled Jews to return to their own lands. How many availed themselves of this permission is not certain, since the evidence is quite conflicting. The account in Ezra ch. 2 gives the total as 42,360 (vs. 64). But the separate items when added up give only 29,818. That the book of Ezra-Nehemiah is from the compiler of 1 and 2 Chronicles, and was intended with them to constitute a single work, Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah, is now generally recognized. The Chronicler's peculiar point of view, and his manner of dealing with his material has already been explained in Lesson 12, Note 2. On the other hand, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who lived in Jerusalem, and who, only sixteen years after the alleged return, inspired and directed the rebuilding of the temple, apparently knew nothing of it. The people whom Haggai exhorted to undertake this task were not returned exiles from Babylon, but "the remnant of the people" (Hag. 1:12, 14; 2:2). Zechariah, deploring the miserable state of Jerusalem (Zech. 1:12-17), sees a return from the exile in Babylon as a thing still in the future, and as

the only condition on which prosperity could be realized (2:7). The truth seems to be that when Cyrus appointed Zerubbabel governor of Judea in 538 B. C., a company of uncertain size went back with him, and that subsequently other small companies drifted back. But that there ever was a return on such vast scale as the Chronicler pictures is contradicted by all the contemporaneous information now available. Nothing but a most self-sacrificing patriotism would have prompted the exiles to leave their comfortable homes in Babylonia for their barren and poverty-stricken homeland. All the evidence outside of the Chronicler's narrative goes to show that the task of reconstructing the Jewish community in Palestine rested mainly on the people who had been left in the land, and that the help they received from their countrymen in other lands was relatively small.

Note 3. The Prophets Haggai and Zechariah. The Jews whom Nebuchadrezzar left in the land may have prided themselves on being Jehovah's favorites, because they had not been driven into exile, but, if so, their regard for Jehovah did not keep them from relapsing into semi-heathenism. The rebuilding of the temple, therefore, did not appeal to them. But if the national restoration which the prophets had painted in glowing colors was ever to be realized, it certainly must begin with the rearing anew of Jehovah's abode. A succession of bad harvests and other hardships were interpreted by Haggai (1:6) as signs of Jehovah's displeasure. Stirring appeals were made by Haggai and Zechariah, his fellow worker, to begin the rebuilding at once. Doubts were dispelled, the faint-hearted were encouraged, the lazy were shamed into activity, and in 520 B. C. the work was undertaken with such enthusiasm and energy that the second temple was finished in 516 B. C.

The prophecies of Haggai (2:20-23) and of Zechariah (6:9-13, where the original text probably read "Zerubbabel" instead of "Joshua") imply that at the beginning of the work on the temple in 520 B. C. the Jews believed that an independent state was about to rise under the rule of Zerubbabel, a "Branch" (Zech. 3:8) of the royal house of David. Two years later, for reasons not entirely clear, this hope was extinguished, and Zerubbabel disappeared from history. But the conviction that Israel would be restored, would experience enduring peace and wonderful prosperity, and would be joined by the nations in the worship of Jehovah, became more firmly fixed than ever (Zech. ch. 8).

Note 4. The Great Prophet of the Restoration. That chs. 40-66 in the book of Isaiah were written long after Isaiah's time and amidst

political and religious conditions widely different from those of his time is now admitted by practically all interpreters. As the chapters are undated and anonymous, the time and place of composition can only be guessed from the contents. Here is the chief point on which interpreters still differ. Two views are current: (1) That chs. 40-55 were written a year or two before the fall of Babylon by a prophet living among the exiles, who, as he witnessed the victorious progress of Cyrus, foresaw in him the destroyer of Babylon and the deliverer of the captive Jews. Chapters 56-66, which imply a Palestinian background and the existence of the temple, are supposed to have been written by another unknown prophet at a still later date. (2) A view now gaining considerable acceptance regards the entire twenty-seven chapters, 40-66, as from a single prophet whose home was not in Babylonia but in Palestine; and who lived, not when Cyrus was advancing on Babylon, but soon after the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah and the rebuilding of the temple. One objection to this view is the mention of Cyrus as the coming deliverer. But a close examination of the text shows that the insertion of this name may be due to a later copyist, since it is not essential to the context, and since it gives the usual post-exilic designation of Israel's ideal king—Jehovah's "anointed" or "Messiah"—to a heathen ruler. If the name Cyrus be removed from the text it leaves the expression "his anointed" with its usual reference to Israel's Messiah. This second view seems on the whole to simplify the problems connected with the interpretations of the second part of the book of Isaiah. It is hardly necessary to add that the high religious value of these chapters is not affected in the slightest degree by the adoption of either of the above views.

Note 5. Jehovah's Character the Pledge of Israel's Destiny. The ardent expectations aroused by the promises of Haggai and Zechariah of a brilliant future, the new confidence in Jehovah's favor inspired by the rebuilding of the temple, and the friendly attitude maintained by the Persians, led the Jewish community to look for a quick change for the better. These expectations, however, were not realized at once. The exiles did not return to the homeland. The strenuous exertions of the people in rearing anew Jehovah's house seemed to be fruitless in winning His favor. Why did the prediction of a restoration remain unrealized? To thoughtful minds there seemed to be only two answers—Jerusalem's sin was still unforgiven, and the exiles themselves lacked faith and a spirit of patriotic self-sacrifice. This was the situation that awakened the inspired argu-

ments and appeals of the great Prophet of the Restoration. The opening words of his message, which is addressed to the people of Jerusalem, re-echo the words of Zech. chs. 7, 8, and assure them that Jerusalem's guilt is expiated, that Jehovah as a Shepherd will gather His scattered people, and that He will make a highway for them through the desert to their own land (Is. 40: 1-11). The prophet's firm assurance that Jehovah is able to save His people and that He has a glorious destiny for them rests on the conviction (1) that there is no being in the universe who can compare with Jehovah in power and wisdom, and that it is sheer folly to try to represent Him by means of material images (Is. 40: 12-31; 41: 6, 7); (2) that Jehovah is infinitely superior to all the heathen gods, not one of whom is able to foretell future events as Jehovah is constantly doing (41: 1-5, 8-29; 44: 6-23; ch. 46); (3) that Jehovah's purpose in all His past training of Israel was to fit the nation for the great and noble service of teaching His law unto the nations (42: 1—44: 5); and (4) that the world-powers that have oppressed Israel, and that are typified by Babylon, are to be overthrown (ch. 47). This argument is restated and summarized in ch. 48.

This "great unknown prophet lives in the atmosphere of the past and the future. His prophecies rise above the limitations of place and time; the entire panorama of ancient history is spread out before his inspired vision. His reasoning is as simple and powerful as is his literary style: Jehovah's incomparable superiority to all other gods is revealed in the leadership and exaltation of His chosen people in the past; the same God who led from the distant East a little clan and gave them possession of Palestine and rulership over their neighbors is able and will again gather His scattered people and realize through them His noble purpose in the history of mankind. It was his supreme vision of Jehovah, as revealed in the past life of his race and of humanity, in the heavens and in nature, that impelled the great unknown prophet to write those immortal poems which illuminate all human history and which present, as do no other passages of the Old Testament, the true character of the infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, and benign Ruler of the universe."—*Kent*.

Additional Reading References.

(1) On the prophets of the restoration, see *Kent, Sermons, Epistles and Apocalypses of Israel's Prophets*, pp. 26-28. (2) On Is. chs. 40-48, see *Whitehouse, New Century Bible, Isaiah*, vol. ii. (3) On Haggai and Zechariah, see *Driver, New Century Bible, Minor Prophets*, vol. ii, and Bible dictionaries.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. Into what two parts was Ezekiel's ministry divided? 2. What great obstacles were to be removed before Israel's restoration could take place? 3. In the restoration of Israel to its former glory, what three steps of progress did Ezekiel discern? 4. How did Ezekiel try to prepare for Israel's restoration? 5. How did his ideas affect the future life of the nation? 6. What is the title of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. How many of the exiles in Babylon are said to have gone back to Palestine when Cyrus gave them permission? (Note 2.)

2. What impression is given by the contemporary writers as to the actual situation?

3. Why was the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem so long delayed? (Note 3.)

4. How, and when was the work accomplished?

5. What hopes were raised by the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah?

6. What has been the prevailing view in the last quarter of a century as to the authorship and date of Is. chs. 40-66? (Note 4.)

7. What view has gained ground in more recent years?

8. Why were the Jews in Palestine greatly discouraged after the rebuilding of the temple? (Note 5.)

9. How did the great Prophet of the Restoration combat this discouraged feeling?

10. On what did he base his assurances?

11. How did his conception of Jehovah compare with that of previous prophets?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Is anything gained by holding to the traditional view that the Isaiah of Hezekiah's time wrote the entire book that now passes under his name? Give reasons for or against.

2. To what extent, or in what sense, were the brilliant promises for the future held out by the prophets realized?

3. Are the promises of Scripture always intended to be fulfilled in a literal or material sense?

Note-book Work.

1. In the column of dates on the chart insert those of the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah and those of the beginning and ending of the rebuilding of the temple.

2. In the column of religious developments note the higher conception of Jehovah held by the author of Is. chs. 40-66.

3. Write a brief sketch of the rebuilding of the temple as narrated in Ezra chs. 3-6.

Bible Text. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Is. 40:8.

Lesson 30. THE IDEAL SERVANTS OF JEHOVAH. Their Vicarious Sufferings as Instruments of Redemption.

Scripture Reading: The Suffering, Death, and Exaltation of Jehovah's Servant.
Is. 52:13—53:12.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the great Prophet of the Restoration interpreted the sufferings of Jehovah's people in the light of their divine mission.

Note 2. Israel, Jehovah's Covenant People. A unique element in the history of Israel was the growing conviction that this nation was Jehovah's chosen people, and that with them alone of all the nations of the earth He had established His covenant. In virtue of this covenant they regarded themselves as the people whom it was His delight to crown with such wealth of material blessings, and with such constant victories over their enemies as would make them the envy of the whole earth. They even believed that His honor, if not His very existence, was bound up with their national life; and that, though for a time He might suffer them to be afflicted, yet in the end He must vindicate His own name by a glorious deliverance. The destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the people proved a rude awakening from these dreams. Jehovah seemed to have annulled His covenant, to have cast off His people, and to have left them to their foes. At first Ezekiel's glowing visions of a revived and reunited Israel had kindled the hope of a happy future. But nothing occurred to change the situation. After fifty years Babylon had been overthrown, but the exiles, comfortable in their distant homes, had not returned. The impoverished remnant in Palestine were discouraged and weak. In a great burst of enthusiasm they had rebuilt the temple, but the prosperity that Haggai and Zechariah had predicted seemed as far off as ever. Israel continued to suffer. What was the meaning of it all? In spite of the promises of the prophets the questions would arise:

Will the Lord cast off for ever?
And will he be favorable no more?
Is his lovingkindness clean gone for ever?
Doth his promise fail for evermore?
Hath God forgotten to be gracious?
Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? (Ps. 77:7-9.)

To such questions the great Prophet of the Restoration gave the sublime answer noticed in our previous lesson (Lesson 29, Note 5). But this answer required a new interpretation of Israel's destiny.

Note 3. Jehovah's Purpose in the Choice of Israel. Because of Israel's persistent sinfulness Jehovah's former covenant with the people had been set aside. But this by no means involved an abandonment of Jehovah's purpose respecting His people. To the great Prophet of the Restoration it was given to see that in a higher sense than they had ever dreamed Jehovah's character was the pledge of a glorious destiny for Israel. But this destiny was far different from what the nation in its pride and arrogance had imagined. He had chosen them for service, for co-operation with Himself in the redemption of the world. So long as Israel remained a sinful, disobedient people, a real covenant or alliance with Jehovah was impossible. Such an alliance in the accomplishment of His gracious purposes necessitated Israel's separation from the idolatrous heathen world, a clear apprehension of Jehovah's glorious character and almighty power, and an uplifting into the sphere of His holiness. These were the results aimed at in all their past training and in their present severe discipline. When these results are reached, Jehovah will make a new covenant with the nation (Jer. 31:31-33); they are to become His covenant people, and a light to the Gentiles (Is. 42:6). For Jehovah is so great that He is not content with the salvation of one people only. His purpose includes the salvation of all peoples, and Israel is the honored instrument in His hand for the accomplishment of this gracious purpose. The divine plan, accordingly, embraces the welfare, not of Israel alone, but that of the entire human race through Israel. Israel is chosen to be the medium rather than the recipient of blessings.

Note 4. Israel as Jehovah's Servant. While the Israelitish kingdom was standing the prophets naturally represented the expected deliverer, the Messiah, as a great king, a descendant of David who should conquer the nations and rule in righteousness (Micah 5:2-4; Is. 9:6, 7; Jer. 33:15-17). But when the kingdom had fallen, and the Davidic dynasty had disappeared, the Messianic hope naturally clothed itself in another form. Accordingly, in Is. chs. 40-66 the agent through whom Jehovah will fulfill His purpose of redemption is for the most part called the servant of Jehovah, rather than the Messiah. This servant is first of all a personification of the whole of Israel. But in surveying the past history of the nation the prophet sees that Israel as a whole has been blind and deaf, useless for the service to which Jehovah had called it (Is. 41:8-10; 42:19; 43:22, 24; 44:1, 2, 23; 45:4). Therefore he turns to the righteous fraction of the people, the true Israel, who are carefully distinguished from

the wicked portion (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13—53:12*). These are the ones who by their faithfulness and through their sufferings were being fitted to become Jehovah's instruments of salvation to the world. In his description of these self-sacrificing witnesses for God, personified and idealized as the perfect servant of Jehovah, the Prophet of the Restoration reaches the highest flight of Old Testament thought.

Note 5. The Servant's Vicarious Sufferings and Final Exaltation. In picturing Israel's glorious future the prophets let their imagination run far ahead of the nation's past experiences. The best of kings and the highest prosperity fell far short of the ideal ruler and the perfect state of which they caught sight in their inspired visions. So also the true Israel, which the Prophet of the Restoration addressed, fell short of the ideal servant whom his imagination beheld. From the very beginning this servant had been chosen and equipped for a divine mission (42:1; 49:1-3). He had not been rebellious against Jehovah's commands nor indifferent to His words, and having thus himself been attentive to the divine message he was able to speak a word in season to those who needed comfort (50:4, 5). Because in all trials he had been faithful to Jehovah, he had been mocked and persecuted by those who had turned for help to other gods (50:6). These chastenings, instead of making him hard and bitter, had developed in him a tender, gentle, undemonstrative spirit (42:2, 3). At times it seemed as if all his efforts to teach trust in Jehovah and his consequent sufferings were in vain, but this did not shake his serene assurance of divine help and final vindication (49:4; 50:7-9). Though men have despised him, yet kings shall rise up before him and princes do him honor (49:7).

The prophet's delineation of the servant culminates in a series of extraordinary testimonies respecting him (52:13—53:12). First of all, Jehovah testifies that the servant, notwithstanding his present abject condition, shall be raised to such dignity that kings in awe-struck wonder shall shut their mouths before him (52:13-15). Then his contemporaries confess that at first they had turned from him in horror, because they looked on his dreadful afflictions as punishments for his sins (53:1-3); but it soon dawned on them that it was on

* Two expressions in these passages as now translated distinguish the servant from the true Israel, *viz.*, 49:5, 6, and 53:8. But the former can with equal grammatical correctness be translated so as to retain the identification with Israel; and the latter, where the text is doubtful, can with a very slight modification of the P. be rendered "our transgressions" instead of "the transgressions of my people."

account of their sins that he had been so grievously smitten (53:4-6). To this testimony the prophet adds his own to the effect that the servant, though absolutely innocent, had of his own free will accepted injustice, martyrdom, and even a grave among the wicked, so that he might thereby atone for the sins of humanity, fulfil God's gracious purpose for men, and realize endless satisfaction in his own soul (53:7-11a). Last of all, Jehovah again testifies that, as a returning conqueror is crowned with honor and glory, so, on account of the martyr-servant's vicarious sufferings, He will reward him with high rank and power (53:11b, 12).

Note 6. How the Servant Ideal was Realized. The conception of Jehovah's servant presented by the Prophet of the Restoration was only partially realized during subsequent centuries in the Jewish race. The splendid destiny indicated in Jehovah's words, "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth" (Is. 49:6), never awakened a whole-hearted and enthusiastic response. It is true that as the race became more widely dispersed it carried with it the knowledge of the true God, and that many were thereby won to His service. It is true, furthermore, that the prophets' worldwide sympathies found expression in some of the later psalms (36:7; 145:9-12), in the Book of Jonah, in the writings of Philo, in the school of Hillel, and among the Hellenic Jews of the dispersion. But it is also true that a free participation in the blessings of Israel's faith was never accorded to aliens. The great war with Rome, that ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 and the scattering of the wretched survivors, extinguished all zeal for proselyting (Mt. 23:15). The true Servant of Jehovah, the One in whom the prophet's inspired thought received a complete and perfect fulfilment, did not appear until Jesus of Nazareth by His sinless obedience, by His tender sympathy with men, by His vicarious sufferings, and by His resurrection and exaltation on high, became the Redeemer of humanity.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Significance of the servant poems. See the foot-notes in Kent's *Sermons, Epistles and Apocalypses of Israel's Prophets*, pp. 343, 361, 365, 370, 371. (2) Meaning of the title "Servant of Jehovah." Kent, *History of the Jewish People, Babylonian, Persian and Greek Periods*, pp. 85, 86. (3) Universalism in the second part of Isaiah. Marti, *Religion of the Old Testament*, pp. 177-179. (4) For a fine discussion of "The Servant of the Lord," "The Servant in the New

Testament," and "The Suffering Servant," see George A. Smith, in *Expositor's Bible, Isaiah*, vol. ii, pp. 252-374.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. To what extent do the exiles in Babylon seem to have returned to Palestine in response to Cyrus' permission? 2. When was the second temple begun, and when was it finished? 3. What has been the general view in recent times as to the authorship, date, and place of composition of Is. chs. 40-66? 4. What more recent view seems more fully to solve the problem? 5. What was the situation in Palestine after the rebuilding of the temple? 6. How did the great Prophet of the Restoration meet the situation? 7. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. How did the extinction of Israel's national life affect the popular idea of Israel's relation to Jehovah? (Note 2.)

2. How was the Jewish community in Palestine affected by the apparent non-fulfilment of Haggai's and Zechariah's brilliant promises?

3. What new interpretation of Israel's destiny was now given by the Prophet of the Restoration? (Note 3.)

4. How were Jehovah's character and Israel's mission related to the world at large?

5. What conception of Israel's Messiah prevailed before the exile? (Note 4.)

6. What form did this conception take when the hope of a restoration of the Israelitish monarchy had passed away?

7. In what two senses did the Prophet of the Restoration use the term "servant of Jehovah"?

8. How did the true Israel compare with the Prophet's description of the servant and his work? (Note 5.)

9. Mention some points in this description.

10. What was Jehovah's first testimony concerning His servant? (Is. 52:13-15.)

11. What did the servant's contemporaries confess concerning him? (Is. 53:1-6.)

12. What did the Prophet himself testify? (Is. 53:7-11a.)

13. What was Jehovah's final testimony concerning the servant? (Is. 53:11b, 12.)

14. To what extent was this conception of the servant realized in the subsequent history of the Jews? (Note 6.)

15. In whom was it fully realized?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Does God choose men for privilege or for service?

2. To what extent is vicarious suffering a general experience?

3. Why is vicarious suffering a redemptive force?

Bible Text. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Is. 53:6.

Lesson 31. THE RISE OF JUDAISM. Nehemiah's Enforcement of the Law in Jerusalem.

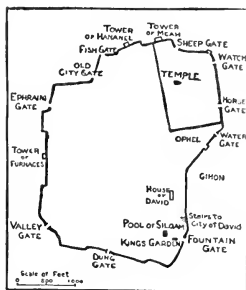
Scripture Reading: Nehemiah's Social Reforms. Neh. 13:4-30.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Nehemiah, by rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and by organizing the community on the basis of the law, restored the Jewish state and prepared the way for Judaism.

Note 2. The Coming of Nehemiah. During the seventy years that followed the rebuilding of the temple in 516 B. C., the colony in and around Jerusalem constituted the representative portion of the people on whom rested the task of reviving the Jewish state and of realizing Israel's future destiny. But they were weak, poor, cruelly oppressed, and woefully discouraged. The defenses of the city had not been rebuilt, and the inhabitants were a prey to any foe. It was at this dark hour that light arose from an unexpected source. At the Persian court in Susa there was a Jew named Nehemiah, who by extraordinary tact and energy had attained the influential position of cupbearer to the king. From some visitors he learned of the pitiable state of Jerusalem. He was deeply stirred, and at the first opportunity obtained leave of absence and authority to restore the city. Perhaps he had heard the call of the great Prophet of the Restoration to the Jews in the dispersion to return to the homeland and help realize Jehovah's glorious purpose for Israel. His prayer (Neh. 1:5-11) breathes the spirit of the great prophet, and shows that he at least was ready for heroic service.

Note 3. The Rebuilding of the Wall. After a secret survey of the work to be done, Nehemiah summoned the people and their leaders and urged that the rebuilding of the ruined wall be undertaken at once. This proposal inspired a prompt and enthusiastic response (Neh. 2:12-18). All the people, including those from the surrounding villages, gave their time and toil freely. Under Nehemiah's wise directions they were set to work on all parts of the wall at once (ch. 3). While the work was in progress two difficulties had to be met. First, they were in constant danger of attacks by the Samaritans, Ammonites and Arabians, whose fear lest the Jews should again rise to power prompted them by open intimidation and secret plots to do all they could to stop the work. Nehemiah's quick penetration of these schemes and his wise generalship effectually frustrated them (Neh. 2:19, 20; ch. 4; 6:1-14). From the misplaced section in Ezra 4:7-23 which refers, not to the rebuilding of the

temple, but of the wall, it appears that Nehemiah's enemies obtained a decree from Artaxerxes forbidding a continuance of the work. But before the decree reached Jerusalem the wall was finished, and so remained, since the decree gave no authority to pull it down. Secondly, the poor bitterly complained of the oppression practised upon them by their rich brethren. Many of the former had been forced to borrow money. While giving their time for the rebuilding of the wall, they were unable to earn money to meet their obligations. Their creditors seized their property, or, if they had nothing, sold their children into slavery. Nehemiah summoned the guilty ones, and so shamed them by his sharp rebukes and by calling attention to his own sacrifices for the good of the community, that restitution was made and a permanent reform effected (Neh. ch. 5). Notwithstanding all hindrances and delays, the wall was finished about the first of September, 445 B. C., in the surprisingly short time of fifty-two days (6:15, 16). Much of it was probably standing, and as for the rest the material from the old wall was still at hand. This was the first step toward a real restoration of the Jews, since it meant that Jerusalem would henceforth furnish a safe home for those returning from other lands.



Outline Map of Walls of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's Time.

Note 4. Nehemiah's Governorship. It is probable that Nehemiah's leave of absence lasted no longer than was necessary to complete the task specified in his commission. The statement in 5:14 seems, however, to show that it covered a period of twelve years, 445-433 B.C. That Nehemiah would have asked so long a leave, or that Artaxerxes would have granted it, seems highly improbable. The statement may mean simply that during this time he was governor of Judea even though he spent nearly all of it at the court in Persia. That this was actually the case appears from the fact that as soon as the wall was completed Nehemiah appointed deputies in charge of Jerusalem (6:1, 2); and by his statement that during all the time preceding his return in 433 B. C., when certain grave abuses were developing, "I was not in Jerusalem" (13:6). How long he remained there after receiving his second leave of absence is not known.

Note 5. Nehemiah's Pioneer Reforms. The book of Malachi, or "my messenger," was addressed to the community in Jerusalem only

a short time apparently before Nehemiah's first visit. It reveals a low state of morals and religion alike among the priests and the common people. The former attended to their duties in a spirit of utter indifference to their sacred character (Mal. 1:6—2:9). For such temple officials the latter could feel only contempt, and naturally refused to contribute for their support the tithes which the law demanded (3:7-12). Divorces, easy under all circumstances, had become scandalously frequent (2:10-16). During Nehemiah's absence many abuses and disorders had grown up. His second visit, therefore, was characterized by a series of drastic reforms that probably could have been effected only by a man of his energy, zeal, patriotism and unquestioned authority. These reforms related to:

(1) *The sanctity of the temple.* Tobiah was originally, perhaps, a slave at the Persian court who had been promoted to be satrap of the Ammonites. As such he had allied himself by marriage with the leading families in Jerusalem, and this created a strong faction in his favor. During Nehemiah's first visit he had persistently opposed his work (Neh. 2:10, 19; 4:3, 7; 6:17). On his return Nehemiah, finding him installed in one of the chambers of the temple, promptly ejected him with all his belongings (Neh. 13:4-9; comp. Deut. 23:3).

(2) *The restoration of the temple revenues.* The withholding of the tithes for the support of the Levites (Deut. 18:1-5) had compelled many of them to leave the sanctuary to earn their living. This withholding of the tithes, intended as a censure of the temple officials, was primarily a sin against Jehovah (Mal. 3:8). The governor at once summoned his deputies whom he sharply denounced for permitting this state of things, recalled the Levites, gave them authority to collect the tithes, and provided for their equitable distribution (Neh. 13:10-13).

(3) *A proper observance of the Sabbath.* The Sabbath was almost the only one of their religious institutions which the Jews could carry with them into the dispersion (Ex. 20:8; 34:21), where it came to be observed with the utmost strictness. In Palestine, however, its sanctity was often disregarded. With the increase of population in Jerusalem during Nehemiah's absence this abuse had increased. In the spirit of a true prophet, and with the full power of a Persian governor, he took such rigorous action as permanently to suppress the evil (Neh. 13:15-22).

(4) *The abolition of mixed marriages.* One of the gravest obstacles to the restoration of a purely Jewish state was the marriages contracted with heathen women. On a tour of inspection, perhaps, Nehemiah discovered that in some places this had been carried to

such an extent that the children were actually unable to speak the ancestral Hebrew. In violent Oriental fashion he showed his anger at the transgressors. Their protests he met with an appeal to the case of Solomon, who, notwithstanding his greatness, could not resist the demoralizing effect of such marriages. His relentless zeal in abolishing these mixed marriages is seen in the way in which he dealt with the high priest's grandson, who had married a daughter of Sanballat, probably governor of Samaria (Neh. 13: 23-28).

Note 6. Nehemiah's Relation to Judaism. By these reforms Nehemiah not only wrought a radical change in the social condition of the Jews in Palestine, but prepared the way for that acceptance of the priestly law which transformed the Jewish community into a Jewish church. The fundamental thought in the noble religion of the prophets was the free and unrestricted access of every soul to Jehovah, whose favor is won by the love of truth, justice, mercy, and righteousness. Judaism, the religion of the law, interposed between the worshiper and his God the absolute authority of regulations and ceremonies. A punctilious observance of these was regarded as forming the condition of acceptance with God. In this transformation of Israel's religion Nehemiah stands out as one of the chief actors.

Additional Reading References.

(1) On Nehemiah, the person and the book, see Bible dictionaries. (2) On the condition of the Jews in Palestine, see Kent's *Biblical Geography and History*, pp. 200-202. (3) On the rebuilding of the wall and the topography of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time, see the same, pp. 202-205. (4) On the work of Nehemiah in Jerusalem, see Kent, *History of the Jewish People, Babylonian, Persian, and Greek Periods*, pp. 167-194.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What were some of the causes that led to the deep discouragement of the Jews after the rebuilding of the temple? 2. What new interpretations did the Prophet of the Restoration give to Israel's destiny? 3. In what sense did he describe Israel as Jehovah's servant? 4. In what famous passage does the description of Jehovah's servant culminate? 5. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What aroused Nehemiah's deep interest in the situation at Jerusalem? (Neh. ch. 1; Note 2.)

2. How did he obtain permission to improve the situation? (Neh. 2:1-8.)
3. What was the first thing Nehemiah did after his arrival at Jerusalem? (Neh. 2:9-16; Note 3.)
4. How did he enlist the co-operation of the people in the rebuilding of the wall? (Neh. 2:17-20.)
5. In what general way was the work accomplished?
6. What trouble did the builders experience from their enemies?
7. How would these enemies have succeeded in stopping the work, if it had not been carried on so rapidly? (Ezra 4:7-23.)
8. What was the first social reform that Nehemiah brought about?
9. What seems to show that Nehemiah spent nearly all of the next twelve years at the Persian court? (Note 4.)
10. What was the state of morals and religion in Jerusalem about this time, as pictured in the book of Malachi? (Note 5.)
11. What was the first abuse that Nehemiah corrected after his return? (Neh. 13:4-9.)
12. How did he reorganize the temple service? (Neh. 13:10-13.)

13. What did he do to enforce a strict observance of the Sabbath? (Neh. 13:15-22.)

14. How did he deal with the mixed marriages? (Neh. 13:23-28.)

15. How did these reforms affect Israel's religion? (Note 6.)

Questions for Consideration.

1. Would there be any advantage to business if stores were kept open seven instead of six days in the week?

2. Should marriages between Christians and non-Christians be encouraged or discouraged? State reasons.

Note-book Work.

1. Insert on the chart the dates for Nehemiah's first return to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the wall, and of his second return and the reforms then instituted.

2. Prepare a brief sketch of Nehemiah, stating the leading facts in his life and the more conspicuous traits of his character.

Bible Text. "Jehovah is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;
My God, my rock, in whom I will take refuge." Ps. 18:2.

Lesson 32. THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRIESTLY LAW. Ezra and the Great Assembly.

Scripture Reading: The Public Reading of the Law. Neh. ch. 8.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how that part of the Old Testament legislation known as the priestly law came into existence and became the popular standard of righteousness.

Note 2. The Persistence of Israel's Popular Religion. When Nebuchadrezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B. C., many of the priests who lived outside the city no doubt fled into adjacent lands, whence they returned when the danger was past (Lesson 27, Note 2, 3). That the priests, who are repeatedly mentioned in Haggai

(2:11, 13), Malachi (1:6; 2:1), and Nehemiah (2:16; 3:22), should have made no attempt during the half century before Zerubbabel's return in 538 B. C. to re-establish any kind of worship is incredible in itself, and is contradicted by the implication in Jer. 41:5 and Hag. 2:14 that worship was resumed soon after the destruction of the temple. The religion of the prophets, which set small value on ritual (Is. 1:11-17; Micah 6:6-8; Ps. 40:6-8), had taken root only in restricted circles. It was too high and spiritual for the common people to discern its value. Nor were the priests, whatever they might have thought of its lofty conceptions of Jehovah, likely to substitute it for the traditional ceremonial worship by which they had their living. It was natural, therefore, that the old popular religion should have retained its hold on the masses, and that the priests who were its uncompromising supporters should have attempted to formulate its principles and practices in conformity with their own views. This is what they really did in what is now generally known as the priestly law.

Note 3. The Character of the Priestly Law. This law embraced not only a legal code, but an historical narrative in which the several groups of laws were embodied. This narrative extended from the creation of the world to Joshua's conquest of Canaan, and was designed to show the origin and purpose of Israel's religious institutions. The narrative is usually bare and meagre except when it leads up to some one of these institutions; then it becomes much more detailed. Thus the priestly account of the creation (Gen. 1:1—2:4*b*) leads up to the Sabbath which is regarded as a divinely established institution, sacred for its own sake rather than for the benefits it confers on man. The story of the deluge culminates in the prohibition against the eating of blood (Gen. 9:4). The story of Abraham, so far as it is told by the priestly narrator, serves only as an introduction to the establishment of the rite of circumcision, the sign by which Abraham's descendants were recognized as belonging to Jehovah's people and entitled to the privilege of the covenant (Gen. 11:10-27, 31, 32; 12:4*b*, 5; 13:6, 11*b*, 12*a*; 16:1-3, 15, 16; ch. 17; 21:1-5). Again, the stories of Isaac, Jacob, the descent into and the deliverance from Egypt, are briefly told by the priestly writer merely for the purpose of paving the way for his account of the institution of the feasts of the passover and of unleavened bread (Ex. ch. 12). All these stories, with that of the journey to Sinai, culminate in the account of Moses' long stay on the mount where he receives the priestly law, which is regarded

as the complete and final revelation of Jehovah's will. This law is recorded mainly in Ex. chs. 25-31, 35-40; Lev. chs. 1-16, and in scattered passages in Numbers. Thereafter the priestly narrative follows the Israelites in their wilderness journeyings, records their conquest of Canaan, and the settlement of the different tribes in their allotted territories.

The legislative portion of this code incorporates most of the ritual provisions in previous codes, especially those contained in Ezekiel's code, which, as a whole, was impracticable because it demanded a miraculous interposition that never came. Since the larger and more comprehensive priestly law was elaborated by pious, God-fearing priests during the century after the rebuilding of the temple, it naturally reflects the conditions that then prevailed. These were a recognition of Jehovah's awful holiness, a crushing sense of Israel's guilt, and a feeling that Jehovah's favor was to be won by a correct performance of the temple ritual. This code, because of its lofty conception of Jehovah's holiness, emphasized the need of purification by avoiding all manner of unclean food and ceremonial defilements; in view of Israel's guilt it laid great stress on sin offerings, and provided for a yearly day of atonement; and in order to win Jehovah's favor it elaborated a complicated system of sacrifices and of religious ceremonies. It should be noted that this expansion of earlier codes was regarded as conforming to the spirit of Moses, and therefore continued to be spoken of as the law of Moses.

Note 4. Ezra and the Great Assembly. According to Nehemiah's memoirs the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, the sixth month of the Jewish year (Neh. 6:15). According to the Chronicler, to whom we owe the subsequent narrative in Neh. 7:73b—13:3, there was held on the first day of the seventh month a great assembly of the people from all the outlying districts (Neh. 8:1, 2). By this assembly Ezra, a scribe exceedingly zealous for the law of Jehovah which he represented as having brought from Babylon (Ezra 7:10, 14), was requested to read the same in public. This he did during the next eight days. Then on the twenty-fourth day of this same seventh month a public confession of sin was made and the law which Ezra had read was publicly accepted as the constitution of the Jewish community.

That the law thus read and adopted was the priestly code, with its historical setting as described in the preceding note, seems quite probable. Josiah's law-book was comparatively short, since its

reading required in each case only a single session. On the other hand, that it was not our present Hexateuch (Genesis to and including Joshua) seems likely in view of the great probability that the welding together of the priestly document with the earlier prophetic narratives (Lesson 10, Note 4) had not as yet taken place. Furthermore, all the details of the covenant into which the great assembly entered after the reading of the law correspond exactly with those of the priestly code.

Note 5. The Date of Ezra's Work. Whether Ezra preceded Nehemiah, or Nehemiah preceded Ezra, has been a greatly debated question in recent years. According to the Chronicler Ezra came in 458 and Nehemiah in 445 B. C. (comp. Ezra 7:7 with Neh. 2:1). Ezra went for the purpose of enforcing "the law of Jehovah" in Jerusalem. The account of his attempt to do so (Ezra chs. 7-10) ends abruptly, and there is nothing heard of him until he suddenly reappears at the great assembly. Unfortunately this arrangement of the events, made by the Chronicler about two centuries later, is not only inconsistent with itself, but with the contemporaneous memoirs of Nehemiah (Neh. 1:1—7:5; 13:4-31). In Ezra's prayer, offered twelve years before the coming of Nehemiah, he classes the rebuilding of the wall with that of the temple as things already past (Ezra 9:9). At Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem he found those "that were left of the captivity" a weak and discouraged community suffering from social and religious abuses, and showing no signs of having been recruited a few years before by the arrival of a large body of leading Jews from Babylon, and of having been reorganized and ruled by Ezra, of whom there is not a hint in Nehemiah's memoirs. Note also the order suggested in Neh. 12:26, "There were . . . in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe." For these reasons, and a multitude of others, many recent writers are convinced that Nehemiah's work not only preceded Ezra's, but that it was indispensable in paving the way for it. In that case the laxity respecting mixed marriages which Ezra found proves that some time had elapsed since Nehemiah's pioneer reforms. On this theory we may place Ezra and the great assembly about 397 B. C. If we hold to the Chronicler's belief that Ezra came first, then, aside from other insuperable difficulties, we must assume that his first attempt to institute the law was such a disastrous failure as to drive him into complete retirement, and to plunge the Judean community into the sore plight in which Nehemiah found it twelve years later.

Note 6. The Effect of the Priestly Law. From the time of the great assembly the priestly law was regarded as the supreme and final expression of Jehovah's will, and as binding on all His people in every land. To them in relation one to another it became an indissoluble bond of union, while in relation to those without it became an almost impassable barrier. Its adoption marked the complete transformation of the Judean community into a church whose ruler was the high priest, and whose chief attention was fixed on worship and ceremonies. The priestly law became the cornerstone of Judaism.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Articles in recent Bible dictionaries on Ezra, Nehemiah, and the books of the same. (2) Ezekiel and the holiness code. Kent, *Israel's Laws and Legal Precedents*, pp. 36-42. (3) The priestly codes. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-48. (4) Origin and historical value of the Ezra narrative, estimated from the recent critical point of view. Kent, *Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives*, pp. 32-34. (5) The same, estimated from a conservative point of view. Davies, *New Century Bible, Ezra*, pp. 21-30.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What led Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem? 2. What great work did he accomplish on his first visit? 3. What obstacles did he encounter? 4. What reforms did he undertake on his second visit? 5. What is the title of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. Why is it probable that a large body of priests escaped being carried into exile by Nebuchadrezzar? (Note 2.)

2. Why would they be more favorable to the popular ceremonial religion than to that of the prophets?

3. What was embraced in the priestly law-book? (Note 3.)

4. Why did the priests in their narrative include accounts of the creation and the deluge?

5. To what did the story of Abraham lead up?

6. In what did this historical narrative culminate?

7. How was the priestly law related to Ezekiel's code?

8. How did the priestly law meet the religious feelings of the Jews after the exile?

9. Why did it continue to be called the law of Moses?

10. On what occasion, and by whom, was the priestly law instituted? (Note 4.)

11. Mention some reasons for thinking that Ezra's work followed that of Nehemiah. (Note 5.)

12. What must we assume respecting Ezra's work on the supposition that he preceded Nehemiah?

13. How was the adoption of the priestly law related to later religious developments? (Note 6.)

Questions for Consideration.

1. Which represents the higher type of religious duty, the precept in Deut. 6:4 or the regulations in Lev. ch. 11?
2. Was the priestly law an advance on the law in Deuteronomy, or a step backwards?
3. Why is ceremonial worship even to this day more popular than purely spiritual worship?

Note-book Work.

On the chart insert the probable date of the institution of the priestly law.

Prepare a brief sketch of Ezra and his work at Jerusalem.

Bible Text. "Blessed is every one that feareth Jehovah,
That walketh in his ways." Ps. 128:1.

Lesson 33. ISRAEL'S NARROWNESS AND JEHOVAH'S LOVE. Teachings of the Book of Jonah.

Scripture Reading: Jonah's Mission to Nineveh. Jonah ch. 3.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how one of Israel's latest prophets, in opposition to the exclusiveness of the Jews, proclaimed Jehovah's gracious purpose of salvation for all mankind.

Note 2. Authorship, Date and Purpose. (1) *Authorship.* The book undertakes to tell the experiences of "Jonah the son of Amittai." In 2 Ki. 14:25 mention is made of a certain "Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher." The natural inference is that the two were regarded as identical. The prophet of Gath-hepher prophesied during or shortly before the brilliant reign of Jeroboam II in Northern Israel (781-740 B. C.). Nothing is said in Kings, however, about his ministry having extended beyond the boundaries of Israel. Possibly such a mission was undertaken, which involved the prophet in some dangers, and which gave rise to a tradition which was used centuries later by the unknown author of the Book of Jonah as a basis for his story.

(2) *Date.* There are many indications that the book was written a long time after the adventures it recounts. Nineveh was destroyed about 606 B. C., but the writer refers to this event as one long since past—"Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city" (3:3). Jonah is

spoken of in the third person, "Now the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah" (1:1). The language of the book relates it to the late, rather than the early development of Hebrew literature. When the book was written the name of the king of Nineveh had evidently been forgotten. The prayer in ch. 2 consists largely of quotations from late psalms. The first mention of the book occurs about 200 B. C., in the list of the twelve minor prophets given by Jesus the son of Sirach. It must have been written sufficiently long before that time to have acquired such standing. Its composition can therefore be placed about 300 B. C.

(3) *Purpose.* The priestly law as expounded by Ezra and enforced by Nehemiah intensified the disposition of the Jews to regard themselves as the sole recipients of Jehovah's grace and salvation. The Book of Jonah was apparently written as a protest against this narrow view, and as a reaffirmation of the earlier prophetic teaching respecting the universality of Jehovah's love.

Note 3. Character of the Book. Men have often sought to honor the Bible by making claims for it that get no support from the book itself. If the story of Jonah were found anywhere outside of the Bible, no one would defend it as exact history. Its grotesque details would at once be recognized as the familiar elements out of which Oriental story-tellers habitually weave their wondrous tales. Only in such tales does one encounter cities sixty to seventy-five miles in diameter, tempests raised to frustrate human plans, great fishes that provide comfortable cabins for carrying drowning men to land, immense cities converted in a day, and plants that in a single night grow up into shady arbors. The contention that all this is authentic narrative rests on the assumption that an inspired writer cannot be supposed to state what is not literally true; that is, that he cannot, like other writers, make use of allegories, symbols, fables or parables. But Jotham's story of the trees that wanted a king (Jud. 9:8-15) is unmistakably a fable. Jeremiah (25:15-29) with great detail tells how he took a cup of wrath from Jehovah's hand and "made all the nations to drink of it"—clearly an allegory. When Ezekiel (4:4-8) represents himself as commanded to lie bound three hundred and ninety days on one side and forty on the other, the narratives do not require us to suppose that such symbolic actions were anything but ideal processes enacted in the prophet's mind. No one insists that the parables of Jesus were actual occurrences. In like manner, the Book of Jonah is an edifying religious story designed to teach, not the possibility of a human being living three days within a sea-monster,

but Jehovah's gracious attitude toward the heathen world. And the sad fact is that nearly every one is content to mock at what the story does not teach, while few seek to learn the impressive truth it teaches. Our Lord referred to the story (Mt. 12:40) not to affirm its historical truth, but to instruct and warn those whom He addressed. If we may draw illustrations from *Hamlet* or *Macbeth* without pronouncing upon their historical truthfulness, why should we deny Jesus the same liberty in respect to the Book of Jonah?

Note 4. Religious Teachings in the Book. The person of Jonah portrays the Jewish race which had been called to be Jehovah's servant in bringing light and salvation to the Gentiles. The writer lived in an age when there had sprung up among the Jews a strong dislike for people not of their own race. The introduction of the priestly law and its ruthless enforcement by Nehemiah had erected a high wall of separation between them and the rest of the world. Those inside regarded themselves as the sole heirs of Jehovah's promises, and they regarded those outside as unworthy and incapable of receiving His favors. Instead of carrying the blessings of Israel's faith to the nations, they cursed them for the cruelties and wrongs which they suffer at their hands. Consequently, when Jehovah summoned them to be His witnesses to the heathen, like Jonah, they did the opposite of what God had commanded.

Jonah was not permitted to go his own way, neither was Israel. Jonah's being swallowed by the sea-monster seemed to complete his destruction, but it gave occasion for repentance, and proved the means of saving him for the fulfilment of his mission. In a similar manner Israel had been engulfed in the Babylonian exile; but, instead of perishing, it was almost miraculously saved for the accomplishment of its high destiny. This part of the story seems little more than an expansion of the thought already expressed in Jer. 51:34, 44a. Jonah's reluctance in preaching to the Ninevites and his perverse and almost incredible anger at Jehovah's mercy reflected the prevailing spirit of the Jews toward the Gentiles. The prompt conversion of the heathen sailors and of the entire population of Nineveh contrasted most favorably with Israel's persistent disobedience.

Finally, Jehovah's gentle remonstrance with His churlish messenger, and His vindication of His own mercy and love in sparing the penitent city, showed that He does not desire the death of the sinner. Moreover, it emphasized the fact that the fulfilment of His apparently unqualified threats always depends upon whether men repent. As great as Jehovah's pity was for the ignorant Ninevites, so great was

His patience in dealing with His stubborn and unreasonable servant. In all these respects the short story of Jonah furnishes the most beautiful illustration of God's attitude toward all men that can be found anywhere outside the New Testament.

Additional Reading References.

(1) On Jonah, the prophet, and the book, see articles in Bible dictionaries. (2) For exposition of the book, see George A. Smith in *Expositor's Bible, The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. ii, pp. 403-541; Horton, in *New Century Bible, Minor Prophets*, vol. ii, pp. 197-216. (3) On the purpose and method of the author of the book, see Sanders and Kent, *Messages of the Later Prophets*, pp. 341-348.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. Why did Nehemiah leave the court of Persia for Jerusalem? 2. What great work did Nehemiah accomplish at Jerusalem? 3. How was the priestly law introduced in Jerusalem? 4. What reformation did Nehemiah enforce after his second return? 5. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. When was the hero of the Book of Jonah supposed to have lived? (Note 2.)

2. When was the book probably written?

3. What was the writer's purpose in relating this story?

4. On what ground has it been claimed that the story of Jonah must be exact history? (Note 3.)

5. Why is it probable that the writer of the story never intended that it should be taken as history?

6. What was Jonah's rebellious conduct intended to represent? (Note 4.)

7. What was represented by Jonah's experiences in connection with the sea-monster?

8. What did the writer think of the religious receptivity of the heathen as compared with the Jews?

9. What is Jehovah's character as represented in the Book of Jonah?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Is there any valid reason why a Biblical writer, like modern writers, should not have made use of fiction as a means of impressing religious truths?

2. If the story of Jonah came to the writer after nearly five hundred years of passing from mouth to mouth, and if he believed it to be true, should that compel us also to do so?

3. How does Jesus' reference to the story of Jonah bear on its historical character?

Note-book Work.

In the column of dates insert the probable date of the Book of Jonah.

In the note-book, write out the parallel passages from which the "prayer" in Jonah 2:2-9 appears to have been compiled. Most of them can be found in a Bible with marginal references.

Bible Text. "I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, and repentest thee of the evil." Jonah 4:2.

Lesson 34. THE MACCABEAN STRUGGLE. Its Effect on Israel's Life and Faith.

Scripture Reading: A Lament over the Destruction of Jerusalem. Ps. 79.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the Jews about the middle of the second century B. C. resisted all attempts on the part of heathen rulers to Grecianize them and to exterminate Israel's faith.

Note 2. The Century after Nehemiah's Time. Though the Persian empire seemed not far from dissolution when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem in 432 B. C., it survived until the conquests of Alexander the Great, before whose victorious armies it fell in 331 B. C. It was Alexander's ambition not merely to put the nations under the rule of Greece, but to extend the Greek language and culture throughout his vast dominion. His untimely death in 323 B. C., with no heir



Antiochus IV, Epiphanes.

to succeed him, led to the partition of his empire among his four leading generals. Egypt fell to Ptolemy I, and Syria to Seleucus I. Owing to the rivalries of these two kingdoms during the next two centuries Palestine became alternately the prey first of one and then the other. In 176 B. C. Antiochus IV (surnamed Epiphanes, or Illustrious, but also called Epimanes, the madman) seized the throne of Syria. In 170 B. C. he invaded Egypt, and defeated the army of Ptolemy VI, but factional strifes in Judea gave him

an excuse for capturing Jerusalem, plundering the temple, and acting toward the Jews with the utmost atrocity (1 Macc. 1:16-40; 2 Macc. ch. 5). A second invasion of Egypt in 168 B. C. was stopped by the Romans who ordered him to return to his own land. On his return he vented his fury on the Jews, whom he tried to Grecianize by suppressing their worship, burning their sacred books, forcing them to profane the Sabbath and to eat the flesh of swine, and desecrating Jehovah's altar by building on it a heathen altar (1 Macc. 1:41-64). This precipitated the most serious crisis to which Israel's faith was ever subjected.

Note 3. Sources of Information. Our chief sources of information for this period are the first and second books of Maccabees, and Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews*, book xii, chs. 5-11. The first book of Maccabees is a sober and trustworthy account of the events which led to the Maccabean uprising, and to the achievement of religious freedom and political independence. The narrative covers about forty years, or from 176 to 135 B. C. The second book of Maccabees, from 4:7 to the end, runs parallel with the narrative in 1 Macc. chs. 1-7. This narrative, which covers only about fifteen

years, is much expanded, and abounds in exaggerations and inaccuracies. Both books belong to the Old Testament Apocrypha, a body of late Jewish literature connected with the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Not being included in the Hebrew text it is excluded from nearly all ordinary Protestant editions of the Bible, though found in some of the large "family" or pulpit Bibles, and in all Roman Catholic editions. The course of history from the time of Alexander the Great until the rising against Antiochus Epiphanes is also obscurely reflected in Dan. ch. 11.

Note 4. The Beginning of the Religious War. Among the Jews there was a numerous party which, in view of the persecutions experienced through adherence to the law, resolved to disregard it and conform to heathen usages. Happily there were others, the Chasidim, or Pious, who were ready to die rather than break their covenant with Jehovah. These found a leader in Mattathias, a priest whose home was at Modin, a village on the road from Jerusalem to Joppa. He had five sons, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar and Jonathan, who were also deeply moved by the cruelties practised on the Jews (1 Macc. 2: 1-14).

When the king's deputy came to Modin to force the people to offer heathen sacrifices, Mattathias, the most influential man in the community, was the first one to be approached. Flattering promises of royal favor were given if he would set an example of obedience to the king's order. He not only refused to do so, but slew in hot indignation an apostate Jew and the king's deputy, and tore down the altar. Then he issued a proclamation, "Whosoever is zealous for the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him come forth after me." With his sons he fled into the rocky fastnesses of the Jordan valley. The story of his defiant act spread like wildfire and quickly gathered around him a multitude of those who would not violate the sacred regulations of the law (1 Macc. 2: 15-30).

Note 5. The War Continued by Judas Maccabeus. On one occasion a thousand fugitives were cut down because they would rather perish than defend themselves on the Sabbath (1 Macc. 1: 31-38). Mattathias and his followers therefore resolved that they must fight under all circumstances if they would save themselves from destruction. Shortly after this the aged patriot passed away, bequeathing the leadership to his son Judas, surnamed Maccabeus, the "Hammerer," probably with reference to the heavy blows he struck at the Syrians. Judas was one of the great military leaders of the world, renowned not merely for his courage and skill, but for his

tenderness and compassion. He quickly inspired confidence by defeating two Syrian armies. Antiochus thereupon commissioned Lysias, the imperial chancellor, not only to put down the rebellion, but to exterminate the entire Jewish population (1 Macc. 2: 39—3: 37). Accordingly an army of forty-seven thousand was placed under the command of three generals—Ptolemy, Nicanor, and Gorgias. This imposing force entered Judea in 166 B. C., but a crushing defeat administered to Gorgias led to the retirement of the other divisions. The next year Judas with a comparatively small force defeated Lysias himself who had renewed the contest with an army of sixty-five thousand (1 Macc. 3: 38—4: 35).

Note 6. The Purification of the Temple and Rededication of the Altar. These successes so far encouraged the Jews that, while still unable to dislodge the Syrian garrison that occupied the citadel in Jerusalem, they heartily responded to Judas' suggestion to undertake the repair and purification of the temple. Every trace of heathen defilement was taken away, the burned gates were replaced, the great altar for burnt offerings was taken down and rebuilt with other material, and new vessels and utensils were supplied for the holy services. When all was ready, the altar was rededicated to Jehovah and the sacrifices resumed (165 B. C.) just three years from the day on which it had been profaned. It was an occasion of great rejoicing, and was observed as a universal Jewish festival until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A. D. (1 Macc. 4: 36-59).

Note 7. The Jews Granted Religious Freedom. The year following the purification of the temple Antiochus died after failing to conquer Persia. Judas regarded this as a favorable opportunity at any cost to recapture the citadel in Jerusalem. When Lysias heard of it he marched into Judah at the head of an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men, and after defeating Judas' small army proceeded to Jerusalem, where he relieved the Syrian garrison and laid siege to the temple in which Judas had fortified himself (1 Macc. 6: 1-54). At this critical moment Lysias, in order to maintain himself against a rival claimant for the regency, was forced to hasten back to Antioch. Before he went he made peace with the Jews and won them to his side by granting them complete religious freedom (1 Macc. 6: 55-63.) Though the war was continued for a series of years, the conflict thenceforth was waged for the establishment of political independence.

Note 8. The Reign of Antiochus IV Reflected in Dan. 11:21-45. The description of this reign occurs in what purports to be a revela-

tion of the course of history during the Persian period given to Daniel. A brief explanation will help the reader to follow the mystical description.

(21) **A contemptible person:** Antiochus IV. **By flatteries:** As a younger son Antiochus had no right to the throne, but gained it by craft (vss. 22-24). These verses relate to events in Syria during the first five years of Antiochus. (22) **Prince of the covenant:** The high priest Onias III who was deposed by Antiochus in 175 B. C. (23) **A small people:** The partisans of Antiochus who helped him win the throne. (25-27) These verses describe the conquest of Egypt by Antiochus in 170 B. C. (28) **Then shall he return,** etc. After plundering Egypt Antiochus returned to Syria, but on the way plundered the temple in Jerusalem, and inflicted unspeakable cruelties on the Jews—"the holy covenant." (29) **Time appointed:** Of God. **He shall return:** In 168 B. C. Antiochus undertook a second expedition against Egypt, but was checked by the Romans. (30) **Ships of Kittim:** The Romans. **Indignation against the holy covenant:** Balked in his scheme against Egypt, he poured out his fury on the Jews. (31) **Abomination,** etc.: A small altar to Jupiter erected on the altar of burnt sacrifices. (32) **Such as do wickedly:** The Hellenizing party, who sympathized with the efforts to convert the Jews to heathenism. (33) **Fall by the sword,** etc.: "The wise," the "Chasidim," or Pious, who refused to apostatize, were slain or sold into slavery. (34) **A little help:** The insurrection begun by Mattathias which seemed insignificant at first. It was apparently about this time that the book of Daniel was issued, since up to this point the writer speaks with assurance. Verses 40-45 seem to be vague guesses at what would happen, and do not represent the actual course of events.

Note 9. Significance of the Maccabean Conflict. The withdrawal of Lysias from Judea in 162 B. C. marked the close of the desperate conflict for religious liberty. Israel's faith, which had been threatened with extinction, was saved to the world. But though there was henceforth no effort made to compel the Jews to exchange their own religious institutions for the customs of the Greeks, the contest was now continued among themselves. The Chasidim, or strict national party, who had led in the struggle for freedom, were bitterly opposed to the liberals, or Hellenizing party, whom they regarded as apostates from the faith, and were in turn regarded as outlaws. In this fierce strife of parties fortune favored, for a time, the Hellenizers to such an extent that their opponents were nearly

wiped out. But through continued struggle of rival claimants for the throne of Syria, there came finally a happy turn of events that placed the Maccabean family at the head of a semi-independent Jewish state.

Additional Reading References.

(1) On Maccabees, and books of Maccabees, see Bible dictionaries; new English translation, in Kent's *Israel's Hist. and Biog. Narratives*, pp. 387-467. (2) On the Maccabean period of Jewish history, see Riggs, *History of the Jewish People, Maccabean and Roman Periods*, pp. 3-139. (3) On the new heroic age in Jewish history, see H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History*, pp. 441-469. (4) For commentary on the First Book of Maccabees, see *Cambridge Bible Series*. (5) For commentary on Daniel, ch. 11, see Driver, in *Cambridge Bible, Daniel*.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What is the probable date of the Book of Jonah? 2. State some reasons why the book should not be regarded as literal history.
3. What seems to have been the prevailing tendency among the Jews against which it was a protest? 4. In what respects does the book reflect Israel's attitude toward the Gentile world? 5. What noble picture of Jehovah's attitude toward the heathen nations is presented in this book? 6. What is the subject of our present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. How was Palestine affected by the conquests of Alexander? (Note 2.)

2. What were the experiences of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes after his first Egyptian campaign?

3. How did Antiochus try to destroy the Jewish faith and worship?

4. What are the main sources of our information respecting the Maccabean struggle? (Note 3.)

5. Into what two parties had the Jews been divided by the attempts to Grecianize them? (Note 4.)

6. Describe briefly how the religious war broke out.

7. What disastrous interpretation of the Sabbath law was held at first? (Note 5.)

8. How did Judas Maccabeus become the leader of the insurrection?

9. Describe some of his early victories.

10. For what memorable event did these victories prepare the way? (Note 6.)

11. How did the death of Antiochus Epiphanes affect the situation in Judah? (Note 7.)

12. How did the Jews eventually regain their religious freedom?

13. What results were achieved by the Maccabean struggle? (Note 9.)

14. Which of the two parties among the Jews gained the supremacy over the other?

Questions for Consideration.

1. If the strict Jews conscientiously believed that the Sabbath law forbade self-defense on that day, was it right for them to adopt the advice of Mattathias?
2. What reasons may have kept the writer of 1 Maccabees from mentioning the name of God in the book?

Note-book Work.

Insert on the historical chart the leading events mentioned in this lesson, and their respective dates.

Write a brief sketch of Judas Maccabeus.

Bible Text. "Turn us again, O Jehovah God of hosts;
Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." Ps. 80:19.

Lesson 35. THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Messianic Visions of Jehovah's Reign.

Scripture Reading: The Ideal Ruler. Is. 11:1-10.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show the nature of Israel's messianic hope, and to trace its development and ultimate fulfilment.

Note 2. The Term "Messiah." Saul (1 Sam. 10:1), David (1 Sam. 16:13), and Solomon (1 Ki. 1:39) were solemnly consecrated for the kingship by the pouring of holy oil on their heads. By a similar rite priests, and occasionally prophets, were set apart for their sacred duties. But since the Hebrew king was regarded as Jehovah's representative, David properly spoke of Saul as "Jehovah's anointed" (1 Sam. 24:6). This word "anointed" translates the Hebrew word "messiah." Naturally, therefore, when the Hebrew people in later times began to look for a great deliverer, or ideal king, they thought of him in a pre-eminent sense as Jehovah's Messiah, or simply the Messiah. When, still later, the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, "christos," the Greek equivalent of "messiah," took its place, and thence passed into the New Testament as a designation for the Prophet of Nazareth, "the Christ" (Mt. 16:16), and then into general use as a proper name, *e. g.*, "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness" (Rom. 10:4).

Note 3. The Messiah of National Triumph. So long as the Israelites thought of Jehovah as a mere national God they also thought of His power as restricted to the bestowment of material prosperity and victory in war. If He was the true God it was inconceivable that He could be overcome by the gods of other nations, or that He would permit His own people to be destroyed, however He might chastise them for their sins. The destiny which it was believed that He had in store for Israel was a great political empire built up by military conquest under a king like David. This purely

national aspect of the messianic hope appears in the prophetic stories of the promises to Shem (Gen. 9:27), Abraham (Gen. 12:3), Jacob (Gen. 27:27-29), and David (2 Sam. 7:5-16). The same expectation of political supremacy appears in the prophecy of Balaam (Num. 24:5-9, 17-19) and in the song of Moses (Deut. 18:15-19).

Note 4. The Messiah of a Miraculous Consummation. The Oriental mind likes to think of God as accomplishing His purposes by direct interposition rather than by the ordinary processes of nature and history. Accordingly, a very popular form of the messianic hope was that which regarded the establishment of the kingdom of God as brought about by miraculous means. At some future time, "the day of Jehovah," He would reveal Himself in glory and majesty to execute judgment on the nations. This "great and terrible day," the turning-point in human history, is to be ushered in by "wonders in the heavens and in the earth; blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke." The sun shall be darkened, the moon be turned into blood, and "the earth shall stagger like a drunken man, and shall sway to and fro like a hammock" (Is. 13:6-13; 24:16b-23; Joel 2:30, 31; Amos 8:8-10). At first the self-complacent Israelites, who regarded themselves as Jehovah's favorites, were disposed to hail with joy the advent of His day as a time when He would not only destroy their enemies but crown them with honor and glory. But the true prophets, with a clearer insight into the righteous character of Jehovah, declared that it would be a day of sifting for Israel also, a day to be awaited with the utmost dread, since the sinners in the nation were to share in the punishment of Jehovah's enemies (Jer. 30:7; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph. 1:18; 2:2, 3; Mal. 3:2; 4:1, 5). But the righteous Israelites, who had kept their covenant with Jehovah, He would gather together from all parts of the earth. The house of David, brought very low, would again be enthroned in splendor, the ruined places would be rebuilt, material blessings in richest abundance would be poured out, sorrow and sighing would cease, and Israel would rule over the nations either by conquest or by their voluntary acceptance of Jehovah as their God (Is. 2:2-4; 35:10; 43:5-7; 45:25; ch. 60; 65:19; Amos 9:11-15; Ezek. chs. 38, 39; Joel 2:18-20; Zech. ch. 14).

Note 5. The Higher Ethical and Spiritual Form of the Messianic Hope. The highest form reached by the messianic hope was its vision of an ideal kingdom of God. This was to be established neither by military conquest nor by stupendous miracles, but by an

inward moral transformation that would make Israel joyfully obedient to Jehovah's rule. His will, instead of being inscribed on tables of stone, is then to be written in the heart. This kingdom could come only when Israel had sincerely repented and forsaken its sins. A truly converted and righteous people would thus be fitted to make known to all the nations Jehovah's majesty and glory, His justice and love, so that they also would join in His worship (Is. 1:25-27; 2:2-4; 44:21-23; Jer. 31:31-34).

Sometimes the instrument by whom this spiritual transformation is wrought is conceived of as a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15, 18). Sometimes Israel itself, redeemed and purified, is personified as Jehovah's servant, called to be a prophet-nation to the other nations (Is. 41:8-16; 42:1-7; 44:1-5). Then, again, this personification rises almost into the definiteness of an ideal person who by his unmerited sufferings and vicarious death works out a glorious redemption (Is. 52:13—53:12).

When the redemptive work of Jehovah's servant is complete, all the nations will be brought under Jehovah's gracious rule. This rule will be embodied in an ideal Messianic King whose endless reign will be characterized by righteousness and universal peace and happiness. So pervasive will be the influence of His gentle reign that even wild beasts will become tame and cease to prey one upon another (Is. 9:2-7; 11:1-10).

Note 6. The Fulfilment of Messianic Prophecy in Jesus of Nazareth. Aside from these three main aspects of the messianic hope there were numerous side developments which introduced not only variant but apparently contradictory types. Some held that Jehovah alone was to be Israel's deliverer (Hag. 2:6, 21, 22), others that the deliverance was to be wrought by some divinely appointed agent. Some thought that this agent would be a great king descended from the house of David, and that he would set up his throne in Zion, and then conquer the hostile nations (Ps. 2). Others imagined that his rule would not begin until after the deliverance had been wrought. Some, following the suggestion in Is. ch. 53, dismissed entirely the idea of a conquering Messiah, and looked for one who by his sufferings would bring salvation. Again he is described as "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4). When the attempt was made to combine all these different ideas, the result was hopeless confusion.

Not until after Jesus had completed His mission did men of spiritual insight perceive that all that was noblest and most signifi-

cant in these seemingly irreconcilable ideas were realized in Him. He was a son of David as well as the Son of God. He founded the true kingdom of God, and is evermore extending it among the nations by spiritual conquests. As a prophet He revealed the will and purposes of God, as humanity's high priest He offered Himself as a voluntary sacrifice to touch and transform the hearts of men and thus take away the sin of the world. His spiritual dominion is destined to be universal and everlasting, and so far as the nations acknowledge His righteous rule, they enjoy unending peace and prosperity.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Historical development of Israel's messianic ideals. Kent, *Sermons, Epistles, and Apocalypses of Israel's Prophets*, pp. 39-48. (2) The hope of Israel. Schultz, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. ii, pp. 354-450. (3) Articles in Bible dictionaries on "Messiah," "Day of Jehovah," "Eschatology," "Religion of Israel," etc.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What actions on the part of the Greek rulers of Palestine precipitated a religious war in 170 B. C.? 2. Who was the first to raise the standard of revolt? 3. Who was the chief figure in the subsequent struggle? 4. Describe briefly the purification and rededication of the temple. 5. What did the Jews gain by this conflict? 6. What is the subject of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What is the meaning of the term "messiah"? (Note 2.)
2. To whom was the term pre-eminently applied in the Old Testament?
3. How is the title "Messiah" related to the title "Christ"?
4. What was generally understood by the national messiah? (Note 3.)

5. What was meant by "the day of Jehovah"? (Note 4.)

6. What were the popular expectations in connection with it?

7. What did the prophets teach respecting it?

8. What was the highest form of the messianic hope? (Note 5.)

9. Through whom was the realization of this hope expected?

10. How would this spiritual redemption affect the world?

11. What shows the wide popular interest in the messianic hope? (Note 6.)

12. In whom were the noblest aspects of Israel's hope finally realized?

Questions for Consideration.

1. How is the New Testament idea of a final and universal judgment related to the Old Testament idea of the "day of Jehovah"?
2. Of the two conceptions presented in Notes 4 and 5, which seems to embody the most truth?
3. Which gives the greater inspiration for Christian service?

Bible Text. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end." Is. 9:6, 7.

Lesson 36. LATER DEVELOPMENTS OF JUDAISM. Rise of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Scripture Reading: Paul before the Sanhedrin. Acts 23:1-10.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how certain Jewish institutions and parties arose in the centuries immediately preceding the New Testament period.

Note 2. The Exaltation of the Law. After the fall of the Jewish state and the destruction of the temple, the law, in its successive expansions, became the chief bond of union for the widely scattered nation. Prophets like Ezekiel dreamed of its adoption as the central regulative authority in the restored Israel; and poets, like the author of Ps. 119, found their chief joy in meditating on its requirements. Obedience to the law in every particular was regarded as the supreme duty of every pious Israelite. In proportion as reverence for the law increased, the theory of its divine origin was elaborated into greater detail. At first it was supposed that the legislative portions only had been given by inspiration, but later it was affirmed that the historical setting also (Lesson 32, Note 3) had been not merely inspired, but dictated to Moses word by word during the forty days on Sinai (Ex. 31:18; 34:27, 28). "He who says that Moses wrote even one verse of his own knowledge," declared the rabbis, "is a denier and despiser of the word of God." The narrative thus received included even the account of Moses' own death (Deut. 34:5-12), which is said to have caused him to weep while writing it. When it was seen that dictation involved the possibility of error on Moses' part, the theory was abandoned for the doctrine that the ~~entire~~ Pentateuch (the Torah) was handed to Moses in faultless form. To deny its sacredness was an unpardonable sin. "He who asserts that the Torah is not from heaven," said the rabbis, "has no part in the future world." The law, accordingly, came to be regarded as the complete and infallible expression of Jehovah's will; acceptance of the law was the condition of union with His people, and divine rewards in time and eternity were proportioned to the strictness with which the law was kept.

Note 3. The Scribes. When enjoyment of personal and national blessings came to be regarded as depending on a strict obedience to the divine law, a knowledge and understanding of its precepts became matters of prime importance. At first the study of the law and the application of its principles to the innumerable details of everyday

life was the duty of the priests. But with the rising reverence for it, its study and exposition acquired an importance that demanded the closest attention. Hence there gradually arose outside of the priesthood an independent class composed of pious laymen who made it their chief business to know the law and to interpret it to the common people. In the former capacity they were known as scribes, and in the latter as rabbis. Naturally they became the zealous guardians of the law, and in this respect presented a marked contrast to the priests, many of whom in and after the Maccabean period were attracted by heathen culture and cared but little for the laws and customs of the fathers. The scribes, on the contrary, by their zeal and devotion acquired a great reputation among the people over whom, as religious teachers, they exercised a controlling influence. They never possessed political power, but as legal experts they formed a large part of the seventy elders who composed the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews in their later history. As a class the scribes were narrow, exclusive, and ambitious of honor, especially from their disciples. In social life they claimed the first rank. They were slavish followers of tradition. If previous rabbis had decided a question in a certain way, it was regarded as almost criminal to vary from it in any particular. In practical religion their original zeal to do what Jehovah required soon degenerated into a cold, bigoted formalism, satisfied with fulfilling trivial demands about tithes, fasting, trimmings on garments, and ceremonial defilements, while utterly indifferent to the higher laws of justice, mercy, and truth.

Note 4. The Pharisees. As distinguished from the scribes, who were a professional class, the Pharisees were a religious party. They were composed of those among the people who spared themselves no pains in carrying into actual practice the complicated rules and legal principles formulated by the scribes. Though the Pharisees as a distinct party did not appear until the latter half of the second century B. C., they represented a cleavage that went back to the Babylonian exile, when the Jews were thrown into a close contact with the heathen world and were either attracted by it or driven into a stricter observance of their ancestral laws. This cleavage was obvious during Nehemiah's administration in Jerusalem, and reappeared conspicuously when Antiochus Epiphanes tried to force the Jews to adopt Greek customs. The Chasidim, or Pious (Lesson 34, Note 4), were those who supported Judas Maccabens in resisting these efforts. But when Judas had won religious freedom a large part of these Chasidim withdrew from the conflict with Syria, since to them politi-

cal independence or subjection to foreign rule were matters about which they cared little so long as they were undisturbed in their observance of their religious laws and practices. They held that when the time came for political independence God would establish it by supernatural means (Lesson 35, Note 4). This group gradually expanded into a strong party. During the reign of John Hyrcanus (135-105 B. C.), grandson of Mattathias (Lesson 34, Note 4), they became known as the Pharisees, or "separated," since it was their aim in daily life to hold themselves rigidly aloof from everything heathen or impure, and even from the common people, who could not keep the law as the scribes interpreted it. From this time on their reverence for the law, reputation for piety, and devotion to national ideals gave them great influence over the people and made them a potent factor in shaping the course of events. Though in the main a religious party, they did not shrink from using political means to further their ends when religious interests seemed to require it. While among them were found noble examples of piety, they were in general, like the scribes, narrow and bigoted, and in their religious practices ostentatious and hypocritical. Naturally the scribes almost without exception were Pharisees.

Note 5. The Sadducees. The tendency which produced the Sadducees (their name is of uncertain origin) must have existed as far back as the beginning of the Hebrew state. Their actual appearance as a party, however, was contemporaneous with that of the Pharisees. When those who were content with winning religious freedom had withdrawn from Judas Maccabeus, a large number remained who were willing to fight for political independence also. These continued to support the Maccabean princes when they had settled themselves at the head of affairs. They were quickly joined by the priestly aristocracy, the nobility, and the men of wealth in Jerusalem, most of whom had sided with Antiochus in his effort to Hellenize the Jews. Now that this policy had been defeated, they found it expedient again to announce their devotion to the law. In the main, they were politicians with whom religious interests were subordinate to the welfare of the state, which they regarded as a secular institution and not as a religious community. They were, accordingly, sober, practical statesmen who, coming into direct contact with the surrounding Gentile world, were forced to guide the affairs of state by a reasonable policy, rather than by the extravagant schemes of the scribes and Pharisees. Seeing that their own welfare depended on the stability of the state, they were content to have

things remain as they were, and rejected everything that was new. In relation to Pharisaic beliefs and practices their position was mainly negative. They accepted the written law, but rejected the scribal traditions; they denied the resurrection, personal immortality, future rewards and punishments, the existence of angels and spirits, and foreordination. The scrupulous attention of the Pharisees to minute legal observances they regarded with disdain. Being an exclusively political party, they disappeared with the final destruction of the Jewish state.

Note 6. The Pharisees and Sadducees in Subsequent Jewish History. For two parties, so opposed in beliefs, aims and methods as were the Pharisees and the Sadducees, to develop peacefully side by side was a practical impossibility. As each increased in power the time soon came when the question had to be decided whether Judah, under the control of the Pharisees, should develop into a purely religious community, or, under the control of the Sadducees, into a merely political state. The ensuing conflicts brought the nation to the verge of ruin and finally left it to the mercy of its foreign foes.

But the chief reason for sketching the origin and nature of these parties is the fact that, while they do not appear in the Old Testament history, the moment we open the New Testament they confront us as determining factors not only in the national life of the Jews, but in the ministry of our Lord and in the growth of the apostolic church. The scribes and Pharisees were the first to manifest hostility to Jesus because His teachings tended to undermine their position as religious leaders, and because He refused to be such a Messiah as they expected. Hence their repeated plots to destroy Him. The Sadducees finally brought about His death because, as one who stirred up the people, they feared an insurrection that might destroy what still remained of the Jewish state. It was the Sadducees, moreover, as deniers of the resurrection, who became the first persecutors of the early church.

Additional Reading References.

(1) See articles in Bible dictionaries on "Scribes," "Pharisees," "Sadducees," "Essenes," "Zealots," "Synagogue." (2) On the growth of parties in the Maccabean state. Riggs, *History of the Jewish People, Maccabean and Roman Periods*, pp. 105-116. (3) The civil war precipitated by the Jewish parties. Riggs, *History of the Jewish People, Maccabean and Roman Periods*, pp. 117-136.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What is the meaning of the term "Messiah"? 2. What was understood by the national Messiah? 3. What was the prevailing expectation respecting the "day of Jehovah"? 4. In what form did the spiritually-minded Israelites cherish the Messianic hope? 5. In whom were the best aspects of this hope finally realized? 6. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. After the exile what was the chief bond of union among the-dispersed Israelites? (Note 2.)

2. How did the Jewish teachers express their increasing estimate of the sacredness of the law?

3. What led to the formation of the professional class known as scribes? (Note 3.)

4. In what respect did they present a contrast with the priests, the official guardians of the law?

5. What social positions did the scribes acquire?

6. What traits of character did the scribes manifest?

7. Who were the Pharisees? (Note 4.)

8. What tendency among the Jews did they represent?

9. Why did a part of the Chasidim withdraw their support from Judas Maccabeus?

10. In general what were the aims and characteristics of the Pharisees?

11. How did the Sadducees originate? (Note 5.)

12. What was their attitude toward the state?

13. In beliefs and practices how did the Sadducees differ from the Pharisees?

14. How did the development of these two parties affect the welfare of the state?

15. Why is an acquaintance with their origin and characteristics of great importance?

Questions for Consideration.

1. What conditions tend to develop an exaggerated doctrine of inspiration?

2. To what extent, if any, would Christianity suffer if the Scriptures were to be regarded as human records with ordinary correctness?

Bible Text. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mt. 5:20.

Lesson 37. THE RELIGION OF THE LAW. What it Accomplished, and Wherein it Fell Short.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah's Prophecy of "the Holy Seed." Is. ch. 6.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Jehovah's purpose in the choice and training of Israel was fulfilled notwithstanding the failure of the nation as a whole.

Note 2. The Legal Religion a Reversal to a Lower Type. The religion of the law resulted from the enforcement of the priestly code (Lesson 32). It incorporated many of the noble ideas of the prophetic religion, notably its lofty conception of God as presented in the first creation story (Gen. ch. 1). But while these ideas in theory remained fundamental, in actual worship the emphasis was put on ritual. The legal religion took over the ceremonies, sacrifices, and sacred feasts which had formed the staple of worship in the old pre-prophetic religion. Many of them were of heathen origin, and all of them had been rejected by the prophets as useless (Is. 1:10-17; Micah 6:6-8; Hosea 6:6). Furthermore, the legal religion fell back on the old and popular error that Israel had been chosen by Jehovah for the enjoyment of distinguished privileges, and not for unselfish service, as the prophets had taught. Finally, the legal religions continued the old breach between morality and religion (Lesson 21, Note 3), which the prophets had tried to remove. By their preaching they had sought to bring the worshiper into close personal relations with God, and thus to inspire a genuine love for righteousness. But the religion of the law thrust a complicated ritual system between man and his Maker, with the result that morality became more a matter of external performance than of inward character and close personal relations with God.

Note 3. Wherein the Law Fell Short. (1) *The law could define only lower kinds of duty.* It could prescribe the various kinds of offerings or sacrifices to be brought to the priests, what kinds of food were clean or unclean, and how to slaughter beasts for food; and it could forbid oppression, dishonesty, unchastity, idolatry, bribery, and the like. But no law can define those higher duties that spring from love, mercy, patriotism, faith, piety, or loyalty toward man and God. Hence one might have rendered most scrupulous obedience to the letter of the law, and failed entirely in respect to duties that lie beyond its province.

(2) *The law made no distinction between ceremonial and moral duties.* The former were considered equally important with the

latter. The reason for not defiling oneself with a ceremonially unclean "creeping thing" is the same as for abstaining from the worst of heathen practices or the most abominable vices, *viz.*, "I am Jehovah your God," only it is stated more forcibly in the former case (comp. Lev. 11:41-45 and ch. 18). To overstep the limit of a Sabbath day's journey was as great a transgression as to lie or steal. The result was that any one who desired a reputation for piety could get it more easily by attention to minute external ritual rules than by cultivating purity of heart and righteousness in conduct.

(3) *Rewards and penalties referred to this life only.* The law made it certain that its observance would be rewarded and its neglect be punished. But since these rewards and punishments were limited to this life, the conclusion followed that prosperity was a sign of God's favor, and adversity a sign of His anger. This theory, once established, had to be maintained notwithstanding the most contradictory facts in actual life. In spite of Job's earnest protestations of his integrity, his friends insisted that his sufferings were due to sins that he was unwilling to confess. When it was impossible to charge a misfortune to personal sin, as in the case of the man born blind, the theory was saved by carrying the sin back to the parents (Jo. 9:1, 2). The prosperity of the godless and the afflictions of the godly formed, in view of this theory, a standing puzzle, a contradiction of the moral order of the universe (Ps. 73:1-14; 99:1-7; Job ch. 21; Mal. 3:14, 15). Another result was the overweening pride and self-confidence of the wicked in their prosperity (Ps. 10:1-13), and the heart-rending questionings and self-accusations of the righteous in their afflictions (Ps. 7:3-5). No man could know when his life was acceptable to God.

(4) *The law presented a constant temptation to substitute ritual for penitence and amendment.* It is always easier to do penance and continue in sin than to repent and forsake evil. There were, no doubt, many pious and devoted souls who even under Judaism strove for a righteousness that exceeded a devotion to the mere letter of the law. But from the whole trend of the legal religion down to the time of Christ nothing is clearer than that the religious leaders as well as the mass of the people were given over to superficial formalities, vanity, conceit, hypocrisy and sanctimoniousness.

(5) The final but supreme shortcoming of the law is seen in the fact that *while it emphasized the magnitude of human sin and guilt, it knew of no way by which sin could be overcome and guilt removed.* To keep the law, even as an external requirement, was impossible, and the contemplation of this impossibility filled the thoughtful mind with

despair. The sacrifices had no power to take away sin, or to bring peace and comfort to the troubled conscience. The law in its utter helplessness could only point to the future for salvation and happiness.

Note 4. What the Law Accomplished. (1) *The law taught obedience to the will of God.* To a people who for centuries had been accustomed to a worship in which the main emphasis was placed on ritual, the religion of the prophets was too high and spiritual. The ordinary man could not grasp its meaning, nor assimilate its teachings. At this point the law stepped in as a preparatory training which by its definite rules taught not only the imperative need of submission to the will of God, but showed precisely how that submission must be rendered. The law was regarded as a complete expression of the will of God. Obedience to the law was therefore obedience to God.

(2) *The law deepened the sense of sin.* By its innumerable regulations and prohibitions that affected all relations of life, the law, especially as developed by the scribes, multiplied transgression; for, "where there is no law, neither is there transgression" (Rom. 4:15). But increase of transgression meant increase of penalty. The broader the sweep of the law, the greater the possibility of sin, and the more clear the impossibility of meeting its requirements in such way as to establish a true righteousness. Thus the law became a tutor to lead men to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

(3) *The law emphasized the duty of caring for the poor.* Much of the kindly and humane spirit of the prophetic religion was carried over into the priestly legislation. Deuteronomy, the priestly law-book, retained its high authority. The spirit of charity and loyalty thus inculcated bears fruit still in the ready help given by the Jews in all parts of the world to those of their number who are overtaken by poverty or distress.

(4) *The law elevated the standard of morality.* In comparison with the laxity prevalent in the heathen world the purity of domestic life among the Jews was proverbial, and has remained so to this day. The prohibition of marriages within close degrees of relationship protected Jewish communities from unions that were a scandal even in the heathen world. The licentiousness openly practised in connection with heathen worship, and against which the prophets had waged uncompromising warfare, was suppressed in Judaism. Finally, the attitude of the law toward certain unspeakable abominations, common among the surrounding nations, caused these vices to be regarded among the Jews with the utmost horror.

Note 5. "The Holy Seed." While Judaism as a religion failed to carry on the noble ideals of the prophets, these did not perish, but continued to be cherished by an inner portion of the people, an Israel within Israel, which Isaiah called "the holy seed." It is to these devout souls that we owe many of the later Psalms that amidst increasing formalism continued to voice the spiritual teachings and lofty aspirations of the prophets (Ps. 40:6-8; 50:7-15; 51:16, 17; 69:30, 31). They show that even under the rule of the law there sprang up and flourished a religious life so intense and genuine that in its songs the purest and noblest aspirations of all subsequent generations have found their completest expression. At the opening of the New Testament history we see this "holy seed," the supreme product of the Old Testament religion, represented in such devout souls as Zacharias and Elisabeth, Simeon and Anna, Nathanael "the Israelite without guile," and many others who, like them, were "looking for the consolation of Israel," and who welcomed the Messiah the moment He appeared.

Additional Reading References.

(1) The legal religion a retrogression. Marti, *Religion of the Old Testament*, pp. 215-220. (2) Merits in the law. Addis, *Hebrew Religion*, pp. 301-304. (3) The system of morality inculcated by the law. Hastings' *Dict. Bible*, extra vol., pp. 722, 723. (4) The religious ideas pervading the Psalms, *Ibid.*, pp. 723, 728.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What estimate was placed on the law by later Judaism? 2. What was the origin and character of the scribes? 3. What were some of the distinguishing traits of the Pharisees? 4. In what respects did the Sadducees differ from the Pharisees? 5. Why is a knowledge of these parties important? 6. What is the subject of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What did the legal religion take over from the prophetic? (Note 2.)

2. What three characteristics of the pre-prophetic religion were perpetuated in the legal religion?

3. What kind of duties did the law fail to define? (Note 3.)
4. Show how the law made no distinction between ceremonial and moral duties.
5. What resulted from referring rewards and penalties to this life only?
6. What resulted from substituting ritual for repentance?
7. What was the chief shortcoming of the law?
8. What meritorious result was brought about by the law in relation to obedience? (Note 4.)
9. What did the law accomplish respecting the sense of sin?
10. What social duty did it emphasize?
11. In what respects did it elevate moral standards?
12. What is meant by "the holy seed"? (Note 5.)
13. What is the testimony of the Psalms as to a survival of the prophetic religion in the truly pious part of the nation?

14. What examples of it appear at the beginning of the New Testament period?

Questions for Consideration.

1. What was the attitude of Jesus toward the prophetic and the legal types of religion?

2. Which of these two types is the more popular to-day? State reasons.

Bible Text. "I will praise the name of God with a song,
And will magnify him with thanksgiving,
And it will please Jehovah better than an ox,
Or a bullock that hath horns and hoofs."

Ps. 69:30, 31.

Lesson 38. OTHER PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTIANITY. How Greece and Rome Paved the Way for its Rapid Spread.

Scripture Reading: The World-kingdoms and the Kingdom of God. Dan. 2:25-45.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the wide spread of the Greek language and culture, and the extension of the Roman empire and the reign of law over most of the known world, helped to prepare the way for the rapid diffusion of Christianity.

Note 2. Israel's Faith Preparatory for a Universal Religion. Antiochus Epiphanes sought by force to make the worship of the Greek gods universal throughout his dominions; but not even he dreamed of a religion for all nations and races over the entire earth. Heathen philosophers scoffed at the idea, and declared that every people needed its own forms of worship as much as it needed its own language, customs, and laws. The emperor Julian declared that "the union of all nations in one religion is an absurdity." As a whole the Jewish people were exclusive and, especially in the later periods of their history, almost fanatically intolerant toward strangers. They made participation in the promises and blessings of Israel's faith depend on a virtual abandoning of one's own nationality and becoming a Jew. But the Hebrew prophets from Isaiah on had nobler conceptions of Jehovah's character and love. To them He was the God of the whole earth. In their inspired vision they caught sight of a day when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." This idea, lost sight of in

later Judaism, became fundamental in Christianity. For the realization of this idea Greece and Rome became important though unconscious instruments.

Note 3. The Diffusion of the Greek Language. The conquests of Alexander in the fourth century B. C. and his Hellenizing policy made the Greek tongue the language of commerce and culture in southern Europe, western Asia, and northern Africa. It thus became a medium of communication in all civilized countries. Even before the Romans became the political masters of the known world, they themselves had been to a considerable extent mastered by Greek thought. Among the educated classes Greek was spoken almost as freely as Latin. This spread of a common language enabled the first preachers of the Gospel to carry their message from land to land without the necessity of learning a new language in passing from one to another. Furthermore, the Greek language was the most perfect medium ever devised for expressing the finest shades of thought. In the schools of Alexandria, where the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, the language had been still further enriched by a religious vocabulary that enabled it to convey the subtlest distinctions of Christian thought. That the New Testament was written in this language, fitted to express the noblest thoughts and finest emotions, was surely no accident.

Note 4. The Influence of Greek Philosophy. The Platonic philosophy in its speculations about the universe had reached the idea of one supreme God, but of His character or will it knew nothing. Its speculations served only to undermine the faith of the cultured classes in their ancestral gods, and were able to offer nothing as a substitute. Nor was it able to lift the ignorant masses out of the superstition and moral degradation into which they had fallen. The Stoic philosophy in a few instances developed a stern and heroic morality, "the courage never to submit or yield"; but it glorified human pride, and by attributing all events to fate destroyed any lingering sense of dependence on a divine being. The Epicurean philosophy declared that pleasure was the end of life. But the common people, casting aside the qualifications with which Epicurus guarded this declaration, made it destructive of all virtue and morality, and a justification of sensuality, gluttony and lust. Thus the philosophers, who professed to be seekers after truth, and who should have been helpful in leading the people into a higher and purer faith, became the most potent instruments in destroying whatever faith still remained. Among the Romans, over whom Greek enlightenment exercised an attractive

influence, the same philosophical scepticism took root and bore similar pernicious fruit. Under such influences the old Greek and Roman religions broke down entirely, and in some measure cleared the field for the introduction of Christianity.

Note 5. The Roman Empire. From the dawn of history the ancient world had been broken up with warring nations. Sometimes a number of these were by conquest combined into great empires, like Assyria, Babylonia, or Persia. But until Alexander no great conqueror had conceived the idea of imposing his own language and civilization on the subject peoples. To some extent this policy was carried out by his successors, and it assisted in bringing about that remarkable unification of the nations which was achieved by the Roman legions. When Augustus seated himself on the throne the empire embraced nearly the entire known world. Conquests could extend no further. Within this stupendous empire national barriers were broken down, mutual hatred and exclusiveness were swept away, social and political intercourse was established, and over the magnificent military roads of the empire the humblest traveler could pass with ease and safety throughout the civilized world. Thus the sway of the imperial scepter was rapidly developing the idea of a universal dominion, and poets and seers stood ready to clothe the vision in inspiring words. All this helped to prepare the nations for the proclamation of the universal kingdom of God promised in the Hebrew Scriptures. Furthermore, in 13 B. C., Augustus became Pontifex Maximus, the supreme official of the Roman state religion. Thereby the ideas of empire and church became again united after having been separated since the expulsion of the Tarquins, and this still further helped the people to grasp the idea of a true kingdom of God.

Note 6. The Roman Law. The most effective force in welding the different nations into one permanent and powerful organization was the Roman law. This vast structure, which it took over a thousand years to build, was characterized by the keenest sense of justice in defining material rights, and by an admirable reasonableness in the application of legal principles. Wherever the Roman armies went they carried the Roman law. So far as local laws conflicted with its provisions they were superseded or annulled. The empire thus became a vast instrument for the protection of property rights. The Roman courts in every part of the civilized world were open to the humblest citizen or freeman. But in this appreciation of Roman jurisprudence we must not include its attitude toward man

as man. This defect is seen in its position toward slaves, who constituted a large, if not the largest, part of the population, and who stood practically outside of the law with few if any legal rights that an owner was bound to respect. This world-wide extension of the Roman law introduced the idea of a central, supreme authority which at the same time expressed the principles of universal justice. Before it all national and personal interests bowed, and thus it prepared the way for the recognition of a universal divine government, founded on principles of eternal truth and righteousness.

Note 7. Heathen and Hebrew Preparations for Christianity Compared. The preceding lessons in this course have shown that the choice and training of Israel was a direct and positive preparation for that complete revelation of God's purpose and grace which came through Jesus Christ. This choice and training had in view the raising up of a people capable of receiving this revelation and communicating it to the world at large. The preparations for Christianity discerned in the heathen world were, on the contrary, indirect and negative. None of those noted above contributed to the religious enlightenment of the human race. Nevertheless, to them was due in large degree the astonishing progress of Christianity during the first and second centuries after its introduction into the heathen world. Without the existence of these conditions its progress would have been greatly retarded, if not made practically impossible.

Furthermore, the downfall of the old heathen religions and the loosening of all the moral restraints which they had imposed formed a negative preparation for a better faith. In thoughtful persons the knowledge of man's inability to remove the consciousness of guilt, to bring peace to the conscience, and to satisfy the highest instincts of mind and heart created a longing for a religion of a widely different type from any then known—a groping in the darkness after "An Unknown God" (Acts 17:23). "Nobody," said Seneca, "can deliver himself; some one must stretch out a hand to him to lift him up." The dispersion of the Jews over the civilized world had made the nations acquainted with their Messianic hopes, and had aroused a general expectation that a Deliverer would come from the East. Thus in the heathen world, whether contemplated in its magnificent material strength, in its woeful moral corruption, or in its despair of help from any human source, we see a hand pointing to a coming Saviour. Nothing short of the divine power inherent in Christianity could react against the growing irreligion, and "stem the torrent of descending time." Such power was needed to inspire new hope and

courage, and to start the world toward a realization of the sublime ideals presented in the kingdom of God.

Additional Reading References.

(1) See Bible dictionaries, "Epicureans," "Stoics," "Philosophy," "Rome," "Greece," etc. (2) Heathen preparations for Christianity. Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Times of St. Paul*, vol. i, pp. 8-16. (3) The Roman empire as a preparation for Christianity. Fisher, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ch. ii.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. Mention some points in which the religion of the law proved a failure in meeting human needs. 2. Mention some of the benefits which it conferred. 3. What did Isaiah mean by "the holy seed"? 4. What was the final and supreme achievement of the Old Testament religion? 5. What is the subject of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. How did the ancient world regard the possibility of a universal religion? (Note 2.)

2. What in general was the attitude of the Jewish people toward sharing their religious privileges with other nations?

3. What noble conception was entertained by the later Hebrew prophets?

4. How did the Greek language become an almost universal medium of communication? (Note 3.)

5. How did it contribute to the spread of Christianity?

6. Describe the influence of

(1) the Platonic philosophy. (Note 4.)

(2) the Stoic philosophy.

(3) the Epicurean philosophy.

7. How did Greek philosophy thus help to prepare the way for the Christian religion?

8. How did the unification of the civilized world under a single government affect the progress of Christianity? (Note 5.)

9. What religious idea was promoted by the union of the supreme offices of state and church in one person?

10. What great benefit accompanied the Roman conquests?

11. How did the Roman law affect the progress of Christianity?

12. What was the general character of the preparations made in Israel's religion for the advent of Christianity? (Note 7.)

13. What was the nature of the preparations made in the heathen world?

14. What followed from the decay of the heathen religions?

15. How did the Jewish dispersion help Christianity?**Questions for Consideration.**

1. Should the apparent preparations for Christianity in the heathen world be regarded as providential or accidental? State reasons.

2. Why is the loss of religious faith, even where this is quite imperfect, a moral calamity, unless it is replaced by a better faith?

Bible Text. "Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; but Jehovah will arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."
Is. 60:2, 3.

Lesson 39. THE PROGRESSIVE NATURE OF DIVINE REVELATION. Review of Lessons 27-38.

Scripture Reading: A Meditation on the Law of God. Ps. 119:129-144.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To review some of the steps of progress made by Israel's faith during and after the Babylonian exile.

Note 2. The General Effect of the Exile on Israel's Faith. No event in the history of the Chosen People exercised a deeper and wider influence on the national life than the fall of the Jewish state, the destruction of the temple, and the deportation into Babylonia of the political, religious, and social leaders of the people. The mass of the people, the poor, incapable and ignorant, remained in the land and constituted the material out of which the Jewish community in Palestine was gradually reorganized. Some of the priests no doubt escaped into the neighboring countries and returned when the Chaldeans had retired. These priests probably set up some form of ritual worship on the temple site. When the temple was rebuilt they reinstated the temple service, introducing into it such modifications as might be suggested by new conditions and by Ezekiel's code. For the Jews in the dispersion the Deuteronomic law became the great bond of union. To its study and development the priests in Babylonia gave themselves after the first shock of the exile had passed away. The hold of the law on the common people was strengthened by their recoil from the heathen practices around them. Through the teachings of the prophets, especially of the great Prophet of the Restoration, the eyes of the people were opened to the significance of the experiences through which Jehovah was leading them. His gracious purposes respecting themselves and the nations at large became more clear, and their apprehension of religious truths was greatly enlarged. The transformations wrought in the religious life of Israel in the exilic and post-exilic periods were absolutely essential as preparations for the final and complete revelations of the divine will made in Christianity. These transformations are apparent along the following lines.

Note 3. Enlarged Understanding of Divine Purposes. The calamities consequent on the fall of Jerusalem at first plunged the exiles into a despair so deep and dark as to leave no room for hope. Jehovah seemed to have cast off His people and forsaken His land. But after a while it was seen that these terrible experiences might be only a purifying discipline designed to qualify it for a glorious

destiny. The prophets who had foretold the overthrow of the nation had also foretold its restoration. Jehovah's grace surpassed not Israel alone but all the nations. Israel's restoration therefore meant a divine mission to the nations. Israel was Jehovah's servant, through whom their salvation was to be accomplished. Not the people as a whole, however, were fitted for this service, but only those whom suffering and discipline had perfected and purified. These, too, in the great day of Jehovah, would be saved from the judgments about to overtake the ungodly, and they would participate in the endless joys of the Messiah's kingdom (Lessons 27-30 33, 34).

Note 4. Enlarged Understanding of Acceptable Worship.

Notwithstanding the teachings of the pre-exilic prophets respecting Jehovah's relation to the whole earth, in popular thought His dwelling-place was the temple. This conception had been strengthened by the abolition of the high places and the Deuteronomic centralization of worship at Jerusalem. But when the temple lay in ruins, when the sacrifices had ceased, and when the Jews had been widely scattered in other lands, either Jehovah's worship must cease entirely or it must be carried on under different conditions. The conviction gained ground that the God of all the earth could be worshiped acceptably wherever His people met together to pray and to meditate upon His law. Hence arose the local synagogues with those simple services upon which the early Christian worship was modeled (Les. 27, Note 5).

Note 5. Increased Devotion to the Law. The rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the situation of the exiles in Babylonia brought about an increased devotion to the law of Jehovah. The people were not yet ready for the high spiritual religion of the prophets. They had to be prepared for it gradually. The legal religion, with all its defects, became a means to this end. The enforcement of the law by Nehemiah and its institution by Ezra made Israel a people of the law. When the Chosen People ceased to be a political state it became a church. Whatever incidental evils resulted from the exaltation of the law by the scribes and Pharisees were overbalanced by the fact that it was a necessary preparatory discipline leading men to look for salvation, not to themselves, but to the coming Messiah (Lessons 31-32, 36, 37).

Note 6. Elevated Morality. The law whether as elaborated by the priests or taught by the prophets set before Israel a high

standard of conduct. It rooted out forever the licentious rites which had been carried over from the Canaanite religions into the worship of Jehovah, and it cultivated in the Jew an abhorrence of the abominable vices openly practiced by the heathen (Lesson 37).

Note 7. The Preparation of a "Holy Seed." In the heart of Judaism as developed by the scribes and Pharisees, a Judaism whose extravagant and superstitious exaltation of the law had bred chiefly religious pride and hypocrisy, there grew up a type of religion more pure and noble and spiritual than any the world had ever known. It was the perfect and consummate flower of the Old Testament revelation. Here all the experiences of the Chosen People, from the time of Abraham downward, found their meaning. It was out of this "holy seed" that Christ was born (Lesson 38).

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What is the object of this lesson? (Note 1.)
2. In the history of Israel, what was the relative importance of the exile? (Note 2.)
3. What was the general effect of the exile on Israel's faith?
4. What was the first consequence of the destruction of Jerusalem? (Note 3.)
5. Mention some of the larger conceptions of God's purposes that followed the first shock.
6. How did the exile affect popular worship? (Note 4.)
7. Why did the legal religion largely supersede the prophetic? (Note 5.)

8. What resulted from the exaltation of the law?
9. How did the law affect morality? (Note 6.)
10. What was the supreme result of the Old Testament religion?
(Note 7.)

THE BIBLE STUDY UNION LESSONS
SENIOR GRADE

PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTIANITY

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.

	Pages
Character and Contents of the Course	iii-v
Directions for Study	vi

THE LESSONS.

Part 4. Christianity the Fulfilment of Israel's Faith.

Lesson 40. The Old Testament Religion Passing into the New	225
Lesson 41. Jesus' Mission in the World	230
Lesson 42. Jesus the Great Teacher	235
Lesson 43. Jesus' Testimony concerning Himself	240
Lesson 44. Jesus' Teaching respecting God	245
Lesson 45. Jesus' Teaching respecting Man	251
Lesson 46. Jesus' Teachings respecting Sin	256
Lesson 47. Jesus' Way of Salvation	262
Lesson 48. Jesus' Law of Love	267
Lesson 49. Jesus' Teaching in Respect to the Future Life	272
Lesson 50. Jesus' Parousia	278
Lesson 51. Christianity for the World	284
Lesson 52. Christianity the Final Religion	290

CHARACTER AND CONTENTS OF THE COURSE.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

Note 1. Purpose. The purpose of this course is to survey those religious ideas which unfolded during the pre-Christian era, served as a preparation for Christianity, and finally received their fullest expression and realization in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Note 2. Scope. The course begins with a sketch of the old Semitic world, of which the Hebrew people constituted a part, traces the rise and development of characteristic features of the religion of Israel, and concludes with a review of the fundamental religious teachings of Jesus.

Note 3. Method. The course is divided into four parts. Each deals with a specific period of historical and religious development.

Part I describes the religions of ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Palestine (as introductory to the Biblical records of Israel's faith), primitive forms of Hebrew worship, the influence of the exodus upon their religious life, the early religious literature of the Hebrews, and concludes with a study of the religious aspects of David's career.

Part II begins with a study of Solomon's institution of the temple service, notes the character of the religious life of Israel during the period of the divided kingdom, and examines the religious content of the earlier prophetic utterances, carrying the course forward to the time of the exile.

Part III covers the religious developments of the exilic and post-exilic periods, special attention being given to the later prophetic writings, the establishment of Judaism under priestly auspices, and the religious temper of Israel under the Maccabees.

Part IV shows how the religious ideas developed in the Old Testament period were enlarged and spiritualized in the teachings of Jesus.

The whole study thus leads naturally to the second year course of the Senior department, which covers the establishment of organized Christianity by the Apostles and gives a brief account of the leading events in the history of the church down to the present time.

Note 4. Longer and Shorter Courses. Classes wishing a six months' course can take either Parts I and II or Parts III and IV, while Parts I, II, and III make an appropriate nine months' course. Part IV is so based upon Part III that it cannot be studied to the best advantage without a previous study of the latter.

Introduction

LESSON TITLES AND SUBJECTS.

(Subject to revision.)

Part I. ISRAEL'S RELIGION TO THE END OF DAVID'S REIGN.

- Lesson 1. THE OLD SEMITIC WORLD. Its Physical Features and its Peoples.
Lesson 2. RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS. Its Origin and Characteristics.
Lesson 3. RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT BABYLONIANS. Its Beliefs and Ceremonies.
Lesson 4. HMMURABI'S STANDARDS OF JUSTICE AND MERCY. Selections from the Babylonian Code.
Lesson 5. RELIGIONS OF ANCIENT PALESTINE. The Baalim, and the Worship at the High Places.
Lesson 6. PRIMITIVE HEBREW FORMS OF WORSHIP. Sacrifices, Sacred Rites and Ceremonies.
Lesson 7. INFLUENCE OF THE EXODUS ON ISRAEL'S FAITH. Jehovah's Power Demonstrated.
Lesson 8. ISRAEL'S FAITH IN THE MOSAIC AGE. Jehovah's Sovereignty Accepted.
Lesson 9. ISRAEL'S FAITH DURING THE SETTLEMENT. Blending of the Faiths of the Desert with those of Palestine.
Lesson 10. EARLY RECORDS OF THE HEBREWS. Their Dependence on Tradition.
Lesson 11. RELIGIOUS PHASES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM. The Influence of Samuel.
Lesson 12. GROWTH OF ISRAEL'S FAITH UNDER THE EARLY MONARCHY. Religious Aspects of David's Career.
Lesson 13. ABIDING IDEAS IN THE EARLY RELIGIONS. Review of Lessons 1-12.

Part II. ISRAEL'S RELIGION FROM SOLOMON TO THE BEGINNING OF THE EXILE.

- Lesson 14. EARLY MORAL AND RELIGIOUS STANDARDS. Israel's Legal Institutions.
Lesson 15. THE RELIGIOUS VALUE OF RITUAL. Solomon's Enlargement of the Temple Service.
Lesson 16. POPULAR RELIGION IN THE DIVIDED KINGDOM. The Setting up of the Golden Calves.
Lesson 17. THE CONFLICT WITH BAALISM. The Crisis in the Days of Elijah.
Lesson 18. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. The Preaching of Amos.
Lesson 19. THE DIVINE JUSTICE AND LOVE. Hosea's Message to a Faithless People.
Lesson 20. THE HIGHER IDEA OF GOD. Influence of the Prophets in Attaining a Truer Faith.
Lesson 21. THE MORAL DEMANDS OF RELIGION. The Insufficiency of Ceremonies.
Lesson 22. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. The Religious Estimate of the Individual.
Lesson 23. ISRAEL'S UNIQUE RELATION TO JEHOVAH. Theocratic Protests against the Monarchy.
Lesson 24. THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW. The Great Reformation under Josiah.
Lesson 25. THE NEW COVENANT. Jeremiah's Messianic Conceptions.
Lesson 26. THE TEACHINGS AND WORK OF THE EARLY PROPHETS. Review of Lessons 14-25.

PART III. ISRAEL'S EXILIC AND POST-EXILIC RELIGION.

- Lesson 27.** ISRAEL AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM. How this Catastrophe Affected its Life and Faith.
- Lesson 28.** COMFORTING MESSAGES TO THE EXILES. Ezekiel's Work in Babylonia.
- Lesson 29.** JEHOVAH'S CHARACTER AND ISRAEL'S DESTINY. The Rebuilding of the Temple.
- Lesson 30.** THE IDEAL SERVANTS OF JEHOVAH. Their Vicarious Sufferings as Instruments of Redemption.
- Lesson 31.** THE RISE OF JUDAISM. Nehemiah's Enforcement of the Law in Jerusalem.
- Lesson 32.** THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRIESTLY LAW. Ezra and the Great Assembly.
- Lesson 33.** ISRAEL'S NARROWNESS AND JEHOVAH'S LOVE. Teachings of the Book of Jonah.
- Lesson 34.** THE MACCABEAN STRUGGLE. Its Effect on Israel's Life and Faith.
- Lesson 35.** THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Messianic Visions of Jehovah's Reign.
- Lesson 36.** LATER DEVELOPMENTS OF JUDAISM. Rise of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
- Lesson 37.** THE RELIGION OF THE LAW. What it Accomplished, and wherein it Fell Short.
- Lesson 38.** OTHER PREPARATIONS FOR CHRISTIANITY. How Greece and Rome Paved the Way for its Rapid Spread.
- Lesson 39.** THE PROGRESSIVE NATURE OF DIVINE REVELATION. Review of Lessons 27-38.

PART IV. CHRISTIANITY THE FULFILMENT OF ISRAEL'S FAITH.

- Lesson 40.** THE OLD TESTAMENT RELIGION PASSING INTO THE NEW. The Preaching of John the Baptist.
- Lesson 41.** JESUS' MISSION IN THE WORLD. The Establishment of the Kingdom of God.
- Lesson 42.** JESUS THE GREAT TEACHER. His Relation to the Old Testament Religion.
- Lesson 43.** JESUS' TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIMSELF. His Relation to the Father and to the World.
- Lesson 44.** JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING GOD. The Divine Fatherhood.
- Lesson 45.** JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING MAN. Human Sonship and Brotherhood.
- Lesson 46.** JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING SIN. Its Essence Found in Selfishness.
- Lesson 47.** JESUS' WAY OF SALVATION. Redemption from Sin through Faith and Obedience.
- Lesson 48.** JESUS' LAW OF LOVE. The Unselfishness of a Good Life.
- Lesson 49.** JESUS' TEACHING IN REGARD TO THE FUTURE LIFE. Its Contrast with Old Testament Beliefs.
- Lesson 50.** JESUS' ABIDING PRESENCE. The Mission of the Holy Spirit.
- Lesson 51.** CHRISTIANITY FOR THE WORLD. The Great Commission.
- Lesson 52.** CHRISTIANITY THE FINAL RELIGION. Review of Lessons 40-51.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY.

Students are advised to use in connection with this course the American Revised Version of the Bible, which is undoubtedly the best.

Note carefully the subject and scope of each lesson as given in the title and as expanded in the "Object of the Lesson," Note 1.

Read the Scripture passage indicated at the head of the lesson, and consider its bearing on the subject in hand.

Read all the lesson "Notes," pausing after each one to let the mind dwell on its contents. Look up the Scripture references. Until this has been done do not look at the "Questions on the Lesson."

Under each of the "Questions on the Lesson" write a brief answer. Whoever fails to do this will miss one of the most helpful features of these lessons. If the class come with the answers carefully prepared and written out, this part of the lesson can be passed over rapidly.

Study for yourself some particularly interesting point suggested by the lesson. This may be a belief, a religious rite, a custom, a temple, a heathen deity, a biography or some historic event. Whatever it is, study it carefully. Make this course contribute to your fund of general knowledge by a good use of whatever libraries may be within reach.

Make note of one or two of the most interesting questions that come to mind as you study the lesson, and bring them up for discussion in the class. If no questions come, study the lesson again, and think harder.

Keep note-book and pencil in hand both when studying the lesson at home and when going over it in the class. In the note-book write (1) what you have to say on the several points indicated under "Note-book Work"; (2) any special assignment made to you; (3) interesting results of investigations, or questions that arise in private study or in the class. Such use of the note-book is indispensable if the best results are to be attained.

Read these suggestions frequently, and with each lesson put them into practice.

PART IV

CHRISTIANITY THE FULFILMENT OF ISRAEL'S FAITH

Lesson 40. THE OLD TESTAMENT RELIGION PASSING INTO THE NEW. The Preaching of John the Baptist.

Scripture Reading: The Substance of John's Preaching. Lu. 3: 1-18.

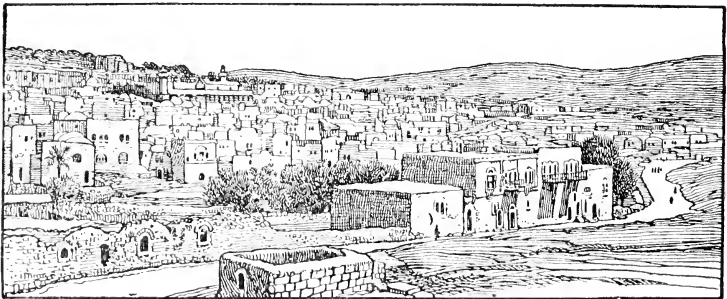
Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how in the public ministry of John the Baptist the religion of the Old Testament was expanding into, and heralding the way for, the religion of the New.

Note 2. The Close of the Old Testament Period and the Beginning of the New. The birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the long-awaited Messiah, marked the turning-point in the world's history, the transition from the period of preparation to the period of fulfilment. The year cannot be determined with absolute accuracy. Our present calendar rests on the calculation of Dionysius the Little, a Roman monk who died in 556 A. D. He fixed the birth of Jesus in the year 754 after the building of Rome. But this was certainly too late by at least four years since Herod the Great, who died in 750 of Rome (4 B. C.), was still living. Jesus may have been born a year or two before this occurred, that is, some time between 4 and 6 B. C.

At the time of the advent Judea had lost the political independence enjoyed under the Maccabean rule by absorption into the Roman empire. In 37 B. C. the Romans made Herod king of Judea. From 4 B. C. until 6 A. D. it remained under the rule of Herod's son, Archelaus, but from that time until after the death of Jesus it was placed under the administration of Roman governors. The Pharisees were for the most part indifferent to this political situation since they held that any government was tolerable which gave them unrestricted freedom of worship. But the masses of the people were burning to throw off the hated yoke of the foreigner. One of the remarkable developments after the Maccabean times was the return each year of great multitudes of Jews from all parts of the empire to attend the great feasts at Jerusalem. While the reaction against foreign thought and customs was still strong, this coming and going must have exercised a considerable influence on the native Jews. The religious conditions developed by the ritual law (Lesson 37) had become more pronounced. Superstitious and fanatical devotion

to its requirements led to popular outbreaks of uncontrolled passions that were repressed with horrible massacres. Excessive and often misdirected as these passions were we must recognize the fact that they were the expressions of a serious and most intense loyalty to religious convictions. On the other hand, the spiritual teachings of prophets and psalmists had also pervaded large numbers of the people, and developed a type of religious life that can be spoken of only in terms of the highest praise.

Note 3. The Voice in the Wilderness. Outside of a narrow circle the birth of the Messiah, with the exception of one event, passed without notice. The excitement caused by the arrival in Jerusalem of the wise men from the East and their inquiries concerning the newborn king of the Jews soon subsided. Events of seemingly greater importance absorbed public attention. Herod's murder of a score or more of infants at Bethlehem was as a mere drop in the bucket compared with atrocities that culminated in the order that, as soon



Hebron, Supposed to have been the Home of John the Baptist.

as he died, the leading people of Jerusalem be assembled in the hippodrome and slain, so that there might be real grief at his death. Nothing occurred during the next thirty years to warn the people that the long expected Deliverer was growing up to manhood in an obscure village in Galilee. Then (about 26 A. D.) the nation was thrown into a fever of expectation by the appearance in the wilderness of Judea of a prophet. With the deepest earnestness he summoned the people to prepare for the immediate appearance of the kingdom of heaven. No announcement could have made a deeper impression as it spread with lightning rapidity to the remotest borders of the land. In the heart of every true Israelite, without distinctions of social rank or party, from the silken-robed Sadducee in the temple to the beggar

in the street, it met a sympathetic response and kindled brilliant hopes of national independence and glory. The promise of that kingdom was the last word of the Old Testament and the prophetic visions of its splendor had taken a hold of the popular imagination that no subsequent storms of affliction could break.

Note 4. The Old Testament Substance in the New Message. The preaching of John the Baptist is reported in Mt. 3: 2, 7-12; Mk. 1: 6-8; Jo. 1: 15, 23, 26, 29, 30; and most fully in Lu. 3: 3-17. In all cases we have only the briefest abstract. But this is of such character as to show at once how closely John attached himself to the words of Israel's great prophets, and especially to that aspect of the Messianic hope which looked for a miraculous consummation (Lesson 35, Note 4). Like the people in general, he conceived of the Messianic kingdom as a visible political reign established first of all over Israel, but as carrying with it dominion over the nations. This dominion was to be preceded by a universal judgment—the day of Jehovah—when the good should be sifted out for salvation and blessing, and the wicked for destruction. This the people expected, but as children of Abraham, and embraced within the covenant, they regarded themselves as safe from condemnation and entitled to an unquestioned entrance into the Messiah's kingdom. From this false security John aroused His hearers by declaring that the Messianic judgment shall fall first of all on Israel, and that every unworthy Israelite shall be destroyed. Even at that moment the Judge was at hand, with His fan in His hand, ready to winnow the wheat from the chaff. Naturally, therefore, John's preaching became a call for moral reformation. This the people did not expect, but nevertheless great numbers of them confessed their sins and accepted John's baptism as a sign of inward cleansing and of union with those who were now preparing themselves for the Messiah's appearance. The scribes and Pharisees, who regarded themselves as already models of legal piety, resented the charge that they also were sinners, and refused to be baptized.

The brief interview between Jesus and John, when Jesus came to be baptized, not in His case as an outward sign of the inward renewal but as a consecration to His mission, seems to have wrought a momentous change in John's conception of the Messiah's mission. When the deputation of priests and Levites came to inquire into the nature of John's claims, he described the Messiah, already standing in their midst, not as the inexorable Judge, the incarnation of stern and unswerving justice whom he had announced in his earlier preaching,

but as "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (Jo. 1: 19-34). Into this brief statement he compressed the description of Jehovah's suffering servant given in Is. ch. 53 by the great Prophet of the Restoration. Thus John linked the highest thought in Old Testament prophecy with the mission of Jesus, the Messiah of the New Testament fulfilment.

Additional Reading References.

(1) On John the Baptist see Bible dictionaries. (2) On the interpretation of John's preaching, see commentaries on the gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John. (3) On John's mission see Rhee, *Life of Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 60-81; Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. i, pp. 275-287; also other lives of Christ. (4) On John's baptism, its origin and significance, see articles on "Baptism" in Bible dictionaries.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What period of religious development was covered by the lessons of the first quarter in this course? 2. What period was covered in the second quarter? 3. What period was covered in the third quarter? 4. What is the general subject covered by the lessons of the present quarter? 5. What is the title of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What event marked the close of the Old Testament period and the beginning of the New? (Mt. 2: 1; Lu. 2: 1-20; Gal. 4: 4; Note 2.)

2. What was the political situation in Judea at that time?

3. Mention some of the religious conditions.

4. What one event called public attention to the birth of the Messiah? (Mt. ch. 2; Note 3.)

5. What startling event occurred thirty years later? (Mt. 3:1, 2; Mk. 1:4-7; Lu. 3:1-3.)

6. How had the Old Testament prophets prepared the way for a response to John's announcement?

7. What were the leading ideas in John's early preaching? (Mt. 3:7-12; Lu. 3:7-17; Note 4.)

8. Where did John get these ideas?

9. What seems to have been John's conception of the nature of the Messianic kingdom?

10. In what respect did John's preaching oppose the popular feeling?

11. What, nevertheless, was its effect? (Mt. 3:5; Mk. 1:5; Lu. 3:3; 7:30.)

12. What seems to have made a radical change in the tone of John's preaching?

13. With what culminating Old Testament prophecy did John connect Jesus?

Questions for Consideration.

1. In view of Jesus' estimate of John the Baptist (Mt. 11:11), how shall we account for the common neglect of him?

2. Did John the Baptist belong to the old order or to the new?

Note-book Work.

On the chronological chart in the note-book insert the probable dates of the birth of Jesus and the beginning of John's ministry.

In the column of religious developments note John's announcement of the kingdom of God as at hand.

Prepare a brief statement of the leading events in the life of John the Baptist.

Bible Text. "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." Mt. 11:11.

Lesson 41. JESUS' MISSION IN THE WORLD. The Establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Scripture Reading: Jesus' Announcement of the Kingdom. Mt. 4:17, 23-25; 5:1-12.

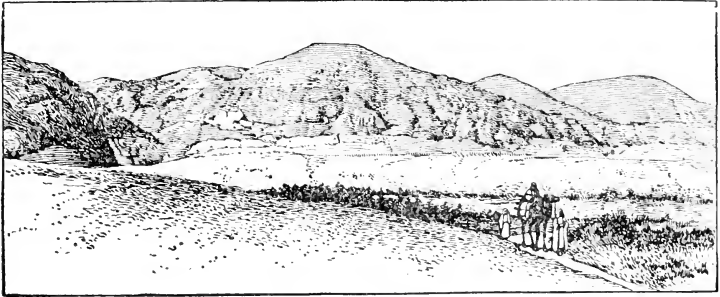
Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Jesus received His Messianic call, and what He understood by the kingdom of God.

Note 2. Jesus' Call to His Messianic Work. The ministry of John the Baptist came as a call to prepare for the impending kingdom of God not only to the nation at large, but to Jesus also in the seclusion of His home at Nazareth. In the former case it meant repentance and moral purification, in the latter consecration and service. Several months passed, however, before Jesus responded to the call. The obvious reason was that John's preparatory work might be effectually accomplished and that the expectancy aroused by him might be raised to the utmost tension.

What consciousness of a divine mission Jesus may have had during the preceding quiet years at Nazareth it is difficult to say. Aside from the simple incident of the visit to the temple at the age of twelve the gospels preserve no record of any word or act of His that challenged public attention. While it is almost certain that He had a sense of the stainlessness of His own character and a premonition of some kind of divine mission, it seems equally certain that the first clear consciousness of His Messianic mission came to Him at the baptism. The title "Son of God," applied to Him by the voice from heaven, could have had only one meaning. It designated Him as the Messiah (comp. Ps. 2:7), and recalls Jehovah's declaration respecting His servant in Is. 42:1. It met and confirmed the premonitions in His own soul. Additional confirmation came in the form of the descending dove, the appointed sign which authorized

John to proclaim Jesus as the Coming One, and which signified to Jesus Himself an endowment of spiritual power for His vocation (Is. 11:2; 61:1).

Note 3. Jesus' Recognition of the Nature of His Mission. After Jesus' baptism "straightway the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness" (Mk. 1:12) "to be tempted of the devil" (Mt. 4:1). This may best be interpreted as an Oriental description of (1) the



The Mount of Temptation.

The traditional scene of Christ's temptation (Mons Quarantania) is a mountain about seven miles northwest from Jericho.

need which Jesus felt of clarifying His own mind respecting the momentous problems laid upon Him by His Messianic call, and (2) the internal conflict which ensued between the ideals and principles which must control His work and the popular expectations respecting the Messiah. He saw the enormous magnitude of the task before Him, and the well-nigh insurmountable obstacles in the way. He knew what sufferings its accomplishment would involve. There was no question as to His willingness to obey the will of God. But what was the divine will? Could not the desired end be reached by some compromise with popular expectation? The people looked for a Messiah who should feed them with miraculous bread, as Moses had fed their fathers in the wilderness (Ex. 16:15; Jo. 6:30, 31). Why not use the miraculous power with which He felt Himself endowed and turn stones into bread? But to have done so would have shown His readiness to use material means to bring about spiritual results. Furthermore, the people looked for a Messiah who should "suddenly come to his temple" (Mal. 3:1). Why not make His first public appearance in Jerusalem as if descending from heaven in the midst of the smoking sacrifices and the throngs of devout worshipers? But to have done so would have indicated His

reliance on signs and wonders rather than the transforming power of religious truth. Finally, the people expected that the Messiah would establish Israel's supremacy over the nations by rapid and resistless conquests. Why not erect such an empire and work through it for the spiritual uplifting of the people? But to have done so would have been to accept the alleged supremacy of Satan over the world-powers for the promotion of the kingdom of God. Jesus rejected every suggestion of compromise with popular opinion as essentially evil. He saw that He must work for the accomplishment of purely spiritual ends by the use of purely spiritual means.

Note 4. Jesus' Idea of the Kingdom of God. The kingdom which the Messiah was expected to establish was called by the Jews "the kingdom of God," since it was regarded as essentially His reign over men. In view of its origin and nature it was also called "the kingdom of heaven." Jesus accepted these terms, but put into them a wealth of spiritual meaning before unknown. By the kingdom of God He indicated "that perfect order of things which He was about to establish, in which all those of every nation who should believe in Him were to be gathered into one society, dedicated and intimately united to God, and made partakers of eternal salvation."—*Thayer*. It aims at the realization of God's will and purposes on earth as they are realized in heaven (Mt. 6:10). Such conformity with God's will on the part of all men will create an ideal society untainted by selfishness, evil, or sin.

Jesus, accordingly, did not contemplate the betterment of human affairs through the increase of wealth, luxury, and power, but through the spread of righteousness and peace. He came with no political schemes or social programs. But He came with the single and immediate purpose of working for the reconstruction of the individual man, the social unit, for He knew that this would eventually broaden out into the reconstruction of the entire mass. Better men always make a better world. Love of God and of one's fellow men finds a quick solution for all social problems. External reorganizations that aim merely to procure better industrial conditions, shorter hours of labor, increase of wages, alleviation of poverty and even-handed justice do not touch the root of the difficulty. The selfishness from which those evils spring still remains in the heart as the ruling passion. Where the love of self is displaced by the love of God and self-will by God's will, social wrongs of every kind will be righted. Mutual suspicions, misunderstandings, hatreds, resentments, and injustice will vanish before a spirit of justice, sympathy, and mutual help-

ness. Holding, as Jesus did, such ideas of the kingdom of God, it was impossible for Him to compromise in any particular with the religious leaders of His time or with the multitudes whose ideas of the kingdom of God rose no higher than a political supremacy over the world and the making of all nations tributary to Jewish pride and glory.

Additional Reading References.

(1) On the kingdom of God, or kingdom of Heaven, see articles in Bible dictionaries. (2) Christ's idea of the kingdom; Bruce, *The Kingdom of God*, pp. 43-62; Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, pp. 102-112. (3) On the parables of the kingdom see commentaries on Mt. ch. 13.

Questions on the Lesson.

1. Why did Jesus delay in presenting Himself to John for baptism? (Lu. 3:21; Note 2.)

2. When did Jesus receive His Messianic call?

3. What did the dove signify to John and to Jesus? (Jo. 1:32-34.)

4. Why was Jesus "driven" into the wilderness? (Note 3.)

5. What may have been the nature of the problems which presented themselves to Jesus in the wilderness?

6. How did the first temptation conflict with Jesus' idea of His mission? (Mt. 4:3, 4.)

7. In this respect, what did the second temptation mean? (Mt. 4:5-7.)

8. What false method was suggested in the third temptation? (Mt. 4:8-10.)
9. Where did Jesus get the term "kingdom of God"? (Note 4.)
10. What did Jesus mean by the kingdom of God?
11. How did Jesus hope to reconstruct human society?
12. What position was Jesus forced to take toward popular ideas of the kingdom?

Questions for Consideration.

1. What kind of people did Jesus invite into His kingdom, and what light does this throw on His idea of it? (Mt. 9:13; 11:5; Lu. 19:10.)
2. How is the kingdom of God related to the church?

Note-book Work.

Prepare for the note-book a short statement descriptive of the kind of kingdom that Satan offered Jesus and the reasons that led Jesus to reject it.

Bible Text. "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Rom. 14:17.

Lesson 42. JESUS THE GREAT TEACHER. His Relation to the Old Testament Religion.

Scripture Reading: Jesus Came to Fulfil the Law. Mt. 5:17-20, 38-43.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show the duration of Jesus' ministry, where He taught, the form of teaching adopted by Him, and the relation of His teachings to those of the ancient law and prophets.

Note 2. When and Where Jesus Taught. As no certain date can be fixed for the birth of Jesus (Lesson 40, Note 2), so no certain dates can be given for His ministry. Some help is obtained from the passovers mentioned in the Fourth Gospel, but as the years are uncertain the dates of the passovers are the same. On the assumption that Jesus was baptized in January, A. D. 27, the following scheme will be approximately correct.

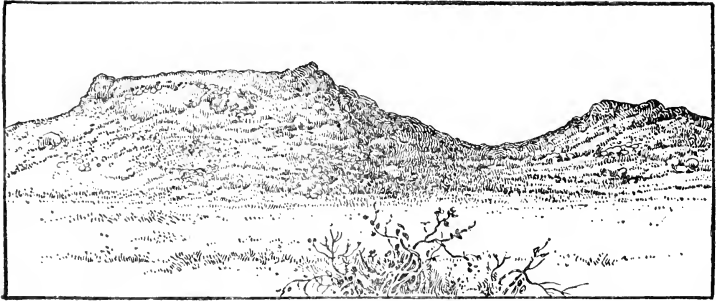
According to the Fourth Gospel (Jo. 2:13-20) Jesus began His public ministry by the cleansing of the temple at the passover (April 11-17) which followed His appearance at the Jordan. The next eight months were devoted to a ministry in Judea similar to that of the Baptist (Jo. ch. 3). Early the following December, four months before the harvest in April A. D. 28 (Jo. 4:35), Jesus gave up baptizing and transferred His work to Galilee (Jo. 4:1-3). From December, A. D. 27, until the final departure from Galilee, probably in November, A. D. 29, Jesus' work was mainly confined to this province. Between the departure from Galilee (Mt. 19:1) and the arrival in Bethany (March 31, A. D. 30), "six days before the passover" (Jo. 12:1), a period of about five months, Jesus appears to have labored in Perea west of the Jordan. The closing work, in and near Jerusalem, extended from the arrival in Bethany to the crucifixion, April 7, A. D. 30. Jesus' public work thus covered about three years and three months.

Note 3. How Jesus Taught. Jesus impressed His contemporaries as an extraordinary teacher whose wondrous works accredited Him as sent from God. Rabbi, or Teacher, was the title by which He was usually addressed (Jo. 1:38, 49; 3:2; 6:25; 20:16). As such the people contrasted Him with their official teachers (Mt. 7:29; Lesson 36, Note 3). The greatest praise given to a scribe was that he resembled a well cemented cistern that lost no drop that came into it. Jesus, on the contrary, was like a clear, cool spring pouring out unfailling refreshment for the thirsty multitudes. He never supported His sayings by appeals to stagnant traditions, but,

speaking from the fulness of His own heart, He appealed directly to the conscience and common sense of men.

Jesus' teaching was marked by a copious use of concrete illustrations. No other religious teacher that ever lived had such power to drive truth home by means of metaphors, similes and parables, nor such exquisite felicity in using them. The most dull and listless hearer carried away the picture even if he failed at the moment to catch its meaning.

Jesus' teachings were never presented in a systematic or theoretical form. His longest addresses as well as His briefest sayings were usually drawn forth by casual incidents. Of the five great discourses



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The traditional place of the choosing of the Twelve and the Sermon on the Mount.

reported in Matthew's Gospel three seem to have been entirely unpremeditated, namely, the parables of the kingdom (ch. 13), the denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees (chs. 22, 23), and the great discourse about the last things (chs. 24, 25). The other two, the Sermon on the Mount, addressed to the Twelve immediately after Jesus had called them to be His special disciples (chs. 5-7; comp. Lu. 6:12-49), and the address to the Twelve when He sent them forth by two and two (9:36-10:42), may have been premeditated, as unquestionably the actions were that preceded them.

Along with these longer discourses we find a multitude of short, pointed sayings almost all of which were prompted by passing incidents, by direct questions, or by hostile criticism. Into many of them Jesus crowded some single truth in absolute form, leaving the listener to discover its qualifications and limits.

The extraordinary attractiveness of Jesus' teaching and preaching is attested not only by the statement that "the common people heard

him gladly" (Mk. 12:37), but by the crowds that thronged around Him so eagerly that He could scarcely find time to eat or rest.

Note 4. Jesus' Relation to the Law and the Prophets. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus defined more fully than elsewhere His relation to the religion of the Old Testament. In saying, "Think not that I came to destroy the law and the prophets" (Mt. 5:17) He speaks as if He were aware that this was what His enemies alleged against Him, and what His friends feared. There was apparent reason for it. Not only had His teachings brought him into relentless warfare with Pharisaic tradition, but with the letter of the ancient Mosaic law. He did not hesitate to set aside its requirements when they conflicted with His own principles, as when He superseded a whole series of ancient laws by His own authoritative enactments (Mt. 5:21-48); or when, by a word, He abrogated the whole system of ritual defilement (Mk. 7:19*b*). But in all such instances Jesus was not overthrowing the standards inculcated by Moses and the prophets, but only realizing more perfectly the end which they had in view. The scribes and the Pharisees fairly worshiped the letter of the law, and sought to acquire righteousness by a slavish obedience to its minutest requirements. These requirements they restricted to mere external ceremonies, placing a tremendous emphasis on trivial things that involved no effort or sacrifice, such as tithing mint, anise and cummin (Mt. 23:23). In opposition to such perverted notions Jesus insisted that true righteousness consists in uprightness of character. It is inward and spiritual rather than outward and mechanical. The righteousness of the kingdom of God requires not merely that one shall not lift one's hand against property or life, but that one shall banish from the heart that spirit of covetousness or hatred which is liable to break out in the dishonest or murderous act. Ceremonial purity avails nothing so long as the heart is full of impure passions (Mk. 7:20-23). It followed, accordingly, that, when Jesus seemed to be destroying the law and the prophets, He was actually fulfilling them, "by realizing in theory and practice an ideal to which Old Testament institutions and revelations point, but which they do not adequately express."

Jesus not only fulfilled the law but He was Himself its final end and fulfilment (Rom. 10:4). He stood in the same relation to the law as to the temple and the sacrifices. As they were superseded by the pure spiritual worship which He introduced, so the law was superseded by His word. Thenceforth, for all His followers the supreme question was to be, not "What has Moses commanded?" but "What does Jesus want us to do and to be?"

Additional Reading References.

(1) Jesus the Teacher with Authority, Rhee: *Life of Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 226-237. (2) The teaching of Jesus, Gilbert: *Students' Life of Jesus*, pp. 181-192. (3) See *Bible Dictionaries*, articles on "Jesus Christ," "Parables," "Teaching," "Sermon on the Mount."

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. When did Jesus receive His distinct call to Messiahship? 2. Why was He driven into the wilderness? 3. What was the significance of the third temptation? 4. What did Jesus mean by the "kingdom of God," or the "kingdom of heaven"? 5. What was Jesus' method for introducing the kingdom of God? 6. What is the subject of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What is our main source for dating the events in Jesus' ministry? (Note 2.)

2. Where did Jesus begin His public ministry?

3. Where did He spend the next eight months?

4. Where did Jesus spend most of His ministry?

5. Where did He spend the closing period?

6. What title was often given to Jesus? (Note 3.)

7. How did Jesus' teaching differ from that of the scribes?

8. What was one of the conspicuous forms into which Jesus cast His teaching?
9. What shows the unsystematic character of Jesus' teachings?
10. What impression did Jesus make on the common people?
11. What did Jesus say to those who suspected that He intended to do away with the law and the prophets? (Mt. 5: 17, 18; Note 4.)
12. What shows, nevertheless, Jesus' freedom in dealing with the law?
13. How did the righteousness which Jesus demanded differ from that of the scribes and Pharisees?
14. What was Jesus' personal relation to the Mosaic law?

Questions for Consideration.

1. How is the statement that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law" consistent with what Jesus elsewhere implied as to its temporary character?
2. What were some of the qualities in Jesus' teaching that made Him the world's greatest religious teacher?

Note-book Work.

On the chart in the column of dates insert the approximate beginnings and ends of the three great periods in Christ's ministry preceding the closing week.

Prepare a brief synopsis of the Sermon on the Mount, stating simply the main points, such as (1) The subjects of the kingdom (5: 1-16); (2) The laws of the kingdom (5: 17-48), etc.

Bible Text. "Never man so spake." Jo. 7: 46.

Lesson 43. JESUS' TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIMSELF. His Relation to the Father and to the World.

Scripture Reading: The Perfect Accord between Jesus and the Father.
Jo. 5: 10-29.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show the nature of the exalted claims which Jesus made respecting His own person.

Note 2. Jesus' Claims to Messiahship. Jesus became clearly conscious of His mission as the Messiah at the moment of His baptism (Lesson 41, Note 2). But there were strong reasons why He should not at once announce it in public. John the Baptist had not yet finished his preparatory work, and until then Jesus felt that He could not begin His own distinctive work, much less present Himself as the fulfilment of the national hope. The cleansing of the temple at the beginning of His public ministry involved no Messianic claim. It was only what any reforming prophet, stirred by zeal for Jehovah's house, might have done. But on Jesus' part, coupled with His reference to the temple as "my Father's house," it was an act that challenged attention to Himself, and had the people stopped to think they would have seen that it involved an assumption of authority that belonged to the Messiah alone. In the early part of His ministry there was only one occasion on which Jesus plainly declared Himself to be the Messiah (Jo. 4: 26), and that declaration was made where it was not liable to be misused for political purposes.

In His preaching Jesus had much to say about the kingdom of God, but He never named Himself as the King. His favorite self-designation was the "Son of man," a phrase which was derived from the Old Testament (Ps. 8: 4; Ezek. 2: 1; 3: 1, etc.), and which there contrasted human weakness with divine independence and power. Two reasons may have led Jesus to adopt it, (1) because in Daniel's vision (Dan. 7: 13, 14) the "one like unto a son of man" corresponded to Himself whom God had commissioned to bring the Messianic kingdom into the world; and (2) because of all the Messianic titles then in popular use this was the least liable to fan into a flame those political passions which would have made it impossible for Him to continue His spiritual mission. For this reason Jesus also avoided the title "Messiah," or Christ. In popular usage it was bound up with false national hopes to which Jesus could not lend Himself without renouncing His mission. It was not until Peter's great confession (Mt. 16: 16) near the close of the Galilean ministry that Jesus accepted it as an expression of inspired faith.

Other titles by which Jesus was addressed were "Son of David"

(Mt. 9:27; 20:30; 21:9, 15) and "Son of God" (Mt. 14:33; Mk. 3:11; Jo. 1:49). The former Jesus never used because of its obvious reference to a particular phase of Messiahship, and the latter only on a few occasions as reported in the Fourth Gospel (Jo. 5:25; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4). Thus it appears that while Jesus throughout His ministry indirectly claimed by His words and acts to be the Messiah, He steadfastly avoided Messianic honors, because He knew that they would arouse false hopes and precipitate a disastrous crisis. When, finally, at the triumphal entry He accepted the homage of the multitude as their Messianic King, this act sealed His fate.

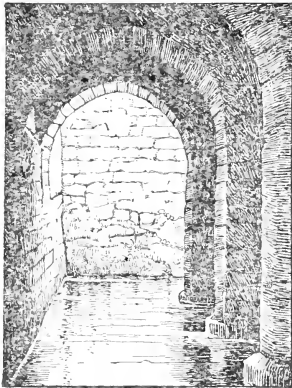
Note 3. Jesus' Claim to Moral Authority. That which most astonished the people in Christ's teaching was the tone of authority which rang clear and sharp in every utterance (Lu. 4:32). He appealed to no precedents and supported His bold statements by no citations of venerable names. Even the authority of Moses, whose every word was regarded by the scribes as an echo of the divine voice, was unhesitatingly set aside in favor of the final and decisive word of Jesus—"but I say unto you" (Mt. 5:22, 28, 32, 34). As He claimed superiority to the law so He also claimed to be greater than the temple and Lord of the Sabbath, the two most sacred institutions of the Jews (Mt. 12:6, 8).

Unlike other religious teachers Jesus was not a seeker for truth. He did not grope His way out of darkness into light, nor did He reach moral conclusions by processes of reasoning. On the contrary, He invariably spoke with the absolute certainty of one who stood face to face with eternal truth, and who intuitively knew the things of God. He used parables and illustrations, and He reasoned from nature and Scripture, but only to make clear to others the truths which He had perceived by direct insight. Note, for example, His proof of a future life drawn from God's words to Moses at the bush (Mt. 22:31, 32).

Jesus claimed supreme and undivided moral authority over the lives of men. The command, "Follow me," involving a renunciation of everything that might stand in the way of complete obedience, was addressed to mankind at large as well as to the first disciples (Mt. 10:37; Lu. 14:33). And yet, though He was conscious of His right to claim popular allegiance to Himself, He never compelled, but only invited, men to take His yoke upon them (Mt. 11:29, 30). At the same time He was convinced that if men rejected this invitation, they were pronouncing their own doom (Mt. 23:37-39).

Note 4. Jesus' Claim to be the Son of God with Divine Authority.

It was apparently on Jesus' first visit to Jerusalem after the opening of His Galilean ministry that He healed an impotent man at the



The Traditional Pool of Bethesda.

Pool of Bethesda (Jo. 5:1-9). Jesus not only did this on the Sabbath, but told the man after he was healed to take up his bed and walk. This was a flagrant violation of the Pharisaic Sabbath regulation against bearing burdens. Naturally it involved Jesus in a sharp controversy with the religious leaders who were glad of a chance to censure Him as a Sabbath breaker. In defending Himself against this charge Jesus made a remarkable revelation of His relation to God. His assertion, "My Father worketh even until now," showed that God is doing good without ceasing, and therefore takes no Sabbath rest in

any such sense as the Jews imagined. In adding, "and I work," Jesus put Himself on the same plane. In healing the impotent man Jesus had done God's work, and therefore Jesus' critics were really censuring God for Sabbath breaking. In thus designating Himself as the "Son," the Jews quickly perceived that Jesus was claiming a sonship superior not only to that which all men sustain to God, but even to that ascribed to the Messiah whose current title was the "Son of God." They saw that Jesus was claiming a relationship to God so exclusive and unique as to "make himself equal with God" (Jo. 5:17, 18). Jesus at once accepted the interpretation as true, and confirmed it by the further declaration that the sympathetic union between Himself and the Father is so close as to make it morally impossible for Him to do anything contrary to the Father's will (Jo. 5:19). Because of this absolute accord between them the Father has given to the Son power over the resurrection (Jo. 5:21, 24-26, 28, 29; comp. 11:25, 26), and over the judgment (Jo. 5:22, 23, 27). This stupendous claim to be the supreme arbiter of human destiny is repeatedly presented in the other Gospels (Mt. 7:22, 23; 16:27; Mk. 8:38), but nowhere so fully and majestically as in the picture of the last judgment, where Jesus represents Himself as gathering together all the nations and deciding every man's destiny according to his attitude toward Himself (Mt. 25:31-46).

Note 5. Jesus' Consciousness of His own Greatness. Because Jesus was conscious of being the Son of God in an altogether peculiar sense, He was in a position to make certain affirmations respecting Himself, nothing like which were ever made before or since. He could speak of Himself as coming down from heaven (Jo. 3:13), and as having had an eternal existence before His assumption of human nature (Jo. 8:58). His words therefore had an imperishable validity; "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mt. 24:35). He represented Himself as "the light of the world" (Jo. 8:12), as "the way, the truth, and the life," and as the sole means of access to the Father (Jo. 14:6; comp. Mt. 11:27). As the Son of God Jesus not only claimed the divine attribute of sinlessness (Jo. 8:46; 14:30), but He exercised the divine prerogative of forgiving sin (Mk. 2:5-12; Lu. 7:48). He invited all that labor and are heavy laden to come to Him as the only Source of rest unto their souls (Mt. 11:28, 29). There is no way of attaining eternal life except through union with Himself (Jo. 10:28). Finally, He presents Himself as invested with all authority in heaven and on earth, as controlling all the forces of the universe that are needed for the advancement of the kingdom of God (Mt. 28:18).

Jesus could make those stupendous assertions concerning Himself without a suspicion of pride, arrogance or conceit, simply because He knew that they were true. All subsequent ages have confirmed His testimony. Those who have studied His character most profoundly yield the most unqualified assent to His claims. Men find no more fault with Him for these amazing self-assertions than with the mountain because it lifts its white crest above the plain, or with the sun because its splendor extinguishes the moon and the stars.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Jesus' conception of Himself. Rhees: *Life of Jesus of Nazareth*, pp. 249-269. (2) Claims of Christ. Hastings: *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, vol. i, pp. 335-337. (3) Consciousness of Christ. *Ibid.*, pp. 361-366. (4) On "Son of Man," "Son of God," see Bible dictionaries.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. Into what three main divisions is Jesus' public ministry divided?
2. How was Jesus' teaching different from that of the scribes?
3. Mention some of the prominent features of Jesus' teaching.
4. How did Jesus define His relation to the law and the prophets?
5. What is the subject of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. Why did Jesus not announce Himself as the Messiah at once after His baptism? (Note 2.)
2. What did His cleansing of the temple signify?
3. Why did Jesus call Himself the "Son of man"?
4. Why did He avoid the title "Messiah"?
5. Why did He avoid Messianic honors?
6. What personal claims did Jesus make in relation to the Mosaic law, the temple, and the Sabbath? (Note 3.)
7. How did Jesus show that, unlike other teachers, He was not a seeker after truth?
8. What claim did Jesus make in relation to the lives of other men?
9. How did Jesus define His relation to God? (Note 4.)
10. In what sense did Jesus call Himself the Son of God?
11. As the Son of God what divine authority had been given to Jesus?

12. Mention some of the extraordinary self-assertions that Jesus made about Himself. (Note 5.)

13. Why could Jesus make such assertions?

14. Why have men not resented them?

Questions for Consideration.

1. How is Jesus' claim that all judgment is committed to Him consistent with His declaration "I came not to judge the world" (Jo. 12:47)?

2. If Christ has all power in heaven and on earth, why does He not use it in crushing out evil?

Note-book Work.

Transcribe into the note-book eight or ten of those sayings of Jesus respecting Himself which you consider most extraordinary.

Bible Text. "This is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Jo. 6:40.

Lesson 44. JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING GOD. The Divine Fatherhood.

Scripture Reading: The Father's Love for the Lost. Lu. 15:11-24

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Jesus emphasized the fatherhood of God, what He meant by it, and the place which it occupied in His teaching.

Note 2. Heathen and Jewish Ideas of the Divine Fatherhood. From the time of Homer on the Greeks called Zeus "the father of gods and men" and they prayed to him as "Father Zeus." But by this term they meant little more than originator and preserver of nature. Occasionally the term appears in substantially the same sense in the Old Testament, *e. g.*, in Mal. 2:10; "Have we not all

one father? hath not one God created us?" In the comparatively few places in the Old Testament where this term is applied to God it denotes, not His personal relation to an individual, but His gracious attitude toward Israel as His chosen people (Deut. 32:6; Is. 63:16; Jer. 3:19; 31:9), or toward Israel's king (2 Sam. 7:14). The religion of the prophets sought to bring men into intimate personal relations with God. But when Judaism displaced the prophet religion, it removed God far away from the individual worshiper, unapproachable except through an official priesthood and with elaborate ritual, and possessed of a name too sacred to be pronounced by mortal lips. Gradually the idea of God lost the noble attributes prominent in the teachings of the prophets, and became, as with Philo, a mere philosophical abstraction, the "Existing One"; or thoroughly unspiritual, as in the Jerusalem Talmud, where God is represented as a model Rabbi who studies the law three hours a day, keeps the sabbath, and rises up before the hoary head. He becomes "the Holy One," or "the Blessed One," terms by which He is still commonly known among the Jews.

Note 3. Jesus' Revelation of the True Fatherhood of God. In Jesus' first recorded utterance when a boy in the temple (Lu. 2:49) and in His last word on the cross (Lu. 23:46) He spoke of God as the Father. As thus used by Him this designation occurs in Mark's Gospel five times, in Luke seventeen, in Matthew forty-five, and in John about ninety times. It is the term in which Jesus embodied His most distinctive conception of God. Indeed, it can truly be said that the one and only subject in respect to which Jesus claimed to bring an absolutely new revelation into the world was that of the fatherly character of God: "No man knoweth . . . the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Mt. 11:27). It was because Jesus knew Himself to be the well beloved Son of God, and was conscious of an absolute accord with Him in nature, will, purpose, and action, that He was able to make a perfect revelation of the character of God, and this revelation in its utmost essence He comprehended in the name Father. Jesus was not the first to use this term. We have already seen (Note 2) that it had been known to Jews and Gentiles. But Jesus in adopting it poured into it a wealth of unsuspected meaning. He made it the fullest embodiment of the revelation which He brought into the world. On the lips of Greek or Jew the term Father, as applied to God, denoted a mere relationship—His relation to the world as its creator and preserver, or to a particular nation as its patron deity. But on

the lips of Jesus it became descriptive of the inmost and essential character of God. In speaking of God as "the Father" Jesus stated concretely what John stated abstractly when he declared that "God is love." Fatherhood and love are thus equivalent terms. Knowing God as Jesus did, He was able to affirm that God is all that fatherliness implies—love that is limitless and undeserved, that anticipates every need, that pours out all its resources on the beloved, that suffers and hopes, that waits for and goes out to meet the returning penitent and draws him to its heart with infinite tenderness and joy (Lu. 15: 11-24). All that is noblest in the best human fatherhood is but a faint reflection of the perfect fatherhood of God (Mt. 7: 11). In the teaching of our Lord fatherhood is not simply one of the divine attributes among many, but that which is central and dominant.

Note 4. Different Meanings of the Divine Fatherhood. The teaching of our Lord respecting the fatherhood of God moves on three planes:

(1) *God as the Father of Jesus Christ.* Jesus continually speaks of God as "my Father," and He never joins Himself with His followers in such an expression as "our Father." The Lord's prayer which begins with this phrase was a model for His disciples, not for Himself. Indeed, He takes special pains to emphasize the distinctiveness of His own relation in specifying "my Father and your Father, and my God and your God" (Jo. 20: 17). Jesus was conscious of living, moving, and having His being so wholly within the sphere of God's will and purposes as to constitute Him in a unique sense the Son of God. In this respect no being in the universe stands on the same plane as Himself.

(2) *God as the Father of believers.* God's redeemed and faithful children, whom Jesus called His brothers and sisters because they do the will of His Father in heaven (Mk. 3: 35), stand on the next lower plane of nearness to God. They reciprocate His paternal love, they are pure in heart, obedience is to them a delight, and it is their high privilege to co-operate in the accomplishment of His gracious purposes. These are they who worship the Father in spirit and truth. In turn they are the objects of His tender care. Each of them is individualized ("thy Father," Mt. 6: 4, 18) as an object of God's loving thought and kindness. For their present protection and guidance and for their eternal salvation they need give themselves no anxiety, since all the resources of divine wisdom, power, and love are engaged in their behalf: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Lu. 12: 32).

(3) *God as the Father of all men.* But while Jesus thus emphasized His own unique sonship, and the high and true sonship of every believer, He did not exclude the mass of mankind from a similar relation to God. In addressing the multitude He did not choose another name for God. To them also He came with the consoling message that His Father was their Father too, and that however far they might have wandered and however deep the degradation into which they had fallen they were not beyond God's fatherly love and care. With unwearied patience He was waiting for their penitent return to His heart and home. This universal fatherhood of God rests not merely on the fact that He has created man in His own image and likeness, but on the fact that in His essential nature God is love. But obviously those who are lacking in filial obedience and reverence cannot experience the benefits of the divine fatherhood in the same full measure as God's loyal children. His willingness to bestow His grace upon them may be frustrated by their unwillingness to receive it. But alienation from Him does not destroy sonship. The prodigal in the far country feeding swine was still a son for whose return the father watched and waited (Lu. 15: 15-20). He was out of normal relation with his father. Jesus' mission in the world was to bring God's prodigal children back into normal relations with Him. He came, not to transform them into the children of God, but to reveal to them the fact that God is their Father, and to lead them to a joyful recognition of this already existent fact.

Note 5. The Divine Fatherhood Fundamental in the Teachings of Jesus. A careful examination of the Gospels shows that Jesus, in choosing the name Father as His favorite designation for God, was not influenced by merely sentimental considerations. It was no loosely attached poetic embellishment of His speech that could be dropped out and leave no perceptible vacancy. On the contrary, the fatherhood of God was fundamental in all His thinking. In teaching and preaching Jesus emphasized the peerless value of the kingdom, but only because it was the Father's kingdom where His will is done as it is in heaven (Mt. 6: 10). The entire realm of human duty springs from the relation which men sustain to God as their heavenly Father, and the consequent relations which they sustain one to another as brethren. Because God is the heavenly Father, and because He is love, therefore love should be the controlling power in the moral and religious life of humanity. While Jesus commanded His followers to love one another, the command certainly was never intended to be limited to the Christian brotherhood.

Additional Reading References.

(1) On the fatherhood of God see article "Father and Fatherhood" in Hastings: *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*; also articles on "God" in other Bible dictionaries. (2) Christ's doctrine of God. Bruce: *The Kingdom of God*, pp. 109-127. (3) The new idea of God and the name Father. Beyschlag: *New Testament Theology*, vol. i, pp. 79-82.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. Why did Jesus by preference call Himself "The Son of Man"?
 2. Why did He avoid Messianic titles and honors? 3. How did Jesus exhibit His moral authority? 4. In what sense did Jesus call Himself the "Son of God"? 5. How did Jesus show His consciousness of His own greatness? 6. What is the subject of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What did the Greeks mean when they called Zeus a "father"? (Note 2.)

2. What is meant in the Old Testament when God is spoken of as a Father?

3. How was the idea of divine fatherhood suppressed in the later Judaism?

4. On the contrary, what use did Jesus make of the name "Father"? (Note 3.)

5. Why did Jesus use the name "Father" as a designation for God?

6. What new revelation as to the character of God did Jesus bring into the world?

7. What parable in the teachings of Jesus most forcibly illustrates the fatherly character of God?

8. What did the fatherhood of God mean to Jesus Himself? (Note 4.)

9. What does the fatherhood of God mean to those who obey and trust Him?

10. What shows that Jesus extended the idea of God's fatherhood so as to embrace all men?

11. What does God's fatherhood mean to those who do not love and obey Him?

12. What place does the fatherhood of God occupy in the teachings of Jesus? (Note 5.)

13. How is this shown?

Questions for Consideration.

1. Why has Christian thought in our time transferred the emphasis from the sovereignty to the fatherhood of God?
2. What is gained by this transfer of emphasis?

Note-book Work.

In the Sermon on the Mount, as reported in Matthew's Gospel, God is spoken of sixteen times as "Father." Make a list of these passages in the note-book, and from them gather into a brief statement the traits of fatherhood that are ascribed to God.

Bible Text. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." Mt. 7:11.

Lesson 45. JESUS' TEACHING RESPECTING MAN. Human Sonship and Brotherhood.

Scripture Reading. Jesus' Compassion on the Multitude. Mt. 9:27—10:1.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Jesus, in virtue of the fatherhood of God, proclaimed the divine sonship of man and a new human brotherhood.

Note 2. Heathen and Jewish Estimates of Man. The ancient world had no conception of the true nature of man nor of his real worth and dignity. The universal prevalence of slavery, the degradation of woman, the exposure of undesirable infants, and the trifling value placed on human life, showed that a human being counted for little more than a superior brute. That a human being as such possesses inalienable personal rights was not understood. A slave was of value to his owner only as a chattel. A free man, or citizen, became of importance to the community or the state only as he acquired rank or fortune. The Greeks despised as barbarians all but those who spoke their language. When the Romans conquered the Greeks, they applied the same scornful epithet to all but themselves and the Greeks. The Jews hated both Greeks and Romans and spoke of them as Gentile dogs. Among the Jews themselves the sanctimonious scribes and Pharisees looked down with a sense of proud superiority on ordinary men and women, who did not strictly keep the law, as mere "people of the earth," social rubbish not worth saving. The obligations of brotherhood were, of course, recognized within the family and in decreasing measure throughout the clan, the tribe, and the nation, but no conception had yet been formed of a brotherhood of man.

Note 3. Jesus' Revelation of the Dignity of Man. So long as God was thought of as sustaining to man no higher relation than that of Creator and Ruler, man himself could only be thought of, along with other living organisms, as a product of the creative energy. No higher idea was attainable until men had obtained a higher idea of the relation which God holds to the human race. This came in the revelation which Jesus brought of the fatherhood of God. But the moment Jesus proclaimed this great truth He lifted man from the plane of mere creatureship into the exalted relation of divine sonship. If God is his Father, then he is God's child. If he is God's child, then, in a deeper sense than ever suspected before, he is made in the likeness of God. This can only mean that God endowed him with mental and moral faculties essentially like His own. On this

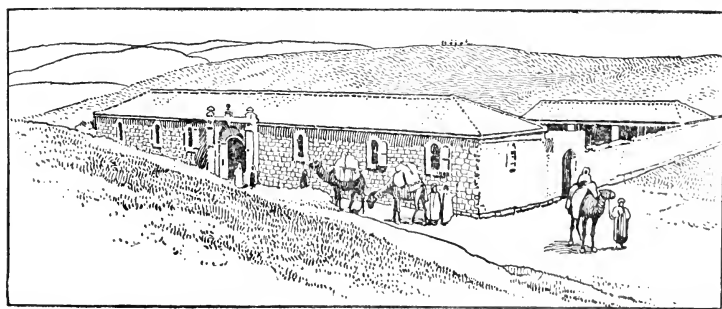
fact rests the possibility of revelation, of science, and of fellowship with God; for, if the human mind is not essentially akin to the divine, God cannot reveal Himself to man, man cannot understand the works of God, and there can be no community of interests between them. It follows, furthermore, from this fact of divine sonship, that man stands not merely at the head of the material creation, but on the border-land between two worlds, his physical organism relating him to the perishing animal world below, while his true inner self relates him to abiding spiritual world above. Man is so great a being that this present world cannot contain him. He reaches out into eternity. As a child of God, he is the heir of an immortal destiny.

If there is a universal divine fatherhood that reposes not only on the fact of creation, but on the essential nature of God as love (Lesson 44, Note 3), then there must be a corresponding universal sonship. Every human being, viewed in the light of the ideal, is a child of God whose highest duty and ambition should be to realize the privileges implied in divine sonship.

Note 4. Jesus' Recognition of Human Sin. While Jesus perceived the ideal dignity of every human being and valued him accordingly, He saw also that even the best of human beings have fallen far short of attaining this ideal. He knew that men were sinners and had fallen into such evil ways as to seem no longer worthy to be called children of God. Nevertheless, beneath all pride and selfishness, ignorance and vice, refined wickedness or shocking outbreaks of lust or brutality, Jesus recognized the infinite worth of the human soul. Even at his worst man is still God's child. Jesus hinted at this incomparable dignity in such questions as "How much is a man of more value than a sheep" (Mt. 12:12)? and "What shall a man be profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life" (Mt. 16:26)? But most emphatically He taught it by His conduct toward those whom the religious leaders neglected as undeserving of God's care. Jesus, too, hated sin with an intensity never felt by these religious leaders, but He never allowed His hatred of sin to keep Him from trying to save sinners. Instead of shunning them as outcasts, He went to them as a sympathetic, helpful Friend, so that by winning their confidence He might win them back to righteousness and to God. How much God thought of them He showed in the parables of the shepherd seeking his lost sheep, and the woman her lost piece of silver (Lu. 15: 1-10), and of their joy over their recovery

of that which was lost. From these and other instances where Jesus speaks of the "lost" it is clear that He does not employ the term in an absolute sense, as, for example, we speak of a ship being "lost" that sinks in mid-ocean. To Him the "lost" were human beings out of the proper relations to God through ignorance and sin, but who as long as they remain human beings remain the children of God; wilful, disobedient, and even defiantly wicked, they may be, but moral alienation cannot obliterate the fact of sonship either divine or human. What is needed is that the "lost" be brought back into normal relations to the heavenly Father, and therefore Jesus began His preaching with the word "repent" (Mk. 1:15), and He declared the purpose of His mission to be "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lu. 19:10).

Note 5. Jesus' Teaching respecting Human Brotherhood. The doctrine of human brotherhood rests on that of the divine fatherhood. Only to the extent that God is conceived of as the Father of all men will men come to think of all other men as their brethren. At first sight it seems singular that Jesus, who bore such unmistakable testimony to the former relation, made no explicit affirmation concerning the latter. The reason may have been a conviction that when men come to love God as their Father, they will quickly come to love one another as brethren, and that until this love of God as the heavenly Father is established in the heart it is useless to appeal to an ideal brotherhood as a basis for moral conduct. That all men



The Inn of the Good Samaritan, on the Jericho Road.

do sustain such a relation one to another is implied, however, in such teachings as the command "Love your enemies" (Mt. 5:44), and the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lu. 10:25-37) in which the term "neighbor" has obviously the same meaning as brother-man.

But the new sense of kinship through which Jesus aimed to redeem human society must be awakened by a more powerful motive, namely, that the duties which men owe one to another spring out of their common relation to God. It is this thought which has aroused not merely a wide-spread discontent with the inequalities and injustices that prevail in the present social order, but a larger sense of responsibility for these conditions than society has ever felt before. Not only has the Christian church (the new brotherhood which Jesus founded), responded most magnanimously to this feeling of social responsibility, but it has passed out from the church into the community at large where it is manifested in elaborate organizations for the relief of human suffering and need. In all Christian lands enormous sums are annually devoted to charities that appeal to brotherly love as the chief reason for their existence. In nothing has the operation of this Christian sense of universal brotherhood been more effective than in the extinction of human slavery. In the ancient world no institution was more widely and deeply rooted in the social structure, and none was so wickedly defiant of the inherent rights of human personality. For Christianity to have declared war against it would have been suicidal. Jesus said not a word against this monstrous wrong. Instead He revealed the universal fatherhood of God, and let men infer the universal brotherhood of man, and wherever these two ideas have gone slavery has gone down, until at the present time it has been abolished over almost the entire earth. The fate that has overtaken slavery will also overtake war. The power that has destroyed the one will eventually destroy the other also. Both violate the law of brotherhood, and both must disappear before the all-conquering spirit of Christian love and mutual helpfulness.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Articles "Brotherhood" and "Children of God" in Hastings, *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, vol. i. (2) Universality of the Christian Republic, Seeley, *Eccle Homo*, ch xii.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What ideas of divine fatherhood prevailed before the coming of Jesus? 2. How did Jesus' idea of God's fatherhood differ from all preceding ideas? 3. In what three senses did Jesus use the name Father as a designation for God? 4. What relation did the doctrine of the divine fatherhood sustain to the other teachings of Jesus? 5. What is the subject of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. How did the heathen world in the time of Jesus show that it had no conception of fundamental human rights? (Note 2.)

2. What was the attitude of the Jews toward the rest of the human race?

3. Why did the ancient world reach no higher conception of the inherent value of man? (Note 3.)

4. How did Jesus revolutionize man's conception of his own worth and that of his fellow man?

5. How did Jesus' teachings affect the idea of man's future destiny?

6. On what does the idea of a universal human brotherhood rest?

7. What shows that Jesus, notwithstanding His exalted estimate of human worth, held no sentimental views as to man's present condition? (Note 4.)

8. If Jesus hated sin above all things, why did He not shun the company of sinners?

9. What was Jesus' idea of the "lost"?

10. Why did Jesus not emphasize the natural brotherhood of man as He did the fatherhood of God? (Note 5.)

11. How did Jesus imply that all men are brethren?

12. How is the thought of human brotherhood affecting social conditions at the present time?

13. Why have the teachings of Jesus led to the extinction of slavery, although He uttered no direct condemnation of it?

14. How do these teachings bear on the establishment of universal peace?

Questions for Consideration.

1. To what extent do so-called "fraternal" organizations realize a true human brotherhood?

2. To what extent is a true brotherhood realized in the Christian church?

Note-Book Work.

Copy in the note-book Jesus' sayings respecting the "lost" as given in Mt. 10:6; 15:24; 18:11; Lu. 15:4, 6, 24, 32, and from these sayings, viewed in the light of His general teachings, write a short statement of what He seems to have meant by the "lost."

Bible Text. "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." Jo. 13:34.

Lesson 46. JESUS' TEACHINGS RESPECTING SIN. Its Essence Found in Selfishness.

Scripture Reading: Slighting the Grace of God. Lu. 14:15-24.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show what Jesus taught respecting the nature and consequences of sin.

Note 2. Pre-Christian Views of Sin. A right view of the nature of sin depends on a right knowledge of the character of God and of man, and of their mutual relations. Such knowledge the heathen world has never attained, and consequently it has never had a proper

sense of sin. Lawlessness or crimes that disturb the peace and security of society are easily seen to be evil and are condemned accordingly, but to sin as a moral state, involving separation of the soul from God, the heathen mind is and always has been insensible. The gods of the heathen were on the same moral plane as the heathen themselves. To be out of moral harmony with them was therefore inconceivable. Among the Greeks Nemesis, the goddess of chastisement and vengeance, was not a personification of offended righteousness, but merely of that moral indignation which is felt when the normal order of things is disturbed either by excess of good fortune or by the arrogance and lawlessness which usually attend it.

From the first the Hebrews had a higher idea of the moral character of Jehovah than the surrounding nations had of their gods. He was Israel's true and righteous King whose will was law. Transgression of law, accordingly, was treated not merely as a civil but as a religious offence. It was sin, and the greatest of all sins was a violation of Israel's primary law forbidding idolatry, the worship of other gods. To the later prophets and the psalmists sin was not merely a transgression of Jehovah's law, but a rupture of the happy relations which should exist between Him and His people, and which resulted in the hiding of His face and a discontinuance of His mercies. The popular religion continued, however, from first to last, to think of sin as transgression of law rather than as lack of conformity to the divine character. The chief defect in this view was its failure to distinguish between moral and ritual transgressions, with the result that blamelessness respecting the latter came to be regarded as of supreme importance, while entire disregard of the former was viewed with indifference. This was the prevailing belief and practice under the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 23:23-28).

Note 3. Sin as Self-will in Opposition to God's Will. Jesus' conception of sin was a distinct advance on that of the Old Testament, and was closely connected with His teachings about God and man. God as the supreme Sovereign rightly claims obedience from man His subject. But Jesus did not make kingship but fatherhood the central attribute in God's relation to man. Man, accordingly, is God's child. The fundamental relation between parent and child is not authority but love. Filial love experiences its highest joy in yielding prompt and cheerful obedience to the Father's will. Law, therefore, is no longer an external code which demands obedience on pain

of penalty, but an inward impulse in perfect accord with the wishes and purposes of God (Jer. 31:33). From the point of view of the divine fatherhood sin is something more fundamental than the mere overstepping of a commandment. It is the substitution of self-will for God's will, of independence of God for trustful dependence, of hostility for love. Sin makes *selfishness* the ruling principle in human conduct, and selfishness makes men unresponsive to God's love, as the rock is unresponsive to the sunshine. In the thought of Jesus sin is failure to live according to the promptings of divine love. It is indifference to God's grace; those who were bidden to the great supper "all with one consent began to make excuse" (Lu. 14:18). It grows into contemptuous refusal of God's grace, and even into murderous hostility toward those through whom He offers it; those who were invited to the king's marriage feast for his son not only "would not come," but even "laid hold on his servants, and treated them shamefully, and killed them" (Mt. 22:3, 6). Sin is refusal of the sheep to follow the good shepherd (Lu. 15:4), alienation of the son from the father's heart and home (Lu. 15:12), and neglect to prepare for participation in God's grace, as shown by the foolish virgins (Mt. 25:1-12) and by the man without the wedding-garment (Mt. 22:11-13). In all these illustrations self-will is seen asserting itself against God's will.

Note 4. Sin as Unbelief in Jesus Christ. When Jesus urged men to become His followers, He demanded absolute faith in Himself. On the other hand, the sin for which He incessantly condemned men was a lack of faith in Himself and in the message which He brought (Jo. 3:12; 4:48; 5:38, 47; 6:36; 16:9, and many other places). The magnitude of this sin lay in the fact that it was nothing less than a rejection of Him in whom the Father had made the fullest revelation of Himself. Unbelief, like idolatry in the Old Testament, separates the soul from God, because it cuts it off from the only channel through which the grace of God can enter a human heart.

Note 5. Sin as Inhumanity toward Man. Next to supplanting God's will by self-will and the rejection of Himself as the son of God, Jesus placed the sin of inhumanity—man's indifference to the sufferings of his fellow men. Nothing so aroused His anger as when the religious leaders showed how little they cared for the relief of human suffering in comparison with the conservation of their petty Sabbath laws (Mk. 3:5). Jesus had only unsparing rebuke for the abominable cruelty of the Pharisees toward the man born blind whom He had healed, and who had courageously defended his un-

known Healer (Jo. 9:36-41). Instead of being good shepherds for God's flock, they were "thieves and robbers," cowardly "hirelings" (Jo. 10:8, 12, 13). The rich man was condemned to torment, not because he was utterly bad, but because of the selfishness which he manifested in his heartless neglect of the beggar who lay at his door (Lu. 16:19-25). A man who makes himself a stumbling-block to young disciples deserves being cast into the sea with a great millstone hung around his neck (Mt. 18:6). God is likened to a king who magnanimously forgives an enormous debt due to himself, but who punishes with pitiless severity one who shows no pity in collecting a trifling debt from a fellow servant (Mt. 18:23-35). In the final judgment the eternal destiny of every man is represented as determined by his kindness or unkindness shown to his fellow men (Mt. 25:31-46). The force of these illustrations is greatly increased by comparison with Jesus' refusal to pronounce sentence on the shrinking woman whom the scribes and Pharisees dragged through the streets into His presence, and whom they would have stoned (Jo. 8:2-11). Jesus' severity in denouncing the sin of inhumanity was due to the high value which He placed on every human being. Man is not a mere creature, but God's child, made in His image, and for an eternal destiny. To misuse one such, even the humblest, is a crime so heinous as to merit unsparing punishment. Here, again, sin appears as a selfish regard for personal interests enjoyed at the expense of others.

Note 6. Consequences of Sin. The spirit of love makes men reverent and obedient toward God and sympathetic and helpful toward their brother-men. Sin, which is the assertion of self as against God and man, alienates men from both. It perverts life from its true purpose, makes it impossible to receive God's best gifts, and checks the development of man's noblest powers. The sinful life falls short of attaining its true destiny. It is a blasted bud, a blossom that does not mature into fruit, a failure and a waste. Not only so, but in breaking away from loyal service to God in order to be his own master, man not only fails of this but becomes subject to another prince (Lu. 4:5, 6; Jo. 14:30), and a slave of sin (Jo. 8:34). As such he comes into opposition to the spirit and aim of God's whole moral government. The consequence is death. The fatherly love of God is not extinguished by human sin, but so long as man voluntarily separates himself from God, the only Source of true life, no other consequence is possible.

Additional Reading References.

(1) See articles on "Sin," "Fall," "Heredity," "Selfishness" in *Bible Dictionaries*. (2) On the "Nature of Sin," see discussion in Clarke's *Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 207-215. (3) On "A Christian Conception of Sin," see McLane in *Biblical World*, Jan. 1905, pp. 46-51.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What estimate was generally put on the value of man before the coming of Christ? 2. How did Jesus show the true dignity of man? 3. How did Jesus show in His conduct toward sinners His high estimate of man? 4. What did Jesus teach about human brotherhood? 5. What is the title of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. Why has the heathen world never attained an adequate sense of the nature of sin? (Note 2.)

2. What is the predominant conception of sin in the Old Testament?

3. How did this view of sin show its inadequacy?

4. How did Jesus develop the Old Testament idea of sin? (Note 3.)

5. What is the essence of sin?

6. How did Jesus in His teachings trace sin to selfishness?

7. What form does sin take in relation to the person and mission of Jesus Himself? (Note 4.)

8. What form of sin did Jesus especially condemn, when shown in relation to one's fellow men? (Note 5.)

9. How did Jesus in His teaching and conduct show His condemnation of such sin?

10. On what did Jesus base His attitude toward the sin of inhumanity?

11. Mention some of the disastrous consequences of sin in the personal human life. (Note 6.)

Questions for Consideration.

1. Why can sin not be satisfactorily explained as the survival of animalism in man's struggle to attain a higher life?

2. Why is there not at the present time as keen a sense of sin as seemed to prevail among Christians a generation or two ago?

Note-Book Work.

In view of the various aspects of sin as presented in this lesson write for the note-book what seems a fairly comprehensive definition of sin.

Bible Text. "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." Jo. 8:34.

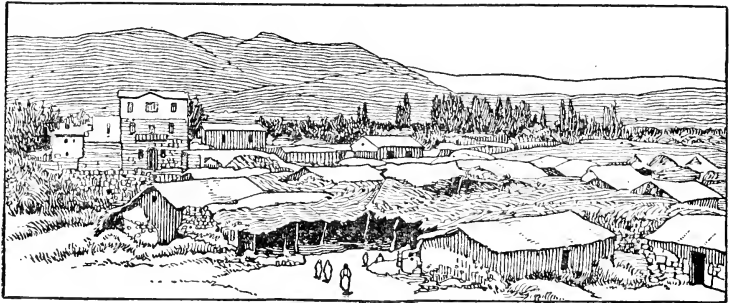
Lesson 47. JESUS' WAY OF SALVATION. Redemption from Sin through Faith and Obedience.

Scripture Reading: Salvation and Forgiveness through Faith. Lu. 7:36-50.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show the nature of the salvation which Jesus procured, and the means whereby it is to be obtained.

Note 2. Jesus' Use of the Terms "Salvation" and "Save." Jesus is reported to have used the word "salvation" only twice—in His conversation with the woman at Jacob's well, "Salvation is from the Jews" (Jo. 4:22), and in His reply to Zacchæus at Jericho,

“This day is salvation come to this house” (Lu. 19:9), that is, Jesus Himself, as the means whereby salvation is obtained, has



Modern Jericho.

From "Glimpses of Bible Lands."

entered the house. The verb “save” is used by Him about twenty times. In a number of instances it denotes deliverance from bodily ills or impending perils, as “Thy faith hath saved thee,” that is, “made thee whole” (Mt. 9:22; Mk. 10:52), or “he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Mt. 10:22). But in most instances Jesus uses the word in a comprehensive sense for all the spiritual blessings which men experience through the redemption which He brings. Thus He says to the woman who anointed His feet while He was dining in Simon’s house, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace” (Lu. 7:50), the same words that He addressed to the woman who had been healed by touching the border of His garment; but in this case it was only another way of expressing what He had just said, “Thy sins are forgiven” (vs. 48). To Zacchæus Jesus said furthermore, “The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lu. 10:10). To the Jews in Jerusalem at various times He said, “I say these things, that ye may be saved” (Jo. 5:34); “By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved” (Jo. 10:9); and “I came not to judge the world, but to save the world” (Jo. 12:47). These examples suffice to illustrate Jesus’ use of these words.

Note 3. What Jesus Meant by Salvation. The meaning which Jesus attached to “salvation” in its religious sense is closely connected with all of His distinctive teachings. It is but another aspect of the kingdom of God, the theme that was constantly on His lips. This kingdom is God’s just and righteous rule over men, the establishment of a new order of things in which God’s will is realized not only in each individual member, but throughout the entire social

organism (Lesson 41, Note 4). Salvation, accordingly, denotes citizenship in the kingdom of God and participation in its benefits. Only those morally qualified can enter it. They are the poor in spirit, those to whom sin is a grief, the meek, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peace-makers (Mt. 5:3-9); in a word, those who find their highest happiness in cultivating a spiritual likeness to God.

Salvation, in the next place, is closely connected with Jesus' thought of God as the heavenly Father and of men as the children of God. The normal relation between them is tender interest on the one hand, and loyal obedience on the other. But this relation has been interrupted by sin. God is still the loving Father, bestowing His gifts even on the evil and the unjust, so far as they are able to receive them. But man is not a dutiful son. In heart and conduct he is alienated from the Father, whose greatest and best gifts he is neither willing nor able to receive (Lesson 44, Note 4, 3). From this point of view salvation means a recognition of God's fatherly love, a genuine repentance, a return to the Father, and a restoration to the privileges of sonship.

But, finally, that which keeps men away from the kingdom of God and from fellowship with the Father is sin. Love is the supreme law in the kingdom and in the home. Sin, however, has substituted selfishness for love as the ruling principle in human life. Selfishness, the desire to do what pleases oneself rather than what pleases God, leads man into a false independence and into a real spiritual bondage. Sin becomes an impassable barrier between him and a holy God. Thus it not only deprives him of the blessings that God bestows upon His dutiful children, but exposes him to sorrow, suffering and death. It sinks him into a state where he cannot attain his high destiny (Lesson 46, Notes 3, 5). Hence it appears that salvation means deliverance from sin and its dreadful consequences. Herein lies the significance of the Messiah's name: "Thou shalt call his name **JESUS**; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21); and of the Messiah's mission: "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" (Jo. 1:29). Hence also the title "Saviour" (Lu. 2:11).

From all this it appears that salvation is fitness for the kingdom of God with participation in its benefits, and restoration to the full privileges of divine sonship, all of which are obtained through deliverance from sin. Moreover, since both the kingdom and the sonship are to be enjoyed here and now (Lu. 17:21; Mt. 5:9, 45) as well as in the heavenly world, it follows that salvation is designed to

be a joyful experience in this life, as well as a heavenly consummation; a present, as well as eternal deliverance from guilt and condemnation.

Note 4. The Basis of Salvation. Jesus knew that the work of human salvation included the necessity of His own death. No other result could follow from supreme devotion to the kingdom of God in an unrighteous world. The deadly opposition which He encountered almost from the beginning of His ministry made this clear. Immediately after Peter's great confession at Caesarea Philippi Jesus began to teach His disciples "that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed" (Mt. 16:21). But while this tragic issue must have been present to His own mind long previous to this announcement (Jo. 3:14, 15; Mt. 9:15), it was, like His Messiahship, a subject about which He could make no public disclosures and give no private instructions. The disciples, who scouted the mere suggestion of His death (Mt. 16:22), were in no position to understand its necessity and deep meaning. Nevertheless, significant allusions to it occur in some of Jesus' latest sayings. The Son of man came "to give his life a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:28). He sacrificed His own life that thereby He might give life unto others. Just before His final departure from the temple He spoke of His being "lifted up from the earth" in order to draw all men unto Himself (Jo. 12:32). As the old covenant between Jehovah and His people was sealed by the shedding of blood (Ex. 29:5-8), so at the Last Supper Jesus declared that a "new covenant" (Lu. 22:20) was sealed in His own blood which was "shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28). The guidance of the Holy Spirit after Jesus' departure was needed to show what these sayings really meant.

Note 5. The Way of Salvation. Man's experience of salvation is conditioned on

(1) *Repentance.* This is a fundamental and indispensable change in the sinner's attitude toward God. The word "repentance" denotes a *change of mind*, a turning from one thing to another. When Jesus began His ministry with the call, "Repent ye" (Mk. 1:15). He summoned men to turn from sin, the gratification of their own wills, to righteousness, the fulfilment of God's holy will. It implies the putting away of sin as an utterly hateful thing instead of clinging to it, the choice of a higher instead of a lower life. To this change on the human side, usually known as conversion, corresponds the forgiveness of sin on the divine side, and restoration to the privileges

of sonship. This is regeneration, or being born anew (Jo. 3:3, 7).

(2) *Faith.* To Jesus' demand, "Repent ye," He added the further demand, "and believe in the gospel" (Mk. 1:15). The glad message of God's goodness and grace can have no effect on men unless they believe it. Men will not turn to God unless they have faith in Him. But faith in God includes faith in Jesus Christ through whom God manifests Himself to the world. Hence Jesus' insistence on faith in Himself as essential to salvation (Jo. 6:35, 36, 47; 9:35-38). This faith shows itself in trustful attachment to His person and in a hearty submission to His will.

(3) *Obedience.* Jesus says: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me" (Mt. 11:29), the example of perfect obedience to the Father's will. Again, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples" (Jo. 8:31). Here obedience is made the condition of discipleship. In the farewell address Jesus said to the eleven gathered around Him in the upper room: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments," and "If a man love me he will keep my word" (Jo. 14:15, 23). Thus obedience is made the supreme test of love to Christ. The way of salvation is summed up in the command, "Follow me," and this includes devotion to the person of Christ, conformity to His rules of life, and unquestioning acceptance of His teachings.

Additional Reading References.

In Bible dictionaries, especially Hastings' five volume edition, see articles on "Salvation," "Redemption," "Ransom," "Atonement," "Propitiation," "Repentance," "Forgiveness," "Reconciliation," "Faith," and "Obedience."

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was the prevailing Old Testament idea of sin? 2. Why must selfishness be regarded as the essence of every form of sin? 3. What new form did sin assume after the coming of Christ? 4. What did Jesus regard as the chief sin of man against his brother-man? 5. What is the subject of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. In what sense did Jesus commonly use the words "salvation" and "save"? (Note 2.)

2. How did Jesus connect the idea of salvation with that of the kingdom of God? (Note 3.)

3. How did He relate it with His thought of God as the heavenly Father?

4. What did Jesus mean by salvation considered in relation to human sin?

5. How is sin connected with the Messiah's name and mission?

6. In view of all these considerations what did Jesus include in His idea of salvation?

7. On what event in His own earthly mission did Jesus make the possibility of human salvation depend? (Note 4.)

8. Why did Jesus not explain more fully the saving significance of His own death?

9. Mention some of the sayings in which He hinted at the necessity for His death.

10. What three steps must be taken in order to experience the blessings of salvation? (Note 5.)

11. What is meant by "repentance," and why is it necessary?

12. Why did Jesus demand "faith" as essential to salvation?

13. Why did Jesus demand obedience?

14. How did Jesus summarize the way of salvation?

Questions for Consideration.

1. In the work of human salvation did God have to be reconciled to man, or man to God, or each to the other?
2. What is the supreme evil from which salvation delivers us?

Note-book Work.

Prepare for the note-book a short statement of reasons for Jesus' coming into this world based on such passages as Mt. 1:21; Lu. 19:10; Jo. 1:11, 12; 3:16; 2 Cor. 8:9; Gal. 4:4, 5; Phil. 2:6-11.

Bible Text. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Mt. 11:28.

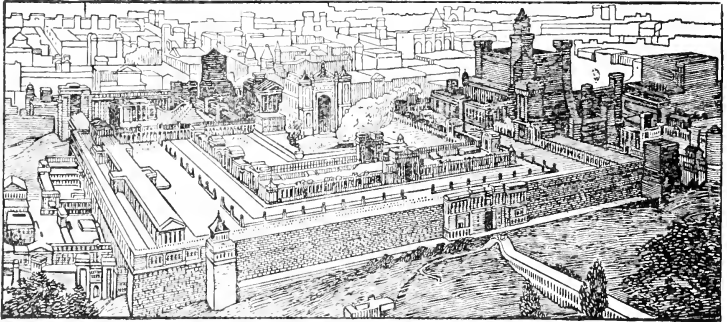
Lesson 48. JESUS' LAW OF LOVE. The Divine Life in Man.

Scripture Reading: Jesus' Commandment of Mutual Love. Jo. 15:9-17.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how the divine life in man manifests itself in character and conduct.

Note 2. Jesus' Summary of the Law. Jesus' doctrine of the fatherhood of God had a far-reaching effect in shaping His teachings. Since God is the heavenly Father, the fundamental attribute of His character is love, and since all men are His children His relation to them is primarily determined by love. Naturally He expects that their attitude toward Himself shall be shown in the same way. Sin, on the contrary, has displaced love by selfishness, and selfishness, which separates the soul from God, issues in death. Now because God is love He has sent His Son to redeem those who had fallen under the power of sin, and were about to perish. Salvation is the restoration of love as the ruling passion in the human heart. The Jews trusted for salvation to their keeping of the divine law. Hence the question of supremacy among the commandments was greatly debated among the Rabbis, some arguing for one precept and some for another. It is not surprising, therefore, to read that a certain lawyer came to Jesus with the question, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" It was the day of Jesus' last appearance

in the temple. The lawyer, seeing how skillfully and completely He had answered the crafty questions of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mt. 22:15-34), may have propounded his question in the sincere hope of getting an equally satisfactory answer. Without a moment's



The Temple Area in the Time of Christ.
From Selous' Picture of Jerusalem in its Grandeur.

hesitation Jesus singled out the command which enjoins love to God as the first of all, and, next to that, that which enjoins love for one's fellow man (Mt. 22:35-40). Thus He summed up the whole round of human obligation in the single word "love."

Note 3. How Love for God Shows Itself. (1) *In a holy life.* Those who truly love one another try to become like one another in disposition and character. God is holy. The first desire of one who has experienced forgiveness of sins, and who has entered into the full privileges of divine sonship, is to live a godly life, that is, to share in God's holiness. Birth into this new spiritual life arouses new aspirations and motives, and gives visions of new and higher aims to be attained. Every impulse is subordinated to God's will, or it is felt that it should be. But complete conformity to God's will is not achieved at once. A holy life is the product of slow growth and long struggles. The kingdom of God in the individual soul, as well as in the world at large, is like a seed cast upon the earth—"first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear" (Mk. 4:26, 28). In the soul of the believer, as well as in the kingdom, the enemy is ever busy sowing tares (Mt. 13:25). In the model prayer, therefore, Jesus taught His disciples, along with the petition for daily bread, to ask, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Mt. 6:12). The child of God should aim in his sphere to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect in His sphere (Mt. 5:48).

(2) *In love for the things of God.* Those who love God will naturally love His word. To men the Bible becomes a treasury of divine instruction, of counsel in perplexity, of comfort in trouble, of strength in trial, and of inspiration for high and holy living. It provides nourishment for the soul, which without it perishes as the body perishes without food (Mt. 4:4). Moreover, those who love God will love the church, the brotherhood of believers in Christ, and will not only accept but seek opportunities for service and sacrifice in its behalf. They will love the Sabbath, because it is God's holy day, and they will sanctify it to divine worship and other appropriate uses. They will try to promote the interests of God's kingdom, not only in their own land, but throughout the world. Hence missions, home and foreign, will enlist their prayerful sympathy and generous support.

(3) *In prayer.* Prayer is the soul's communion with God. It is breathing the air of the heavenly world. True prayer is not a mere saying of prayers, a thoughtless repetition of set forms of words, but the sincere utterance of the heart. It includes asking for things needed, a humble and contrite confession of shortcomings and sins, and, above all, thanksgiving for the numberless blessings which the good hand of our heavenly Father daily bestows upon us. Jesus not only set an example of prayer to all His followers (Mk. 1:35; Lu. 6:12), but encouraged them to pray by the strongest assurances that God hears and answers prayer (Mt. 7:7-11; Jo. 15:16).

Note 4. How Love for Man Shows Itself. This reveals itself.

(1) *In a recognition of human worth.* The mere fact that every man is a child of God invests him with incalculable value. How greatly God estimates his worth is shown by His sending His Son to redeem man from sin and death, and by His joy over every sinner that repents. Those whom God prizes so highly cannot be treated with indifference and contempt, however poor or ignorant they may be. As Jesus saw possibilities of good in social outcasts and sought to win them to righteousness, so should those who have experienced God's saving grace co-operate with Him in rescuing the lost.

(2) *In recognition of human rights.* Every self-respecting man will treat his friends right. The Christian does not only this, but, so far as he follows the example of his Master, he treats every man as a friend. The rights which he claims for himself he extends to others. Above all men he should be honest and fair in his dealings, he should never take advantage of another's ignorance or weakness, he should not injure another's good name by speaking evil of him, he should

not oppress those who have none to maintain their cause, and he should not revenge himself on those who injure him but freely forgive even as he wishes to be forgiven.

(3) *In recognition of human needs.* Not only should the Christian refrain from injuring other men, but he should be ready at all times to do them whatever good he can. The temptation is often strong to let others look out for themselves as best they can. This was the spirit of the priest and the Levite, but not of the Good Samaritan. It was not the spirit of Jesus, and it should not be of His followers. God gives riches, not that they be squandered on oneself, but that they may be used for the good of others. Wealth means stewardship, and "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). The rich man at whose door Lazarus lay was not condemned because he had obtained his wealth by fraud or oppression, but because of his utterly selfish use of it. No duty is more plainly included in the law of love than the relief of physical suffering, and there is no more obvious test of a Christian profession than a readiness to do this (Mt. 25:31-46).

Note 5. How a Proper Love for Self is Shown. When Jesus made the standard of love for the neighbor the love which every man should cherish for himself, He thereby implied that a certain amount or kind of self-love is entirely legitimate (Mt. 22:39). Such love will prompt one to live up to high ideals, and to shun all impurity in thought, speech, and conduct. It will demand the suppression of all evil habits and sinful passions, such as anger, jealousy, profanity, drunkenness, lust and lewdness. It should lead one to be moderate in gratifying all innocent appetites. So, too, within proper limits, pleasures and amusements are not only allowable but helpful. "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy." But, on the other hand, to pursue pleasure as the chief good is to put a low estimate on the worth of one's own life.

Additional Reading References.

(1) In Bible dictionaries see articles on "Love," "Righteousness," "Prayer," "Worship," and "Sanctification." (2) The laws of mercy, resentment and of forgiveness. Seeley: *Ecce Homo*, chs. xix-xxiii.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What did Jesus mean by "salvation?" 2. How has the possibility of salvation been procured for sinful men? 3. On what con-

ditions may salvation be experienced? 4. What is the subject of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. How did Jesus' teaching respecting God affect His other teachings? (Note 2.)
2. Why was Jesus asked which commandment He considered the greatest?
3. What was His answer to the question?
4. What desire should the thought of God's holiness inspire in His children? (Note 3.)
5. How can a holy life be attained?
6. What new interests are started and stimulated by love for God?
7. What constitutes true prayer?
8. How should Christians regard their fellow men? (Note 4.)
9. How should Christians show their respect for human rights?
10. How should Christians show their sympathy for human needs?

11. How should a proper self-love affect the Christian life? (Note 5.)

Questions for Consideration.

1. Why is the perfecting of the Christian life a process rather than a thing to be attained all at once?
2. Why did Jesus lay stress on self-denial as the only way to reach self-perfection?

Note-book Work.

For the note-book let each member of the class make a list of what he considers the most important helps in living the Christian life.

Bible Text. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another." Jo. 15:12.

Lesson 49. JESUS' TEACHING IN RESPECT TO THE FUTURE LIFE. The Contrast with Old Testament Beliefs.

Scripture Reading. Jesus the Resurrection and the Life. Jo. 11:19-44.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show what Jesus taught about the certainty and the nature of a life hereafter, and how these teachings were related to Old Testament ideas respecting the same.

Note 2. Old Testament Beliefs as to a Future Life. During the greater part of the Old Testament period the Hebrews gave little thought to the question of a personal immortality. The significance of the individual was lost in that of the family, the tribe, or the nation. The continuance of these was a matter of far greater solicitude than that of the individual. To enjoy length of days, a fair measure of material prosperity, and the blessing of a large family of children was regarded as the most satisfactory reward for piety, and the surest sign of divine approbation. At death a man, no matter where he died or was buried, was said to be "gathered to his fathers" (Jud. 2:10; 2 Ki. 22:20), or to "his people" (Gen. 25:8; 49:29). Death, therefore, was not regarded as the end of personal existence, but what the mode of this existence might be is not entirely clear. That the disembodied spirit retained some measure of consciousness was taken for granted, but, as compared with the mental activity of the previous earthly life, it was a mere dream-like existence. From this state of inactivity it was supposed that the shades could be aroused by magical

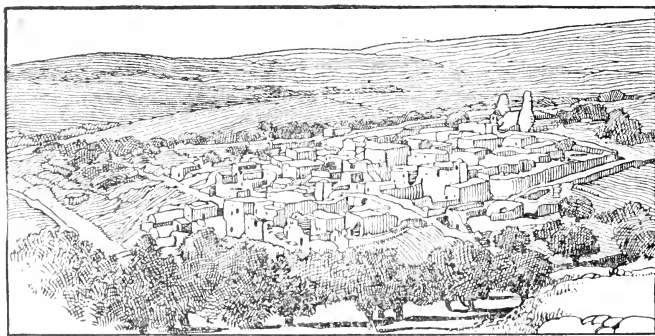
incantations; hence in the ancient world there arose a class of diviners who were known as necromancers, and who professed to be able to communicate with the spirits of the departed. Among the Hebrews such superstitious practices were strictly forbidden (Deut. 18:11), though they were occasionally employed, as by Saul through the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28:3-20). The abode of the departed was in Sheol, the underworld, a place of silence, darkness, and forgetfulness. Here they were cut off from participation in human affairs, and even from communion with Jehovah (Job 10:21, 22; Is. 38:10-12, 18). Sheol was the abode of all the dead, kings and their subjects, slaves and their taskmasters, the good and the bad. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest" (Job 3:11-19).

Note 3. Later Expansions of Old Testament Beliefs. After the Babylonian exile, but especially during the two centuries preceding the opening of the New Testament era, the popular conception of the state of the dead underwent a remarkable development. This was due in part to contact with Greek thought, but more especially to a growing apprehension of the prophetic teachings respecting the worth of the individual man, and the consequent emphasis on personal responsibility (Lesson 22, Notes 4, 5). This led to a conviction that an assignment of the same fate to the righteous dead as to the wicked was inconsistent with divine justice. This distinction, together with the foreshadowing of a resurrection, appears in one of the latest of the Old Testament writings (Dan. 12:2, 3), and is fully developed in the Jewish apocalyptic writings of this period. Sheol is conceived of as divided into two portions, separated by an impassible gulf. The part assigned to the wicked is known as Hades, Gehenna, or Hell, while that assigned to the righteous is called Paradise, or Abraham's Bosom. Some, however, removed Paradise out of Sheol entirely, and made it a place of felicity in the presence of God. These were the popular beliefs in the time of Jesus.

Note 4. Jesus' Certainty of a Life Hereafter. The reality of a conscious life beyond the grave was an assumption that underlay all the teachings of Jesus. He never tried to prove it, any more than He tried to prove the existence of God. He did not need to, since these beliefs were held by all whom He ordinarily addressed. The most explicit declaration on this subject was made in reply to the Sadducees, when He showed that the doctrine of a future life which they rejected was clearly implied even in that part of the Old Testament which they unquestioningly accepted as God-given scripture; God "is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him" (Lu. 20:38). The

exhortation to lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth (Mt. 6:20) affirms the fact of a heavenly as well as an earthly life, and so does the promise of thrones to His followers "in the regeneration" (Mt. 19:28), and of fellowship with Himself in Paradise to the penitent thief (Lu. 23:43). The many mansions in the Father's house (Jo. 14:2) cannot on any interpretation refer to earthly conditions. Nor is this certainty of a future life affirmed in respect to His followers only but of the unbelieving as well. When the Son of man comes in His glory, His enemies shall "see" Him "sitting at the right hand of power" (Mt. 26:64). All His references to a coming day of judgment (Mt. 7:22, 23; 10:15; 11:23, 24; 25:31-46), when men shall be rewarded or condemned according to the character of their present life, rest on the assumption of a future conscious life for both classes. The same is implied in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lu. 16:19-31).

Jesus' certainty of a life hereafter rested on a surer basis than mere popular belief. It was a necessary conclusion from His thought of



Bethany.

From a photograph.

The tall ruins at the right of the picture are pointed out as those of the home of Martha and Mary.

God as the heavenly Father, and of the human personality as of infinite worth. It is the very nature of love to seek intimate and endless fellowship with the one beloved. No true earthly father can look with complacency on the annihilation of his children. How much less can the heavenly Father, who has created man with capacities for endless fellowship with Himself and who has set His love upon him, be thought of as willing to see him quickly sink into nothingness. So sure was Jesus of an eternal life for those who believe in Him that He could speak of it as already begun in this life. To the grief-stricken Martha at Bethany, hoping at best only for the resurrection of her brother

“at the last day,” Jesus said, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die” (Jo. 11:25, 26). Similar affirmations are made in the great discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum (Jo. 6:54, 58), and in the intercessory prayer (Jo. 17:3). Eternal life issues from the eternal Father, it partakes of His eternal being, and it consists in living fellowship with Him.

Note 5. Heaven and Hell. Jesus said surprisingly little respecting the conditions into which men enter in the life hereafter. In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus He seems to accept the popular belief that Sheol was divided into separate abodes for the righteous and the wicked. In other places His language implies that, in accordance with the thought of His time, heaven is an upper region, the abode of God and His angels (Mt. 6:9; 24:36). It was “the Father’s house” from which Jesus had descended into this world to accomplish His work of redemption (Jo. 3:13; 16:28), and to which He purposed to return at the close of His mission (Jo. 14:12, 28; 16:10, 28). Here He would prepare a place for His followers, that where He is they may be (Jo. 12:26; 14:3; 17:24). But beyond the vague intimation that in the Father’s house are “many mansions” Jesus gave no description of the place. Equally indefinite are His references to the location or nature of Hades, Gehenna, or Hell. Here again His words reflect the current ideas of His time. It was the fiery abode of the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:41), to which the wicked also are assigned. But while Jesus thus appropriated popular conceptions of heaven and hell, conceptions that should not be interpreted with slavish literalness, yet we cannot conceive of His having endorsed them in any form unless to His mind there lay behind them in the spiritual world realities, glorious or terrible, that fully warranted His words.

Note 6. The Nature of the Future Life. To those who through faith in Christ and obedience to the will of God have entered into the high privilege of divine sonship, death is merely the portal through which they pass into the Father’s house. Earthly relations are no longer necessary. “They that are accounted worthy to attain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection” (Lu. 20:35, 36). They enter “into the joy” of their Lord, and “inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world” (Mt. 25:21, 34). There they are with Christ and behold His glory (Jo. 17:24).

Of future retribution Jesus speaks far less than of future rewards, but His words are terribly significant. Hades is a place of "torments" (Lu. 16: 23, 24), where is "the weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 8: 12), and "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mk. 9: 47, 48).

Very impressive is the contrast between Jesus' reticence about the future life and His constant emphasis on the need of personal preparation for it. A mere entrance into heaven or an escape from future punishment is not so important a matter as the acquisition of a character that will fit one for participation in the felicities of the one, and deliver from the loss involved in the other.

Additional Reading References.

(1) See Bible dictionaries, articles on "Eternal Life," "Eternal Fire," "Eternal Punishment," "Eternal Sin," "Immortality," "Heaven," "Paradise," "Abraham's Bosom," "Hades," "Hell," "Gehenna," "Eschatology," etc. (2) Articles in *Biblical World*, February 1906; July and August 1911.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. In what commands did Jesus sum up the entire Old Testament law? 2. In what three ways does love for God show itself? 3. In what three ways does love for man show itself? 4. How can a proper love for oneself be shown? 5. What is the subject of this lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. Why did the earlier Hebrews lay little stress on personal immortality? (Note 2.)

2. What kind of existence was attributed to the dead?

3. What was Sheol conceived to be?

4. What led the later Hebrews to modify these beliefs? (Note 3.)

5. What new beliefs respecting Sheol developed in the centuries immediately before Christ?
6. What was Jesus' attitude toward the belief in a future life? (Note 4.)
7. What was Jesus' answer to the Sadducees who did not believe in a life hereafter?
8. Mention some other sayings of Jesus which show His attitude toward the belief in a future life.
9. On what did Jesus base His certainty as to a conscious personal immortality?
10. What was Jesus' conception of eternal life?
11. To what popular ideas of heaven and hell did Jesus accommodate Himself? (Note 5.)
12. Why may we not dismiss His words as mere accommodations to current superstitions?
13. What did Jesus intimate respecting the nature of the heavenly life? (Note 6.)
14. What did He intimate respecting the state of the lost?
15. On what did Jesus lay the supreme emphasis in connection with a life hereafter?

Questions for Consideration.

1. How does a belief in immortality affect man's estimate of his own worth?

2. How would a general disbelief in a future life be likely to affect man's present life?

Note-book Work.

Write a brief statement of probable reasons for Jesus' comparative silence respecting the future life.

Bible Text. "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." Jo. 14: 2.

Lesson 50. JESUS' PAROUSIA.* His Abiding Presence through the Holy Spirit.

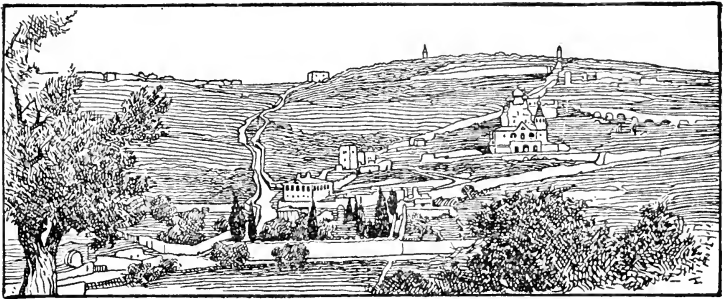
Scripture Reading: Jesus' Promise of Another Comforter. Jo. 14:15-31.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Jesus announced to His disciples that, though He was about to be taken from them, He would come again, and how He comforted them with the promise that He would send the Holy Spirit to be their constant Helper.

Note 2. Jesus' Prediction of His Coming Again. When Jesus passed out of the temple on Tuesday, the last day of His public ministry, one of His disciples called His attention to the massiveness of its stones and the magnificence of its architecture, implying thereby its seemingly imperishable character. His only reply was a prediction of its complete destruction. The disciples, awed into silence, followed Him out of the city and up the slopes of the Mount of Olives. Here, as they looked down on the city at their feet, Peter, Andrew, James and John came to Him apart and questioned Him further concerning this catastrophe, with which they associated His return, the end of the world, that is, the pre-messianic age, and the beginning of the Messiah's reign (Mt. 24:1-3). Their question embraced three distinct points: When shall this calamity take place? what shall be the signs of thy

**Parousia* is a Greek word used in Mt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39, and frequently in the New Testament Epistles, to denote the coming again of Christ in glory. Its literal meaning is *being alongside of*, or *presence*, as opposed to absence. It emphasizes Jesus' perpetual presence with His people, as contrasted with His transient presence during His earthly ministry. It lays stress on the idea of a continuous coming as well as a constant presence.

parousia? and what shall be the signs of the end of this present age? These questions Jesus answered in the reverse order.



The Mount of Olives from Jerusalem.

(1) *What shall be the signs of the end of the pre-messianic age?* In reply to this question Jesus enumerated five signs: (a) that the Jews, who had rejected Himself their true Messiah, would become the dupes of false messiahs and false prophets (Mt. 24:5); (b) that insurrections and wars would ensue (vss. 6-8); (c) that Jesus' followers would be persecuted, so that many would fall away (vss. 9-13); (d) that nevertheless the good news of the kingdom would be proclaimed world wide (vs. 14); and (e) that the Roman armies would be seen encompassing the Holy City (vs. 15; cf. Lu. 21:20). When these signs are seen Jesus' followers must seek safety through immediate flight (vss. 16-28).

(2) *What shall be the signs of thy coming again?* The disciples had heard Jesus speak of His departure (Jo. 7:33, 34) and of His return "in glory" and "in his kingdom" (Mt. 16:27, 28). They wanted to know how to discern the approach of this event also. Jesus connected it with the collapse of the Jewish state—"immediately after the tribulation of those days," the horrors attending the destruction of Jerusalem, "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mt. 24:29, 30). The signs presaging it are familiar prophetic symbols (Is. 13:9-11; Ezek. 32:7, 8; Joel 2:28-31). That this highly wrought Oriental imagery was not intended to be taken literally is clear from the fact that Peter declared just such signs to have been fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21).

(3) *When shall these things be?* The question referred primarily to the destruction of Jerusalem, but included also the accompanying events. In reply Jesus assured His disciples that they would take place within the lifetime of the generation then living (Mt. 24:34). But as

to the exact date, "that day and hour," He disclaimed any knowledge, that being a matter which the Father had reserved unto Himself (vs. 36). Forty years later (A.D. 70), after a siege of unparalleled horror, Jerusalem was razed to the ground by the Romans.

Note 3. What Jesus Meant by His Coming Again. In the interpretation of prophecy two questions arise: What was it intended to mean to those who heard it? and What does it mean to us? The failure to discriminate at this point has introduced endless difficulties into the interpretation of our Lord's words in Mt. chs. 24 and 25.

In studying this discourse note: (1) It was an answer to a plain question, and was intended to enlighten the disciples, not to mystify them.

(2) From beginning to end the discourse moves in the realm of messianic ideas, and must be interpreted accordingly.

(3) By the expression "end of the world" the disciples meant, not the end of the visible order of nature, but merely the close of world-period before the Messiah's advent. They naturally understood our Lord's answer to refer to the consummation of that Jewish age in which they were living, and do not appear to have had the slightest idea of centuries of Christian development before the final consummation would occur.

(4) The question touching Christ's coming again and the end of the age involved elements that were utterly incomprehensible to the disciples. Any attempt to give them a detailed historical outline of the future would have left them hopelessly mystified (Jo. 16:12).

(5) Under these circumstances Jesus answered the question in the only form in which an answer was comprehensible. He pictured His coming chiefly as a single historical event, the overthrow of the Jewish polity, its time uncertain but near at hand. Within the limits of a single generation He crowded the events of all the future, knowing that time and time only, could make His meaning clear.

(6) The disciples, therefore, who were not yet emancipated from Jewish ideas, naturally understood this whole series of messianic predictions as destined to be fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem, when Jesus, their acknowledged Messiah, would come again, overthrow the existing Jewish order, judge the nations (comp. Mt. 24:29-31 with 25:31-46), and set up His everlasting kingdom. This misunderstanding on their part should not blind us to the larger meaning of the discourse.

(7) That larger meaning has been revealed only so far as Jesus' predictions have already been fulfilled. What Jesus in deference to the

incapacity of the disciples was forced to picture as mainly a single event, has been shown by this fulfilment to be an historical process involving repeated comings. Such comings were His bodily reappearance after His resurrection (Jo. 14: 18; 16: 16); His spiritual coming in the sending of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Jo. 14: 23; 16: 7); a coming to all believers at death (Jo. 14: 3); a coming for judgment at the destruction of Jerusalem (Mt. 24: 15-31); and a continuous coming in all subsequent religious movements that have quickened and purified the life of the church ("Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven," Mt. 26: 64). Whether this coming is to continue as an historical process, or culminate in a single final judgment, no one can say. The great stress of the discourse in Mt. chs. 24, 25 is laid on the duty of watchfulness, so as to be prepared for the Lord's coming whenever it takes place.

Note 4. Jesus' Larger Meaning as Apprehended in the Fourth Gospel. The belief that Jesus would soon return was universal in the early church before the destruction of Jerusalem, and it colors nearly all the New Testament writings before that event (1 Thess. 4: 13-18; Jas. 5: 8, 9; 1 Cor. 4: 5; Heb. 10: 25; 1 Peter 4: 5, 7). It was natural, therefore, that the synoptic Gospels, which were written while that belief prevailed, should lay far greater stress on it than on the promises respecting the Holy Spirit, which were supposed to have been completely fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. How profoundly the destruction of Jerusalem, and the non-fulfilment of Jesus' words in any such sense as had been expected, modified Christian thinking after that event is seen in the Fourth Gospel written twenty to thirty years after that event. Here the synoptic idea of an impending world-crisis is replaced by that of a purely spiritual coming. Jesus' promises are seen in a new light. Hence an extraordinary emphasis is placed on His words respecting the Holy Spirit. The parousia, or perpetual coming and permanent presence, of which He had spoken on the Mount of Olives was seen to be, not an outward manifestation, but a spiritual indwelling. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever. . . . He abideth with you, and shall be in you" (Jo. 14: 16, 17). "If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (vs. 23). When the emphasis was thus transferred from a visible to a spiritual coming, it was seen that the real fulfilment of Jesus' words had only begun on the day of Pentecost.

Note 5. The Mission of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord's farewell discourses are reported by John alone. The crisis was at hand that was about to separate Him from His disciples. Their hearts were oppressed with forebodings and grief. He assured them that His departure was not a calamity, but a blessing. He would not leave them orphans. He would send them another Comforter, who would take His place and be their Helper and Guide. It was in connection with these repeated promises of the sending of the Holy Spirit that Jesus most fully described His mission and work. The efforts of the world to silence the testimony of the disciples by persecution would not succeed, because their words would be reinforced by the Holy Spirit (Jo. 15: 20-27). Furthermore, since the sending of the Spirit was dependent on Christ's return to the Father, this return, which had filled the disciples with sorrow, was really a matter of the utmost expediency. It would open the way for the universal work of the Spirit in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (Jo. 16: 4-11); and for His special work as the Revealer of that spiritual truth which the disciples needed for the prosecution of their future work (Jo. 14: 26; 16: 12, 13). In this way the Spirit would glorify Jesus, even as Jesus had glorified the Father (vss. 14, 15).

Additional Reading References.

(1) In Bible dictionaries, see articles on "Eschatology," "Holy Spirit," "Judgment," "Millennium," and "Parousia." (2) For interpretations of Jesus' discourse on the Mount of Olives, see Commentaries on Mt. chs. 24, 25; Mk. ch. 13, and Lu. 21: 5-38. (3) For interpretations of the farewell discourses, see commentaries on Jo. chs. 14-16.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was the prevailing conception of the future life during the greater part of the Old Testament period? 2. How was this conception modified in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era? 3. On what did Jesus base His certainty respecting a future life? 4. What ideas then current did He accept as to the future states of the righteous and of the unrighteous? 5. How did Jesus express Himself respecting the nature of the life hereafter? 6. What duty did He emphasize as of transcendent importance? 7. What is the subject of this lesson? its object.

Questions on the Lesson.

1. In Jesus' discourse on the last things, what did He mention as signs of the end of the age then current? (Note 2.)

2. With what historical event did He connect His coming again?

3. What did He say as to the approximate date of these events?

4. What did the disciples mean by "the end of the world"? (Note 3.)

5. How was Jesus forced to answer the disciples in order to make Himself at all understood?

6. What, then, did the disciples understand Jesus to mean?

7. What larger meaning has subsequent history given to Jesus' words?

8. What was the universal belief in the early church as to Jesus' coming again? (Note 4.)

9. What was the effect on the church when this belief was not realized in any such form as had been expected?

10. How is this changed belief reflected in John's Gospel?

11. What great promise is most conspicuously presented in the Fourth Gospel? (Note 5.)

12. Mention some of the modes in which the Holy Spirit would continue the work of Jesus.

Questions for Consideration.

1. What should be the attitude of Christ's followers toward the promise of His coming again?

2. What is implied in Jesus' farewell discourse as to the personality of the Holy Spirit?

Note-book Work.

Study carefully the passages in John chs. 14-16 which speak of the work of the Holy Spirit, and then in the note-book enumerate the several kinds of activity that Jesus said would characterize His ministry.

Bible Text. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you." Jo. 16:7.

Lesson 51. CHRISTIANITY FOR THE WORLD. The Great Commission.

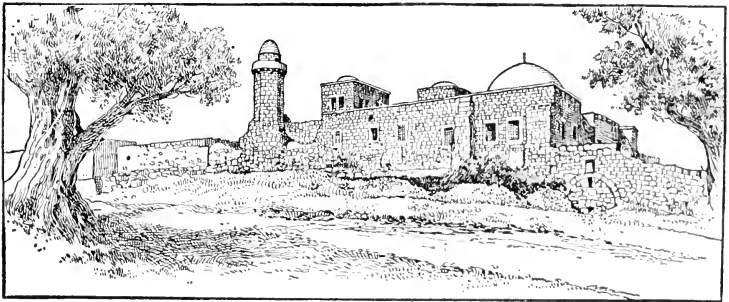
Scripture Reading: The Command to Teach all Nations. Mt. ch. 28.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To show how Jesus before His ascension laid upon His followers the task of preaching the gospel to the entire human race.

Note 2. The Several Accounts of the Great Commission. On two occasions during Jesus' ministry He commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel of the kingdom in the surrounding towns and villages—once in Galilee when He sent out the Twelve, and once in Perea when He sent out the Seventy, among whom no doubt the Twelve were included. These were temporary missions designed to give the disciples under the Master's eye a preparation for independent work in the future. On both occasions Jesus gave them detailed instructions as to how they should proceed (Mt. 10:5-15; Lu. 10:2-12). These instruc-

tions had in view local conditions, though they involved general principles. These missions merely anticipated that final assignment of work which took place between the resurrection and the ascension, apparently in several places and in various forms.

Matthew, who says nothing about the ascension, gives an account of a meeting between Jesus and a large company of believers at an appointed place in Galilee. On this occasion, Jesus, speaking as if already enthroned in heaven and invested with omnipotent power, addressed to His hearers the familiar words reported at the close of the first Gospel, and which are usually known as the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20). Mark's Gospel ends abruptly at 16:8, without recording any appearances of the risen Christ. The original ending, if one existed, was lost by some mischance at an early date. To remedy this defect a brief summary of events (vss. 9-20) was added by another hand. The form in which the commission is here reported (vss. 15-18) falls far below the majesty of the utterance as reported by Matthew. Instead of the promise of Christ's perpetual presence with His people, "Lo, I am with you always," emphasis is put on the gift of working physical wonders. Luke gives two accounts of the events that followed the resurrection. In the Gospel (ch. 24) he seems to place the ascen-



The Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives.

sion on the same day as the resurrection, though in Acts 1:3 he explicitly informs his readers that an interval of forty days elapsed between them. Neither narrative mentions a direct sending out, but both imply that such a commission had already been given (Lu. 24:46-49; Acts 1:4-8). Both narratives also represent these farewell words as having been spoken near Bethany on the Mount of Olives from which the ascension took place. John (20:19-23) tells how, at the close of the resurrection day Jesus appeared to the assembled

disciples, and how, after having proved His identity, He sent them forth even as the Father had sent Him. This was apparently the same occasion as that which Luke describes in his Gospel, though the accounts vary in some particulars.

Note 3. Essential Unity in the Commissions. In all these reports of the task laid upon the disciples, except in one case, the universality of their mission is distinctly emphasized. In Matthew the disciples are commanded to go and "teach all nations." In the supplement to Mark they are to go "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." In Luke's Gospel it is implied that they are to preach "among all the nations," and in Acts Jesus tells them that they are to be witnesses for Him "unto the uttermost part of the earth." In John the range of their mission is not specified, but its universality is implied in the fact that no limits are set. Our Lord could not have used stronger language than He did to express His conviction that His mission of redemption pertained to the entire human race. Furthermore, all the narratives, except that in Mark, lay stress on the giving of the Holy Spirit, or, what amounts to the same thing, the abiding spiritual presence of Christ as the condition of future success. As the task imposed far exceeded human ability, so for its accomplishment more than human power was needed.

Note 4. The Universality of the Gospel. Jesus confined His earthly ministry almost exclusively to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and in sending out His disciples on preaching tours He charged them likewise not to go "into any way of the Gentiles," nor to enter "into any city of the Samaritans" (Mt. 15:24; 10:5). This seems at first sight entirely in harmony with the Jewish exclusiveness of that day which claimed the kingdom of God for the descendants of Abraham, and for proselytes who through circumcision and obedience to the law had become incorporated in the Jewish community. There were other reasons, however, which peremptorily demanded such a course for the time being. God's chosen people were to have the first offer of the messianic salvation. Had Jesus included the Gentiles in His ministry He would at once have cut Himself off from His own people. With inherited prejudices and such an example, it is not surprising that the primitive church in Jerusalem felt no call to break with the ancestral faith. To this faith they merely added a belief in the Messiahship of Jesus. To the temple worship and all distinctively Jewish customs they remained steadfastly loyal. They failed entirely to see that faith in Jesus was a new wine that could not be contained in the old wine-

skins. Had the proclamation of salvation for the Gentiles by faith alone been forced to wait for readiness on the part of these Palestinian Christians, it would have had to wait a long time. No plainer indication of the divine will and purpose in respect to the Gentiles could have been asked for than was given in the case of Cornelius (Acts 10:1—11:18), but it was stubbornly rejected as bearing only upon this exceptional case. Stephen, the Hellenistic Jew, was the first to apprehend the world-wide significance of Christianity. And it was Paul, another Hellenist, who broke through the trammels that would have kept Christianity a mere Jewish sect, and carried the dying words of Stephen into the very heart of the Roman empire. In the simplification of Christianity which fitted it to become a world-religion Paul fell back upon the teachings of Christ. For the intolerable burden of the Jewish law Jesus had substituted the simple and universal law of love. For salvation He had told men to look in simple faith to Himself. Compliance with such requirements was not dependent on conditions of social life, nationality, or race. Herein lay the possibility of a religion for humanity, a religion that consisted in the recognition of God as the heavenly Father and of man's divine sonship. Before His death Jesus could only hint at conceptions so revolutionary (Mt. 8:11; Mk. 14:9; Jo. 12:32), but after His resurrection this idea of a world-mission was given the uppermost place in His thought. How incapable the disciples were even then of grasping its meaning is shown by their question, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) that is, the political kingdom which it was supposed the Messiah would establish. From such crass Jewish narrowness the Great Commission as reported by Matthew could not have come. It is no invention of a provincial publican, but a word of the risen Christ which proves its genuineness by its incomparable majesty and world-wide reach.

Note 5. Christianity a Missionary Religion. The universal destiny of the Christian faith is proved by the way it is penetrated by the missionary spirit. It loses its vitality when it ceases to propagate the gospel. The Great Commission which Jesus gave His followers did not command them to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the world to come to them. On the contrary, "beginning at Jerusalem" (Lu. 24:47), they were to "go" to the Gentiles throughout the whole world. This command to make disciples of all nations is the great missionary charter of Christianity, our warrant for carrying the gospel to the remotest corners of the earth, and an express command not to rest until "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." There is in it, too, a declaration of the ability

of the gospel to override all differences of race, nationality, language, and social conditions, and thus become the universal religion of the world. For the still further encouragement of the Apostles, their exalted and almighty Lord assures them that He will be with them in their spiritual conflicts "always, even unto the end of the world," literally, "all the days," "days of strength and of weakness, days of success and failure, of joy and of sorrow, of youth and of age, days of life and day of death—all the days" till time shall end.

Additional Reading References.

(1) Hastings: *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, Articles "Commission," "Cosmopolitanism," "Exclusiveness," "Gentiles," "Missions," and "Universalism." (2) Universality of the Christian Republic. Seeley: *Ecc Homo*, pp. 139-154. (3) The Gospel for all the nations. Gibson: *Expositor's Bible, Matthew*, pp. 439-450.

Review and Preliminary Questions.

1. What was the subject of Christ's prophetic discourse on the Mount of Olives? 2. With what great historical event did He associate His coming again? 3. Why did He picture His coming as a single event? 4. What larger meaning has the passing of time given to Jesus' words respecting His coming again? 5. How is this coming viewed in John's Gospel? 6. How did Jesus comfort His disciples in view of His departure and their fear of being left alone? 7. What is the subject of the present lesson? its object?

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What preliminary commissions had been given to the disciples during Christ's ministry? (Note 2.)

2. How many reports of Christ's final commission to the disciples have we?

3. What conception of Christianity is emphasized in practically all of these reports? (Note 3.)

4. What promise of supreme importance to the church is also emphasized?

5. What limitation did Jesus set on His own ministry and, at first on that of His disciples? (Note 4.)

6. What was the natural effect of this limitation on the primitive church in Jerusalem?

7. Who in the primitive church first discerned the universal mission of Christianity? (Acts 7:47-50.)

8. On what did Paul base his idea of this larger mission?

9. What shows that the Great Commission is a genuine word of Jesus?

10. How is Christianity related to missions? (Note 5.)

11. How does the Great Commission imply the fitness of Christianity for the entire human race?

12. What gracious promise did Jesus give His followers for all coming time?

Questions for Consideration.

1. What great duty is laid on Christians in every age by the Great Commission?

2. How is the Christian church at the present time fulfilling this duty?

Bible Text. "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." Mt. 28:18, 19.

Lesson 52. CHRISTIANITY THE FINAL RELIGION. Review of Lessons 40-51.

Scripture Reading: A Part of Jesus' Farewell Address. Jo. 16: 1-16.

Note 1. Object of the Lesson. To recall the purpose of Jesus' mission into this world and some of His most important teachings, and to show from these the impossibility of Christianity ever being superseded by a higher religion.

Note 2. Jesus' Mission in the World. At the opening of the Christian era the religious life of the Jews had for the most part degenerated into a dead or fanatical observance of the letter of the law. There was, however, a small portion of truly righteous people who still cherished the high ideals of the prophets and who were waiting for the appearance of the long promised Messiah. Suddenly a voice was heard in the wilderness of Judea proclaiming the nearness of the Messiah's advent, and calling on the nation to prepare for it by repentance. It was the voice of the Messiah's herald, who soon afterwards pointed out Jesus of Nazareth as the One whom Jehovah had sent to redeem the world (Lesson 40). The formal messianic call came to Jesus at His baptism, when the voice from heaven proclaimed Him God's Son, a title the significance of which could not be misunderstood. The temptations tested His purpose to adhere to a purely spiritual program in His divinely appointed task of establishing the kingdom of God, or to seek this end by the adoption of a worldly policy (Lesson 41). His decision in favor of the former naturally involved a decision as to the nature of the means to be employed. Jesus' ministry, therefore, consisted largely in preaching the good news of the kingdom, instructing men as to its true nature, and urging them to become its subjects through the practice of a genuine righteousness (Lesson 42).

Note 3. The Fundamental Teachings of Jesus. Though Jesus was conscious of His Messiahship from the moment of His baptism it

was not expedient that He should make a public announcement of it at once. From the first, however, He gave indirect proofs of His mission in the amazing authority which distinguished His teachings as compared with the slavish adherence to tradition which marked the utterances of the scribes and Pharisees. Furthermore, His testimony concerning Himself, while not directly claiming Messiahship, contained such stupendous self-assertions as clearly marked Him off from ordinary humanity, and as must have brought conviction respecting His true character to all who were not blinded by prejudices (Lesson 43).

The most distinctive and far-reaching revelation in the teachings of Jesus was His new conception of God as the heavenly Father. This relation He sustains to all men, not merely on the ground of having created them in His own image, but because in His own essential nature He is love, and all that fatherliness in its highest sense betokens. This conception of God is fundamental in Jesus' teachings. It gives shape and color to practically all of them (Lesson 44).

The first and most obvious deduction from the universal fatherhood of God is the universal sonship of man. As the world had never had a proper idea of the character of God until Jesus revealed the divine paternity, so it never had realized the dignity and worth of man until Jesus proclaimed the great truth that every man is God's child, the object of His ceaseless love and care. This fact did not blind Jesus to the deplorable condition into which men have fallen in consequence of sin, and from which they need to be rescued (Lesson 45).

Jesus based His teaching respecting the future life on the inherent worth of man as God's child. He is created with capacity for eternal fellowship with God. The bestowment of such capacity was not intended as a mockery of human hopes, but a prophecy of their certain fulfilment (Lesson 49).

Note 4. Jesus' Redemptive Work. Jesus' revelation of the true relation which exists between God and man introduced a new conception of the nature of sin. It is not merely a lawlessness that injures the community, as the heathen thought; nor a mere transgression of divine law, as the Old Testament religion taught; but it is the substitution of man's own will and affections for the will and love of the heavenly Father. Sin, therefore, in its inmost essence is selfishness. This produces immediate alienation from God, and, so long as persisted in, separation from Him (Lesson 46).

The way of salvation, accordingly, is just the opposite of the way of sin. It means knowledge of sin, acknowledgment of sin, and abandonment of sin. But this abandonment of sin implies the substitu-

tion of God's will for self-will, and love for Him instead of love for self as the supreme good. Thus the sinner is restored to the full privileges of divine sonship, and made an heir of eternal life (Lesson 47).

When love becomes the central law of life this reveals itself in the earnest cultivation of a godly life, in love for the things of God, and in spiritual communion with Him. In relation to one's fellow men it manifests itself in a full and generous recognition of human worth, of human rights, and of human needs, all growing out of a sense of human brotherhood (Lesson 48).

Note 5. Jesus' Outlook into the Future. During His earthly ministry Jesus had trained a little band of disciples to take up and continue His work after His own departure. The magnitude of this work and the superhuman power needed for its achievement He foresaw as they did not. Therefore He comforted and strengthened them with the assurance that He would come again to help and guide them in all the future. This coming, He was forced, in condescension to their inability to understand the full truth, to picture in the prophetic language of the Old Testament and to associate with the overthrow of Jerusalem and of the hostile institutions of Judaism. Time has shown that while this historical event was in an important sense a coming of the Son of man, it did not exhaust the meaning of the promise; that this coming was to be a long process rather than a single event; and that it was to be spiritual rather than visible. It has, accordingly, been largely fulfilled in the sending of the Holy Spirit through whose indwelling we experience the abiding presence of Christ (Lesson 50).

The abiding and universal presence of Christ in the souls of His followers implies a religion with a capacity for unlimited expansion. Jesus had come into the world to save sinners. This is but another way of saying that He had come to save the entire human race. Therefore, in His parting words Jesus laid upon His disciples a universal mission. Christianity is not for a class or a nation, but for the world (Lesson 51).

Note 6. Christianity the Final Religion. A moment's reflection will show that no religion can ever supersede Christianity for the simple reason that no other can ever go beyond it. In the incarnation of Jesus Christ God has made the supreme revelation of Himself to man. He can make no greater. In sending His only Son, God sent Him who stands nearest to Himself. He can send none greater. As a Mediator between God and man Jesus partakes perfectly of the nature of both and can perfectly represent both as no other mediator can. In the

teachings of Christ God has told men all that they are able to comprehend of His character and purposes. No other teacher can do as much. In the vicarious sufferings and redemptive death of Christ divine love has made its supreme sacrifice. By His triumph over death and enthronement at the right hand of God Jesus has become the ever-living and all-sufficient Saviour to them that believe. "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12).

In looking back over the entire course we see how religious conceptions have advanced from one stage to another. Primitive worship consisted in bringing to the gods such offerings or services as were supposed to please them. It never entered the mind of the worshiper that his personal character could have anything to do with the acceptableness of his offerings. Why should it, since the gods themselves stood on the same moral level as the worshiper? The main thing was the presentation of rich sacrifices. This divorce between morality and religion was the fatal defect in the heathen religions of antiquity, as well as in the early religion of Israel. A higher stage was reached when, in place of a multitude of immoral gods, religious thought in Israel grasped the idea of one supreme God who not only was righteous Himself, but required righteousness in His worshipers. The fusion of morality with religion was the great achievement of the Old Testament prophets. A still higher stage was reached when Jesus demanded not merely external obedience to the moral law, but an inward spiritual conformity with God. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." Such worship is the prostration of the human spirit before the divine; the surrender of all personal volitions and desires. It is independent of times, places, and ceremonies. This is the highest form of worship that can be reached, and therefore it is the final.

Questions on the Lesson.

1. What was the mission of John the Baptist? (Note 2.)

2. What conception of His own mission did Jesus reveal when tempted in the wilderness?

3. What means did Jesus adopt for establishing His kingdom?

4. What was the substance of Jesus' testimony concerning Himself?
(Note 3.)

5. What was His new revelation concerning God?

6. How did Jesus' conception of God affect His conception of man?

7. How did Jesus' conception of man bear on His doctrine of a future life?

8. What did Jesus teach as to the essence of sin? (Note 4.)

9. What did Jesus teach as to the way of salvation?

10. What did Jesus proclaim to be the supreme law of life?

11. State briefly what Jesus seemed to teach, and what He really taught, respecting His coming again. (Note 5.)

12. What was Jesus' conviction respecting the future destiny of Christianity?

13. Why is Christianity the world's supreme and final religion?
(Note 6.)

14. How does Christianity embody the highest and therefore final form of worship?

Christian Life and Conduct

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CONDUCT is an analysis of the particular Biblical rules and principles which all Christians should undertake to follow. Though our religion is not a set of rules, nevertheless the Christian purpose includes a determination to do certain things and to abstain from others.

At the age of fourteen there is a tendency in boys and girls to break away from restraint and to resent authority. They are passing rapidly from the period when they follow rules of conduct merely because they have been so trained, to the period when they should follow them of their own desire. They are unwilling to be children any longer. They desire the freedom of men and women, while as yet they do not understand the adult point of view. The aim of CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CONDUCT is *to assist the pupil to make the transition from childish conduct to that of young men and women who desire to live as Christians.*

PARTIAL LIST OF TOPICS

Part I. LIVING ACCORDING TO THE STANDARDS OF LAW

Here the pupil surveys in a new way the great laws of the Scriptures. Frequent reference is made to our common law which is largely founded upon the Bible.

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| 2. The Right to Property | 5. The Right to Truth |
| 3. The Right to Fair Dealing | 7. The Rights of Parents |
| 4. The Right to Rest | 9. The Rights of the Unprotected |

Part II. LIVING ACCORDING TO THE STANDARDS OF THE PROPHETS AND SAGES

Here emphasis is laid upon the duty of doing good to others instead of merely refraining from injuring them. The lesson material is from the Old Testament.

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| 13. Negligence and its Results | 16. The Power of the Tongue |
| 14. The Cultivation of Habits | 20. The Brotherhood of Man |
| 15. The Importance of Self-control | 22. False and True Worship |

Part III. LIVING ACCORDING TO THE STANDARDS OF JESUS

The course is brought to a culmination by the application of the standards of Jesus to everyday life. The lesson material is from the New Testament.

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| 25. The Christian and his Leader | 31. The Ambition of a Christian |
| 27. The Christian and his Friends | 34. The Life of Faith |
| 30. The Christian and his Thoughts | 35. The Christian and his Heavenly Father |

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