

# SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 22.]

DECEMBER, 1888.

[No. 12

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Annual Meeting of the Sunday-School Board.....	353
Abstract of Report of Secretary and Treasurer of Sunday-School Board... ..	353
A New Departure.....	354
Opening and Closing Service.....	2nd page of cover
International Sunday-School Lessons.....	355

## The Sunday-School Banner

It is designed to afford aid to Sunday-School Teachers and Heads of Families in the Religious Training of the Young, and to excite throughout the country a deeper interest in Sunday-School Work.

Published Monthly, 32 pages, at the low rate of

SIXTY CENTS PER ANNUM, INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE, FREE OF POSTAGE.

SINGLE COPIES - - - 10 CENTS.

ADDRESS—

WILLIAM BRIGGS,  
78 & 80 KING STREET EAST, TORONTO.

TORONTO:

WILLIAM BRIGGS, PUBLISHER.

MONTREAL:  
C. W. COATES.

HALIFAX:  
S. F. HUESTIS.

## OPENING AND CLOSING SERVICE FOR FOURTH QUARTER.

I. Silence.

II. Doxology.

III. Responsive Service.

*Supt.* I will extol thee, my God, O King;

*School.* And I will bless thy name forever and ever.

*Supt.* Every day will I bless thee;

*School.* And I will praise thy name forever and ever.

*Supt.* I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty,

*School.* And of thy wondrous works.

I. Class Study of the Lesson.

II. Singing Lesson Hymn.

III. Recitation of Title, Golden Text, Outline, and Doctrinal Suggestion, by the school in concert.

I. Singing.

II. Responsive Sentences.

*Supt.* Be strong and of a good courage:

*School.* For unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land.

*Supt.* Be thou strong and very courageous:

*Supt.* Men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts:

*School.* And I will declare thy greatness.

*Supt.* They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom,

*School.* And talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts.

*Supt.* Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,

*School.* And thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

IV. Singing.

V. Prayer.

### LESSON SERVICE.

IV. Review and Application of the Lesson, by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. The Supplemental Lesson.

VI. Announcements (especially of the Church service, and week-evening prayer-meeting).

### CLOSING SERVICE.

*School.* That thou mayest observe to do according to all the law.

*Supt.* Be strong and of a good courage:

*School.* For the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

III. Dismissal.

### THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the

right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to Judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

I.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

II.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

III.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy

stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

V.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI.

Thou shalt not kill.

VII.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII.

Thou shalt not steal.

IX.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.



V  
An

TH  
Board  
Novem  
Rev. V  
Dr. W  
to be  
held.  
Treas  
gress  
An ou  
Rev.  
of the  
Rev.  
Conf  
repre  
place  
of our  
coura  
not g  
of St  
work.  
able  
Ontar  
memb  
that  
were  
the i  
only  
Meth  
ing a  
also  
with  
\$3,87  
\$20,0

# SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. XXII.]

DECEMBER, 1888.

[No 12.]

## Annual Meeting of the Sunday-School Board.

THE Annual Meeting of the Sunday-school Board of the Methodist Church was held on November 1st, at the town of Port Hope. The Rev. Dr. Carman occupied the chair; the Rev. Dr. Williams was unable, on account of illness, to be present. A very successful meeting was held. The reports of the Secretary and Treasurer gave evidence of very marked progress all along the line of Sunday-school work. An outline of that report is given below. The Rev. A. Cunningham was elected representative of the Guelph Conference in the place of the Rev. Dr. Henderson, removed to the Montreal Conference. George Bishop, Esq., was elected representative of the Montreal Conference in place of the late Senator Ferrier. The outlook of our Sunday-school work is exceedingly encouraging. We think that our Church does not get full credit for all it is doing in the way of Sunday-school extension and missionary work. At the late Convention of that admirable organization, the S. S. Association of Ontario and Quebec, a very distinguished member of that meeting expressed great regret that all the churches in these two provinces were doing so little for Sunday-school extension, the income of the Association amounting to only about \$2,500. We think it due to the Methodist Church to say that while contributing a considerable proportion to that sum, it also has raised for distinctly missionary work within its own borders during the past year \$3,674, and during the past eight years over \$20,000. During the past three years nearly

400 new schools have been established in the most needy and destitute parts of the Dominion by means of the S. S. Aid and Extension Fund; and the strength and influence of that Fund is increasing year by year in a very remarkable degree.

## ABSTRACT OF REPORT OF SECRETARY AND TREASURER OF SUNDAY-SCHOOL BOARD.

The Sunday-school Board of the Methodist Church is composed of one minister and one layman from each Conference appointed by the General Conference; of the two General Superintendents; of a Lay-Treasurer, Warring Kennedy, Esq., and of a Secretary, Rev. W. H. Withrow. Its object is the general oversight of the Sunday-school work of the Church, the collection and tabulation of statistics, the preparing a "Winnowed List" of improved Sunday-school libraries, and the collection and distribution of the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund. This Fund is maintained by an annual collection directed to be taken up in each Sunday-school throughout the entire Church for the purpose of helping poor schools, and especially of planting new schools in remote and destitute places. This it does by means of grants of Bibles, Lesson Leaves and Sunday-school Papers and Libraries, either free or at greatly reduced rates. Each school is required to do what it can toward payment for the grants made. Not a dollar of the income of the Fund is spent in salaries or in anything else but direct help to schools and the necessary expenses of the Board. About 30,000 second-hand library books have been collected and dis-

tributed to poor schools. During the last three years nearly 400 new schools have been organized, chiefly in remote and destitute places, through the agency of this Fund. During the last quadrennium the missionary collections of the schools increased from \$14,701 during the first year to \$20,762 at its close. During the year before last they have still further increased to \$25,526, and during the last year to \$27,915, nearly doubling in six years. Very many testimonies are received from all the Conferences reporting the great good that has been accomplished by the S. S. Aid Fund in establishing and sustaining Sunday-schools, where without its help they could not exist.

The number of scholars reported is 210,824, an increase of 13,286 on the previous year. The increase in teachers and officers is 916. During the last Conference year 41,476 are reported as having signed a pledge against the twin evils of liquor and tobacco. The number of books in the libraries of the schools is over a quarter of a million. The most pleasing feature of all in connection with the annual report of the Sunday-schools is that the lessons therein taught have, under the blessing of God, resulted in the conversion of 11,550 of the scholars; 34,037 scholars are meeting in class, and 32,222 are studying the catechism. While this is highly gratifying, still there is urgent need for the more thorough and systematic study of that important compendium of Biblical truth—the Methodist Catechism.

The magnitude of the Sunday-school operations of our Church is shown by the fact that during the year \$77,544 have been raised for school purposes; when to this is added the amounts raised for missions and for the Sunday-school Aid Fund we reach a total of \$107,711, or over 50 cents for each scholar. The increase in the circulation of our Sunday-school papers has been very great. We are now printing an aggregate of 305,750 copies, an increase of over 21,000.

In every case it will be remembered that even the poorest school is expected to pay what it can toward the grant of papers made. Last year the schools receiving help to the amount of \$3,468.57 contributed in part payment therefor \$1,403.17. Supplying just such needs as these all over the continent, from Labrador to the borders of Alaska—and helping to plant new schools wherever a handful of children can be gathered together, and a loving heart to point them to the Saviour—is the work that the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund is doing.

## A New Departure.

At the meeting of the Sunday-school Board last year a suggestion was made for the publication of a racy and readable periodical of higher grade than any now published for our schools, for the use of senior scholars and for circulation, where preferred, instead of Sunday-school libraries. The great expense of establishing another high class periodical, in addition to the dozen already officially published by our Church, prevented the Book Committee from undertaking the venture. But the suggestion has been made to adapt the *Methodist Magazine* still more fully for Sunday-school circulation. Already a considerable number of schools have found it admirably adapted for that purpose, and have been largely using it both in bound volumes—three numbers in each—and in circulating single copies. Some schools have thus taken as many as ten copies. Their great variety of contents; their interesting character, and the number of attractive engravings, make them particularly suitable for this purpose.

A new departure now being made will make them still more so. The *Magazine* for 1889 will be printed in a new and handsome type, a size smaller than that heretofore used, but still clear and legible. This will give room for an increased amount of specially interesting and attractive reading. Another feature which will make this magazine specially valuable to senior scholars and Sunday-school teachers, will be a series of magnificently illustrated articles on the Lands of the Bible—their manners, customs, etc. This series will have over 100 fine engravings, and will alone be worth the price of the *Magazine*. Another new feature will be a series of attractive short stories of the best literary quality, and of distinctly religious character. In order that every school may take advantage of this new departure the price will be considerably less to schools taking two copies and upwards. As this arrangement must not interfere with our regular agency and subscription rates, we have to ask our friends wishing to take advantage of the special rates to schools to write to the Rev. William Biggs, Toronto; Rev. S. F. Huestis, Halifax; or, C. W. Coates, Montreal, for full particulars. See also advertisement at close of this number of the BANNER.

FOR full announcements about our Sunday-school periodicals we refer our readers to the advertisements in this number. This has been the best year these periodicals have ever had. No effort shall be spared to make the numbers for the coming year better still. The Editor feels deep the privilege and responsibility of the opportunity which he enjoys, and asks an interest in the prayers of every Sunday-school worker that his labors may more than ever be made a blessing to the scores of thousands of readers of those periodicals, to all of whom he wishes, with the most heart-felt sincerity, "A Very Happy Christmas and New Year."

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

## FOURTH QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

E. C. 1425.]

## LESSON IX. ISRAEL UNDER JUDGES.

[Dec. 2.

Judg. 2. 11-23.

[Commit to memory verses 11, 12.]



11 And the children of Is'ra-el did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Ba'al-im:

12 And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of E'gypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.

13 And they forsook the LORD, and served Ba'al and Ash'ta-roth.

14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Is'ra-el, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

16 Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed

themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so.

18 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

20 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Is'ra-el; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice:

21 I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Josh'a-a left when he died:

22 That through them I may prove to Is'ra-el, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.

23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Josh'a-a.

## General Statement.

The ship of state is now launched and on its voyage over the sea of time. What was the condition of Israel in that critical period when, with the war of conquest over and the conqueror in the retirement of old age, the people were left to work out their own destiny? They were in partial possession of an alien country. The mountains were theirs, though even here were cities in possession of their foes, like Bethel and Jebus; and under them every-where crouched the conquered people ready to rise against their oppressors. From their heights they could look down upon the Philistines on the southern plain with their five powerful cities; while the Jordan valley and the plains of Sharon and Esdracron were occupied by the Canaanites. Besides these elements of danger in their own borders, there were Amalekites and Edomites on the south, and Moabites, Amorites, and Bashanites on the east. Israel was standing alone amid the nations, and in equal danger from their enmity and their friendship. We scarcely

wonder, when we realize the temptations around and the lusts within, that the people of God soon forgot their high vocation and their glorious history, and sank into the embraces of sin. They longed for a visible object of worship, like the people about them; they were charmed by the splendid rites, and were led astray by the seductive fascinations of idolatry. The generation that had seen the pillar of fire and had crossed the Jordan, the generation molded by such leaders as Joshua and Caleb and Phinehas, passed away. Their children grew up under other influences, and they fell under the power of temptation. Israel forgot her own almighty Jehovah, and bowed the knee to Baal. Sin brought helplessness, for Israel without God is weaker than a shorn Samson. Idolatry brought in oppression, and wave after wave of foreign power swept over the land, each in turn rolled back by the deliverers whom God in mercy for his people and in remembrance of his covenant raised up in the hour of need.

## Explanatory and

## Practical Notes.

**Verse 11.** The children of Israel. It must be remembered that the Israelites held only the mountain region of Palestine, and that both the plain of Jordan and that on the sea-coast were occupied by their enemies. They were thus surrounded by their foes and in great danger. **Did evil.** Their great sin was in following the idols of the people around them. The evils of idolatry were in turning men from God to images, and in its tendency to every form of wickedness in the name of religion. (1) *How easy it is to fall into sin!* Just as easy as to have weeds grow in the garden. **In the sight of the Lord.** Expressive of the fact that, with God's eyes on them and God's law before them, Israel yet fell into sin. (2) *All sin is in God's sight, for God's law is the standard of righteousness.* **Served Ba'al-im.** The plural form of the word Baal, "lord," or "master," which was the name of the chief male divinity worshipped by the nations surrounding Israel, and hence was used in its plural form as a general term for all idolatry. Baal was represented by images of various kinds, and worshipped in dances, often of an immoral character, and in human sacrifices.

**12. They forsook the Lord God.** We are not to suppose that all the Israelites were carried away by the popular frenzy for idol-worship. Throughout the entire history from the exodus to the captivity in Babylon, there were two Israels: a common, ignorant, sensual people generally tending downward; and a

small number of spiritual, earnest minds, men of faith and fidelity, the true Israel, the "remnant," who were the hope of the nation. (3) *There is a "remnant" now: do you belong to it? Of their fathers.* Thus by their backsliding they dishonored the memory of their ancestors the patriarchs, who came out of idol-worshipping lands that they might worship God. **Which brought them out.** They forsook the God that had given them victory, and followed the idols which could not save their own lands. **Followed other gods.** The motives to their idolatry were: 1. The craving of the human heart after a visible object of worship, as may be seen, for example, in the Romanist worshipping his crucifix. 2. The influence of association, "following the fashion." People dislike to be singular, and Israel was often taunted by other nations as having no gods. 3. The feasts and revels connected with idol-worship had a fascination for corrupt hearts, especially when drunkenness and licentiousness could be veiled under the name of religion. (4) *How many influences unite to lead hearts astray from God!* The people that were round about. On the Mediterranean shore by the south were the Philistines, new-comers like themselves, but already rich and powerful; on the northern coast were the Phœnicians, with the culture and civilization of commercial life; in the Jordan valley were still unconquered Canaanites; in the heart of the country were Jebusites and Hivites, tributary but still dangerous; east of the Dead Sea were the Moab-



What were the names of the hostile peoples round about to whom they were delivered? chap. 3. 1, 3.

Was there any relief found for them?

Give the names of the judges whom God raised up. Chaps. 3. 9, 15, 31; 4. 4; 6. 11, 12; 9. 22; 10. 1, 3; 11. 6; 12. 8, 11, 13; 16. 30, 31.

What was the general history of the people for three hundred years? Judg. 21. 25.

Do men to-day suffer the penalty of their misdeeds?

What was the great lesson that God was teaching the world by these punishments.

What was the warning which the apostles in their teaching constantly gave? Heb. 3. 12.

#### Practical Teachings.

Forgetfulness is a great cause of sin. Israel forgot their own history.

Forgetting God, they forsook him.

As they forgot, so we do many times.

As they forsook him, so we do.

We forget him when we disobey our parents, when we give up church-going, when we love the follies of the world, when we break the Sabbath, when we desire to be rich more than to be right, when we are at all dishonest.

God will as surely forsake us as he did them unless we repent.

#### Hints for Home Study.

1. These verses are an epitome of the history of these people for three hundred years. The next three lessons are only incidents in the story of the years. Each teacher and scholar should read the whole book of Judges carefully.

2. Study and carefully learn all that you can find about the worship of Baal and Ashtaroth. Any Bible dictionary will help you.

3. See from the Bible how many times the people began to worship Baal. Search Num. 22. 41; Judg. 8. 33; 1 Kings 16. 32; 18. 26; 2 Kings 17. 16; 19. 18; 21. 3; Jer. 2. 8; 7. 9; 12. 16; 19. 5; 23. 13; Hos. 2. 8, etc.

4. Write a practical lesson about God's long-suffering and forbearance.

### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

#### I. Forsaking God.

In what wicked service did Israel engage?

What friend did they forsake?

What choice did they make instead?

What was the feeling of the Lord against Israel?

What evidence of his anger did they have?

Who was against them continually?

What promise was thus fulfilled? Deut. 28. 25.

What act of mercy relieved this judgment?

How did the people treat their judges?

To what wickedness did they turn?

What good example of their fathers did they spurn?

What benefit were the judges to the people?

Why did God show them this mercy?

What conduct followed after the death of a judge?

#### 2. Forsaken by God.

Why was the Lord angry with Israel?

What would he not do for them?

How would he thus prove Israel?

What nations were thus left in Canaan? Chap. 3. 3.

What warning does Israel's history enforce? (Golden Text.)

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That God is angry with the wicked?

2. That God is patient with the wayward?

3. That God is merciful even in his judgments?

#### Hints for Home Study.

Learn how many captivities, and of how long duration, Israel had during the period of the judges.

### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did the Lord command the Israelites to do? To drive all the heathen out of Canaan.

Did they obey him? No; they allowed some to stay.

What did they soon begin to do? To be on friendly terms with the heathen.

What did the heathen teach them to do? To worship idols.

Whom did they forsake? The God of their fathers.

To what was the Lord provoked? To anger.

What did he allow? Their enemies to conquer them.

What is our great enemy? Sin.

If we obey God, what will he do? Conquer sin for us.

If we disobey, what may we expect? That sin will conquer us.

What did the Israelites ask of God? Help.

Whom did he send to help them? Judges.

For whose sake would the Lord help the people? For the sake of the judge.

What would the people then do? Go on sinning again.

How long did this continue? More than three hundred years.

What must grieve our heavenly Father? To have his children sin against his love.

#### Words with Little People.

SATAN makes slaves: GOD sets free.

SATAN makes weak: GOD makes strong.

SATAN destroys life: GOD gives life.

Which will you obey, GOD or SATAN?

### THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. After Joshua's death how did the people of Israel act? They forgot God and did evil.

2. How did they do evil? They worshiped heathen gods.

3. What was the result of their evil? They were bitterly punished by the Lord.

4. How did God even then show his mercy and love for them? He raised up deliverers for them.

5. What warning did the apostle give the Church many centuries afterward? "Take heed, brethren," etc.

### CATECHISM QUESTION.

11. But are all mankind, being born in sin, born without hope?

No; for a Saviour was provided from the beginning, and all that come into the world receive of His grace and His Spirit.

Genesis iii. 15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.

### ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

#### The Steps of a Backslider.

#### I. FORGETFULNESS OF GOD.

Another generation....knew not the Lord. v. 10.

"Profess....works deny him." Titus 1. 16.

"Vengeance....that knows not God." 2 Thess.

1. 8.

#### II. FELLOWSHIP WITH THE WORLD.

The people....round about them. v. 12.

"Friendship of the world....enmity." Jas. 4. 4.

"Love not the world." 1 John 2. 15.

#### III. FORSAKING GOD.

Forsook the Lord. v. 13.

"Forsake....my covenant." Deut. 31. 16.

"Beware lest thou forget." Deut. 6. 12.

#### IV. FOLLOWING IDOLS.

Served Baal and Ashtaroth. v. 13.

"Mingled among the heathen." Psa. 106. 35.

"Sacrifice to devils." 1 Cor. 10. 20.

#### V. WEAKNESS FROM SIN.

Could not....stand before their enemies. v. 14.

"Thou....goest not forth." Psa. 44. 9, 10.

"Without me ye can do nothing." John 15. 5.

#### VI. SUFFERING FROM SIN.

They were greatly distressed. v. 15.

"Iniquities have separated." Isa. 59. 2.

"Refuse and rebel....devoured." Isa. 1. 19, 20.

#### VII. GROWTH IN SIN.

Corrupted....more than their fathers. v. 19.

"Evil men....shall wax worse and worse." 2 Tim.

3. 13.

"Like the chaff." Psa. 1. 4.

**THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.****Dangers to God's People.**

1. God's people are in danger when the period of active and special work is followed by a period of rest and ease. Peace has its perils, no less than war. "After the revival" is as important as during the revival.
2. God's people are in danger when parents cease to teach their children God's way. If the generation that followed Joshua had carefully trained their children in the knowledge of God, and in the memory of his mighty works, the great backsliding in the days of the Judges might have been averted.
3. God's people are in danger from the companionship of the world. The world's principles, aims, and standards are not those of God's people. When the Church begins to walk with the world it begins to follow the world, and to be corrupted by the world.
4. God's people are in danger when they lean on men instead of leaning on God. They looked to judges when, if they had clung to God, they would never have needed judges to deliver them.
5. God's people are in danger when they forget their promises and covenants of service, and live as though they had never made them.

**An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.**

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

OFF the south-west coast of England, twelve miles from the entrance to Plymouth Sound, lies the Eddystone Rock, on which in former times countless vessels have perished. To prevent these disasters the first light-house was erected on the rock by a merchant in Queen Elizabeth's reign. For a time all went well; the light-house bravely weathered the furious storms that beat upon it, and many a vessel warned and guided by the friendly light reached the harbor in safety. But after the lapse of a few years the light-house gave way; the wild sea washed over it, and the terrible tale of wreck and loss of life began as before. Was the destructive force of storm and wave and treacherous rock to be triumphant? No: for another force had been roused to battle with them—a saving force—the force of human desire, energy, and skill. Before long another light-house crowned the place of danger. This lasted nearly fifty years, and then it was destroyed by fire, and the forces of destruction again worked their will. But was the compassion—the earnest desire to save life—to be in the end foiled? Not so. A third light-house, far more solidly and firmly built than those that had gone before, took their place, and there it has stood for more than a hundred years. The saving force has conquered.

The passage for our lesson to-day tells us a sad tale. It is a tale of a continually working and destructive force which spoiled and desolated the fair homes God had given to his people Israel in the land of Canaan. This was the force of sin and unbelief. It was constantly sweeping the Israelites from their safe moorings into the whirlpool of idolatry. We find them forsaking the God whom they had solemnly promised to serve and obey, and serv-

ing many "lords" (the meaning of "Baalim"). Some of the wicked rites and sacrifices practiced by the heathen nations of Canaan are described in Psa. 106. 37, 38. For these things the judgment of God had come upon the Canaanites, and now that his own people were falling into the same abominations his judgments came upon them also. Twice we are told that "the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel." Bondage and misery followed. And this not merely for a short time. What is related in the twenty-three verses we have to consider is a summary of the whole book of Judges, describing in brief the course of events for some hundreds of years. But there was another force meeting and wrestling with the force of evil—a saving force, which, not once, or twice, but time after time, brought deliverance. It was the force of divine compassion and love. We read that "the Lord raised up judges which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them;" "And when the Lord raised up judges the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge." The histories of a few of these deliverers are given us, but of others we know little or nothing. But what they effected was merely temporary. On the death of the judge each succeeding generation "returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers," and the last picture given us in the record is one of sin and sadness and failure.

Was, then, the force of evil to be finally triumphant after all? The means which had been used, to stem it were inadequate to hold the ground permanently. But the force of divine love was not yet exhausted. All through the Old Testament we see it still striving. And the story of the nation of Israel is not yet finished. But the imperfect and erring human deliverers, whose power was but partial and transitory, have been succeeded by a divine Saviour, against whom the whole force and fury of evil has been hurled in vain. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son," Gal. 4. 4.

The forces of evil—the destructive forces—are still working all around us. And worst of all is the treacherous rock, the "evil heart of unbelief," as our Golden Text tells us, whose tendency is always to "depart from the living God." But the deliverer is here. The light-house of mercy and safety is set up. The force of divine love is conqueror. No vessel whose course is guided by this ever-shining light can go astray. And where Christ is fully received the heart that was once evil and faithless becomes, like the Eddystone Rock, a place where the true light is exalted and manifested to the help and benefit of others round about.

**The Lesson Council.****Question 20.** How were the judges of Israel chosen?

At the suggestion of Jethro, judges were at first chosen by Moses, when overworked by his judicial duties. Exod. 18. 13-35. The judges mentioned in the book of that name were chosen of God directly, as in England to-day they are appointed, for the most part,



by the crown. They were not hereditary governors, neither were they elected by the people, but they became judges under the consciousness of a divine call, evidenced by special endowments on their part, and by special emergencies on the part of Israel.—*Henry Speltmeyer, D.D.*

### 21. What was the authority of the judges?

God was king. The judges were his vicegerents, who headed armies, presided in courts and councils, declared war, concluded peace, ratified treaties, and were chief in all things relating to the state. It was not a regal office, and to it there was no external dignity or emolument. Yet the judge was greater than the head of a tribe. He was not a law-maker. God gave the law; the priests explained it. But the judge upheld and enforced it, proclaiming its righteousness, and avenging its violation. The power of a judge was therefore civil and military, correspondent to that of the *suffetes* of Carthage, the *archons* of Athens, or the "dictators" of Rome.—*Henry Speltmeyer, D.D.*

From time to time, as occasion required it, the Spirit of God raised up deliverers, who assumed dictatorial powers and after whose death the history very frequently becomes a blank. The office of a judge was in such cases occasional, uncertain, and irregular. He who occupied it, often after it had been long vacant, was not a king, though his authority was more than that of the mere sheik of a tribe, or a judge of special, not of petty cases, an office instituted in the wilderness. Exod. 18. 13-27. The Hebrew word *shophet*, used to denote the office, is identical with that of the *suffetes*, or the rulers of Carthage at the time of the Punic wars (see Livy, xxx. 7; xxxiii. 46), etc. and somewhat resembled that of *Æmphytes*, in Greek history. (See Stanley's *Jewish Church*.) The first three of the judges seem only to have ruled during the times of the special crises that required their leadership. Deborah and Gideon ruled for life. Though the attempt at a monarchy made under the latter was rejected, yet as a matter of fact it was maintained while he lived, and was then formally assumed by his son. The sons and nephews of Jair, Ibzan, and Abdon appear to have been heirs, if not to the power, yet at any rate to the state and show, assumed by those three judges. Samuel seems to have transmitted the office by hereditary succession to his son, while in his predecessor, Eli, as well as in his own person, the judicial and the highest sacerdotal offices were united. In later times we find five classes of judges or courts of justice among the Jews: 1. The Sanhedrin. 2. The lower Sanhedrin, consisting of twenty-three members, in important cities. 3. The bench of three elders ordained by laying on of hands, and belonging to every synagogue. 4. The bench of the lesser three, authorized by letters patent to act as judges in special cases, and 5, the unauthorized bench, consisting of private persons who were allowed to act as arbiters or umpires in petty cases. See also Lightfoot on 1 Cor. 6. 4.—*J. E. Hanauer, Jerusalem.*

### Cambridge Notes.

Like the other historical books, Judges is anonymous, and it is perfectly futile to guess an author. Its materials are largely drawn from remote antiquity, but its present shape is probably due to a compiler in the later age, during which so many of the ancient records took their permanent form. The chronology of the book is most perplexing, but it seems certain that the periods of the judges are not continuous, but often overlapping. The genealogies suggest about two hundred

and fifty years as the scope of the history. For the characteristics of the period Stanley's brilliant chapter (*Jewish Church*, chap. xiii) should be read. He notes how it illustrates and is illustrated by the Middle Ages—times of anarchy and barbarism, whose half-developed morality must be judged by far lower standards than our own. But all this corruption and lawlessness was yet a preparation for an enlightened age to come. Experience was teaching the people the fearful perils of idolatry, constant fighting developed their national strength, while their weak and intermittent allegiance to the old theocracy was producing dangers which paved the way for the lower but at present more practicable ideal of the monarchy. Among the northern tribes Ephraim retains the leadership. But meanwhile Judah (with its appendage Simeon) holds aloof from these local strifes, and in the complete obscurity shrouding it throughout is preparing to emerge as the champion of Israel in the age of the kings.

VER. 11. The phrase (R. V.) suggests that idolatry was "the evil thing" above all other evils, which indeed it always brought in its train. *The Baalim*. Plural of Baal, "lord." Comp. 1 Cor. 8. 5. It probably represents the various local cults of Baal (the sun-god, as the productive power of nature). We read of Baal-berith, Baalzebub, Baal-peor, etc., very much as in Greece Apollo was worshiped as Delios, Patereus, Pythios, Smintheus. *Peoples*. For the frequent change in the R. V. see the Revisers' Preface. The plural answers to that in Baalim. VER. 12. *Forsook*. No doubt they only intended to worship manifestations of Jehovah. All polytheism probably starts from the separate deification of the attributes of the one God. But of course breaking the second commandment involved the first too. *Provoked*. They were guilty of the basest ingratitude, and a practical refusal to do the work God had given them in his designs for the world. And worse still, they yielded to the most foully immoral form of heathenism in the ancient world. VER. 13. Note the sad iteration, preparing for a climax in the mention of "the Ashteroth." This is the plural of Ashteroth, who answers to the Hittite *A-ter*, the Assyrian and the Phœnician *Astarte*. See 1 Kings 11. 5. From the latter both cult and probably name passed to the Hellenic *Aphrodite*. This poisonous importation, accepted not without evidences of healthy contempt by the Homeric poets, did more than any thing to corrupt and enervate the Greek people. As goddess of the moon or of the planet Venus, Astarte was the female counterpart of Baal, and she was honored with an even fuller ritual. The name is not akin to *Asherah* (Exod. 34. 13, R. V. marg.) nor, of course, to the Aryan word "star." VER. 14. This passage (vers. 14-19), containing a general review of the period, is probably due to the compiler, ver. 20 originally following ver. 13. It is very similar to Psa. 106. 34-45. *Sold*. The correlative of redeem, common in this book. VER. 15. The reference is to predictions like Deut. 28. Contrast Josh. 1. 9. VER. 16. *Judges*. A word inadequately expressing the Hebrew *shophetim*. Their functions were military, regal, judicial, according as the Spirit guided them. In name they answer to the Carthaginian *suffetes*, in work most nearly to the Roman *dictator*. VER. 17. *Whoring*. The usual metaphor for spiritual unfaithfulness. See note on Josh. 24. 19. *Fathers*. The generation of Joshua. VER. 18. *Repented*. A common anthropomorphic phrase, indicating that God's action changed, though the cause was the change in men. VER. 19. Each declension sunk them lower than before. With the vivid margin comp. ref. on Josh. 21. 45. They insisted on bearing their full burden of sin. VER. 20. *Nation*. The special

word for heathen nations, and so very forceful here, though passages like Exod. 33, 13; Josh. 3, 17; 4, 1, etc., prevent our laying much stress on it. VER. 23. This is retrospective, and gives an additional reason why the work was not completed in Joshua's day. It was to be gradual, and intermitted during times of apostasy.

#### Berean Methods.

##### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Draw map of Palestine showing "sea-coast plain," "mountain region," "Jordan," and "eastern table land."... Indicate on the map the parts held by the Israelites, and those occupied by the native peoples. (See General Statement and note on verse 12.) The heathen tribes might be shown in colored chalk, the Israelites in white. This will represent the condition of affairs at the opening of the period of the judges.... Show the downward steps of Israel in sin, and show how the same sins are committed now. The outline in the Analytical and Biblical Outline might be placed in the form of descending steps.... Find in this lesson the dangers of God's people, from whence they proceed, and to what they tend.... How God delivered Israel.... The judges, their office, authority, and (if time admits) their names. It would be a good plan to memorize the names of the fifteen judges in a supplemental lesson.... Two rivers in Europe, the Rhone and the Saone—one turbid, the other clear—unite their streams. For a distance they flow on without intermingling, but after a time they mix together, and then all the water is black and muddy; an image of fellowship with the world.... In Thomas Cole's celebrated paintings, "The Voyage of Life," the second picture represents a youth on a vessel seizing the helm, while his guardian angel watches from the shore. This is Israel when Joshua leaves it. The next picture shows the vessel on the edge of a cataract, in the midst of darkness and storms, and the guardian angel in the heavens above. Such was Israel in the period of the judges.

**References.** FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. VER. 13: Baal, 184; Baalim, 223; Ashtaroth, 304.

Give praise to God.  
How good thou art to me!  
Deep are the wounds which sin has made.  
Come, said Jesus' sacred voice.  
Hasten, sinner, to be wise.  
Come to Jesus, and be saved.  
God calling yet! shall I not hear?  
Weary child, by sin oppressed.  
Come to the fountain.  
I need thee every hour.  
All the way my Saviour leads me.  
Will Jesus find us watching?

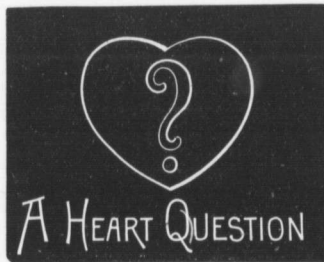
#### Lesson Word Pictures.

What crowds before the stupid images of Baal and Ashtaroth! Hear the plaudits of the people as the flames kindle and sacrifices consume away! How it shocks every reverent sentiment! This must be a foreign land! These must be barbarous idolaters! How well it is that there is one land into which God brought a peculiar people, snatched from idolatry, saved to the worship of the great Jehovah! What? Can there be any Israelites among these worshippers of Baal? If so, they are only spectators in the land of the Amorite or the Hittite. The rest are idolatrous foreigners. No, no, alas! These are all Israelites, the

people of God so called! This is the promised, the sacred, the holy land! O shame! Hang the heavens with sackcloth! Weep for the treachery of Israel! But see! The day of worship becomes the day of war. Those idolaters are massed into an army of defense, for the land has been invaded. How proud their posture! How calm, confident their waiting for the battle-charge! They are the descendants of warriors that heard Jericho's walls go down with an awful crash when Jehovah went marching round the city, who saw Israel's enemies flee in the day of the great battle of Gibeon. Come on, Moabite! Advance, Philistine! Swarm over Jordan, all ye barbarians! These are Hebrews that cannot be worsted. But hark! Hear the final shock of arms and the rush of hosts driving one another across a bloody field. But it is Israel that faints, that falters, that flees. God is not with them. Baal and Ashtaroth are their trust. Away into captivity are they swept. They grind in the house of bondage. They droop under the hot sun in the oppressors' fields. And hark! They cry to heaven. They moan. They wring their hands. They vow a better life if ransomed. And look! Who have risen up in the strength of the Lord? Lo, Othniel and Ehud, Shamgar and Samson, Deborah and Barak, Gideon and Tola, Jair and Jephthah! The strength of the Lord is in their arms. The courage of God is in their hearts. They break through the ranks of the oppressor. They snatch away the enslaved. Happy Israel, free once more; the exile at home! But the old judge is dead at last. He is carried to the tombs of his fathers. And now who again are at the altars of Baal? Who bring sacrifices? Who bow in reverence? Who shout in praise? Moabite and Hittite? Not these to-day, but Israel, ransomed of God, saved, yet bowing in thanksgiving before those senseless blocks! O people not of God but of Satan, what wonder if the nation is cursed of Jehovah, and idolatrous Canaanites still pollute the land of the once people of God!

#### Blackboard.

BY J. E. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The blackboard design is intended to supplement the teaching of the lesson. After the facts and truths connected with the lesson, in its relation to the past, have been discussed, then turn to the blackboard, and bring out the great heart question: IS THERE AN IDOL HERE? Another blackboard design:

WHATEVER SEPARATES  
MY HEART FROM MY GOD  
IS MY IDOL.

#### — IDOLS. —

In Olden Time, In Present Time,  
A DUMB IMAGE. A LIVING DESIRE.

## Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Forgetting God.*

REVIEW. Show a little image of some kind. If a real idol can be obtained, so much the better. See if children understand clearly who worshiped such images. Whom were the Israelites taught to worship? Recall Joshua's last charge. What solemn promise did they make? What was set up under an oak-tree for a witness? Who hears all our promises? Why is a promise a very solemn thing?



LESSON STORY. Set the little image up in a conspicuous place. Tell that for a good many years the people remembered their promise to Joshua, and would not serve idols. Then, they began to forget God, and so they did not try to remember what he had told them to do. All around them

were Canaanites worshiping idols. Perhaps the Canaanites laughed at them for worshiping a God whom they could not see. May be they said, "These people who worship idols are just as happy and well off as we are. Why should we not do as they do?" They be-

gan perhaps by getting a little image and setting it up where they could see it. No harm seemed to come of it, and so they went on, little by little, until by and by they were praying to the very worst of the heathen gods!

Illustrate by story of a boy who had been taught the sin of swearing; tell how he trembled the first time he spoke a profane word; how he grew bolder with every word, and at last came to take God's name in vain with perfect ease. Teach that worshiping idols, swearing, or any sin, comes of forgetting God.

Tell of God's anger, and the punishments he sent to make the people think of him; how they were sorry and begged God to forgive them and try them again. Tell that this was done many times, for God is very patient with his naughty children.

Show a string. Let it be a thread of bright-colored silk. Ask the children to think of this as the promise of the Israelites to obey God. Break it. Ask, can it be mended? Yes, tie the broken pieces together. It does not look so well, but it is a whole string again. Break it again, and tie it again, and so for many times. Every knot stands for a broken promise. By and by it will be full of knots. What a sorry thing to show to God! Teach that only Jesus can keep us from breaking the string.

## B. C. 1249.]

Judg. 7. 1-8.



## LESSON X. GIDEON'S ARMY.

[Dec. 9.]

[Commit to memory verses 2, 3.]

1 Then Je-rub'ba-al, who is Gid'e-on, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of He'rod: so that the hosts of the Mid'i-an-ites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Mo'reh, in the valley.

2 And the LORD said unto Gid'e-on, The people that are with thee are too many; lest Is'ra-el vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gil'e-ad. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

4 And the LORD said unto Gid'e-on, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there; and it shall be, that of

whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5 So he brought down the people unto the water; and the LORD said unto Gid'e-on, every one that lapped of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7 And the LORD said unto Gid'e-on, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Mid'i-an-ites into thine hand; and let all the other people go every man unto his place.

8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Is'ra-el every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men. And the host of Mid'i-an was beneath him in the valley.

## General Statement.

The three centuries after the death of Joshua have been called "the age of the heroes;" for they were a period in which great men arose to brighten the gloom with occasional sunlight. Perhaps the land was more peaceful and the people more prosperous than the record seems to show; for the centuries of peace are apt to receive less notice in history than the years of war. But it is evident that during the three hundred years of this epoch at least seven waves of oppression rolled across Israel. Each was caused by a lapse of idolatry, and in each case the delivery began when the people turned toward the Lord under the leadership of a reformer. The first oppression came from Mesopotamia, and was broken by the first judge, Othniel, Caleb's younger brother. The second was by the Moabites, and its deliverer was the second judge, Ehud. The third was the beginning of Philistine inroads, repelled by the ox-goad champion, Shamgar, the third judge, perhaps at the same time with Ehud's deliverance in the east. The fourth oppression was by the Canaanites, from whose yoke the northern tribes were freed by Deborah and Barak. The fifth oppression was that of the powerful Midianites, from the desert border on the east of Pal-

estine. It was the most bitter of all, thus far; for the enemy seized all the fruits of the field and of the herd, drove the helpless Israelites to hide in the caves, and left them to starve. But in the nation's deepest extremity stood forth one of its noblest heroes, Gideon, the fifth and greatest of the judges. At the call of an angel he began the reformation in his own home by destroying the image of Baal and rearing an altar to the Lord. So close was his communion with God that he did not hesitate to test God's power, and in the fleece of wool, dry and wet by turns, but ever different from its surroundings, showed the type of his own Israel among the nations. In answer to Gideon's trumpet-call his own tribesmen rallied around him, and a little camp was formed on Mount Gilboa, while in the plain below were the outnumbering tents of Midian. Small as was his army, it was too large for God's plan of deliverance; so by successive tests it was reduced, until at length, from thirty-two thousand soldiers, three hundred heroes were called out. With these a midnight assault was made. Midian was routed and destroyed, and liberty was won for Israel.



**Verse 1. Jerubbahal,** who is Gideon, because those names are significant. Gideon is "he that cuts down," referring to his destruction of Baa's image (see previous chapter). Jerubbahal is "one who contends with Baa," that is, Baa's open enemy. Gideon belonged to a noble family in Manasseh-west, and had already won the reputation of "a mighty man of valor." He began his deliverance by an act of uncompromising opposition to idolatry. (1) *God wants for his work men of decision.* **The people that were with him.** As the oppression was heaviest in the north, Gideon's followers were mostly from the northern tribes, Manasseh, Naphtali, Asher, and Zebulun. The powerful tribe of Ephraim in the center of the land took no part in the deliverance, and was greatly offended at Gideon's leadership. **Rose up early.** An expression showing prompt and earnest action, and means that they made a march early in the morning. **I pitched beside the well (Rev. Ver., spring) of Harod.** Probably the large spring at the foot of Mount Gilboa, now called Ain Jalud. Mount Gilboa is famous not only for Gideon's victory, but also for Saul's defeat and death, which took place upon it. **The Midianites.** These were the powerful tribe of Arabians inhabiting the desert border east of Palestine, and frequently in arms against the Israelites; though closely related to them since they were descended from Abraham through Keturah. **By the hill of Moreh.** The mountain north of Mount Gilboa, known to travelers as Little Hermon, but to the natives as Jebel ed Daliy. In the valley below this valley extends from the plain of Esdraelon, the historic battle-ground of Palestine, to the river Jordan; and through it the Midianites fled after their defeat.

**2. The Lord said.** Like most of the Judges, Gideon lived in constant communion with God, and received frequent intimations of God's will. (2) *God's warriors need to keep their communication open with their heads quartered.* Too many for me. Israel's army numbered 32,000; Midian's 135,000, or more. Yet there were too many for God's purpose; because he wisied the victory to be stamped with the seal of divine power, and to show that it was God's gift, and not the result of their own courage. (3) *God sees not of works, but by his grace, that he may have all the honor of our salvation.* **Let Israel vaunt themselves.** The victory would be little avail if the victors should forget God and trust to themselves. (4) *God's people need to learn well the lesson of humility.*

**3. Go to.** An exclamation like our "Come, now." Proclaim in the ears of the people. This proclamation was enjoined by the Lord (Deut. 20. 8), to strengthen the warriors in battle by removing the cowardly. But at this time it was to show Gideon how weak were the human forces upon which he was relying; so that he might learn to look to God and not to man. **Whosoever is fearful and afraid.** Not only would such add nothing to the power of the army, but they might dispirit others, for fear is infectious in battle. (5) *So none, in God's cause, half-heartedness is weakness and causes failure.* **From Mount Gilead.** A singular expression, for we should expect to read "Mount Gilboa." Perhaps it is an error from an ancient copy; or the sentence may be the customary war-cry of Manasseh, the tribe to which Gideon belonged, whose principal seat was in Mount Gilead east of the Jordan. **Returned for twenty and two thousand.** They were unskilled in war, and crushed by oppression; and their hearts sank as they saw the host of Midian, four times their own number, encamped below them. Yet the army of Israel was stronger after they had departed; and even these deserters may have done

#### Explanatory and Practical Notes.

good work in the pursuit of the Midianites afterward. There remained ten thousand men, of which the rest of those who had originally followed Gideon's standard.

**4. The people are yet too many.** God was testing Gideon's faith while trying the material of his army. **Bring them down to the water.** The command was given without explanation, but the result of the spring was the method of testing disclosed. **Of whom I say unto thee, This.** God saw each man in Gideon's ten thousand, knew his character, and knew just what work he could do in his cause. (1) *Our Master knows by name each soldier in his army.* (2) *When God seems to weaken his Church by weeding it, he is strengthening it by the trial.* (3) *God not only chooses His own plan, but chooses also the men who are to carry it out.*

**5. He brought down the people.** Leading them down Mount Gilboa, as if about to make an attack upon the enemy. **Every one that lapped.** Some would stop in their march, when they reached the spring, break ranks, and kneel down to drink; while others would pause only long enough to catch up a handful of the water and throw it into their mouths, after the peculiar manner of the Orientals when drinking. **Set by himself.** He that lapped was to stand by the spring, watch the men, and make the division, while they were unconscious that a test was being made. However slight may be the distinctions upon which God divides men, yet they rest upon great principles.

**6. The number of them that lapped.** Small as this seemed, it was a test of character. He showed earnest men, who were single-hearted in their warfare, and would not pause to gratify their own desire of ease. 2) It showed cautious men, who would not drop their weapons and cast their lives away in a moment, exposing themselves to sudden attack, but who stood erect, alert, and ready for the enemy. 3) Perhaps, as some expositors think, it showed religious men. Idolaters were wont to worship prostrate on their faces. Thus the momentary act may have shown who were loyal Israelites. (4) *How small are the tokens which will reveal character!*

**7. By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you.** With God the number of men was of far less consequence than their fitness for the work. The plan of battle was one which did not require many men, but it did require disciplined, careful, courageous, and ready heroes. (1) *Men may noise numbers; God values the "remnant."* Will I save you. Notice how constantly God emphasizes the fact that the deliverance of Israel was his own work, not man's. **Let all the other people go.** Though they did not make the attack, they probably joined in the pursuit of the flying Midianites after Gideon's victory. How their dismay must have tried the faith of their comrades!

**8. Took victuals . . . and . . . trumpets.** The sense of the original is, that they took the victuals or food of all the army (meaning as much as they had need), so that each of the chosen three hundred had a trumpet, a lamp, a pitcher, and a weapon. **Sent all the rest.** The words "all the rest" are not in the text. He sent all Israel to their tents, that is to some. **Host of Midian were on the sides of Mount Gilboa, and the Midianite camp was spread out on the plain at their feet.** The attack was made at night, in three divisions, each from a different quarter. The Israelites carried lamps concealed in pitchers, which they broke suddenly, showing lights all at once around the host. At the same time they raised a cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" The sudden panic seized the Midianites; they fled down the valley to the Jordan, where multitudes were slain in crossing. Other victories were won in the pursuit, and the Midianite power was forever broken. See the verses and chapter following the lesson.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. Gideon's army. Judg. 7. 1-8.  
 Th. Gideon's army. Judg. 7. 16-23.  
 W. The commission. Judg. 6. 11-21.  
 Th. Gideon's zeal. Judg. 6. 22-32.  
 F. The dream. Judg. 7. 9-15.  
 S. Strength from God. Isa. 40. 21-31.  
 S. Power in weakness. Zech. 4. 1-10.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Zech. 4. 6.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 105, Dominion Hymnal.  
 Onward, Christian soldiers,  
 Marching as to war.

## No. 284, Dominion Hymnal.

We are marching on  
With shield and banner bright.

## No. 291, Dominion Hymnal.

On to the conflict, soldiers for the right,  
Arm you with the Spirit's sword.

TIME.—1249 B. C.

PLACE.—Near Mounts Gilboa and Little Hermon,  
west of the sea of Galilee.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The Lord of hosts.

## QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

## 1. The Host of Midian.

Who was Jerubbaal, or Gideon?  
Why was he called Jerubbaal? chap. 6. 32.  
What caused the invasion of the Midianites?  
Whose descendants were these Midianites? Gen. 25.

2, 4. Where did they dwell? Exod. 2. 15; 3. 1; Num. 22.

1, 4. In what part of the land was this invasion made?  
How great was the army of invasion? ver. 12.  
What was the general feeling throughout the army?  
ver. 3.

## 2. The Host of God.

By what name is God often called? Isa. 1. 9; Rom. 9. 29.  
What was the number of the host of God that made Gideon's army?

How was the choice made?  
How were they equipped for the battle?  
How had Gideon gathered his army?  
What lesson ought Israel to have learned from this method of the Lord? Zech. 4. 6.  
To whom did they ascribe the whole glory? chap. 8. 22.

How complete was the victory which God gave them?  
chap. 8. 28.

## Practical Teachings.

God and one are a majority, one one has said. Will you be that one? Gideon was ready for any task? Are you?

There were fearful ones in my army. There are moral cowards every-where. Are you one?  
The hosts of Midian, like the hosts of sin, were a vast multitude. God was greater than they. God is greater than are the forces of sin.

Only one out of every one hundred and seven was accepted for this army.  
When the Son of man comes with fan in hand to purge his floor, will he divide as closely? Will you be chosen or left?

## Hints for Home Study.

1. Learn all you can of Gideon in chaps. 6, 7, 8.
2. Write the story of his life as fully as you can.
3. Locate these two armies so as to understand all that happened.
4. Mark the places that are difficult to understand, and ask some one about them.
5. Give the great characteristic of Gideon as a man.

## QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

## 1. The Host of Midian.

Who was the leader of the army of Israel?  
By what other name was he known?  
Why was he called Jerubbaal? chap. 6. 32.  
Where did Gideon make his camp?  
In which direction was the host of Midian?  
How many were there of this host? chap. 8. 10.  
Where was their camp?

## 2. The Host of God.

What did the Lord say about Gideon's army?  
Why were they too many?  
What order was Gideon directed to issue?  
How many returned home?  
What did the Lord then say about the number?  
Where was Gideon to make the next test?  
What division would then be made?  
What was the test which was applied?  
How many kneeled to drink?  
How many lapped with the tongue?  
Which class was chosen to defeat the Midianites?

Where were the rest sent?  
What preparation did the three hundred make?  
Where was the host of Midian?  
How could Gideon hope to defeat this host?  
(Golden Text.)

## Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That God will not give his glory to men?
2. That God is mightier than all his enemies?
3. That God chooses men of courage for his service?

## Hints for Home Study.

Learn by what expedient Gideon defeated the Midianites.  
Learn what snare Gideon's victory brought to Israel.

## QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Into whose hands had the Israelites now fallen?  
Into the hands of the Midianites.  
What had the Midianites done? Driven them from their homes.

Where were they living? In caves in the mountains.  
What true servant of the Lord lived at this time? Gideon.

What had Gideon's father done? Built an altar to Baal.

What did Gideon do? He threw down the altar.  
What did the Midianites do then? Raised an army to fight the Israelites.

What did the Lord tell Gideon to do? To raise an army of Israelites.

How many came at Gideon's call? More than thirty thousand.

What did the Lord say? That the army was too large.

What did he want to teach them? That he was their strength.

Who were told to go home? All who were afraid.  
How many went away? Twenty-two thousand.

How many still remained? Ten thousand.  
What did the Lord direct? That all go to the water to drink.

Who only were allowed to fight? Those who drank in a certain way.  
How many remained? Three hundred.

Who can only win victories for God? The obedient.

## Words with Little People.

My way is God's way is  
To make a great show. To work very quietly.  
To seem to be very strong. To choose weak ones to help.  
To do as I think best. To work through those who obey.

"When I am weak, then am I strong."

## THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What great danger was threatening Israel during the days of Gideon? Destruction by the Midianites.

2. To what tribe did Gideon belong? The tribe of Manasseh.

3. What made Gideon the leader of the army of Israel? "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him."

4. How large an army did he raise? Thirty-two thousand men.

5. How many did God choose to overthrow Midian? Three hundred picked men.

6. What lesson did he mean thus to teach them? "Not by might," etc.

## CATECHISM QUESTION.

12. By what means were our first parents led to commit so great a sin against God?

By the subtlety of the devil, who made use of the serpent to beguile Eve.

Genesis iii. 13. And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

2 Corinthians xi. 3. As the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness.

## ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

## God's Chosen Leader.

## I. A MAN OF DECISION.

Jerubbaal, who is Gideon. v. 1.

"Throw down . . . Baal." Judg. 6. 25, 26.

"Who is on the Lord's side?" Exod. 32. 26.

## II. A MAN OF ENERGY.

*Rose up early.* v. 1.

"Blew the trumpets." Chap. 7. 19.

"Earnestly contend for the faith." Jude 3

## III. A MAN OF COURAGE.

*Pitched beside the well.* v. 1.

"Thou mighty man of valor." Judg. 6. 12.

"Speak boldly. . . ought to speak." Eph. 6. 20.

## IV. A MAN OF COMMUNION WITH GOD.

*The Lord said unto Gideon.* v. 2.

"Built an altar. . . unto God." Judg. 6. 24.

"Our fellowship. . . with the Father." 1 John 1. 3.

## V. A MAN OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

*Bring them down. . . he brought.* v. 4. 5.

"Keep his commandments." Eccl. 12. 13.

"Prepared his heart. . . to do." Ezra 7. 10.

## VI. A MAN OF FAITH IN GOD.

*He sent. . . every man unto his tent.* v. 8.

"The sword of the Lord." v. 20.

"Time would fail. . . of Gideon." Heb. 11. 32.

## THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

## God's Chosen Warriors.

1. God chooses for his warriors those who are humble, willing to give God all the glory. The true soldier seeks to be a machine to carry out his commander's plans. v. 2.

2. God seeks for his warriors fearless men, however powerful may be their foes. Let us be strong and bold in the Lord. v. 3.

3. God's chosen warriors must be single-hearted, not divided between his work and their own ease. vs. 5, 6.

4. God's warriors must be loyal, with no lurking taint of idolatry in their hearts. vs. 5, 6.

5. God's warriors must be trusting, having confidence in God, even in the face of seeming impossibilities. v. 7.

6. God's warriors must be submissive, obedient to orders, and ready to follow their leader's will.

## English Teacher's Notes.

SOME three hundred years ago England was threatened by a naval force the like of which, in size and grandeur, had never yet been seen. So impossible did it seem that such a force could be other than victorious that it was called before the contest began the "Invincible Armada." Here is an example of might. But the Armada which represented the might of Spain was met by a fleet of English ships, small indeed and insignificant compared with the stately vessels of the enemy, but manned by expert seamen and brave warriors who successfully harassed and kept in check the hostile forces. Here is an example of power. Yet the discomfiture of the Armada would have been incomplete but for winds and storms which wreaked their fury upon it; and England and her queen gave the glory to God for their deliverance.

The words "might" and "power," though used somewhat indiscriminately throughout the Authorized Version of the Old Testament, express in our Golden Text two distinct ideas such as I have indicated above. "Might," *chayil*, refers to something outward and visible, and is sometimes rendered "army." "Power," *koach*, is used in a more

spiritual or immaterial sense. When the angel of the Lord bids Gideon "Go in this thy might" (Judg. 4. 14), the word used is "*koach*," or "power." A man who is rich and noble may have the material "might" without "power," while one who is poor and obscure and utterly without such "might" may be full of "power."

When Gideon's army took the field against Midian it was out of the question that they should trust in their "might." The Midianite host being a hundred and thirty-five thousand strong (see chap. 8. 10), while Gideon's men amounted only to thirty-two thousand, they were in the proportion of one to four, or rather less. And in fact so glaring was their disadvantage in this respect that more than two thirds of them were "fearful and afraid." The presence of these trembling ones would have been a hindrance, and when they were dismissed, and the army thus reduced to ten thousand men, there was no loss of "power." The feebler element had been eliminated from their ranks, but the strong remained. And this compact though small army of ten thousand brave and determined men were as much a hindrance to the fulfillment of God's purposes as the larger one had been. Not only the fearful, but they also who were confident in their own strength, must be got rid of. And not until the band of warriors was by the command of God reduced to three hundred (a number which rendered the idea of victory by human means utterly hopeless and absurd) was the way open for the distinct promise: "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you." It is not necessary to see any special meaning in the different manner in which the people drank. It is enough that God chose that way of deciding, so that Israel should not "vaunt themselves, . . . saying, Mine own hand hath saved me," but acknowledge, like England's queen long centuries after, that their deliverance was the Lord's doing.

There are two particular temptations which are apt to beset those who have enlisted in the service of Christ. One is the temptation to fear and despondency. "I have no might," says one: "I stand so alone; I cannot hold out against my companions; they would not listen to my testimony;" or, "I am nobody; I am poor; I cannot do much for Christ." But the word of the Lord says: "Not by might." Then what need to deplore its absence? The other temptation, to confidence in self, is more specious: "I shall not be led away by others; I am going to make a good fight; I shall stand firm." But the word says also: "Not by power." Want of "might" is no hindrance to a true soldier of Christ; confidence in his own "power" is a decided hindrance. It is by the "Spirit of the Lord" that the victory is to be won.

## The Lesson Council.

**Question 22.** Upon what ground has Gideon been called "the greatest of the judges."

Gideon's greatness is to be measured by his splendid achievements and his personal character. He secured practically, though not permanently, the abolition of

idolatry in Israel (Judg. 8. 33), and so completely exterminated the dreaded Midianitish army from the land that only 15,000 out of 120,000 escaped alive. It is not surprising, therefore, that Israel in gratitude proposed his coronation. He was probably, like Saul, a man with a noble presence and princely look (Judg. 8. 18), whose very face was radiant from his frequent interviews with God. He was great in generalship, full of inventiveness, strategy, and tact. Recall the device of the dew on the fleece, the harmless weapons of trumpets and pitchers by which he won a great victory, and his "soft answer" by which the wrath of the jealous Ephraimites was turned away, and which passed into a proverb, Judg. 8. 1-3, with Prov. 15. 1. He was decisive in judgment, cautious in execution, humane in conquest, without arrogance (Judg. 8. 3,) and having no unholy ambition. In him was the humility of Moses, the bravery of Joshua, the grace of David, and the loyalty of Daniel, a solitary and kingly spirit, living ahead of his age, who might have been the first monarch of the Hebrew state.—*Henry Spellmeyer, D.D.*

Because of his character he displayed the great qualities of bravery, wariness, resolution and magnanimity. His zeal for God was evinced in his destruction of the idolatrous shrine of Baal at Ophrah. So great was the gratitude of his country that he was offered the kingly dignity, which though refused in words was actually sustained by him through life and seized by a son of his after his death.—*J. E. Hanauer, Jerusalem.*

**23.** Was the test of the three hundred significant of their character, or was it accidental?

It was a test of qualification for service selected by the Lord, and an unconscious exhibition of personal character. These men did not prostrate themselves as men often leisurely do when drinking from a forest spring or stream. They bent over, not even getting on their knees; they made from the curved palms of their hands a hollow cup, and quickly satisfied their thirst. This showed them to be men of judicious impulse, eager for conflict, and fitted for hasty expeditions, and the emergencies of war.—*Henry Spellmeyer, D.D.*

It was an illustration of the great truth that men's real character is best known by noticing their conduct in unguarded moments. Those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth without adopting a position which in case of a sudden attack would have placed them at the mercy of their assailants, proved that they possessed the qualities of caution and of self-restraint.—*J. E. Hanauer, Jerusalem.*

### Cambridge Notes.

Judg. 7. 1-8.

The character of Gideon is drawn with more detail than that of any judge until Samuel. His indomitable courage is entirely the offspring of faith. Heb. 11. 32. Witness his slowness to stir a finger until he can be quite certain of his divine mission. We note his keen feeling of the national degradation (6. 13), his humility (6. 15), his wise self-restraint in the "soft answer" of 8. 2, 3, and his freedom from self-seeking in the renunciation of the crown (8. 23). And if superstition and polygamy mar his later life, we must not blame him too severely for not being in all points before his age. Ver. 1. *Jerubbaal*. Ewald remarks that as Baal ("lord") was not originally narrowed to describe a heathen god, Gideon's name may have meant "God's warrior." The suggestion is unnecessary, and not convincing, though the cunning speech of Joash (6. 32) would gain in humor by being a new application of his

son's name, according to the Hebrew fondness for playing on names. The sarcasm of Gideon's father recalls that of Elijah, 1 Kings 18. 27. *Gideon* means "smiter," not unlike Martel and Maccabee. *Early*. Apparently in the morning following the night of chap. 6. 40. Once assured, he lost no time. *Harod*. "Trembling," a name either given or newly applied from the event of verse 3. It is probably the spring at the foot of Gilboa, *Ain Jalud*. *Midian*. The wild Bedouin tribe among whom, in the Sinaitic peninsula, Moses had lived so long, and who had done so much harm to Israel in the time of Balaam. *Moreh*. Probably little Hermon, but the only known Moreh is near Shechem. Gen. 12. 6. *Valley of Jezreel* or *Esdraelon*, scene of so many famous battles, the defeat and death of Saul and of Josiah, as well as the triumphs of Barak and Gideon. The Israelites always preferred to fight in the hills, and one of the features of the present victory was its being won in a plain. VER. 2. *Too many*. Though the Midianites were four times as numerous! Chap. 8. 10. Comp. Deut. 8. 17. VER. 3. *Whosoever*. This is a combination of the usual watchword of Israel (Deut. 20. 8) with that peculiar to the eastern Mannasites round Mount Gilead, which had apparently spread over the whole tribe. (This is better than to alter Gilead into Gilboa.) The precaution was adopted before the battle of Leuctra by Epaminondas, a hero singularly like Gideon in character, and also by Judas Maccabeus. 1 Macc. 3. 5, 6. *Depart*. A contemptuous word, "slink away." VER. 4. *Water of Harod*. *Try*. The word used for refining gold. VER. 5. *Lappeth*. A characteristic Oriental mode of drinking, in which the rapid motion of the hand imitates the jerking action of a dog's tongue. This attitude was indicative of self-control and consciousness of the enemy's nearness. VER. 6. *Three hundred*. The number of the Spartans at Thermopylae. VER. 7. *All*. That is, the 9,700. VER. 8. *The people*. The marginal reading is better. The three hundred took the trumpets and the pitchers of provisions brought by the whole host. *Sent*. Many of them doubtless joined in the pursuit and plunder.

### Berean Methods.

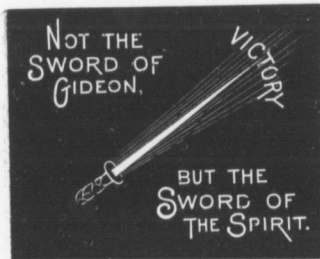
#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Let the teacher carefully read Judg. 3-5, as preparatory to the lesson; induce the scholars also to read it before the session of the school, and call for the names of the first five oppressors and deliverers of the Israelites. . . . Then read Judg. 6-8, containing the story of Gideon; and notice especially the traits of character which are shown in his acts. . . . Draw map of the region here referred to: Mounts Tabor, Moreh, Gilboa, plain of Esdraelon, river Jordan, etc. . . . Show on the map the relative positions of the two armies. . . . The test by the spring, and how it showed character. Notice how small an act will be a true revealer of character. . . . There are two lines of teaching running through this lesson. One is, "God's chosen leader" (Gideon), (Note Analytical and Biblical Outline). . . . The other is: "God's chosen warriors." The private soldiers are not less important than the general. See here what sort of men God chooses for his work. (Note the Thoughts for Young People.) . . . When Cromwell had disciplined his Ironsides, he led them out, and caused an alarm of battle to be sounded. He noticed some who hesitated and showed fear. There was no enemy, but the test had shown who were not fit for war. These he sent home, retaining their horses and arms to be given to men who were better qualified for his needs.

Though troubles assail.  
How firm a foundation.  
Fear not, God is thy shield.  
Since Jesus is my friend.  
He leadeth me.  
The Lord will provide.  
Marching to Zion.  
Am I a soldier of the cross?  
Battling for the Lord.  
Soldiers who to Christ belong.  
Soldiers of the cross, arise.  
Sound the battle-cry.  
Strike for victory.  
Onward, Christian soldiers.

#### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



**LESSON TAUGHT.** It was not the sharp-edged sword of the warrior Gideon that brought the victory, but it was the sword of the Spirit of the mighty Lord of hosts. We learn from this lesson also that one must not only have faith but obedience. Believe and obey, and the Lord will not fail.

#### SEVEN FAIL NOTS:

Deut. 31. 6, 8; Josh. 1. 5; Heb. 13. 5; 1 Chron. 28. 20; Psa. 27. 10; Isa. 49. 15; John 10. 27, 28.

#### Primary and Intermediate.

##### LESSON THOUGHT. How God Works.

Show as beautiful an apple as you can find. Talk about it a little. Ask what apples are good for, who makes them, whom they are made for, how they are made. Produce a wax or candy apple. Is this as good an apple as the other? Talk about how it was made, what for, etc. Tell something of the process of making the artificial apple. Then tell, letting children help as much as possible, how God works upon the real apple. Tell how his servants, earth, air, sun, rain, dew, heat, all are called to help. Tell that he works silently. Nobody sees, nobody knows how he works, but when the beautiful apples are furnished for our use we know that it is God who thought about us, and took all this trouble to please us, his children. Teach that it is God who is working all the time, even in the cold winter, in nature, and that he works for us because he loves us. God can work easily with the sun and air, the trees and flowers, because none of these has a will of its own, and refuses to do as he says. But now, we must talk about God working with people, for it is the same God who makes the apple, who makes

all the children and men and women. But people, big and little, want their own way, and so they hinder God. Let us see how he managed with the people in the story.



Print "Gideon" on board.

He worshiped God, and obeyed him. You know how the Israelites had worshiped idols, and now God had let their enemies, the Midianites, become their rulers, to punish them. Tell how the Israelites had to leave their homes and live in caves in the hills, and how at

length the Lord called Gideon to deliver them. God always calls obedient servants to help when he has work to do. Tell how quickly the people came when Gideon blew his trumpet, all ready to fight. Now God wanted to show that all power is his. He does not need any of us to help him make an apple. He does not need our help to conquer our enemies. Our part is to trust God, and do just what he tells us. Tell the story vividly, and show that God means to teach us that only those who are full of faith and zeal can really be soldiers in his army.

Talk about the enemy we have to fight. Print "Satan." Print names of some of his helpers, envy, anger, indolence, carelessness, etc. How shall they be driven away? Print, "By my Spirit." Believe God. Obey him, and he will do the rest.

#### Lesson Word-Pictures.

O, Gideon, the Lord is going to do great things for you in the coming battle. True, the Midianites, and Amalekites, and the children of the East have come over the hills like an immense swarm of grasshoppers. Their camels seem numberless as the sea-shore sand. You can see how far-reaching is their encampment. How swarthy their faces! What strange jargon of words, what barbarous fashions! And look, out of the folds of those tents you will see the hideous faces of idols peeping! At a signal, all those belligerent idolaters will rise up, anger in their faces, sharpened weapons in their hands, bloody swiftness to their feet, and like a tornado they will rage against the Hebrews there by the well of Harod. But never you mind, Gideon. You have thirty-two thousand patriots. How flaming their devotion! Who among them all is a coward? Who has any fear? Count them up, the thirty-two thousand, and remember that one Hebrew can chase a thousand idolaters, and what an army you have with you! Is it any wonder that you step about so proudly? O, how effective will be this great arm of Hebrew flesh when you swing it, measuring thirty-two thousand man-power, and bring it down on the invaders! But hark! What is God telling thee? Too many men? Israel may boast of the strength of its own hand? Send some away?

Yes, send away—God is saying to Gideon—any one whose heart may shrink within him, "whosoever is fearful and afraid."

"Ah," Gideon may be saying, "they will not want to go, so full of daring."

But look! When they have a chance to go, see them moving away! Some of the bravest talking, probably, are the fastest in retreating. They go in clusters, and now in crowds, the ground covered with their withdrawing forms. A thousand gone, and now another, another, another, another, till twenty-two thousand have left the camp of Gideon! Only ten thousand left! But such warriors there are among them! Such tried



skill some have shown! This man at our left has been a famous Canaan-fighter all the days of his manhood, while his neighbors have been captains of heroic bands of patriots. If each of the ten thousand is a match for his thousand assailants, then come on, Midian and Amalek! Ten millions of men—as good as they—will meet you.

Does Gideon's heart swell with pride?

"Too many," God is saying. But how will he get rid of any of these when no one wishes to go? Strange indeed is the command that is issued. Let Gideon's army go to the water and drink! There they are, drinking away, one lapping the gathered crystal out of his hand, another bowing his mouth to the water, and all wondering, doubtless, what crazy motive Gideon has in this compulsory drinking by ten thousand men.

"Take those that lap with their tongues," God is saying. What, not the historic fighters, the men who

have been Canaan's foes so many years? Not the men who have been leaders of war bands? They may be the best-armed fighters in the camp. Let them go, let them go! They did not lap when they drank. "O, crazy Gideon!" the people say. "What do you mean? Only three hundred chosen, and not because they can fight, or have weapons, but can lap water! This expected battle may be their first, and have they weapons? Nothing is said of sword or spear. They may have come with only their hands, and now into these are put—trumpets? See them, the poor, pitiful three hundred, with only trumpets in their hands! They shall have other armor, and, in the mean time can you not imagine them turning in their helplessness to the almighty Jehovah in the skies? Up there is the armor for Gideon's band, but when weapons are received, they are only—lamps and pitchers!

B. C. 1120.]

Judg. 16, 21-31.



[Commit to memory verses 29, 30.]

21 But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Ga'za, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

22 Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.

23 Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Da'gon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.

25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Oell for Sam'son, that he may make us sport. And they called for Sam'son out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.

26 And Sam'son said unto the lad that held him by

#### LESSON XI. SENTRY OF SAMSON.

[Dec. 16.

the hand, suffer me that I may feel the pillars which uphold the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

27 Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and he went up upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Sam'son made sport.

28 And Sam'son called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me. I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

29 And Sam'son took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

30 And Sam'son said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein: so the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

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

#### General Statement.

From the time of Gideon we pass over a century and a quarter to the time of Samson. A new enemy has arisen, more powerful and more relentless than the former foes of Israel. For a hundred years the Philistines were the terror of the land, requiring not one deliverer, as the previous oppressors, but many in succession. The last three judges and the first of the kings carried on a constant and often unavailing war against these oppressors. Not until David sat on the throne did victor and vanquished change places and the five cities of the Philistines become subject to the twelve tribes. At the time when Samson arose to begin the deliverance the Philistines held all Palestine under absolute subjection, which no revolt could break. The hero was endowed with the power and the gifts which might have made him the liberator of his land. Had he but fulfilled God's plan, and lived to accomplish his mission, the Philistine yoke might have

been broken a century earlier in the history. But he lived an aimless, frivolous, selfish, and sensual life, playing practical jokes when he should have been winning victories, spending his time in guilty pleasure, and soiling his Nazarite consecration. The champion became the captive, and with blinded eyes dragged the heavy millstones in the prison. But the day of vengeance came at last. With lengthening locks came renewed strength. Samson stands now between the pillars of the Philistine temple, with a thousand nobles before him, and multitudes on the roofs above. He breathes a prayer to the God of Israel, a prayer for vengeance upon his foes; then summons all his strength, and plunges into death with himself all the Philistine hosts. In the destruction of that hour was wrought the first in a series of great victories completed a century later in the conquest of David.

#### Explanatory and Practical Notes.



teenth judge, the son of Manoah, of the tribe of Dan.

**Verses 21. The Philistines.** A powerful people living on the Mediterranean shore bordering the tribe of Judah. They held five strong cities, Gaza, Ashdod, Ekron, Ashkelon, and Gath, in a confederation; and during most of the time from Samson to David they held control over southern Israel. The name *Philistine* is a corruption of the word *Philistia*. **Took him.** Samson, the thir-

He possessed great opportunities of freeing Israel, but lost them by his own folly and lust. See the previous verses of this chapter for an account of his capture by the Philistines. We trace the failure of his life to four causes: 1. His frivolity; living for pleasure instead of a purpose. 2. His selfishness; doing all his great deeds for himself instead of his nation. 3. His worldly companionships; seeking his associations among Philistines and not Israelites. 4. His sensuality; throwing away his strength while blind with lust. (1) *How many noble lives have been wrecked on these rocks!* Put out his eyes. A common practice in ancient warfare, portrayed on the Assyrian monuments. It was wrought either with a spear or a red-hot iron. Says Bishop Hall: "His eyes were the first offenders

which betrayed him to lust; and now they are first pulled out." **To Gaza.** The southernmost city of Palestine, near the Mediterranean Sea, then the capital of the Philistine league; still a flourishing place containing fifteen thousand inhabitants, called *Azahas*. **Fetters of brass.** Literally, "brasses," as we say "irons." **Did grind.** By moving the upper millstone around the lower with a handle. This was an additional disgrace, because the labor when light was done by women, when heavy by asses. (2) *Sin has a harder service than righteousness.* (3) *None is so low as he who has lost God's favor.*

**22. The hair of his head.** The long hair was a token of his Nazarite vow, and a pledge on God's part of divine power. When it was lost by his own folly the vow was broken and the power gone. **Began to grow.** And with its growth there may have been in the champion's heart a renewal of his vow of consecration as a Nazarite, or one set apart to God's service. (4) *See a token of God's infinite mercy in forgiveness.*

**23. The lords of the Philistines.** At this time the Philistines were governed by five chiefs in joint sovereignty. Afterward the king of Gath became the Philistine over-lord or chief ruler. See 1 Sam. 37: 2; 29: 1-11. **To offer a great sacrifice.** The heathen sacrifices were generally accompanied with abominable scenes of debauchery and wickedness, for idolatry is apt to be a dedication of human lust and passion. **Dagon their god.** The national divinity of the Philistines, named from *dag*, "a fish." It symbolized the life-giving forces dwelling in the sea, and was generally represented with the head of a man on the body and tail of a fish. **Our god hath delivered.** Though they had made Samson prisoner by treachery, they looked upon the victory as given by their god, and showing the superiority of Dagon over Jehovah. (5) *Shall heathen see a divine power in the affairs of men and Christians fail to see it?*

**24. When the people saw him.** Brought from prison to be mocked by the crowd. They praised their god. As Kito says on this passage: "The question was now put upon a different ground. It was no longer a matter between Samson and the Philistines, but between Dagon and Jehovah." **The destroyer of our country.** Some of Samson's mighty acts are corded in the history, but doubtless many more were wrought. But they appear to have been done more in sport or in personal vengeance than in behalf of his people. (6) *The true hero is the man whose deeds are done for his fellow-men.*

**25. When their hearts were merry.** Among heathen nations a great feast accompanied every public sacrifice. **Make us sport.** By rough gambols and feats of strength, amid the mockery of the spectators. (7) *The backslidden follower of God becomes an object of derision to the world. Between the pillars.* Perhaps upon a stage against the two main pillars of the building; or it may have been that he retired there to rest after his exhibition.

**26. Unto the lad.** Some think that this may have been an Israelite boy, in the secret of the plot, and forewarned in time to escape. **That I may feel the pil-**

lars. The best explanation of the event is that Samson performed upon a platform before the front of the building, in full view of the crowd within and on the roof; and then left the platform, and rested against the front pillars of the temple, out of sight from those overhead.

**27. The lords of the Philistines.** All the chiefs of the five confederated cities, with their families, and the nobles of the tribe, were with him on the feasting. **Upon the roof about three thousand.** These were the common multitudes, unable to find place inside the temple.

**28. Samson called unto the Lord.** In his darkness he sees God as he never saw him in the light, and he calls upon God for help in his need as he never called on him in his prosperity; (8) *How often does sorrow bring hearts into communion with God! Lord God.* He invokes the high name Jehovah, as well as the common name God, showing by his use of the words some conception of spiritual truth. **Remember me.** As if feeling that he had been forgotten in his blindness. (9) *How easy to think that God does not see us when we fall to see him! Strengthen me.* He now felt his dependence, not on self, but on Omnipotence. (10) *Blissed is that trouble which teaches us to trust in God. Only Avenged of the Philistines.* His prayer breathes the spirit of Old Testament religion, rather than of New, for it sought judgment and not mercy. Yet it was in accord with the age, and with the character of the hero. **My two eyes.** Literally, "for one of my two eyes," as if no vengeance could compensate him for both.

**29. Took hold of the two middle pillars.** The roof was undoubtedly flat, following the Egyptian architecture, and the temple may have stood upon a declivity, as the topography of Gaza indicates; so when the two pillars in the middle were taken out the entire building would fall in destruction.

**30. Let me die with the Philistines.** This was not suicide, because his purpose was to kill his country's enemies, and his own death was accepted as necessary to the slaughter. **The house fell upon the lords.** These are especially mentioned, because their death robbed the Philistines of their leaders, and thus broke the power of their domination. **Upon all the people.** Those upon the roof falling with it upon those within, and all slain together. **The dead which he slew.** Not less than five or six thousand people perished in this overthrow, a far greater number than is mentioned as slain during Samson's life-time.

**31. His brethren.** His fellow Danites, taking advantage of the terror among the Philistines. **Took him.** Found his dead body among the ruins. **Between Zorah and Eshtaal.** Two towns in the Shefelah, or foothills between Judah and Philistia. **Burying-place.** Probably a cave. **Manoah his father.** For an account of him, see Judg. 13. **Twenty years.** He probably exercised rule on the frontiers, at the same time while Eli was directing affairs in the center of the land.

TIME.—1180 B. C.

PLACE.—Gaza, in south-western Palestine.  
DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The fear of God.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

##### 1. Blind.

Who was made blind by the Philistines?  
Who was he? what had he done? why was he made blind?  
How had he come into the power of the Philistines?  
How was he regarded by the Philistines?  
Under what vow had he been born?  
Had his long hair any thing to do with his strength?  
What was the secret of his gigantic might?

##### 2. Mocked.

Where had Samson been confined?  
What occasion gave them opportunity to mock and deride him?  
What was the character of the gathering? vers. 25, 27.  
What inference do you draw as to the size of the town of Gaza at this time?  
How could people be on the roof of a house and see what went on inside?  
How could Samson "make sport" when blind?  
What can you find explaining this scene?

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. Death of Samson. Judg. 16. 21-31.  
Th. Samson's strength. Judg. 14. 1-9.  
W. Prayer and answer. Jer. 15. 15-21.  
Th. Judgment from God. Psa. 9. 1-10.  
F. Strength in weakness. 1 Cor. 1. 20-31.  
S. Alliance with evil. 2 Cor. 6. 11-18.  
S. Spiritual strength. Eph. 3. 14-21.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

Great men are not always wise. Job. 32. 9.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 114, Dominion Hymnal.  
Holy Spirit, faithful Guide,  
Ever near the Christian's side.
- No. 86, Dominion Hymnal.  
I am thine, O Lord, I have heard thy voice,  
And it told thy love to me.
- No. 35, Dominion Hymnal.  
Take the name of Jesus with you,  
Child of sorrow and of woe.

**3. Avenged.**

How severe was the punishment put upon Samson?  
 What was Samson's prayer?  
 Does this teach that God approves of human vengeance-taking?

What do the Scriptures teach about self-avenging?  
 Deut. 32. 35; Psa. 94. 1; Isa. 35. 4, etc.  
 How was he avenged upon his enemies?  
 What was the character of Samson?  
 Was his life a success or a failure?

**Practical Teachings.**

The old story is told over: temptation, parley with evil, a moment of weakness, asleep in sin, bound hand and foot by the devil. Life is daily witnessing the same scene. Are you acting in such a one?

Men come to a spiritual crisis as Samson came to a physical one. If they yield, spiritual blindness comes, and who will restore sight to those blind eyes? Is there a hint that it will ever come? Samson died blind.

**Hints for Home Study.**

1. Study first the history from Gideon to Samson.
2. Study, second, the history of Samson's life.
3. Study the effect of his life on history.
4. See if you can find any references to him in other parts of the Bible.
5. What were the elements of success and failure in his life?

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.****1. Blind.**

Of what blind man does this lesson tell?  
 What caused Samson's blindness?  
 Where did his captors take him?  
 To what mean employment was he put?  
 What sign of returning strength appeared?

**2. Mocked.**

What great gathering occurred at Gaza?  
 What idol did those people worship?  
 What victory did they ascribe to their god?  
 What said the people when they saw Samson?  
 What demand did the revelers make?  
 From whence was Samson called?  
 Where was he placed?  
 What other great captive was mocked by his enemies?  
 Matt. 27. 27-31.

**3. Avenged.**

What request did Samson make of his keeper?  
 Who were in the house?  
 How many were upon the roof?  
 What prayer did Samson utter?  
 What preparation did he make for avenging himself?  
 What trial of his strength did he make?  
 What disaster followed?  
 What is said of the number slain?  
 Who buried Samson?  
 Where was he buried?  
 How long did he judge Israel?  
 What lesson does Samson's history teach us? (Golden Text.)

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

When in this lesson are we taught—

1. That sin blinds its victims with fetters?
2. That sin blinds its victims to danger?
3. That sin ruins its victims at last?

**Hints for Home Study.**

Read the early history and achievements of Samson. Find a commendation of Samson in the New Testament.

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

Who was Samson? The son of Manoah.  
 What had God given him? Great strength.  
 Who were the enemies of Israel at this time? The Philistines.

What work had God called Samson to do? To deliver Israel from the Philistines.  
 How did Samson displease God? By telling the secret of his strength.

How did the Lord punish him? By taking away his strength.

What did the Philistines then do to him? They took him and put out his eyes.

Where was he confined? In a prison at Gaza.

What did he learn while there? That all strength is in God.

What did God restore to him? His strength.

To whom did the Philistines make a great feast? To their idol, Dagon.

Who was called to amuse the people? Samson.

Where was the feast held? In the idol temple.

Who were present? All the lords of the Philistines and many others.

What did Samson pray that he might do? Slay all these people.

What did he then do? He pulled the house down upon the people.

What work was Samson thus able to do in his death? To deliver Israel from the Philistines.

**Words for Little People.**

God gives us our strength and talents to use for him. We must not use them to please ourselves. We must not boast of what we have or can do? God gives all to us; let us give all to him.

**THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

[For the entire school.]

1. When the Philistines had overpowered Samson what did they do to him? **Put out his eyes.**
2. What did they then compel him to do? **To grind in the prison-house.**
3. To whom did the Philistines ascribe their victory over Samson? **To their god Dagon.**
4. What do we know was the cause of his misery and death? **His wicked forgetfulness of God.**
5. What serious warning from this great man's life comes to us all? **"Great men are not always wise."**
6. Wherein only lies true wisdom? **In fearing and loving God.**

**CATECHISM QUESTION.**

18. Who is the devil or Satan?

The chief of the fallen angels, who, before man's fall, sided against God, and was cast out of heaven.

1 Peter v. 8. **Be sober, be watchful; your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.**

John 6. Angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation. He hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

**ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.****Samson in Two Aspects.****I. CAPTIVE THROUGH SIN.**

1. **Blinded.** "Put out his eyes." v. 21.  
"Knowest not that thou art... blind." Rev. 3. 17.
2. **Fettered.** "Fetters of brass." v. 21.  
"Committeth sin... servant of sin." John 8. 34.
3. **Burdened.** "Did grind." v. 21.  
"Servants... brought in bondage." 2 Pet. 2. 19.
4. **Despised.** "Make us sport." v. 23.  
"Rejoice not... O mine enemy." Micah 7. 8.

**II. CONQUEROR THROUGH FAITH.**

1. **Reconciliated.** "Hair... began to grow." v. 22.  
"The Lord shall repent." Deut. 32. 36.
2. **Believing.** "Called unto the Lord." v. 28.  
"This is the victory." 1 John 5. 4.
3. **Praying.** "Strengthen me." v. 28.  
"Shall call... I will answer." Psa. 91. 15.
4. **Self-sacrificing.** "Let me die." v. 30.  
"Lose his life... shall find it." Matt. 16. 25.

**THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.****The Lessons of Samson's Life.**

1. There are some sad warnings from Samson's life: Against fleshly lusts which war against the Spirit; against a selfish use of the divine endowments bestowed for noble purposes; against frivolous aims in life, wasting God-given powers; against evil companionships, which drag the highest down to level with the low.

2. Samson's history shows that the misuse of powers foreshadows the loss of them. There is a depth of meaning in that sentence, "He wist not that the Lord had departed from him." v. 20.

3. There are some gleams of hope in Samson's career, for it shows that it is never too late for the backslider to return and be saved. "There is time for a victory before sunset!" said Napoleon at three o'clock in the afternoon at Marengo.

4. Even from the erring and the sinful God hears prayer when it is sincere and repentant.

5. A man should hold his life of less value than God's cause, and should be willing to die if he can save others. Samson gave up his life for vengeance on his enemies; our Saviour gave up his life to bring salvation to his enemies.

#### English Teacher's Notes.

In the early part of the year one of the fine steamships that ply between England and America lay helpless on the mighty Atlantic, tossed by the waves, drifting with the currents, and in imminent danger of making a fearful end. For some days the passengers had to be put on an allowance of food, and passed a time of much suspense. This deplorable situation was not brought about by any want of capability in the captain or the crew; it was simply owing to the circumstance that the vessel had lost her propeller. The helmsman might point the helm in the right direction, but there was nothing to answer to it and send the vessel forward.

Our Golden Text reminds us that similar disasters occur in the story of human life. There are "great men," men of ability, men of rank among their fellows, and men, it may be, on whose course the welfare and safety of many are depending, who for want of a propeller nearly make shipwreck, not only of themselves, but of others. "Great men are not always wise."

The story for our lesson to-day strikingly illustrates this. We can hardly discover the last scenes of Samson's life from those that had gone before, and indeed our Golden Text distinctly leads us to examine the connection between them. How came the Israelite hero, the champion of his people, the terror of the Philistines, in the wretched and degraded condition in which we find him—blind, fettered, doing the work of the lowest slave, and sent for to "make sport" at his captors' festival? It was for want of a propeller. He was a great man; great in power and great in achievement; great as to his destination from his birth; great as to his position of "judge" in Israel; great in his aim to free his people from the Philistine yoke; great above all in the being made, by the power of the Spirit, God's instrument for the deliverance of Israel. But when we find him drawn hither and thither by caprice and passion we see that he lacked the moving principle which should have impelled him steadily onward. And what was this? It is that to which reference is made in our Golden Text—that heavenly wisdom whose beginning is the fear of the Lord. This would have kept him constantly pursuing the work to which God had called him, in spite of all the winds of circumstance or the currents of earthly temptations.

The real helplessness of Samson did not begin when the Philistines made him captive. Had he been "strong in the Lord" he never would have entered the valley of Sorek, nor "opened all his heart" to Delilah. Had he not been drifting away from the path God had marked out for him the last fatal confession would never have been made.

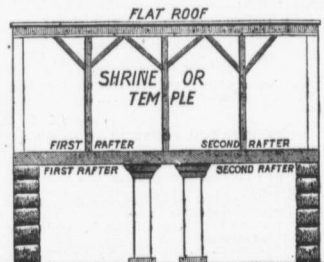
The vessel I have spoken of above, after drifting some days, was rescued by another ship sent out by the company in search of her. She was taken in tow by this vessel, brought safely to port, fitted with a new propeller, and is now plowing the waves as before. God does not take less pains with his willful, erring creatures. Samson's hair, the sign of his consecration to God and the pledge of his divinely given strength, began to grow again in the prison; a token that God had not forgotten him. And in the hour of his deepest humiliation we find that his heart had been drawn to God in repentance and faith, so that he was able to call upon him in sure trust that the answer would be given, and that in sacrificing his own life he should be enabled to effect a last great deliverance for Israel. Samson died a conqueror. The "cords of love" and of mercy wherewith Jehovah had drawn him had brought him back into the place of victory.

The lesson for the class is two fold: 1. See that you have a propeller on the sea of life; abilities, advantages of position, etc., are not all that is needed. Without heavenly wisdom you are in constant danger. See that you get it. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." James 1. 5. 2. But if you have consciously erred from the right way, and are driven hither and thither, remember the "cords of love" (Hos. 11. 4) are outstretched toward you. Let them draw you back into a place of safety and of victory.

#### The Lesson Council.

Question 24. What was the probable form of the Philistine temple?

There is but little said about this building, save that it had two massive pillars which supported the roof, and



yet were so close together that one man could at once embrace both. Hence it is difficult to describe the building, but from the analogy of other buildings of the present day we may suppose that the two

columns supported two rafters, on which at right angles rested others, forming a floor to the flat-roofed shrine, in front of which ran a corridor looking down into a yard. I suppose rafters, either of wood or stone, were used, as it is generally thought that the arch was unknown at that age. At the present day I can point out houses built like this, excepting that the substructures are vaulted.—*J. E. Hanauer, Jerusalem.*

It was possibly, as Stanley suggests, "the great temple of the Fish-God at Gaza," a building of great size, with a flat roof, upon which three thousand men and women might crowd together, located on one of the many side-hills of Gaza. Its "two middle pillars" would naturally be its main support. It is not said that there were but two pillars, but the temple was so constructed as to rest mainly on two, which being pulled out the whole building would be demolished. Fliny speaks of two theaters built at Rome large enough to contain the whole Roman people, and so constructed as to depend upon a single hinge or pivot. (*Hist. Nat., xxxvi, 15.*)—*Henry Spellmeyer, D.D.*

### 26. Was the life of Samson a success or a failure, and wherein?

The complete verdict of success or failure in life can only be pronounced by the Judge of all the earth at the last day. Samson's life was not in all things a failure. He was a chosen instrument to deliver Israel from the Philistines, and his name appears in the sacred calendar of Old Testament worthies. Heb. 11. 39. He was true to his vows of which the seven twisted locks of his shaggy hair were the sign, and in all his excesses and wanderings he is said never to have touched wine. He was full of good nature. His name means not only "strength," but "sunshine." There is nothing of the coarse and brutal about him, as was the case with his enemies, the Philistines. He was a practical jester, always happy when in mischief, and one whose drollery gave him his final chance to execute vengeance on his adversaries. He did not forsake his wife until she was treacherous to him, and he had afterward sought first a reconciliation. Samson lived in an heroic age, when might was right, in days of anarchy and blood, and is not to be measured altogether by New Testament standards. He was a jovial, great-hearted, companionable man, like most of his class too easily molded by his surroundings. His life teaches us that the strength of the soul is supreme faith in God, and suggests the reflection that if modern biographies were as faithful as those of Scripture in recording our weaknesses and sins few of us could stand.—*Henry Spellmeyer, D.D.*

The gross self-indulgence and wayward pranks of the great charlton seem, as it was only natural that they should, to have estranged the minds of many from him (see the conduct of the men of Judah, chap. 15. 11. 13). His achievements were but the spasmodic exploits of a person who seems to have lacked the power of rallying the people round him at decisive moments as Gideon had done. He appears to have been a Danite Don Quixote, and to have been looked upon as such. His triumphs over Israel's enemies, the Philistines, consequently bore no lasting fruit, as under other circumstances they might have done.—*J. E. Hanauer, Jerusalem.*

### Cambridge Notes.

Judg. 16. 21-31.

The story of Samson, probably drawn from some larger account of the adventures of that unique hero, presents too many points to be even sketched here as a

whole. As in the case of the other Judges, the tribe most sorely pressed by the enemy at the time produced the deliverer. Here it was Dan, crushed into a narrow space between Judah and Ephraim, with the Philistines hard pressing on their southern border. Samson is the first recorded Nazarite (see Num. 6. 2-21; chap. 13. 4, 5; Amos 2. 11), but the Nazarite Institution must have been familiar to allow of his dedication before birth. Compare the histories of Samuel, Elijah, John the Baptist, and James the "brother of Jesus." His name ("Sunny") suggested a very obvious rationalizing of his story in days when solar myths explained every thing. We are certainly lending no argument to such over-ingenious theories when we note the striking similarities between Samson and the Greek Heracles. Gigantic strength, not associated with giant stature, rollicking humor, gross sensualism, mighty labors, and a tragic end are common to both—and natural, we may add, to a type of man not rare in the early stages of civilization. It is possible that Samson's name was a popular title won by his character, so exactly representing the Hebrew idea of the sun. Comp. Ps. 19. 5. Stanley's contrast of the bright and genial hero with his heavy butts the Philistines is splendidly brought out. We need to emphasize this so as not to confound the historical Samson with the hero of Milton's magnificent drama. The poet has caught the Hebrew inspiration as perfectly as he has the Hellenic style. But though suffering may have greatly transformed the weak-minded and sensual Danite, we must remember that the tragic grandeur of Milton's Samson is due to imagination alone.

VER. 21. Jehovah had departed from him because of the criminal recklessness by which he showed how little he thought of his vow. And his strength only belonged to him as a servant of Jehovah. It is this last fact that gives him his place among the heroes of faith (Heb. 11. 32), despite his many failings. *Grind.* The work of slaves and women. VER. 22. The hair was not a charm; it was the emblem of the Nazarite's consecration, to which meanwhile suffering was guiding him back. VER. 23. *Dagon.* The fish-god, special deity of a maritime people. Comp. 1 Sam. 5. 1-5. *Our god.* Milton well brings out the insult to Jehovah implied, sure precursor of an impending catastrophe. VER. 25. *Merry.* Comp. chap. 9. 27; 1 Sam. 25. 36. *Sport.* Perhaps to dance and make music, though feats of strength are possibly included. Exod. 32. 6 contains the same word. VER. 26. Samson feigns fatigue, and the half-drunk Philistines, too stupid to apprehend danger, let him lean against the pillars. The house was perhaps an amphitheater cut in a hill-side; above the semicircular tiers of seats a roof or gallery was supported on four pillars, the two middle ones close together. Samson comes forward from the stage, and the boy leaves him resting against these. VER. 27. On the roof were the common people, as the changed word implies. VER. 28. Note the three names of God—*Lord, Jehovah, Elohim*—which mark the fierce intensity of Samson's last prayer. The very probable rendering of the margin restores the grim jest with which Samson characteristically passes away. His successors were to wreak the full vengeance; Samson would be content with half. We need not discuss the ethics of this revenge, nor quibble with the ancients about Samson's supposed suicide. VER. 30. The destruction of the leading families must have been a blow from which they never fully recovered. VER. 31. *Brethren.* That is, the tribe of Dan—"Gaza was not in plight to say them nay." *Zorah.* In Dan, his birthplace. *Eshkol.* Josh. 15. 33 marks this as Judah's, but it was given to Dan. (19. 41). *Judged*

*Israel.* We see from this that the judge's authority was not necessarily very far-reaching. Samson scarcely left his own tribe.

### Berean Methods.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Read carefully the story of Samson's life, and talk it over in brief with the class. Show how great were his opportunities, and how near he came to complete failure. . . . The causes of Samson's failure are given in note on verse 21. Notice how these four elements were manifested in his life; and notice how many lives come to naught through them. . . . Show in Samson the prisoner the condition of God's servant when he backslides into sin—weak, blind, enslaved, burdened, despised. . . . Notice the Scripture texts in first part of Analytical and Biblical Outline. . . . Illustration of this condition. Bunyan's pilgrims in Castle Doubting, under the power of Giant Despair. . . . Relate the closing scene and show in it Samson's return to God. See the texts in latter part of Analytical and Biblical Outline. . . . Or we may take up, 1. The warnings of Samson's life. 2. The encouragements of Samson's life. . . . Show the parallel and contrast between Samson and Christ: one died to destroy his enemies, the other to save them. . . . Illustration of fabled wrestler Anteus, who was strong while he touched the earth, but helpless when lifted up from the ground. Samson's power was in his consecration as a Nazirite, of which his hair was a token.

**References.** FREEMAN. Ver. 21: Grinding as a punishment, 235; prisoners blinded, 360; fetters, 360. Ver. 23: Dagon, 236. Ver. 27: Sports witnessed from the roof, 237. Ver. 29: The middle pillars, 238.

Abide with me.  
There's a wideness in God's mercy.  
Father, I stretch my hands to thee.  
There is a fountain filled with blood,  
I'm poor, and blind, and wretched.  
Depth of mercy, can there be.  
Come, come to Jesus.  
Weeping will not save me.  
Take me as I am.  
Tell it to Jesus. [gather.  
Come unto me, when shadows darkly  
What a Friend we have in Jesus!  
I was a wandering sheep.

#### Primary and Intermediate.

##### LESSON THOUGHT. *All for Jesus.*

Another remarkable story which cannot fail to interest the children. Recall the story of the hero, Gideon. Tell that to-day we have a story of another hero. Print "Samson" in large letters. Some child will tell that he was "the strongest man." Where did he get his great strength? Show a small statue, or a doll. Call attention to the hands, feet, eyes, etc. Why can it not walk and talk as we do? Children will say it is not alive. Teach simply and clearly that God put some of his own life into each one of us. Without it our hands and feet and eyes and ears would be of no more use than are these in the lifeless image. Let children name as many of God's gifts to us as they can, such as sight, hearing, etc. Print them, placing above them "God's Gifts to Me." Over "Samson" print "God's Friend." Print "Philistines," and over this, "God's Enemies." What had God given to Samson? Yes, great strength.

He wanted him to use it in doing good work for him. What kind of people are God's enemies, and what must always be done with sin? Now God gave Samson great strength to use in subduing these bad people, the Philistines.

Ask children to hold up their hands. Let us see how many can move—so? who can clap them—so? who can move the fingers—so? Very well; who gave them to you? Now tell story of little boy who used his hands to strike, to snatch, to tease other children. Was this right? Why not? Because he used them to please self and not to please God. This is just what Samson did after a while. Tell the story. It will interest greatly to tell some of the stories showing how great Samson's strength was before his downfall. Make it clear that Samson lost his strength because he forgot God and used his gifts to please himself.

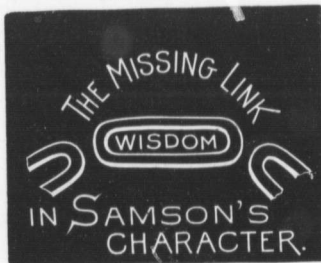


Bring out the truth clearly that Samson's strength did not come back until he had seen his sin and told God how sorry he was. Then he was willing to forget self and work for God.

What can children give to Jesus? Yes, pennies. But he wants more. Will he take our pennies if the hands with which we give them are used for Satan? Print "All for Jesus" above "God's Gifts to me," and enforce lesson of responsibility in use of gifts.

#### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



Samson's character may be likened to a chain with one weak link. A chain is only as strong as each link is strong. This blackboard design is for the purpose of bringing out that missing link. If you have a blackboard with two sides, you can draw the link as it is represented in the cut; then turn the board over. Have the school name the other links of the chain that were elements of his strength, such as courage, wit, self-reliance, etc. At the last state that the chain is incomplete, and by turning over the board show that the missing link was wisdom. Great bodily strength united with wisdom would have made him a power for good, but great strength governed by folly made him morally weak. Strength without wisdom is like a great tree without deep roots.

#### Lesson Word Pictures.

Who is this down in the dusky old prison-house? Poor fellow, his eyes are out. Fetters of brass are on his limbs, and he sullenly grinds and grinds and grinds.

All day he is the slave who forever and monotonously grinds. But what brawny limbs and magnificent muscle and massive frame! What a man of war he would make if he only had his sight and his liberty! What a splendid head he has! His hair has been cut lately and the noble shape of his head is to be clearly seen. He might not only fight but lead in the fight. While we look at him he turns toward us, lifting those poor sightless eyes, yet still grinding. You can see his face now still better. "Why," you say, "we know the man!" It is Samson, the great Nazarite, athlete, hunter, fighter for the Hebrews, his long locks flowing in the wind. No common man, but Israel's leader, judge, hero, saviour at times, and the hated victor of the Philistines. Ah, Samson, how fallen to-day! not beaten in the fight, but a Nazarite shorn of his locks by a harlot, tripped by the wiles of a Philistine woman. Unhappy slave! However, the horrible wounds inflicted upon his eyes are healing. Now and then he puts his hand up to his head and mutters, "My hair is growing!"

But who are these crowding about the altars of Dagon? They bring offerings. They light the red, bloody fires. They make obeisance. They shout, they dance, they rejoice. Dagon has delivered Samson into their hands. How changed are the times! Israel's leader is grinding in the prison-house. How they praise their god! Good Dagon! Great Dagon! Glorious Dagon! All the while the dumb old block with hideous eyes stares senselessly at its worshippers. "Call for Samson!" somebody has shouted. They have gone for him. They stay his grinding. They unfasten the chain binding him to his task. As if a big fettered bear were led

out of the depths of Lebanon's forests, so the big, blinded warrior is led before the idolaters, and how their crazy shouts rend the air! He lifts his useless eyes. May be, as he feels the cool, pure air blowing upon him, he wishes he could see once more the blue sky, the green fields, the rounded hills of his Hebrew home! If he could only see his old father and mother! But there are the taunting and maddening shouts of the Philistines as they call upon him to make sport for them! Is Delilah among the spectators, looking contemptuously down? He puts his hand up to his head and mutters, "My hair is growing!"

He says something to the lad guiding him. He wants to lay his hands on the pillars supporting the house. He lifts his head toward the sky. Hark! Does any one hear a blind man's prayer about his enemies? It is not like that in later days ascending from a cross, but may be he is thinking more of his country's cause than his own injuries. The prayer is finished and death comes soon. No more grinding in the prison-house, no more days of blindness, but under the ruin-heap somewhere is the mangled body of one who has liberty and sight at last. Was Delilah under that ruin-heap also? A sorrowful band has come up from Israel. They stoop down to the bruised, broken body. They lift it tenderly. They carry it away on a bier. You can follow the slowly winding train across the land of the Hebrews. You can tell their route by the cries of grief that pierce every-where evokes. They halt at last at a tomb between Zorah and Eshtaol. There they lay down to its unbroken rest the body of Samson, warrior, sometimes hero, judge of Israel for twenty years.

B. C. 1312.]

Ruth 1. 16-22.



[Commit to memory verses 16-18.]

16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

18 When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

19 So they two went until they came to Beth'le-hem.

## LESSON XII.

## RUTH'S CHOICE.

[Dec. 23.]

And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth'le-hem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Na-o'mi?

20 And she said unto them, Call me not Na-o'mi, call me Ma'ra: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Na-o'mi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22 So Na-o'mi returned, and Ruth the Mo'ab'it'ess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Mo'ab: and they came to Beth'le-hem in the beginning of barley harvest.

## General Statement.

The Book of Ruth opens a picture of peace in the midst of centuries of war. While Gideon was breaking the Midianite yoke in the north, quiet reigned in the south of Israel. During the peaceful relations of Moab and Israel, a family of Bethlehem removed from their ancestral home to the land on the east of the Dead Sea. There the sons married the daughters of the land, and enjoyed a few brief years of happiness. But death entered that happy home, and Naomi, widowed, childless, and poor, prepared to return to her own land. Her two daughters-in-law, the widows of her sons, went forth to accompany her. At the borders of Moab there were tears and embraces, Orpah gave to Naomi the kisses of farewell, but Ruth clung to her, resolved to become her

companion. Hand in hand they journeyed together down the mountains of Moab, across the valley of the Jordan, and up the ravines of Judah. They returned to Naomi's home in Bethlehem, and Ruth the Moabitess became Ruth the Israelite, having chosen Israel for her people and Jehovah for her God. At Bethlehem she entered upon a life of poverty and toil, gleaning in the fields for her daily supply of food. But her faith was rewarded by the care of God, by the fellowship of God's people, and by an honored place in her adopted country. She became the wife of the rich and the noble Boaz, the ancestress of David the king, and of David's greater Son, the King of kings.

## Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 16. And Ruth said. Ruth belonged to the people of Moab, whose home was east of the Dead Sea, between the rivers Zered and Arnon. They were descended from Lot, the nephew of Abraham, and hence were related to the Israelites. But they had lost the knowledge of the true God and were idolaters, worshipping the idol Chemosh. The descendants of Jacob were

the only people among the many nations of the Abrahamic stock who clung to Abraham's God. After one of the earliest of the foreign oppressions, that of Eglon (Judg. 3), there was peace between Moab and Israel during most of the period of the Judges. It was probably about the time of Gideon that Elimelech and his wife Naomi came to Moab from the tribe of



Judah. Their sons married Moabite women, and died in the Moabite country. Elimelech also died, and Naomi, left utterly alone, returned to her own land. Orpah, one of her daughters-in-law, gave her the kiss of farewell; and our lesson opens with Ruth's answer to Naomi's entreaty that she would follow Orpah back to her country and her gods. Her answer shows a mingling of decision, love, whole-heartedness, and self-sacrifice. For the very reason that Orpah had left because Naomi was old, childless, and poor, Ruth clung to her.

(1) *We should choose for the good that we can do, not for the gain that we can get.* Entreat me not, As Fuller says: "God wrestled with Jacob with desire to be conquered; so Naomi, no doubt, opposed Ruth, hoping and wishing that she herself might be foiled." So Elijah entreated Elisha to leave him, as a test to his fidelity, yet rewarded him for staying. 2 Kings 2. Naomi desired Ruth's companionship, but she would not take advantage of her sympathy and earnest feeling. **Whither thou goest, I will go.** For Naomi's sake she would go to a land which she had never seen, against which there was a prejudice among her own people, and where she must meet the same prejudice against herself. **Where thou lodgest, I will lodge.** Naomi was poor and could promise no worthy home to her adopted daughter, yet for her sake Ruth would dwell in the lowliest cottage. **They people shall be my people.** She would renounce citizenship in Moab and become an Israelite. In a spiritual sense Moab represents the world, and Israel the people of God. Every Christian should make Ruth's resolution and take God's people for his friends, no matter how lowly they may be, nor how exalted worldly associations may appear. Notice the choice of Moses in Heb. 11. 24-26. (2) *God's people in poverty are richer than the world's people in luxury. Thy God my God.* Probably this did not mean the same fulness with Ruth as with us; yet it was a renunciation of the idolatries of Moab and a putting on of Jehovah, of whom she had doubtless received much knowledge during ten years of married life in an Israelite family. It is this which draws people to Christ now. They see what Christians are, and through them they are led to their God. (3) *May we so reflect Christ's character as to draw men toward Christ.*

17. **Where thou diest, will I die.** She turns her back upon Moab and its associations, and turns her face toward Israel and its promises. Though by blood a descendant of Lot, who clung to the world, and of Lot's wife, who wavered and turned back to Sodom, Ruth shows herself in heart a true daughter of Abraham. **There will I be buried.** A desire to be buried among one's own people was strongly characteristic of the ancient world, and still characterizes the Oriental world. Note the dying wish of Jacob (Gen. 49. 29-32), and of Joseph (Gen. 50. 25, 26). The Chinitans, who come to America require a contract that in the event of death their bones shall be taken back to their own land. But Ruth chooses Israel for her home, living and dead. **The Lord do so to me.** This is the first instance of a peculiar form of oath found often in the Old Testament invoking the judgment of heaven upon the non-fulfillment of a vow. It may have been spoken

with some expressive gesture accompanying the words, "The Lord do so to me." (4) *Let us not be so, that attaches us to Moab, and fasten every link united us to Israel.*

18. **When she saw.** Naomi's advice was sincere, for she knew the hardships awaiting Ruth, from poverty, toil, and the scorn of narrow-minded Israelites. Yet she was, no doubt, more glad at her refusal than at Orpah's consent. **Streastfully minded.** This is the mind for every follower of Christ to have, the steadfast, determined mind. It silences opposition, puts away doubt, and quells temptation. (5) *It is really easier to be earnest in God's service than to be lukewarm.*

19. **So they two went.** They journeyed down from the mountains of Moab to the valley of the Jordan, passed the head of the Dead Sea, not far from Jericho, and ascended the mountains of Judah. **Bethlehem.** This village is situated six miles south-east of Jerusalem, and is distinguished as the birth-place of David and of Jesus Christ. All through Bible history, it was a small village of a few hundred inhabitants. See Micah 5. 2. It is still a prosperous town of much better appearance than most in Palestine, containing two or three thousand people. **All the city.** The term "city" is applied in the Bible to all places, large and small, having walls. **Was moved about them.** As is usual in small towns, the coming of a new resident and the return of an old one attracted general attention; and all the more so Naomi's family had once enjoyed high social position, being descended from Nababon, the prince of Judah at the exodus from Egypt. **They said.** In the Hebrew, "the women said." **Is this Naomi.** In surprise at her altered appearance and lonely state.

20. **Call me not Naomi.** A name meaning pleasant, beautiful. **Call me Mara.** A word meaning bitter; in allusion to her troubles—widowhood, bereavement and poverty. **The Almighty hath dealt.** She had a measure of faith to see that God ruled in her afflictions; but a small measure, since she could not trust him fully, though she called him the Almighty. **Dealt very bitterly with me.** The word bitterly in the original is *mara*, bitter. "Call me Bitter, because God has been bitter toward me." (6) *How blessing are earthly blessings, when ten years turn Naomi to Mara!* (7) *How great our need of faith to trust God at all times!*

21. **I went out full.** That is, rich, with husband and sons, in happiness. **The Lord hath brought me home.** The going was by her own will, the returning by God's constraint. (8) *Often sorrow brings back to God those who in enjoyment have wandered from him.* **Testified against me.** God had borne witness against her by his dispensations, and in appearance was turned to be her enemy. It was the ancient belief that afflictions were sent in punishment for sin; in the clearer revelation of the New Testament we see that God gives us discipline and training here, and reserves penalty for the hereafter.

22. **Ruth the Moabitess.** This is the name by which she was generally known among the people of her adoption. **It was a name of honor,** for it represents the first-fruits of the Gentile world brought into God's true Israel. The blood of a Gentile woman ran in the veins of Jesus of Nazareth, thus giving him kinship not only with Jews, but with the Gentile world. **Barley harvest.** This fact is named to introduce the narration of the next chapter. In southern Palestine the barley harvest comes in the middle of April.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. Ruth's choice. Ruth 1. 16-22.  
 Tu. Preceding narrative. Ruth 1. 1-10.  
 W. Ruth finds favor. Ruth 2. 1-12.  
 Th. Kindness of Boaz. Ruth 2. 13-23.  
 F. Jonathan and David. 1 Sam. 20. 11-17.  
 S. Leaving all for Christ. Luke 18. 18-30.  
 S. An inseparable Friend. Rom. 8. 31-39.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Ruth 1. 16.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 72, Dominion Hymnal.  
 O happy day that fixed my choice  
 On thee, my Saviour and my God.

No. 127, Dominion Hymnal.

Nearer my God to thee,  
 Nearer to thee.

No. 63, Dominion Hymnal.

My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine;  
 For thee all the pleasures of sin I resign.

TIME.—B.C. 1312.

PLACES.—The land of Moab. Bethlehem.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The love of Christ.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **The Voice of Love.**  
 Who are the characters who appear in this lesson?  
 Where is the scene of the story laid?



To what period of Bible history does it belong?  
Where was the country in which this Jewish family had been living?

What made Ruth use the language of ver. 16?  
What kind of character is displayed by this language?  
Why is Ruth of special interest to every Bible student?  
Ruth 4. 17.

### 2. The Voice of Wee.

How were these two travelers received when they reached Bethlehem?

What is the meaning of the words *Naomi* and *Mara*?  
Was Naomi's speech true?  
What great blessing had God in store for her?  
Was she grateful to Ruth?  
What was the attitude of Naomi toward God and the world?

Give an analysis of her character.  
Was she not acting just as many of us act now?

### Practical Teachings.

See this picture of true devotion. Ruth forsook country unasked. Ruth left her home and kindred. Ruth went, a stranger, into a strange land. Ruth went among those who hated a foreigner. And it was all for love of her earthly friend.

Compare Christ's devotion. He forsook heaven, his Father, glory, and power, to go into poverty, to those who hated him, and all for love of his enemies. Read John 3. 16.

### Hints for Home Study.

1. Read the whole book of Ruth.
2. Study this particular chapter with care.
3. Commit to memory Ruth's words.
4. Trace the journey of these women.
5. Write Ruth's story as fully as you can without a Bible.
6. Find why this story is put into the Bible at all.
7. Study on the ancestry of the Moabites, and find how they were related to the Jews.

### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

#### 1. The Voice of Love.

By whom was this voice of love uttered?  
To whom were the words spoken?  
What appeal did Ruth make to Naomi?  
What had she resolved to do?  
What choice did she make of kindred and religion? (Golden Text.)  
What only would be permitted to part them?  
What caused Naomi to cease her objections?

#### 2. The Voice of Wee.

To what place did the women go?  
How long since Naomi had left Bethlehem? ver. 4.  
What effect had their arrival on the city?  
What question did the people ask?  
What did Naomi reply as to her name?  
Why did she wish to be called *Mara*?  
What is the meaning of the two names?  
What contrast was there between her going out and her return?  
To what source did she trace her sorrow?  
What mistake did she make in regard to her afflictions? Heb. 12. 6.  
At what season of year was this return from Moab?

### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. A lesson of domestic love?
2. A lesson of religious devotion?
3. A lesson of confidence in God?

### Hints for Home Study.

Learn what earthly prosperity came to Ruth in consequence of her devotion to Naomi.  
Learn what place Ruth occupied in the genealogy of Jesus.

### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

When was there a famine in Canaan. In the time of the judges.

Who went from Bethlehem to live in Moab? The family of **Elimelech**.

Who died in Moab? **Elimelech and his two sons**, and Ruth, her daughters-in-law.  
What did Naomi say she would do? **Go back to Bethlehem again.**

Who begged to go with her? **Orpah and Ruth.**  
Why was Naomi unwilling? **Because they would have to leave their own home and friends.**

Who refused to leave her mother? **Ruth.**  
What did Ruth say? **"Thy God shall be my God."**  
Why did this make Naomi happy? **Because she loved Ruth.**

What do Christians want to see others do? **Love and serve the true God.**  
How can Christians help others to love God? **By loving him themselves.**

What had come upon Naomi? **Great trouble.**  
What great good came out of the trouble? **Ruth learned to love and serve God.**  
Who can turn trouble into blessing? **The Lord.**

### Words with Little People.

*A loving heart* Clings to friends.  
*A selfish heart* Thinks about his own pleasure.  
Tries to comfort them. Forgets friends in trouble.  
Is glad to follow them. Chooses to go its own way.  
Wants to be taught by them. Thinks it knows the best way.

### THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Whose story is told by the book of Ruth? **Of Ruth, of Naomi, and of Boaz.**
2. Who was Ruth? **A heathen girl of Moab.**
3. What was her destiny in Jewish history? **To be an ancestor of Christ.**
4. What was the moving principle of her life? **Fidelity to her loved ones.**
5. In what words did she express her loving purpose? **"Thy people shall be my," etc.**

### CATECHISM QUESTION.

14. What is the employment of the fallen angels? They tempt men to sin, and thus seek to bring them to their own place of misery.  
*Matthew xxv. 41; Ephesians vi. 12; 1 Thessalonians iii. 5; 1 Timothy iii. 7.*
15. Can they do what they please? No; God controls their power, and will save from their malice and subtlety all who put their trust in Him.

### ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

#### The Choice of Ruth.

- I. AN INDEPENDENT CHOICE.  
*Entreat me not to leave thee, v. 16.*  
"As for me...serve the Lord." Josh. 24. 15.
- II. A PERSONAL CHOICE.  
*Whither thou goest, I will go, v. 16.*  
"Whithersoever thou goest." Matt. 8. 19.
- III. A CHOICE OF FELLOWSHIP.  
*Thy people shall be my people, v. 16.*  
"Forget also thine own people." Psa. 45. 10.
- IV. A CHOICE OF GOD.  
*And thy God my God, v. 16.*  
"Ye turned to God from idols." 1 Thess. 1. 9.
- V. A DETERMINED CHOICE.  
*Steadfastly minded to go with her, v. 18.*  
"No man...looking back is fit." Luke 9. 62.
- VI. AN UNSELFISH CHOICE.  
*Brought me home again empty, v. 21.*  
"Affliction with the people of God." Heb. 11. 25.
- VII. A GENTLE'S CHOICE.  
*Ruth the Moabitess, v. 22.*  
"Gentiles shall come to thy light." Isa. 60. 3.

### THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

#### The Example of Ruth.

1. Ruth shows a self-forgetting, unselfish affection, renouncing all for the sake of love. She chose a life of poverty because she loved Naomi, and was willing to be poor with her.
2. Ruth shows decision and whole-heartedness in her choice. There were difficulties and hinderances, but she did not look back to Moab when she had chosen Israel.

3. Ruth shows a desire after God, as the result of her acquaintance with one of God's people. May we so live that others may be drawn to our God through us!

4. Ruth shows a spirit of helpfulness, bearing burdens and toiling for the support of Naomi. She was young, and could easily have earned her own living, but she took upon herself the burden of Naomi's support.

5. Ruth shows the reward which God gives to those who enter upon his service. She obtained a place in Israel, a home among God's people, an honored name in the record, and the privilege of being an ancestor of Jesus.

#### English Teacher's Notes.

It is not a light thing for a man to change his country and his people. Even when settled in some spot remote from the land of his birth he will not forget to what race he belongs nor where his home is. There is a story of an English interpreter in the East who, in conversation with a supposed Turkish officer, incautiously spoke in a somewhat contemptuous manner of Scotland and the Scots. To his surprise the officer turned and in broad Scotch threatened him with dire vengeance if he uttered another syllable against his country and people! There are cases in which a man seeks naturalization in a foreign country, becoming a subject of its king or its government, and renouncing entirely the protection of his own, but this for the sake of securing some decided advantage. It is rare for a woman to give up her native land except for her husband's sake, and even when she has been settled and has passed the greater part of her life away from the old home, she does not forget her nationality. "My fatherland," wrote one who had for years been queen of a neighboring country but who retained her affection for her German home and people. This feeling was no less strong in ancient than in modern times, and therefore the choice of Ruth, which is the subject of our lesson to-day, is one of peculiar and striking interest.

Ruth belonged to a nation whose pride is recorded in the sacred word. Isa. 16. 6; Jer. 48. 29. She herself is stated in the Mishna to have been a daughter of King Eglon. From the history of her descendants it seems probable that she was at least royally connected. See 1 Sam. 22. 3, 4; comp. with chap. 4. 18. How she came to marry the son of the Israelite exile we do not know, but it is probable that Elimelech had been a man of means (comp. Naomi's words: "I came out full," ver. 21) and of position in his own country. Ruth and her sister-in-law were, however, eventually left the sole companions of the widowed Naomi, and when she started on her homeward journey they dutifully accompanied her to the borders of their own country. There, however, Naomi stopped and bade them count the cost of proceeding further. For Orpah this cost was too heavy, and she turned back to her old home. For there not only must home and friends be given up, habits altered, and new customs be conformed to; there

must be a distinct severance made between the old life and the new. Naomi could take no one with her into the land of Israel who was in heart a Moabite or had even a lurking tolerance for idol worship. The break must be made entirely and forever. And what had she to offer in return for all this? To the eye of sense, absolutely nothing. She was a widow now, poor and forgotten. The daughter who accompanied her would have to share her lot. She could not even look for a welcome in the land of her adoption. Having given up her own people she would yet be considered in Israel as an alien and a stranger. She could expect to form no new ties. Perpetual widowhood, (quite another thing to a young Eastern woman from what it is among ourselves!) poverty, and obscurity lay before her.

Of this lot Ruth made deliberate choice. Evidently there was strong affection for her mother-in-law to influence her. Yet not only would this have been in itself insufficient, but something was needed to account for its intensity. Our Golden Text tells us what this was: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." It was not mere earthly affection. Ruth loved Naomi as one who belonged to Jehovah. It was his favor, his service, his protection, that her heart was set upon, and Naomi was the one perhaps to whom she owed her knowledge of him and of his ways. And so, where to the eye of sense there was all to be lost and nothing to be gained, to the eye of faith it was just the reverse. She reckoned it enough to have the Lord for her portion.

The same definite and decided break is required now of those who would follow the Lord Jesus. With some it may require to be outward and visible. There may be the theater and the ball-room to give up. With others, whose lot is cast by circumstances among the profane children of God, it may be less apparent. But it must be none the less real. Our Golden Text no less than the story in which it finds a place teaches us this. "Thy people shall be my people," said Ruth, as well as "thy God my God." For she could not have chosen Jehovah as her God and yet have remained either actually or in heart among her own people. The adoption of the service of God carries with it an entire and irreversible change of citizenship; "Hearken, O daughter, and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people and thy father's house;" "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God!"

The follower of Christ is called, as Ruth was, to renunciation. He may no longer fulfill "the desires of the flesh and of the mind." Eph. 2. 3. To the eye of sense this is loss. But the eye of faith will perceive, not only the grand outlook of the future, but the present blessedness of the companionship of Christ, of going where he goes, lodging where he lodges, and of descending with him to death and the grave. And the voice of faith can take up the words of Ruth's descendant and say:

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures forever more." Psa. 16. 11.

### The Lesson Council.

**Question 26.** What reason can be given why the story of Ruth is inserted in the canon of Scripture?

The canonicity of the Book of Ruth has seldom been questioned by competent critics. It may be considered a supplement to the Book of Judges, to which in the Hebrew canon it was joined. As David was a famous king it is natural to expect that some one would write out his genealogy, and the book was evidently written to give the ancestry of David, and one evidence of its truthfulness is that it traces this genealogy to a source not remarkably flattering. The language of the book is quite similar to Judges and to Samuel, and its genealogical account is quoted in Matt. 1, 5 and Luke 3, 32.—Henry Speltineyer, D.D.

Not only because it gives an account of the extraction of David, the future king of Israel and the ancestor of Messiah, but because, though brief, the narrative contains examples of patience, industry, faith, and kindness, and of God's mysterious ways in so overruling the sin of Elimelech's son in marrying a Moabitess (Deut. 23, 3) and the troubles that came thick upon the family that in the end this Moabitess was converted and received a rich reward of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings she came to trust.—J. E. Hanauer, Jerusalem.

### 27. What noble traits of character are found in Ruth?

Ruth, an example of virtue and piety, shines the more brightly because she lived in an idolatrous age. She came from a modest and humble home, but one of the sixty-six books of the Bible is called by her name, and she is one of the few characters in Bible biographies whose virtues are not marred by some moral stain. In her there is an honest, rugged simplicity. She is a natural, sincere woman, without the need of art, because her heart was so large and true. Orpah gave the sign of affection; Ruth showed it by her deeds. Orpah "kissed;" Ruth "clave." Ruth 1, 14. And this example of filial devotion, expressed in language of incomparable pathos, is worthy of universal emulation. Being poor, she was not proud, and ashamed of honest toil, but "gleaned and gathered after the reapers" (Ruth 2, 7), winning their respect, and receiving such rewards as was due to her sex (Ruth 2, 9) and such courtesies as were due to her industry. She was full of womanly grace, (Ruth 2, 10) profoundly grateful for favors received, sitting at meal-time among the reapers (Ruth 2, 14). With characteristic humility, and with womanly modesty, when "she did eat and was sufficed, she left." Ruth 2, 14. She is an example of religious decision and vital piety. Most of all she desired God. "Thy God shall be my God," and her history suggests that he wants gleaners as well as reapers in his harvest-field.—Henry Speltineyer, D.D.

Deep affection, decision of character, modesty, faith.—J. E. Hanauer, Jerusalem.

### Cambridge Notes.

Ruth 1, 16-22.

This exquisite little idyl preserves a picture of quiet country life in Judah during the earlier part (comp. Matt. 1, 5) of the period of the judges, showing a marked contrast to the turbulence and lawlessness of the other tribes, as depicted in the appendix to the last book. It seems probable that the actual composition

of Ruth must be placed very late, but it is evidently based on the traditions and chronicles of the family of David, whose ancestry it was designed to relate. It is noteworthy that the very lawlessness of the time may have contributed to bring into the royal Messianic line a faithful and noble woman from the accursed tribe of Moab, in stricter ages rigidly excluded from the congregation of Jehovah. VER. 16. Orpah and Ruth had accompanied their mother-in-law to the boundary of Moab, and there Naomi expected the courtesy to end. Orpah yields to her unselfish pressure, and goes back to her country and her God Chemosh. Ruth deliberately sacrifices all, and faces poverty in a strange land. Compare Elijah's similar protestation, 2 Kings 2, 2, etc. The religious application of her noble speech is thoroughly in accordance with the spirit of the original. VER. 17. *Buried.* This must be emphasized by remembering the strong desire of Orientals to be buried in the ancestral tomb. Comp. the patriarchs and such passages as 1 Kings 13, 23, etc. *Do so, etc.* The formula so common in the books of Samuel and Kings. The "so" includes all the unexpressed consequences felt to attach to perjury. VER. 19. *Beth-lehem.* "House of bread," the abode of the family. VER. 1. The journey was fully fifty miles, and across two rivers, Arnon and Jordan, no light task for two solitary women. *The women said.* Quick to notice the change wrought in Naomi by age and sorrow. The men, busy with the harvest, had no time to spare for gossip about strangers. VER. 20. *Naomi,* a name akin to *Naaman*, meaning "pleasant," or perhaps "my delight." If the latter, it may have been a pet name, and we can the better understand the sad thoughts it would recall. *Mara.* Comp. Exod. 15, 23. For similar plays on names compare Gen. 27, 36; Jer. 30, 3; 1 Sam. 25, 25. *The Almighty.* Hebrew, *Shaddai*, the name used by Bunyan in the *Holy War*. It is a title used in the Pentateuch and largely in the Book of Job. This clause looks like a reminiscence of Job 27, 2. VER. 21. *Contrast* Gen. 32, 10; 1 Sam. 2, 5. *Full.* Rich in the possession of husband and sons. Note the emphatic *I*; her going away was an act of self-will, and she had been punished for sojourning in a heathen land. *Testified.* Comp. 1 Kings 17, 18, 20; and for the metaphor Exod. 20, 16; 2 Sam. 1, 6; Isa. 3, 9, etc. Naomi speaks of Jehovah as of a hostile witness in court who brings up her misdeeds for judgment. VER. 22. *Which returned.* Evidently the description by which Ruth was best known. Comp. 2, 6. The language of Moab was almost identical with Hebrew, as Meshah's stone shows, but Ruth's history would be too vividly remembered for her foreign origin to be ignored. *Barley harvest.* Exod. 9, 31, 32. That is, the end of April. The only point in the sequel needing special elucidation is the duty of the *Goel*, "redeemer," or next of kin (to be remembered in explaining Job 19, 25). He was bound to redeem the property of the dead man, to avenge his death, if violence had occurred (see Josh. 20, 3), and to marry his widow, the children being reckoned legally not his, but those of his deceased kinsman. We see here that the "Levirate law"—one older than Moses and not confined to Israel—extended to other kinsmen besides brothers. In this case the proper *Goel* declines to marry Ruth, and Boaz takes over the obligation; Obed, however, is described in Israel as his son, doubtless because Mahlon was practically a foreigner.

### Berens Methods.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

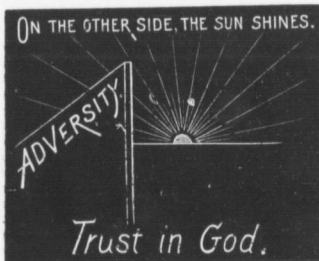
The story of Lot, his residence near Sodom, his escape, and the fatal irresolution of his wife. See Gen. 13.

7-18; 19. 1-30. Note the contrast between Lot, the ancestor, and Ruth his descendant.... Draw a map showing the land of Moab, the Dead Sea, and the tripe of Judah.... Tell the story of Naomi's emigration to Moab, her life in Moab, and her return to Bethlehem.... Indicate on the map the probable line of her journey.... A picture of the three women setting out on the journey. What spirit was shown by Naomi? by Orpah? by Ruth?.... The choice of Ruth; its motives; what it involved; its characteristics; its rewards.... (See the analytical and Biblical Outline).... Notice that all this resulted from Ruth's acquaintance with an Israelite woman, whose love drew her to Israel.... See noble instances of choice in the Bible: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Caleb, Elisha, Daniel, the disciples of Christ, Lydia, etc., etc.... Story in *Arabian Nights* of a prince who loved a princess from seeing her picture, and forsook all to find her. How many have loved Christ from love of those who bear the image of Christ!

The Lord's my shepherd.  
O little town of Bethlehem.  
Just as I am, O Lord.  
Who'll be the next?  
To Jesus I will go.  
I am trusting, Lord, in thee.  
I've found a joy in sorrow.  
O happy day, that fixed my choice.  
Take my life, and let it be.  
O holy Saviour, Friend unseen,  
I heard the voice of Jesus say.  
Child of a King.

#### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The blackboard illustrates one of the practical thoughts of the lesson, and it should be used at the close of the brief lesson-review. Affliction and adversity come into our life. We do not see beyond them, and life is all bitterness; but, trusting in God, it is a comfort to know that just beyond, on the other side, the sun shines, and though we may with Naomi say, "The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me," yet perfect trust carries us beyond adversity to where God has prepared for us some rich compensating blessing. Though the clouds be temporarily overhead, let us have the faith of the child who said, "There is blue sky somewhere." Ruth, through love, chose poverty. Let each one of us through a higher love choose Christ and the riches of his grace.

#### Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Choosing God.*

Divide the board into two parts. Name one Canaan, the other Moab. Make large square, to stand for Bethlehem, in Canaan. Within large square make small

one. Tell that this was the home of a good man named Elimelech and his wife Naomi. Tell about the family and the simple home-life. Tell how trouble came. God sent a famine upon this happy land, and people could not find enough food to eat.

Now, over here in Moab there was enough to eat. Explain that idolaters lived there. They had food for the body, but none for the soul. Do you think it was right to go and live among them? Teach that it is not right to go and live among evil people for the body's sake. God will take care of our lives if we are just busy about his work. Perhaps Elimelech was afraid his wife and boys would starve. He ought to have trusted God to take care of them all.



Now we will make a square here in Moab to stand for their new home. How many were in the family? Four; yes, father and mother and two sons. After a while there were two daughters also, for both the sons were married. They married women who worshiped idols. It was still a happy home, for there was love in the home. Now tell how trouble came. First one son died, then the other, and then the father. Who were left now? Only three women; one who was far from her own land, and who had lost all her dearest friends. What do you think she would want to do? Tell that sick, tired, troubled people like to go home. Illustrate by some story of child-life. Imagine her getting ready to leave Moab. Where is she going? Yes; to Canaan, where she can meet with those who love and worship God. Will she go alone? Draw the picture as vividly as you can: the daughters-in-law who love and pity her, ready to go, and the mother begging them to stay in their own land. In their own land are pleasure, home, friends, and idol-worship. Over here in Canaan, the home of God's people, are love, peace, self-sacrifice, and the knowledge of the true God. Which will they choose?

Make a cross on the Canaan side of the board. Tell that in choosing love Ruth chose God. Love means a cross—parting with one's own wishes. Tell what honor came to Ruth afterward, and show how all who choose love and duty before self will receive honor from God.

#### Lesson Word-Pictures.

This is the parting of the roads; one going over to the land of Moab, the other striking off toward the country of the children of Israel. Here at this corner stands Naomi, the widowed pilgrim, on her way back to Canaan. Her two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, the Moabitesses, have followed her to this point. Will they go farther? Naomi is poor. She is humble. She has no resources in Canaan with which to tempt thither her daughters-in-law. She has no sons there with which to furnish them husbands. Orpah has left her. There were tears in her eyes, and she energetically kissed her old mother-in-law. She made a great ado about leaving, crying aloud as if at a big funeral. She will survive it, though she has headed for Moab wringing her hands and declaring she can never smile again. What will Ruth do, still halting at the corner; graceful, shapely, beautiful Ruth? She looks away to ward Moab. She would be welcomed there. She has kindred and friends there. She would have bread, position, a home—all these with the gods of Moab. She turns toward Israel. She must take poverty there, obscurity also. She will be known as the stranger, the Moabitess, among Israel's proud daughters. But she

will have Naomi there, and Naomi's God. She does not kiss Naomi, but she says, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

She takes with Naomi the weary way to Bethlehem. They are poor. They must go afoot, but they go together. They drink of the same brook. They halt at noon in the shadow of the same tree. At twilight they stand side by side in some village street till summoned together beneath some hospitable roof. And at last, there is Bethlehem! There are the old familiar homes. There are the same narrow, crooked streets. And look, Naomi! Here are some of your old acquaintances! Yes, in the name of the Lord they come forward to bid her welcome. The news goes quickly about, "Naomi is come!" It seems as if every body gathered. "Is this Naomi?" they are asking. She went out with Elimelech, her stalwart husband. She had two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. They were as two strong staves beneath her weary arms. Yes, it is Naomi, wrinkled and worn and gray.

"Call me Mara, friends!" she is saying.

Neither husband nor child accompanies her. But who is it with her?

"That woman!" somebody whispers.

"She is not a daughter of the Hebrews," says another, turning away in scorn.

How curiously and coldly they gaze at the Moabitess! They may shrink from the dark-eyed stranger, but they will get to know her and learn to love her. Where will Naomi go to-night, for the sun is setting red and round behind the distant and shadowy hills. We know not, but wherever Naomi goes there is Ruth. And can they suffer hunger? Look! The long shadows fall across the beautiful fields of barley in this the promised land.

"I can glean the scattered stalks of grain for Naomi," Ruth is saying softly.

## FOURTH QUARTERLY REVIEW.

Dec. 30.

### HOME READINGS.

- M. Crossing the Jordan. Josh. 3. 9-17.  
 Th. Christmas day. Matt. 2. 1-12.  
 W. The fall of Jericho. Josh. 6. 12-20.  
 Th. Caleb's inheritance. Josh. 14. 5-15.  
 F. The covenant renewed. Josh. 24. 14-22.  
 S. Gideon's army. Judg. 7. 15-23.  
 S. Ruth's choice. Ruth 1. 16-23.

### REVIEW SCHEME FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

#### Directions for Study.

1. Our lessons are in three books of the Bible. Read all of Joshua during Monday and Tuesday. Read all about Gideon's life and Samson's life during Wednesday and Thursday. Read the book of Ruth on Friday. Saturday write a history of those times from memory.
2. Test your knowledge of the Golden Texts and Titles and Outlines by trying to repeat them from memory. If you cannot do it, then at once learn them.
3. Call to mind all the different characters mentioned during these lessons.
4. Arrange in proper chronological order the following events: The return of two and a half tribes east of Jordan, Naomi and Ruth journeying to Bethlehem, soldiers fleeing from Ai, the message of encouragement to Joshua, Samson grinding in the prison-house, Caleb storming the city of Hebron, three hundred soldiers lapping water at the spring, a pillar built at Gilgal of twelve stones.
5. Who prayed for vengeance? Who said, "Entreat me not to leave thee?" Who said, "Shout for the Lord hath given?" etc. Who said, "All that are afraid may go home?" Who said he had wholly followed the Lord?
6. What lesson teaches the nearness of God to his people? What one teaches the fearful consequences of sin? What one teaches the fear of God? What one teaches that God should be honored at all hazards?

What one teaches the believer will surely triumph over the world?

7. Give the title of the lessons suggested by the following pictures: A body of priests standing in the middle of a river's bed, where there is no water—a city full of people hastening to welcome two travelers, and asking their story—a man writing a book of record, and erecting a monument—a man lying on his face, with his clothes rent, and wailing and lamenting—a company of people with pitchers and lanterns—a people dancing and corrupting themselves before an idol's shrine—a city whose walls are fallen flat down—a man with long hair asleep, a woman with shears about to cut it.

8. Who was the best man mentioned in this quarter's lessons? Who was the next best? Who was the worst? Who was the strongest? Who the weakest? Who lived longest? Which one could have been king, and would not?

9. Write ten facts that you have learned from this quarter's lessons. Write ten practical thoughts suggested by them.

### REVIEW SCHEME FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

#### I. TITLES AND GOLDEN TEXTS.

- |                 |                                  |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. The C. of J. | Stand therefore, having your ... |
| 2. C. of the J. | When thou passest through ...    |
| 3. The S. of M. | Then ye shall let your ...       |
| 4. The F. of J. | By faith the walls of ...        |
| 5. D. at A.     | Incline my heart unto ...        |
| 6. C. I.        | Trust in the Lord, and ...       |
| 7. H. O. A.     | Bear ye one another's ...        |
| 8. The C. R.    | The Lord our God we ...          |
| 9. I. U. J.     | Take heed, brethren, lest ...    |
| 10. G. A.       | Not by might, nor by ...         |
| 11. D. of S.    | Great men are not ...            |
| 12. R. C.       | Thy people shall be ...          |

#### II. LESSON PICTURES.

1. Which lesson shows us a great general receiving great commands and great promises? (Answer with Title.)
2. Which shows some priests keeping a path open for an army?
3. Which shows twelve men building a monument?
4. Which shows a desolate city and a victorious army?
5. Which shows a defended city and a defeated army?
6. Which shows an old man asking for a mountain?
7. Which shows a peaceful people and a departing army?
8. Which shows us a book and a stone of witness?
9. Which shows an idolatrous people and an angry God?
10. Which shows an army of cowards on the eve of battle?
11. Which shows a blind man killing thousands of people?
12. Which shows two women on a journey?

#### III. LESSON TEACHINGS.

1. Which lesson teaches the need of Christian courage? (Answer with the Golden Text.)
2. Which assures us of God's protecting care?
3. Which teaches the duty of remembering God's mercies?
4. Which teaches us the power of faith?
5. Which warns against a breach of the tenth commandment?
6. Which tells how we can be sure of our daily food?
7. Which shows us how we can be like Christ?
8. Which tells us in whose service we ought to engage?
9. Which warns us against a dangerous sin?
10. Which tells of the source of highest power?
11. Which teaches a lesson of self-distrust?
12. Which points us to a wise choice?

### REVIEW SCHEME FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS.

Can you repeat the GOLDEN TEXT?

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Stand therefore,—   | Bear ye—             |
| When thou passest—  | The Lord our God—    |
| Then ye shall let—  | Take heed,—          |
| By faith the walls— | Not by might,—       |
| Incline my heart—   | Great men are—       |
| Trust in the Lord,— | Thy people shall be— |

**LESSON I** tells how Joshua was told to lead the Israelites into Canaan. Who was Joshua? **The servant of Moses.** Who told him to go into Canaan? **The Lord.** What did he promise? **To be with him.** What did he tell him to do? **To keep all the law.**

**LESSON II**—What lay between Israel and Canaan? **The river Jordan.** Who opened a way through the river? **The Lord.** What did the priests carry? **The ark.** What happened when they touched the water? **A dry path appeared.** What did this miracle show? **That God was with his people.**

**LESSON III** tells about the stones of memorial. From what place were these stones taken? **From the river.** How many stones were there? **Twelve.** Where were they set up? **In Gilead.** At whose command? **At Joshua's command.** What were they for? **To tell the story of God's care.**

**LESSON IV** tells about the fall of Jericho. What was Jericho? **A heathen city.** Who gave it to the Israelites? **The Lord.** What did he command them to do? **To march around the city.** What did the priests do? **They blew on trumpets.** What did they carry? **The ark of God.** What fell on the seventh day? **The walls of the city.**

**LESSON V**—Who disobeyed the Lord? **Achan.** To what did his disobedience lead? **To defeat at Ai.** Why were the Israelites defeated? **God did not fight for them.** What did Joshua do? **He prayed to the Lord.** What did the Lord show Joshua? **The sin of Achan.** What did Joshua do? **He put Achan to death.**

**LESSON VI**—What two spies brought a good report from Canaan? **Caleb and Joshua.** What did Moses promise to give to Caleb? **Hebron.** What did Caleb now come to tell Joshua? **Of this promise.** Why had Moses given Caleb this land? **Because Caleb believed God.**

**LESSON VII**—What tribes crossed the Jordan with the Israelites? **The two and a half tribes.** Where did these men live? **In Gilead.** Why did they cross the Jordan now? **To help their brethren.** When did they return to their homes? **When Canaan was conquered.** What did they take home with them? **Cattle and gold and silver.**

**LESSON VIII** tells about a great meeting. Who called the people to Shechem? **Joshua.** Of what did he remind them? **Of all God's goodness.** What did he ask them to choose? **Whom they would serve.** What did the people say? **We will serve the Lord.**

**LESSON IX** tells how the Israelites forgot their promise to serve the true God. In what did they disobey the Lord? **In not driving all the Canaanites out.** What did they learn of the Canaanites? **To worship idols.** What did this bring upon them? **The Lord's anger.** What did he give them when they repented? **Judges.** How long was Israel ruled by judges? **More than three hundred years.**

**LESSON X** shows how a weak army became strong. What heathen nation had driven the Israelites from their homes? **The Midianites.** Who was raised up to deliver Israel? **Gideon.** How many men gathered to fight with him? **More than thirty thousand.** What did the Lord want to teach the Israelites? **That their strength was in him.** How many were sent away? **All but three hundred.** What was gained through this small army? **A great victory.**

**LESSON XI** gives the story of Samson's death. Who were now the enemies of Israel? **The Philistines.** Who was raised up to deliver Israel? **Samson.** What was given to Samson? **Very great strength.** How did he lose it? **By self-indulgence.** Into whose hands did he fall? **The hands of his enemies.** When did Samson's strength return? **When he repented.** What did he pull down upon his enemies? **Their idol temple.**

**LESSON XII** is the beautiful story of Ruth. Who was Ruth? **The daughter-in-law of Naomi.** What was she willing to leave? **Her home and country.** For whose sake? **For Naomi's sake.** What did she say to Naomi? **"Thy God shall be my God."** To what place did Ruth and Naomi go? **To Bethlehem.**

## TEMPERANCE LESSON.

Dec. 30.

Num. 6. 1-4.



[Commit to memory verse 3.]

1 And the Lord spake unto Mo-  
ses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Is-  
rael, and say unto them, When  
either man or woman shall separate  
themselves to vow a vow of a  
Naz'rite, to separate themselves  
unto the Lord;

3 He shall separate himself from  
wine and strong drink, and shall  
neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat  
most grapes, or dried.

4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing  
that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to  
the husk.

### General Statement.

In every land and in every age there have been found people who desired to devote themselves peculiarly to the service of God, either in active works for his cause, or in a life of meditation and prayer. Under the Israelite dispensation such persons were called Nazirites, "people set apart, or consecrated." Their consecration was never compulsory, but always voluntary. It might be a vow for a definite time and purpose, or it might be for life. There were three outward signs of the ancient Nazirites. They never allowed razor or scissors to touch their hair, but left it to grow long during their vow; under no circumstances would they touch a dead body, and they avoided all wine or fruit of the grape. So careful were they in this particular that they never ate a ripe grape, or touched a grape-vine. We cannot from their example prove that it is wrong to eat grapes or to drink wine, for some of the best men in the Bible were not Nazirites, and of the one perfect Man it is said that "he came eating and drinking." Yet there is a lesson in the Nazirite's total abstinence. It shows that there is danger in the cup, and that he who would live wholly consecrated would do wisely to keep himself from its fascinations.

### Explanatory and Practical Notes.

**Verse 1. The Lord spake unto Moses.** This is an expression frequently recurring in the portions of the Pentateuch devoted to the laws of Moses. It may mean that each precept was given directly, by a divine voice, to Moses; or it may mean that the mind of Moses was divinely guided in making the laws.

**2. When either man or woman.** Either a man or a woman could make these vows; but in the case of a married woman the vow must be sanctioned by her husband, in order to be of binding force. **A Nazirite.** The Rev. Ver. has "Nazirite," which is the correct word, and should be used in all cases; especially since word, and avoids the possibility of being mistaken for *Azarine*. Our Saviour was a Nazarene, that is, an inhabitant of Nazareth in Galilee; but he was not a Nazirite, one who under the peculiar vow here described. The word used means "one who is separated or set apart." Some were thus set apart during their entire life-time, as Samson (Judg. 13. 7), Samuel (1 Sam. 11), and John the Baptist (Luke 1. 15). Others made a vow for a definite time, as in the case of the apostle Paul. Acts 18. 19; 21. 23-26. To separate themselves unto the Lord. The Nazirite was regarded as one peculiarly consecrated to God, either for the performance of some special work or for general holiness and devotion. All Christ's followers should be Nazirites, consecrated to his service.

**3. He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink.** This was the principal distinguishing mark of the Nazirite, but not the only mark. He cut off all his hair at the time of beginning his vow, and then left it to grow long until his vow had expired. This was a constant reminder to himself and to all others of his vow. It was like a red-ribbed badge which we see now, telling every one that its wearer is a pledged

man, under a vow not to drink liquor. Another rule for the Nazirite was not to touch a dead body. He could not enter a house where a corpse lay, nor follow it to the grave. This was also a law for the high-priest. It was a token of purity, that he be defiled by any polluting contact. But the "total-abstinence vow" was the most marked peculiarity of the Nazirite. Even in those ages the use of wine tended to excite passion, and the man who was specially set apart to God's service must abstain from it. No vinegar of wine. Much of the ancient wine was very sour, like our vinegar. A man might have wine-vinegar which was not wine; but in those times the distinction was not clearly made, and to keep the Nazirite out of temptation, he was directed to abstain even from wine vinegar. Here is a lesson for us. Why abstain from sweet cider, since it is only apple juice? Because sweet cider soon becomes hard cider, with intoxicating qualities, and it is not easy to draw the line between them. Hence it is best to avoid both, and keep out of temptation. **Liquor of grapes.** That is, any liquor made from grapes, whether called wine or not. **Moist grapes, or dried.** This was to keep the Nazirite out of temptation, for the vow was very strong and the rules explicit. We are not to infer from this that it is a sin to eat grapes, or to use vinegar made from wine. That was the childhood of God's Church, and children must be directed differently from grown people. A mother would say to her child, "Don't touch any of the bottles on that shelf, for some of them contain poisons." But her older son, who can read labels, and tell the poisonous from the harmless, needs no such general command. So the lesson for us is to watch and avoid those products of the grape which will intoxicate. Our vinegar, though made from grapes, is not at all like wine in its taste. But that of the Bible was mainly sour wine, hence it was necessary to warn the Nazirite against it.

**4. All the days of his separation.** Whether the vow was for a given period or for life. **Nothing that is made of the vine tree.** This made the abstinence very thorough, like that of a certain order of priests among the ancient Romans, who were forbidden even to walk under a grape arbor. A complete and total abstinence is the safe rule. Better that a reformed drunkard should not take a sip of fermented wine at the communion table, than that he should fall under the dominion of his former appetite!

#### HOME READINGS.

M. Josh. 3, 9-17. 7th Matt. 2, 1-13. W. Josh. 6, 12-30. 7th Josh. 14, 5-15. F. Josh. 24, 14-22. S. Judg. 7, 15-23. S. Ruth 1, 16-22.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. Luke 1, 15.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 162, Dominion Hymnal.

Tell me the Old, Old Story,  
Of unseen things above.

No. 134, Dominion Hymnal.

I need thee every hour,  
Most gracious Lord.

No. 237, Dominion Hymnal.

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.

TIME.—1491 B. C.

PLACE.—Mount Sinai.

This lesson has no connection with the lessons of the quarter.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Temperance.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

##### 1. Separation from Sin.

What was a Nazirite?  
From what things were Nazirites obliged to totally abstain?  
Could not a man be holy unto the Lord without such separation?  
What was the great principle which underlay this abstinence?

What is the best and noblest part of man?  
To what does self-indulgence always lead?  
What is the effect of sin upon the soul?  
Of what is the Nazirite's separation typical?

What was Christ's teaching concerning this law of self-denial? Matt. 16, 24.

What is the great sin of modern society?

##### 2. Consecration to God.

What was the purpose of the Nazirite's separation of himself from the world?

How would such self-denial promote the spirit of consecration?

What place do you think consecration should occupy in a Christian's life?

What did Christ do for us? Phil. 2, 5-8.

What ought we to do in return for him?

What are some of the ways in which we may show our consecration?

Is it right for a man to gratify his appetite even if he can do it without danger to himself?

What was the character of Christ's forerunner?

##### Practical Teachings.

Notice the law for total abstinence was prescribed by God himself, ver. 1.

There was no place in the Nazirite's diet for any liquor, or any thing like it, or any thing that could suggest it.

Total abstinence—no moderate drinking.

Total abstinence—no wine, or grape, or tendril of a vine.

Total abstinence, *total abstinence*, TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

##### Hints for Home Study.

1. Find who of the Bible characters were Nazirites.
2. Find all the places that speak of separation from sin.
3. Find if the Bible teaches that drunkenness is a sin.
4. Find what the destination of drunkards is declared to be.
5. Find five Bible characters who lived lives of consecration to God, and study them.

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

##### 1. Separation from Sin.

Whose commands does this lesson record?

To whom were the commands given?

From what sinful indulgences was separation demanded?

What was the Nazirite forbidden to drink?

What was he forbidden to eat?

How long was this prohibition to be in force?

What demand for separation from sin does God now make on all Christians? 2 Cor. 6, 17.

##### 2. Consecration to God.

Upon whom were the commands to total abstinence binding?

To whom did a Nazirite devote himself?

To whom are we called upon to devote ourselves? Rom. 12, 1.

What effect will true devotion have on our eating and drinking? 1 Cor. 10, 31.

How will it lead us to guard our influence over others? Rom. 14, 21.

What will true consecration decide as to the use of intoxicating drink? 1 Cor. 8, 13.

##### Teachings of the Lessons.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That we ought to devote ourselves to God?

2. That we ought to avoid every thing that God disapproves?

3. That wine-drinking is both harmful and sinful?

##### Hints for Home Study.

Find two eminent Nazirites whose history is in the Bible.

Find the history of a whole tribe who were Nazirites.

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who gave laws to govern Israel? **The Lord.**

To whom did he give them? **To Moses.**

To whom did Moses then give them? **To the Israelites.**

What law is given in this lesson? **The law of separation.**

What was one called who separated himself to the Lord? **A Nazirite.**

What did a Nazirite make? **A vow.**

What is a vow? **A solemn promise.**

What did he promise not to drink? **Wine or strong drink.**

What did he promise not to eat? Grapes in any form.  
How long did the vow last? A week, or a month, or a whole life-time.

What noted men were Nazirites all their lives? **Samson and John the Baptist.**

What is caused by strong drink? **Great misery and crime.**

What is a safe rule for Christians? "**Touch not, taste not, handle not.**"

Who alone are truly separated to the Lord? Those who obey him.

What has God said about wine? "**Look not upon the wine.**"

#### Words with Little People.

"Wine is a mocker."

Satan uses wine as one of his agents.

He says that it is a pleasant, harmless drink.

He says that a little cannot do any harm.

Do not let Satan deceive you.

### THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What was a Nazirite? A man consecrated to God.

2. Who gave the law to govern the lives of Nazirites? **The Lord gave it to Moses.**

3. In what were they for examples to us? **In their total abstinence from wine.**

4. Who was the most shining example in history of absolute total abstinence? **John, the Lord's herald.**

5. What prophecy was made concerning him? "**For he shall be great,**" etc.

### ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

#### An Ancient Temperance Society.

#### I. DIVINELY COMMANDED ABSTAINERS.

*The Lord speaks unto Moses.* v. 1.

"Walk after the Lord." Deut. 13. 4.

"Obey my voice." Jer. 7. 23.

#### II. PLEDGED ABSTAINERS.

*Separate themselves to vow.* v. 2.

"Vow, and pay unto the Lord." Psa. 76. 11.

"Unto thee...vow be performed." Psa. 65. 1.

#### III. TOTAL ABSTAINERS.

*Separate himself from wine.* v. 3.

"Drink not wine nor strong drink." Judg. 13. 4, 5.

"Drink neither wine nor strong drink." Luke 1. 15.

#### IV. CAREFUL ABSTAINERS.

*No vinegar...nor moist grapes.* v. 3.

"Abstain...appearance of evil." 1 Thess. 5. 22.

"Zealously affected...good things." Gal. 4. 18.

### THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

#### Lessons from the Nazirite.

1. The Nazirite shows us that even in that early day, fifteen centuries before that Christ, there was danger in the use of wine, and that those who aspired to be perfect avoided it.

2. The Nazirite shows us that total abstinence is the safe rule, and not moderation. Notice how carefully and how thoroughly the Nazirite was required to abstain from every thing connected with strong drink, even where it might seem to be harmless.

3. The Nazirite shows us that God specially honors those who abstain. Some of the noblest names in the Bible, as Samuel, Daniel, and John the Baptist, are those of total abstainers. We have reason to believe that Elijah was also a Nazirite, and therefore an abstainer. Total abstinence people are in good company.

4. The Nazirite shows us that the pledge is desirable: for the vow of the Nazirite was a pledge. He was a pledged man, and not ashamed to be known as one. Let us not hesitate to make public profession of our temperance principles and practice.

### Berean Methods.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Let the teacher read all the passages in the Bible which refer to "Nazirites," "vows," "drinking neither wine nor strong drink," etc., and find what is taught in Scripture concerning these subjects...A good method of teaching is hinted at in the Analytical and Biblical Outline: "An Ancient Temperance Society." 1. Its founder, Moses, under God's command. 2. Its members. 3. Its pledge. 4. Its thoroughness, etc.. Show wherein our circumstances are different from those of the Nazirites, and how far their rules should apply to us...The lesson will give opportunity to show the benefits of the pledge, among which are— 1. It strengthens resolution. 2. It encourages others by its influence. 3. It removes temptation.

In thy theft, O Rock of Ages.

The Christian's hiding-place.

In the secret of his presence.

Yield not to temptation.

Dare to do right.

Take up the cross.

Rescue the perishing.

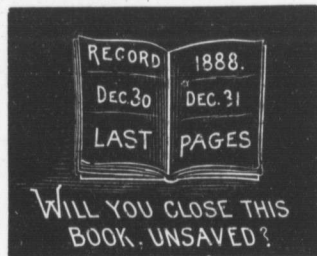
Heaven is my home.

I'm a pilgrim.

No compromise.

#### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



This is the last Sunday of the year. To-morrow will be the last day of the year, and then the record for 1888 will be closed. How is it with your soul? Will you close the book with it unsaved? The Nazirites, as shown in to-day's lesson, separated themselves unto the Lord. Now is the time to separate one's self from wine and strong drink, and all manner of evil, by giving the heart to God. Let the last session of the school this year be one of heart-searching and heart-giving, with prayer for divine guidance.

#### LESSONS FOR JANUARY, 1889.

JAN. 6. The Mission of John the Baptist. Mark 1. 1-11.

JAN. 13. A Sabbath in the Life of Jesus. Mark 1. 21-34.

JAN. 20. Healing of the Leper. Mark 1. 35-45.

JAN. 27. Forgiveness and Healing. Mark 2. 1-12.



## Responsive Review Service for the Fourth Quarter, 1888.

BY G. N. COMPTON.

(NOTE TO THE SUPERINTENDENT.—Make the Review a great occasion. Create expectancy. Announce it, talk about it, prepare for it, and invite every body. Intersperse this service with suitable singing; arrange an opening and closing exercise. Get the morning or evening church hour if you can. Have the responses made by selected scholars, classes, or school. Be enthusiastic.)

### LESSON I.

*Superintendent.* We are met to review the lessons for the quarter now ending. They began just after the death of Israel's great leader, "Moses, the servant of the Lord." Such had been his life and character that it was no small honor and responsibility to become his successor. Will the school announce the title of the first lesson, giving the name of this chosen one?

*School.* The Commission of Joshua.

*Supt.* Who was Joshua?

*Answer.* A descendant of Joseph—a great general, and Moses's minister.

*Supt.* What was he commissioned to do?

*Ans. 1.* To lead the Israelites across the Jordan. 2. To possess the land of promise by conquest.

*Supt.* What was God's promise to him?

*Ans.* As he had been with Moses, so would he be with him.

*Supt.* State three things in this lesson to be remembered.

*Ans. 1.* "God buries his workman, but carries on his work." 2. If we are faithful, there will come ever-increasing duties and responsibilities. 3. To the loyal and obedient the victory is assured.

*Supt.* Let us all repeat the Golden Text.

*School.* "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness."

### LESSON II.

*Supt.* The second lesson relates the crossing of the river Jordan. What was first done?

*Ans.* They made preparation for it.

*Supt.* What was the order of march?

*Ans.* The priests were to lead, bearing the ark.

*Supt.* The river was full and rapid, and there was no bridge, no boats; how, then, were they to cross over?

*Ans.* God opened a dry way through the swollen waters.

*Supt.* What is there in this lesson for us?

*Ans. 1.* Consecration of ourselves to God. 2. The leaders in God's work should be worthy to be followed. 3. Faith and obedience overcome what seem to be insurmountable difficulties.

*Supt.* What is the Golden Text?

*School.* "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

### LESSON III.

*Supt.* The third lesson brings us to their encampment after crossing the river. What did they do?

*Ans.* Twelve chosen men took each a stone from the river's bed, carried them to camp, and erected a memorial pillar.

*Supt.* For what purpose was this done?

*Ans. 1.* To remind them, and their children, of God's mercy and power. 2. To teach "all the people of the earth the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty."

*Supt.* Does this lesson teach us any practical truths?

*Ans. Yes.* 1. It is well to remember God's special care and dealings. 2. We should diligently teach these things to the children. 3. We have many memorial days, and memorial churches, etc., but our greatest memorial is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

*Supt.* Repeat the Golden Text.

*School.* "Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land."

### LESSON IV.

*Supt.* The fourth lesson gives an account of the first engagement with their enemies. What is the title?

*Ans.* The fall of Jericho.

*Supt.* How was it brought about?

*Ans.* By the power of God, after the people did as they were commanded.

*Supt.* What was done with the spoil?

*Ans.* It was put into the treasury of the Lord.

*Supt.* Why was Jericho destroyed?

*Ans. 1.* Because their cup of sin was full. 2. Because it was the key to the whole country, and must needs be destroyed, to spread fear among all the inhabitants of the land.

*Supt.* What are we taught in this lesson?

*Ans. 1.* Christians must assault the works of evil. 2. However strongly fortified, the evil will be destroyed, if Christians move in concord and trust in the Lord. 3. All we have must be consecrated to God.

*Supt.* How does the Golden Text explain the lesson?

*School.* "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."

### LESSON V.

*Supt.* The fifth lesson casts a cloud across the clear sky. What is the title?

*Ans.* The defeat at Ai.

*Supt.* What was the cause of it?

*Ans.* One of the chiefs of Israel had stolen money and clothing at Jericho, and defiled all the people by his sin, and God permitted the defeat as a punishment.

*Supt.* What effect had the defeat?

*Ans. 1.* The people were humiliated. 2. "Joshua rent his clothes, and fell upon his face.... he and the elders of Israel."

*Supt.* May we not profit by this lesson?

*Ans.* Yes; our sin will find us out, and be a curse to us and those about us.

*Supt.* What wholesome advice is given in the Golden Text?

*School.* "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness."

### LESSON VI.

*Supt.* The sixth lesson is about a former companion of Joshua. What is the title of the lesson?

*Ans.* Caleb's inheritance.

*Supt.* What had made Caleb illustrious?

*Ans. 1.* He was one of the chosen spies sent into Canaan. 2. He brought back a good report, and urged the people of Israel to go up at once and possess the land, showing his courage and faith.

*Supt.* At this time God made him a promise, because he wholly followed him, and now, after forty-five years, how was it fulfilled?

*Ans.* Joshua was dividing the land among the tribes, and gave unto Caleb Hebron for an inheritance, according to God's promise.

*Supt.* How did he propose to take possession?

*Ans.* By God's help he would drive out his enemies.

*Supt.* State two practical lessons.

*Ans. 1.* God never forgets his promises. 2. Personal effort with God's blessing will insure success.

*Supt.* Does not the Golden Text teach this?

*School.* "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

### LESSON VII.

*Supt.* The title of the seventh lesson is a beautiful motto.

*School.* "Helping One Another."

*Supt.* How was this illustrated in this lesson?

*Ans.* The two and a half tribes who had settled on the east of Jordan sent their soldiers to assist their brethren in taking possession of Canaan.

*Supt.* What advice was given them when they returned to their homes?

*Ans.* "But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul."

*Supt.* How does the Golden Text enforce the title of this lesson?

*School.* "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

#### LESSON VIII.

*Supt.* The eighth lesson is about a certain covenant. What is a covenant?

*Ans.* An agreement between two parties.

*Supt.* The Lord and Israel had made a covenant. What was it?

*Ans.* On God's part—protection, victory, and the whole land. On Israel's part—obedience and fidelity.

*Supt.* This lesson is about renewing a covenant. What does that mean?

*Ans.* The people had broken the covenant.

*Supt.* Is God ready to forgive those who forget him?

*Ans.* Yes, if we confess and forsake our sins.

*Supt.* Will the whole school enter with me now into a holy covenant with God, by repeating the Golden Text?

*School.* "The LORD our God will we serve, and his will we obey."

#### LESSON IX.

*Supt.* The ninth lesson shows the terrible consequences of backsliding. Read what the Bible says about this mournful story.

*Ans.* "And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger."

*Supt.* What happened to them for all this?

*Ans.* "And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies."

*Supt.* Did the Lord afterward show mercy?

*Ans.* "Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them."

*Supt.* Thus will God deal with us. Let us all repeat the Golden Text.

*School.* "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

#### LESSON X.

*Supt.* The tenth lesson sounds military. What is its title?

*Ans.* "Gideon's Army."

*Supt.* The Midianites were oppressing the Israelites, and Gideon was commanded to destroy them. He thought it was necessary to take a large army, but the LORD wanted the people to know that his own arm must bring them deliverance. What did he say to Gideon?

*Ans.* "And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people

that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me."

*Supt.* What was done after this?

*Ans.* The army was reduced from thirty-two thousand to three hundred chosen men, and by these God delivered the Midianites into their hand.

*Supt.* We learn from this that however great our resources, and perfect our plans, "without me," said Jesus, "ye can do nothing." The Golden Text beautifully expresses this same truth.

*School.* "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

#### LESSON XI.

*Supt.* The eleventh lesson gives an account of the death of one of the most celebrated characters of Old Testament history, that of Samson. For what was he noted?

*Ans.* His great physical strength.

*Supt.* For what purpose was this given him?

*Ans.* To destroy the enemies of Israel.

*Supt.* Was he a good man in his personal character?

*Ans.* The latter part of his life proves the contrary.

*Supt.* What brought him to an untimely death?

*Ans.* He told the secret of his strength to a wicked woman, was bound by his enemies, had his eyes put out, and was put to hard work in a prison.

*Supt.* Give the Bible account of his death.

*Ans.* "And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O LORD God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein: so the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

*Supt.* We learn from this lesson the danger of keeping bad company, and that God hears the prayer of the penitent. Repeat the Golden Text.

*School.* "Great men are not always wise."

#### LESSON XII.

*Supt.* We have now come to the last lesson of the quarter, and of the year. What is its title?

*Ans.* Ruth's Choice.

*Supt.* When Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, returned from Moab to her old home in Canaan, after the death of her husband and sons, Ruth chose to leave her own home and country and go with her. What did Ruth say?

*Ans.* "And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

*Supt.* To whom was she afterward married?

*Ans.* To Boaz, a man of great wealth, and an ancestor of King David.

*Supt.* Thus we find that Ruth became the ancestress of our Lord, and was highly honored by her undying devotion to God's people. This beautiful story is a true picture of the Christian life. And now, after having reviewed these interesting lessons, and marked God's wonderful power and mercy, let us all with one voice, and with bowed heads and sincere hearts, repeat the Golden Text.

*School.* "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

ADVERTISEMENTS.

---

**TO CHURCHES.**  
**UNFERMENTED**  
**JUICE OF THE GRAPE**  
FOR SACRAMENTAL PURPOSES.

---

This article is the pure UNFERMENTED GRAPE JUICE, declared by H. SUGDEN EVANS, F.C.S., F.R.M.S., (Chief Analyst of the Dominion), to be perfectly FREE FROM ALCOHOL in any form. Also highly recommended

**FOR MEDICINAL PURPOSES.\***

This article is used in most of the Methodist churches in Toronto, and also in churches of other denominations in the city and throughout Ontario and Quebec.

IN SEALED BOTTLES.

PRICES—Pints, 35 Cents; Quarts, 60 Cents.

Boxing 1 or 2 bottles, 10 cents extra; 3 or more bottles, 20 cents extra.

N.B.—Special quotations for quantities.

---

**COLLECTION PLATES**  
Made of Black Walnut—lined with Crimson Plush.  
**SUPERIOR FINISH.**

Price, each, . . . . . 90 cents.

---

**NOW IS THE TIME**  
**For Sunday-School Entertainments.**

SEND FOR OUR CATALOGUE OF

**READINGS, RECITATIONS, AND DIALOGUES,**

AND ALSO FOR A SAMPLE COPY OF OUR NEW BOOK,

**SUNDAY-SCHOOL AND CHURCH ENTERTAINMENTS,**

Just out. 30 cts. each, post free.

---

**WILLIAM BRIGGS, 78 & 80 King Street East, Toronto.**  
C. W. COATES, MONTREAL, QUE.      S. F. HUESTIS, HALIFAX, N.S.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

## PANSY BOOKS.

CANADIAN COPYRIGHT BOOK BY PANSY, FROM ORIGINAL PLATES, ENTITLED

# EIGHTY-SEVEN

A CHAUTAUQUA STORY—DEDICATED TO THE CLASS OF '87.

PRICE - ONE DOLLAR.

Bound in extra cloth, gilt, bevelled boards, etc., and is in good demand.

NEWEST BOOK BY PANSY—JUST ISSUED.

CANADIAN COPYRIGHT EDITION—FROM ORIGINAL PLATES.

## JUDGE BURNHAM'S DAUGHTERS

A SEQUEL TO "RUTH ERSKINE'S CROSSES."

PRICE—12mo, Cloth, 339 pp.—ONE DOLLAR.

This Book is Pansy's latest, and is well, strongly and tastefully bound in extra cloth, gilt, bevelled boards, etc.

Best and Cheapest Editions from  
Original Plates.

Price, in good Cloth Binding, Gilt Lettered,  
50 Cents Each.

Four Girls at Chautauqua.  
Ruth Erskine's Crosses.

Chautauqua Girls at Home.

One Commonplace Day.

The Hall in the Grove.

New Graft in the Family Tree.

From Different Standpoints.

The Man of the House.

Mrs. Sol. Smith Looking On.

Ester Ried.

Three People.

Interrupted.

Ester Ried Yet Speaking.

Julia Ried.

Tip Lewis.

27 Others to follow of this Cheap Edition.

## A NEW BOOK

FOR S. S. LIBRARIES AND HOME READING,

# CHRISTOPHER

AND OTHER STORIES,

By AMELIA E. BARR.

CLOTH, 352 PP. . . . . ONLY 60 CTS.

WILLIAM BRIGGS, 78 & 80 King Street East, Toronto.

C. W. COATES, MONTREAL, QUE.

S. F. HUESTIS, HALIFAX, N.S.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

LESSON HELPS FOR ~~1889~~ 1890

PELOUBET'S SELECT NOTES.

8vo, cloth. Price \$1.25.

QUESTION BOOKS,  
IN THREE GRADES.

Price, each, 20c. net; or 17c. each by the dozen.

ALSO,

Vincent's Select Notes on the International S. S. Lessons,

With maps, illustrations, etc. 8vo, cloth, net, \$1.25.

QUESTION BOOKS, in three grades.

Each, 20c.; 17c. each by dozen.

Monday Club Sermons on the S. S. Lessons

12mo, cloth, \$1.25.

Dr. Pentecost's Commentary on the S. S. Lessons for 1889

350 pages. 12mo. Invaluable for teachers. Paper covers, 50c.; cloth bound, \$1.00.

Send for our New Catalogue of Bible Commentaries, Bible Dictionaries, Bible Concordances. Sent to any address, post free, on application.

THE NEW  
**C. L. S. C. BOOKS**  
1888-89.

PRICES TO MEMBERS, Bound in Cloth.

Outline History of Greece.	Vincent	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	\$0 60
Preparatory Greek Course in English.	Wilkinson	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 10
College Greek Course in English.	Wilkinson	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 10
Character of Jesus.	Bushnell	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0 50
Modern Church in Europe.	Hurst	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0 50
Chemistry.	Appleton	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 10
Zoology.	Steele	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 35

Or the Complete List, mailed post-free, on receipt of \$6.00.

GARNET SEAL

1. Old Greek Education. (With a chapter on the Greek Drama.) Mahaffy.
2. Economics for the People. Bowker.
3. Michael Faraday. J. H. Gladstone.
4. The Chemical History of a Candle. Faraday.

The four volumes in a box, \$3.00 net, post-free.  
NOT SOLD SEPARATELY.

Send for the NEW CIRCULAR giving all particulars about the C.L.S.C. Movement. Just Ready.

WILLIAM BRIGGS, 78 & 80 King Street East, Toronto.

C. W. COATES, MONTREAL, QUE.

S. F. HUESTIS, HALIFAX, N.S.

JUST PUBLISHED.

**WESTERN CHINA. AMONG THE FOREST TREES;**

By REV. VIRGIL C. HART, B.D.

Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society.

12mo, 306 pp., with 12 full-page illustrations and map, \$2.00, post free.

**JUBILEE SINGERS!**

JUST RECEIVED

A fresh supply of

**THE STORY OF THE JUBILEE SINGERS,**

WITH THEIR SONGS.

By J. B. T. MARSH. Revised Edition. With a photo. group of the Jubilee Singers.

12mo, cloth, 124 pp. and 128 hymns. \$1.00 net, post free.

A BEAUTIFUL VOLUME.

**THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

FOR VERY YOUNG CHILDREN.

By EMMA MARSHALL.

This is a beautiful volume, full of illustrations, and printed in very large type. Size 9 x 11½ inches, bound in red cloth.

Price only 90 cents.

**NOW READY.**

ANOTHER EDITION OF

**"Sing Out the Glad News,"**

By THE WHYTE BROS.

Send along your orders. 25c. each; \$2.50 per doz.

A NEW CANADIAN STORY.

**AMONG THE FOREST TREES;**

OR,

**How the Bushman Family Got Their Homes.**

Being a book of facts and incidents of pioneer life in Upper Canada, arranged in the form of a story.

By REV. J. H. HILTS,

Author of "Experiences of a Backwoods Preacher," etc.

12mo, cloth, 380 pp., \$1.25.

NEW

**Sunday-School Music Book,**

By ASA HULL.

Author of "GEM OF GEMS," "JEWELS OF PRAISE," etc.

**HAPPY GREETINGS,**

A Collection of Choice Original Hymns and Tunes suitable for Sunday-schools, Bible Classes, and the Home Circle.

Price, 35c. each. \$3.60 per dozen.

**BEFORE AN AUDIENCE ;**

**Or, The Use of the Will in Public Speaking.**

*Talks to the students of the Universities of St. Andrews' and of Aberdeen, Scotland.*

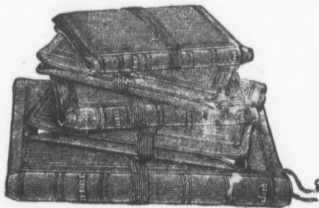
By NATHAN SHEPPARD. Author of "Shut Up in Paris," etc., etc. 12mo, cloth, price 90 cents.

A splendid book for college men and all public speakers. Send for full descriptive circular. The *New York Evangelist* says:—"They are very racy and earnest talks, full of sense and most delightfully dogmatic. The author knocks to flinders the theories of elocutionists, and opposes all their rules with one simple counsel, 'Wake up your will.'"

**WILLIAM BRIGGS, 78 & 80 King Street East, Toronto.**

C. W. COATES, Montreal, Que.

S. F. HUESTIS, Halifax, N.S.



## THE OXFORD BIBLE FOR TEACHERS.

Is now issued in Twelve Sizes, with the Text arranged in each so as to correspond page for page with all the others.

It contains Helps to the Study of the Bible, which have been carefully revised from time to time by DR. STUBBS, Bishop of Chester, ARCHDEACON PALMER, DR. ANGUS, and other eminent scholars. The scientific information was prepared under the supervision of PROFESSORS ROLLESTON, WESTWOOD, LAWSON and EARLE, names of the highest authority in their several departments.

Seven Sizes are printed on best Rag-made Printing Paper, and vary in price from \$1.00 to 15.00.

Five Sizes are printed on thin opaque INDIA PAPER, and are EXTREMELY LIGHT AND THIN. They vary in weight from 12½ ounces to 22 ounces, and in price from \$2.50 to \$16.00, and do not exceed an inch in thickness.

Four Sizes are also issued interleaved throughout with writing paper for MS. notes.

A handsome Quarto Edition, in Pica type, has been prepared for Family use, and is issued in various bindings, from \$5.25 upwards.

The Helps to the Study of the Bible are published separately, in small type, at 30 cents and in large type at \$1.00.

**The "METHODIST RECORDER"** :—"This invaluable and incomparable book is the most wonderful digest, both in compactness and completeness of Biblical information, compiled by the best Scholarship of the age, that has been offered to the general reader."

**The "WESLEYAN METHODIST MAGAZINE"** :—"To Ministers, Local Preachers, and Teachers, it is simply invaluable. Nothing is wanting to the completeness of the volume."

**The "TIMES"** :—"The whole has been done with admirable completeness."

**The "DAILY NEWS"** :—"For completeness and portability it could not possibly be surpassed. It furnishes the student with all that is needful for a scholarly mastery of the Text."

**The "CHRISTIAN WORLD"** :—"The most complete Bible yet published."

**The "PALL MALL GAZETTE"** :—"Every Bible Student knows it to be the best collection of Biblical information ever brought together in so small a compass."

**The Rev. G. Osborn, D.D.** :—"A book which comes as near perfection as can reasonably be expected; has surpassed all competitors."

**The Rev. C. Garrett** :—"The highest wishes of Biblical Students are here exceeded, not a want is unmet."

**The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A.** :—"I have used this book for years, and can only join in the universal chorus of all students of Scripture in describing its high merits, and commending it to all."

**The Rev. Robert N. Young, D.D., of Headingley College, Leeds** :—"As a manual of Biblical information and an auxiliary of Biblical study, it is unrivalled. It is as exhaustive as it is concise, no irrelevant matter has been introduced, and nothing essential to Biblical study seems to have been omitted, and in no instance, so far as I can judge, has thoroughness or accuracy been sacrificed to the necessities of condensation."

**The Rev. F. Greeves, D.D., Southlands Training College** :—"As perfect and complete a series of Helps to the Study of the Bible as could well be conceived or executed."

**The Late Rev. Gervase Smith, D.D.** :—"It would be impossible to suggest a more beautiful, useful, or reasonable gift for any who are engaged in Sunday-school work, or other students of Holy Writ."

**The Rev. James Comper Gray** :—"After a most patient examination I am astonished at the immense amount of accurate and carefully digested matter it contains; and that, too, of a kind precisely adapted to the Teacher's needs."

**The Rev. James H. Rigg, D.D.** :—"I have found it remarkably concise and full; it seems to form, in fact, a COMPLETE library of Bible lore in itself. The Natural History, so thorough and in such small compass, will very greatly assist all who use the book, and the historical notices deserve very high praise. I congratulate you heartily on having provided a book which promises to be of so much value."

*The Sale already exceeds 900,000.*

London: HENRY FROWDE, Oxford University Press Warehouse,

# Gospel Music

**GLAD HALLELUYAH'S** is Sweney and Kirkpatrick's best book. Substantial words. Soul-inspiring music. 100 new songs. They *thrill* and *electrify*. They sing themselves.

**SONGS OF TRIUMPH** is brimful of good and popular pieces. There's a world of glorious theology in each song.

If you want Gospel Music, these are the books to buy.

Price of each, by mail, 35c. By express (not prepaid), \$3.60 per doz.; \$30 per 100. Sample copy, 25c. Inducements to schools, churches, and evangelists. Write us.

T. T. TASKER, SR., PUBLISHER, 921 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

12-34



Strengthen confidence in the Estey Organ. Its tone, the perfection of material in its construction, and the painstaking care given to every detail are reasons for its leading position.

Illustrated Catalogues sent free.

ESTEY ORGAN CO.,  
Brattleboro, Vt.

**GATHERED JEWELS** is still the first choice of Sunday-schools. Demand constantly increasing. Hymn and Tunes compiled by W. A. OGDEN. Sample copy, 25 cents. Specimen pages free. W. W. WHITNEY, Publisher, Toledo, O.; or, WILLIAM BRIGGS, 78 and 80 King Street East, Toronto. 10-6t

## DENVER REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS.

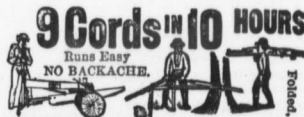
Conservative, safe, profitable. Circulars and references mailed. H. B. Chamberlin & Bro., Box 1934, Denver, Col. 9-6t

**W. STAHLSCHMIDT & Co.**  
PRESTON, ONTARIO.

Manufacturers of  
OFFICE, SCHOOL, CHURCH,  
AND  
LODGE FURNITURE.



SEND FOR CATALOGUE AND PRICE LIST.  
8-1y



**9 Cords in 10 HOURS**  
Runs Easy  
NO BACKACHE.  
Folger,  
BY ONE MAN. Greatly improved. Also TOOL for filing saws whereby those least experienced cannot make a mistake. Sent free with machine. To others, for common cross-cut saws, by mail \$2.00. Hand-dredf have sawed 5 to 9 CORDS daily. We want all who burn wood and all interested in the timber business to write for our Illustrated Free Catalogue. We have excellent tool now on earth. First order from your vicinity secures agency. No duty to pay. We manufacture in Canada. FOLDING SAWING MACHINE CO., 508 to 511 So. Cass Street, Chicago, U. S. A.

12-54



ADVERTISEMENTS.

## Golden Texts: —1889—

Something which the younger scholars, at least, will appreciate, is the roll of Golden Texts for 1889. There are sixteen pages (7x5 inches), and upon each page are three golden texts in large, clear type. The leaves are turned upon a brass bar, and the whole device is suspended by a colored cord. Printed in red and black upon light-blue paper. Single copy, ten cents; five or more, eight cents each; fifty or more, seven cents each.

## The Lesson Roll:

The Sunday School Lesson Roll gives the full text of each lesson of the year, and also the Golden Texts. It is attractively printed in two colors. When a week has passed by, the leaf for that week is turned upon the ingenious wire hanger, and takes its place back of the other leaves. Single copy, fifteen cents; five or more, twelve cents each; fifty or more, ten cents each.

## Pocket Edition

Of the International Sunday-school Lessons, with both the Common and the Revised Version given in full on opposite pages. A little book (2½x4 inches, 100 pages), containing all the lessons of the year. It is printed on thin, tough paper and neatly bound in cloth, with side stamp in color and gold. Just the thing for those who wish to look over the lesson at odd moments. Choice enough for a gift to teachers or scholars at Christmas. Single copy, twenty-five cents; five or more, twenty cents each.

## Christmas Service

The song service for Christmas, by the Rev. Leonard W. Bacon, D.D., entitled "The Coming of the King," is virtually a Christmas Oratorio, embracing bright and joyful carols for the children, hymns and choruses for the entire congregation, and for the choir some of the noblest compositions in the whole range of religious music. In the preparation of this service, Dr. Bacon, himself a musical expert, has had the aid of Mr. Gilchrist, the eminent composer, not only in original anthems composed expressly for this service, but in the adaptation and arrangement of selections from the great masters of the art. The service brings out vividly: I. The Birth of the Prince. II. The spread of the Kingdom. III. The Triumph of the King. The programme has been made brief; but it contains a rich store of material that will engage and reward the study of the best choirs, organists, and Sunday-schools.

Price of the school edition, five cents; \$4.00 per hundred. The full Order for the Service, including full Organ and Voice score of all the music for the choir, with suggestions for the effective organization and conduct of the festival, is published separately in a large pamphlet. Price, twenty-five cents.

Note.—For schools not caring to undertake such a service as the one described above, a simpler one, suitable for city and country schools alike, has been prepared. Price, five cents; \$2.00 per hundred.

Any of the above publications may be ordered through bookellers, or will be mailed on receipt of price by the publisher. Address

JOHN D. WATTLES,  
Publisher of The Sunday School Times,  
104 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.



CINCINNATI BELL FOUNDRY CO.  
SUCCESSORS IN BLYMVER BELLS TO THE  
BLYMVER MANUFACTURING CO. 11-1  
CATALOGUE WITH 1800 TESTIMONIALS.  
BELLS, CHURCH, SCHOOL, FIRE ALARMS.

## FOR SUNDAY SCHOOLS EVERYWHERE!

**PENTECOST** "BIBLE STUDIES" on the 1889 International Lessons. Copies in Quarterly or Complete form. Send for free specimen pages, or a copy sent post paid on approval.  
Rev. Geo. F. Pentecost, D.D.

**ABBOTT** ON ROMANS. Just out. Also, MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN and ACTS. Abbott's Commentaries are invaluable. Address,  
New York:  
111 & 113 WILLIAM ST.  
Chicago:  
263 & 265 WABASH AVE.  
**A. S. BARNES & CO.**  
Publishers. 12-3t

## EDWARDS' DESICCATED SOUP.

A dry preparation of Extract of Beef and Vegetables; a delicious, nourishing and economical basin of Soup in a few minutes; a ground-work for all Brown Soups, an excellent gravy, and an invaluable adjunct to Irish Stew.

The Best and Cheapest Article of Diet ever introduced to the Public.  
Highly recommended by the medical profession and the entire press.

Don't fail to try it!

For Sale by all Grocers everywhere,  
In tins, 1lb. 40c.; ½ lb. 25c.; ¼ lb. 15c.; and 2 oz. packets 5c

WHOLESALE DEPOT:  
30 ST. SACRAMENT ST., MONTREAL.

EDWARDS' ECONOMIC COOKERY—a valuable book—  
post free on application. 12-6t

FOR CLOSE PRICES IN



WATCHES, JEWELRY,  
SILVERWARE, &c.

Write or call on

**GEO. E. TROREY,**

(SUCCESSOR TO GOULDEN & TROREY.)

Manufacturing Jewelers,  
61 KING STREET EAST—(Opp. Toronto Street,  
TORONTO. 1-ly

**PHONOGRAPHY OR  
PHONETIC SHORT HAND**

Self-taught. Send for Catalogue. Address  
9-ly The Phonographic Institute, Cincinnati.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

## TO SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

It will be to your advantage if you want good, sound Sunday-school Library Books to write to us for quotations before ordering elsewhere. Please note that

**OUR** PRICES ARE LOW.

OUR **BOOKS** ARE NEW.

OUR TERMS **ARE** LIBERAL.

OUR BOOKS ARE **GOOD**.

We have also a large variety of

**SUNDAY-SCHOOL REQUISITES, SUNDAY-SCHOOL REWARD CARDS,  
SUNDAY-SCHOOL MUSIC BOOKS, SUNDAY-SCHOOL DECORATIONS.**

Send for our Sunday-School Catalogue. Liberal terms to Schools.

WILLIAM BRIGGS, 78 & 80 King Street East, Toronto.

C. W. COATES, MONTREAL, QUE.

S. F. HUESTIS, HALIFAX, N.S.

# BALL'S

# LADIES!



# CORSETS

If you appreciate a Corset that will neither break down nor roll up IN WEAR,

**TRY BALL'S CORSETS.**

If you value health and comfort,

**WEAR BALL'S CORSETS.**

If you desire a Corset that fits the first day you wear it, and needs no "breaking in,"

**BUY BALL'S CORSETS.**

If you desire a Corset that yields with every motion of the body,

**EXAMINE BALL'S CORSETS.**

If you want a perfect fit and support without compression,

**USE BALL'S CORSETS.**

Owing to their peculiar construction it is impossible to break steels in Ball's Corsets.

The Elastic Sections in Ball's Corsets contain no rubber, and are warranted to out-wear the Corset. Every pair sold with the following guarantee:

"If not perfectly satisfactory in every respect after three weeks' trial, the money paid for them will be refunded (by the dealer), *Soiled or Unsoiled.*"

**FOR SALE BY ALL LEADING DRY GOODS DEALERS.**