

**PAGES**

**MISSING**

# SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. XVIII.]

AUGUST, 1884.

[No. 8.

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS. THREE MONTHS WITH DAVID AND THE PSALMS. AUGUST, 1884.

NOTE.—The Scripture verses to be committed to memory are indicated by an index [§§] at the side.

B. C. 1034.]

### LESSON V.—DAVID'S REPENTANCE.

[Aug. 3.

Psalm 51. 1-19.



1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies a blot out my transgressions.  
a Col. 2. 14.

2 Wash b me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.  
b Heb. 9. 14; 1 John 1. 7; Rev. 1. 5.

3 For c I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.  
c Psa. 32. 5.

4 Against d thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil e in thy sight; f that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.  
d Gen. 39. 9.—e Luke 15. 21.—f Rom. 3. 4.

5 Behold, g I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother a conceive me.  
g Job 14. 4; John 3. 6; Rom. 5. 12; Eph. 2. 3.—a Warm me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.  
§§9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

§§10 Create h in me a clean heart, O God; and renew b a right spirit within me.  
h Acta 15. 9; Eph. 2. 10.—b Or, a constant spirit.

§§11 Cast me not away i from thy presence; and take not thy j Holy Spirit from me.  
i Gen. 4. 14.—j Ezek. 36. 27; Rom. 8. 9.

§§12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free k spirit;  
k 2 Cor. 3. 17.

13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

14 Deliver me from c blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.  
c Bloods.

15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice, d else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering.

d Or, that I should give it.  
17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou be pleased with l the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.  
l Mal. 3. 3.

#### GENERAL STATEMENT.

In the record of David's prosperity a dark blot appears upon the page in the story of David's sin. He committed two grievous crimes. He robbed an unsuspecting man of his wife, and then to hide his guilt caused the innocent husband to be murdered by the swords of enemies. It is noticeable that the Scripture does not conceal nor gloss over the wickedness

of him who had been called in other days "the man after God's own heart," but relates David's sin and his punishment with far more detail than David's conquests. And his crime, great as it seems to our eyes, and even greater to his own, would not have been deemed gross by another sovereign in the Oriental world, either in that age, or in any age since. It shows the loftiness of the Bible standard of moral purity, that David received for this sin the bold rebuke of the prophet, and a warning of the woe which was destined to follow it. The crime had been committed in private, and few knew the guilty secret. But David's repentance was public and before all the nation. In the deep humiliation of his spirit he penned this psalm, which entered into the literature of the Old Testament, was chanted by priests at the services of worship, and has been "the sinner's guide" to repentance and pardon through all the centuries since. In it we note the clearness with which he saw his own sinfulness, and the humiliation of soul with which he confessed it, claiming no extenuation, but taking all its guilt as his own. We observe how earnest was his pleading, not that the penalty might be remitted, but that its stain might be cleansed away from his own consciousness. From David's psalm we may learn how we, like him in our sinful condition, may with him climb the steps of repentance up to the summit of renewed acceptance with God.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verses 1, 2. Mercy . . . loving-kindness . . . tender mercies.** Notice the three words which express the grace of God which was David's only hope for pardon. The first means pity toward one who deserves punishment; the second, the love from which that pity springs; the third emphasizes compassion and shows it to be infinite. 1. A sinner's only hope is in the love of God. **Transgressions . . . iniquity . . . sin.** These are the three words expressing David's guilt; the first meaning the passing over a forbidden line; the second, turning out of the right way; the third, in the original meaning, "to miss an aim;" and all these give pictures of wrong-doing in its various aspects. 2. None but the penitent knows the truth about sin's misery. **Blot out . . . wash . . . cleanse.** These are David's three prayers for himself: the first meaning the erasure of the record against him; the second, literally, "multiply to wash me," wash me again and again, until thoroughly pure; the third, a desire for purity of heart, deeper than of life. 3. The true penitent is more alarmed for his sinful condition than for the overhanging penalty.

3. **For.** This word gives the reason, not why he should be forgiven, but why he asks for forgiveness. **I acknowledge.** "I will know;" expressing a clear internal perception of sin. 4. The first step toward salvation is to clearly recognize one's self a sinner. **My transgressions.** Note the plural form; showing that David saw not one, but many sins in his act. **Ever before me.** The guilty con-

sciousness, not the fear of punishment, haunted him constantly.

4. **Against thee, thee only.** True, he had wronged his fellow-man, and had dishonoured his royal estate; but the sin against God cast into shadow every other relation; for in its true essence all sin is against God, and against God only. **That thou mightest be justified.** He admits that God is just, whatever may be the sentence pronounced against him, and bows his head to submit to it.

5. **I was shapen. Born. In iniquity.** He recognizes that since birth he has been a sinner; but this is not in extenuation of his guilt, only an aggravation of it. **Did my mother conceive me.** He does not throw the blame upon his parents, and make heredity an excuse for his condition; but confesses to a tainted nature, to an original birth-depravity. 5. Man belongs to a guilty stock, and grows from a sinful root.

6. **Thou desirest.** He now turns from beholding his own depravity to the contemplation of the divine standard of purity. **Truth. Uprightness, righteousness. Inward part.** Not only the outward right conduct, but the inward integrity of heart and purpose. **Make me to know wisdom.** God makes us to know wisdom by placing in us reverence for himself, which is the beginning of wisdom.

7. **Purge me with hyssop.** This was the formal purification of one who had been a leper. Lev. 14. 4-6. David considered himself in God's sight as a leper who needed cleansing. The hyssop was a plant headed like a broom, and used for sprinkling. **Clean.** 6. He whom God pronounces clean is clean indeed.

8. **Make me. By the assurance of forgiveness. To hear joy and gladness.** The most joyful sound a sinner can hear is the voice which proclaims him forgiven. **Bones which thou hast broken.** The bones, as the framework of the body, are regarded as crushed by the consciousness of guilt. **May rejoice.** 7. He who imparts sorrow for sin can alone give the joy of salvation. Hosea 6. 1.

9. **Hide thy face.** A prayer that God will not only forgive, but forget, his sins. So he has promised to do, saying, "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." But God will hide his face from our sins only when we turn our face toward him. **Blot out.** See note on verse 1.

10. **Create.** The word here used is the strongest in the Hebrew language to express the bringing into being that which was not (as in Gen. 1. 1), and is spoken only of God. David seeks for that which is a creation, and which only God can create. **Clean heart.** The heart is the source of character and life; and David's prayer was for what Christ called the new birth. 8. To change a sinner to a saint is greater and more divine than to speak a world from nothing. **A right spirit.** "A steadfast spirit;" a purpose which will not be fickle, now serving God and then yielding to sin, but thorough and determined in righteousness. 9. We need not

only a new, but a steadfast, heart in God's cause.

**11. Cast me not away.** He realizes, like the prodigal, that he is not fit for the companionship of his Father's house, yet prays not to be turned away. **From thy presence.** The presence of God, which the sinner dreads, is the one longing of the penitent. **Take not thy Holy Spirit.** That divine influence which came upon David at his anointing (1 Sam. 16. 1), and which he now fears he may lose, as did Saul, whose misery after its departure David well knew.

**12. Restore unto me.** For he once had known it, and longs to know it again. **The joy of thy salvation.** 10. Who that has once felt the joy of sonship in God can ever forget it, wherever he may stray! **Uphold me with thy free Spirit.** Rather, according to the best scholars, "with a willing spirit," make my spirit willing; referring to David's mind, rather than the divine Spirit.

**13. Then will I teach.** The original indicates a desire to show to others who have sinned the mercy of God. 11. None can tell the story of salvation so well as the sinner who has been saved. **Sinners shall be converted.** Perhaps no psalm has been a guide to so many from sin to grace as this; so that David's desire has been gratified.

**14. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness.** David feels that Uriah's blood cries for vengeance, and he prays that the accuser may be silenced by his own forgiveness. **Sing . . . of thy righteousness.** Of God's righteousness as manifested in the fulfilment of his promises; and of the righteousness which satisfies both justice and mercy in forgiveness.

**15. Open thou.** Rather, "Thou wilt open." David's lips had been closed by his guilt, but now God would unseal them by his pardon. **Show forth thy praise.** The highest praise is not that for God's greatness and majesty, but for his mercy in salvation; and this new song would David sing.

**16. Desirest not sacrifice.** A less spiritual mind would have thought that offerings would atone for sin; but David sees that the external rite availed nothing without the inward contrition. **Delightest not in burnt-offering.** The offering of a slain beast would have value only so far as it represented the consecration of the living heart to God.

**17. Sacrifices of God.** Those sacrifices which are acceptable to God. **A broken spirit.** A heart truly penitent for its sins and humbly seeking God. **Thou wilt not despise.** God never refuses the prayer of one who is conscious of sin and seeks for mercy. 12. When we turn toward God, God turns toward us.

**18. Do good . . . unto Zion.** Zion was the stronghold of his realm, his new capital, and the place where the ark of God was resting. David prays that his sin may not stop the progress of God's kingdom. **Build thou the walls.** David was just completing the walls

of the city when his sin was committed. As another crime caused the death of seventy thousand people, David feared that this might bring some reverse upon Israel. 13. The sins of God's people are the greatest hinderances to God's cause.

**19. Then shalt thou be pleased.** While sacrifices from an unforgiven sinner were worth nothing, God would accept those offered from the gratitude of a redeemed spirit. **Sacrifices of righteousness.** Sacrifices to express gratitude for righteousness regained. **Whole burnt-offering.** An offering wholly consumed, showing the consecration of the worshipper. **Bullocks.** The largest and most expensive kind of sacrifices.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

**My sin is ever before me.** Psa. 51. 3.

#### OUTLINE.

1. A Confession, v. 1-5.
2. A Supplication, v. 6-19.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 47, S. S. Hymnal.

Come, O come with thy broken heart.

No. 48, S. S. Hymnal.

Child of sin and sorrow!

No. 50, S. S. Hymnal.

Wand'rer come, there's room for thee.

No. 56, S. S. Hymnal.

Hark! 'tis the voice of the Saviour.

TIME.—B.C. 1034.

CONNECTING LINK.—David's sin with Bathsheba. 2 Sam. 11. 1-27.

EXPLANATIONS.—This psalm was written by David after the prophet Nathan had rebuked him in God's name for a great crime. He had caused Uriah, a brave soldier, to be slain that he might obtain his wife, whom he wished to marry. When accused by Nathan he confessed his guilt, and sought forgiveness of God. This psalm is his prayer for mercy. *Loving-kindness*—God's love is our only hope for forgiveness. *Iniquity*—The guilt of sin, from which David longed to be made clean. *Against thee, thee only*—Not that he cared little for the wrong done to man, but all sin is really before God, and against God's law. *Justified*—That God's action in punishing sin may be shown to be right. *Shapen in iniquity*—Born a sinner, and a sinner from birth. *Hyssop*—A plant like the broom used to sprinkle the sacrifices and the people who offered them. *Create in me*—God only can create hearts anew. *Free Spirit*—God's Spirit, which gives the joy of freedom from sin. *Blood-guiltiness*—The guilt of shedding blood. *Desirest not sacrifice*—David felt that offerings of beasts could not take away his sin. *A broken spirit*—A heart sorry for its sins. *Walls of Jerusalem*—David had begun the city, and he feared that God's wrath for his crime would fall upon it. *Bullocks*—These were burned upon the altar at the sacrifice.



**HOME READINGS.**

- M. David's repentance. Psa. 51. 1-19.  
 Tu. David's sin. 2 Sam. 11. 1-13.  
 W. Uriah slain. 2 Sam. 11. 14-25.  
 Th. David reproved by Nathan. 2 Sam. 12. 1-13.  
 F. David's confession. 2 Sam. 12. 14-23.  
 S. The source of cleansing. 1 John 1. 1-10.  
 S. The blessedness of forgiveness. Psa. 32. 1-11.

**QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.**

1. **A Confession**, v. 1-5. What is the prayer of the penitent king? To what divine attributes does he appeal? What has God declared of himself in Num. 14. 18? What must be the plea of every sinful heart? How may this cleansing be wrought? 1 John 1. 7. What follows the cry for a clean heart? Whom has the sinner offended? To whom should confession, then, be made? What encouragement have we for the confession of sin? 1 John 1. 9.

2. **A Supplication**, v. 6-19. For what change did David pray? What has God promised to the penitent? Ezek. 36. 26. What presence and guidance are here sought? To whom has the Lord promised his Spirit? Luke 11. 13. What service does the psalmist promise? What is the duty of every converted soul toward others? What will follow faithful witnessing? What should be the language of the Christian? Psa. 35. 28. What encouragement have the broken-hearted? Psa. 34. 18. What sacrifice is pleasing to God? Have you offered this sacrifice?

**TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.**

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. The prayer of the penitent?
2. The confession of the contrite?
3. The acceptable sacrifice?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.—(For the entire school.) 1. What is David's prayer? "Have mercy upon me, O God." 2. What does David ask of God? "Cleanse me from my sin." 3. What does God desire? "Truth in the inward parts." 4. What are the sacrifices of God? A broken spirit. 5. What does God not despise? A broken and a contrite heart.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—True repentance.

**QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.**

1. **A Confession**, v. 1-5. What was David's sin, referred to in the psalm? Why did he say that it was against God and God only? What showed the sincerity of his repentance? What characteristics of a true confession are here shown? To what traits in the divine nature did David appeal in his prayer?

2. **A Supplication**, v. 6-19. For what six mercies did David pray? What kind of cleansing did he desire? What was his prayer concerning his iniquities? What does God promise in Isa. 43. 25? What was David's prayer for God's Spirit? How is his prayer illustrated by Eph. 4. 30? What was David's vow to God if forgiven? What does he name as the sacrifices acceptable to God? What was his prayer for Jerusalem?

**PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.**

Where in this lesson do we find—

1. The characteristics of a sincere repentance?
2. The elements of a true prayer for mercy?
3. The vows of a forgiven sinner?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

For what does David plead? For God's mercy. What confession does he make? [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.] Against whom had David sinned? Against God. Who only can judge sin? God. What does God look upon? The heart. What did David want? A clean heart and a right spirit. What did David ask of God? To be washed and made pure. For what did he pray? That the Holy Spirit might not be taken away from him. What promise did he make? To teach sinners the way of the Lord. What always follows true repentance? God's pardon. What does God love? A broken and contrite heart. What is better than sacrifice? A humble, obedient spirit. What does David ask God to prosper? The Church of Zion. When are sacrifices acceptable to God? When offered with repentant hearts. What only can give us joy? God's forgiveness of our sins.

**WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.**

When you have sinned—Do not hide it. Do not deny it. Do not try to excuse it. Confess it humbly. Sorrow over it heartily. And with God's help *never do it again*. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

**ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.****The Upward Steps of a Sinner.****I. PENITENCE.**

I acknowledged . . . transgression. v. 3.

"I acknowledge my sin." Psa. 32. 5.

"Confess our sins . . . forgive us." 1 John 1. 9.

**II. PRAYER.**

Blot out my transgressions. v. 1.

"Let us return unto the Lord." Hosea 6. 1.

"Call ye upon him . . . near." Isa. 55. 6.

**III. PARDON.**

Hide thy face from my sins. v. 9.

"Redemption . . . forgiveness of sins." Col. 1. 14.

"Will not remember thy sins." Isa. 43. 25.

**IV. PURITY.**

Create in me a clean heart. v. 10.

"Ye shall be clean." Ezek. 36. 25.

"Ye are washed . . . sanctified." 1 Cor. 6. 11.

**V. PRAISE.**

Open thou my lips. v. 15.

"A new song . . . even praise." Psa. 40. 3.

"Hast redeemed us to God." Rev. 5. 9.

## VI. PROMISE.

The sacrifices of righteousness. v. 19.

"I will pay my vows." Psa. 116. 14.

"Will pay that I have vowed." Jonah 2. 9.

## ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

## The Traits of True Penitence.

1. The true penitent hopes for mercy, not in his own righteousness, but only in the loving-kindness of God. v. 1.

2. The true penitent is overwhelmed with the consciousness of sin, and sees his guilt in all its fulness. v. 1-3.

3. The true penitent seeks for cleansing from sin, rather than for relief from punishment. v. 2, 3.

4. The true penitent realizes that his sin is in relation to God, and submits to the divine justice in its sentence. v. 4.

5. The true penitent reizes at once the height of the divine standard, and the depth of his own innate depravity. v. 5, 6.

6. The true penitent seeks entire cleansing, a complete pardon, and a renewal of the divine presence. v. 7-12.

7. The true penitent is ready to tell the story of salvation, and lead other sinners to repentance. v. 13.

## CATECHISM QUESTION.

6. *What do you call this mystery?*

The mystery of the Holy Trinity.

7. *What do you mean by mystery?*

A truth which man's reason could not discover, and which God by degrees makes known.

## ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

I hope there are few who ever come to a Sunday-school for instruction who would not be sorry to see a fellow-creature in trouble; whose interest would not be in some measure roused for such a one, who would not care to ask what is the matter, and whether the trouble can be removed. In the passage for to-day we get the sight of a man in the deepest distress. And this man is none other than King David, of whose glory and prosperity we have so lately been reading. We have here his own account of his trouble. Let us look closely at this account, that we may see both the reason of the trouble, and the quarter from which he looked for deliverance:

1. *The reason of his trouble.*

In many of David's Psalms we read of wars and enemies and oppressors and dangers; of nets and snares laid for him; of friends forsaking and foes mocking. But there is nothing of this sort here—no outside trouble

is weighing him down. It is something inside, something of his own: "my transgressions;" "mine iniquity;" "my sin." It is a trouble always with him, and which he cannot forget: "ever before me." Ver. 3.

Why is this? You may notice men doing wrong day after day, but it does not seem to trouble them. They do not look at all miserable. Their thoughts are full of something else. Their business, their money, their pleasure, is "ever before" them, not their sin. Why was it so different with David? There were two things that made the difference:

(1) In the old English story of King Alfred and the cakes, the peasant's wife feels no compunction for her abuse of the supposed poor wanderer who had unwittingly allowed her cakes to burn. Her conscience in no way smites her for her ill-temper and want of courtesy, until she finds out whom she has offended. The discovery that it is the king of the land quite alters the case, and fills her at once with horror and distress. King David saw that he had sinned, not merely against his own subjects, but against his God: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." This was what made the matter so terrible. God had marked the sin. God was displeased at it.

(2) But it was not the outward act of wickedness only that God marked. In the collection of tales on the beatitudes, called the "Golden Ladder," there is a story of a school-girl, Annie, who commits some act of petty selfishness. She is somewhat distressed at the thought of what she had done, but persists in saying, "It was not like me," looking upon it as an isolated act, and not the natural produce of an evil heart. In vain does the teacher try to show Annie that it is like her, and that she needs her heart cleansed and renewed; she is too proud to acknowledge it. Not so David. "Behold," he says, "I was shapen in iniquity." It was out of his natural corrupt heart that the evil had sprung, and not the one act merely, but the wickedness of the heart was abominable in the sight of him who desired "truth in the inward parts."

No wonder that, seeing all this, David was miserable, that the terrible plague of his heart was "ever before him," giving him no rest. But now look at

2. *The quarter from which he hoped for relief.*

Only a short time ago I had a sad and distressing case laid before me in a letter. The writer imagined I was a suitable person to apply to for help, and that I should be able to give it. But it was a mistake. I was obliged to reply that the matter was entirely out of my province and beyond my power. In order not to be disappointed of what we desire, we should seek for it in the right t

quarter—in that which corresponds to the need.

Now what was David's need? He wanted pardon, (vers. 1, 9,) cleansing, (vers. 2, 7, 14,) renewal, (ver. 10,) and restoration to all that he had lost. Vers. 8, 11, 12, 15.

*Whose province was it to grant these?* It is of no use to ask one person to forgive an offence committed against another. And if the offence be against the law of the country, pardon can only be granted by the administrators of that law. David's sin being against God, God alone could pardon it. It was his province. To seek pardon anywhere else would have brought only disappointment.

*In whose power was it to grant these?* Among men it does not always follow that the thing which is in a man's province is also in his power. It is a mother's province to watch over her child, but failing health sometimes renders this impossible. It is a doctor's province to mitigate pain and suffering, yet there are cases in which he can do nothing. But God has not only the province, but the power, to forgive, cleanse, renew, restore. He has provided for the "blotting out" of sin by the cross, (ver. 9; Col. 2. 14,) for "cleansing" from all sin by the blood. Ver. 7; Lev. 14. 6, 7; Heb. 9. 19. He alone, the Creator, can renew the heart, (ver. 10; 2 Cor. 5. 17,) and give that "joy and gladness" which is the fruit of pardon and restoration to his presence. Rom. 5. 11; Psa. 16. 11.

Did David seek all this in vain? His confident and glad purpose to tell others of the God who had been so good to him, (vers. 13-15,) as well as the form of the petition, (vers. 7, 8,) (believed according to the right rendering, to be: "Thou shalt purge," "Thou shalt make,") shows that he was not disappointed. Happy those who have his experience!

And what of the two concluding verses of this psalm? They would appear to have been added by another writer at a later date, and therefore do not properly come within our subject. But the pardon and restored will, according to the prayer in ver. 18, seek and desire the good of God's people, and will, as in ver. 19, seek to offer themselves, body, soul, and spirit, as "whole burnt-offerings," upon the altar of their Lord. Rom. 12. 1.

### BEREAN METHODS.

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

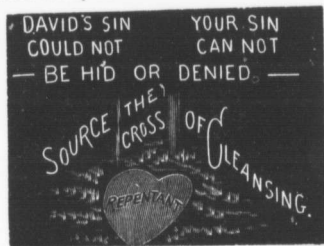
Tell the class carefully about David's sin, Nathan's parable, etc., as the events leading to this psalm. . . . Show that David not only sinned, but repented of his sin. . . . I. Notice in this psalm David's view of a sinner's condition, with the words describing it—transgression, iniquity, sin, evil, blood-guiltiness. Let the class find these words, and the

teacher explain them. . . II. Show what David desired, and explain the words, as before: 1. "Blot out;" 2. "Wash;" 3. "Cleanse;" 4. "Hide;" 5. "Create," etc. . . III. Show the privileges of a penitent as here presented. . . IV. Show the vows of a penitent as here made. . . Do not fail to present in this lesson the way of salvation. . . ILLUSTRATION. An ancient Persian song says: "If the heavens were a bow, the earth its string, the lightning the arrow, and you were its target, what would you do?" And the next verse answers. "I would seek the bosom of the archer!" Man's only hope of mercy is in the loving-kindness of God.

#### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

The lesson to be taught by means of this illustration is that sin cannot be hid from God. It cannot be denied. There is but one source of cleansing, and that is to bring a repentant heart to the cross where Jesus suffered and died, and plead that through his blood it may be made clean.



SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER BLACKBOARD DESIGNS. I. The cleansing fountain. II. Two hearts, one filled with the words "Sin" and "Sorrow," the other with the words "Joy" and "Peace." III. An altar, over it the words, "Thou desirest not sacrifice." A heart, over it the words, "A contrite heart thou wilt not despise."

#### Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Sin and its Cure.* Object Lesson. A worm-eaten flower or leaf, or an apple decayed at the core, may be used to illustrate the way sin works in the soul.

#### SIN AND SORROW.

Question about David's life, bringing vividly before the children his great power and riches, and the favor God had showed him. Tell the story of his sin, the desire to please himself, no matter what happened to others, which led to the death of Uriah. Show that

it is the same sin in the heart of a child which makes him crowd another out of his place, or take away his apple, and that God is displeased with it, as he was with David's sin. Make a heart on the board with something to represent a worm inside, and teach that this is the worm of selfishness which eats the life out of the soul. Tell of the prophet's visit to David to show him his sin and God's displeasure, and how God punished David by taking away his dear little boy. It was because God loved David that he punished him for his sin, and David shows us how we should behave when we have sinned and have been shown our sin. He was sorry, and went right to God to ask forgiveness. Read parts of the lesson to show how he prayed.

#### SIN AND ITS CURE.

Tell story of a little boy who, when he has done wrong, says, "I don't want to hear any thing about it!" David had to hear, and then confess, and then God could forgive him. Pin up white paper and make a charcoal mark upon it. Sin makes a black spot upon the soul which no human hand can rub off. Read verse 7. David knew that he could not wash away his sin, and that none of his friends could do it for him. Tell what the laver was used for in old times, and tell that it was a picture of the washing that a soul needs. If class is familiar with it sing, just here, "What can wash away my stain?" and teach that to get our sins washed away we must pray, as David did, for the Holy Spirit to show us where we are wrong, and we must believe that Jesus' blood has power to wash away sin. Teach that any sin is a sin against God, and that every day we need to have our sins washed away, just as every day we need to have the soil of this world washed away.

#### Lesson Word-Pictures.

What is it we hear—"Nathan would like to see King David?" He is admitted, and there stands the prophet before the king's throne and tells the pathetic story of the little ewe lamb that a rich man took from a

poor man, and sparing his own flock, he served up the poor man's pet to satisfy a hungry guest. Contemptible to crowd the poor man to the wall and thereby crush the little ewe lamb! How David's face flames with anger! Wretch! Where is that oppressor of the humble? "Let him die," is David's thought. But stay your indignant speech, David! Nathan is looking at you. What a sharp-pointed, far-penetrating look! What does he mean? Then comes Nathan's terrible charge: "Thou—art—the—man!" The prophet is gone now. David is left in shame and sorrow. Soon after, there is a sick baby in the house, David's little ewe lamb is dying. There is a royal but guilty father prostrated before God. He puts away food. He will not leave the place. Is he draped with sackcloth? It is not as black as his sin. He is sorry though. The ashes upon him may be cold, but his tears are hot. He is alone, bowed and in deep sorrow, begging God for the life of his little ewe lamb. It may have been then he cried out, "Have mercy—upon—me, O God!" Hear him: "upon me!" Ah, David, guilt is coming home, striking to the heart! How his guilt rolls up! It is a mountain just above him that cannot be hidden: "My sin is ever before me." How evil an heart to roll up such a mountain of guilt! How far back the mischief extends as if a birth-misfortune: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity." There must be deep root-work to reach a trouble going so far back and down. "Create—in me—a clean heart, O God," he sobes. But, David, you have not mentioned your sin yet? Is it not agreeable? Wont the blood on the ground stay covered, and does it seem to come out and stare at you? "Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God!" There it is! And no sacrifice to offer but a broken heart? Take that to God, a broken and contrite heart, David. Under the darkness of hours of guilty self-reproach what wonder if there comes a hope—like the morning light staining all the eastern sky with a crimson flush—that God heard and forgives!

B.C. 1023.]

### LESSON VI.—ABSALOM'S REBELLION.

[Aug. 10.

2 Sam. 15. 1-14.



1 And *a* it came to pass after this, that Absalom *b* prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

*a* Chap. 12. 11.—*b* 1 Kings 1. 5; Prov. 11. 2; 16. 18.

2 And Absalom *c* rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy *a* came to the king for

judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

*c* Prov. 1. 16.—*a* To come.

3 And Absalom said unto him, See, *d* thy matters are good and right; but *b* there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

*d* Prov. 12. 2.—*b* Or, none will hear thee from the king downward.

*e* 4 Absalom said moreover, *e* Oh that I

were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

*e* Judg. 9, 20.

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and *f* took him and kissed him.

*f* Psa. 12, 2.

6 And on this manner did Absalom to so *g* Israel! that came to the king for judgment: so *g* Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

*g* Rom. 16, 18.

7 And it came to pass after *c* forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in *h* Hebron.

*c* Forty years from David's anointing, as recorded in 1 Sam. 16, 1. Or, four years from Absalom's return.—*h* Chap. 2, 1.

8 For *i* thy servant *f* vowed a vow while *k* I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.

*i* 1 Sam. 10, 2.—*j* Gen. 28, 20.—*k* Chap. 13, 38.

9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were *l* called; and they went *m* in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

*l* 1 Sam. 9, 13; 16, 3, 5.—*m* Gen. 20, 5.

12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, *n* David's counsellor, from his city, even *o* from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices: and the conspiracy was strong; for the people *p* increased continually with Absalom.

*n* Psa. 41, 9; 55, 12.—*o* Josh. 15, 61.—*p* Psa. 3, 1.

13 And there came a messenger to David, saying, *q* The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

*q* Judg. 9, 3.

14 And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us *r* flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and *d* bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

*r* Chap. 19, 9; Psa. 3, title.—*d* Thrust.

#### GENERAL STATEMENT.

While the throne of David seemed to be most secure, victorious over its foreign foes, and prosperous in all its relations; while the walls of Zion were rising, and wealth was pouring into its gates, suddenly it tottered to its very foundations, as if an earthquake had risen beneath it. David's sin brought forth its result even though it had been forgiven. There were causes for discontent in the realm. The powerful tribe of Judah was displeased because it had lost the capital, and was not suffered to rule the whole land. The king no longer appeared at the head of his army, arousing the enthusiasm of his people, but was shut up in the palace, surrounded by women and foreign guards, while his seat at the gate was unoccupied, and his judicial duties were left undone. The crimes

of Joab and the intrigues of the court had given offence, the foreign wars led to increased taxes, and throughout the land there spread a restless desire for a change in the government. This discontent was artfully fomented by Absalom, who had returned from exile, and lived in royal state at Jerusalem. By his flatteries the hearts of the people were won, and the seed was scattered throughout Israel for a harvest of treason and rebellion. Everywhere arose an "Absalom party," composed of the worldly-minded, the godless, and the idolatrous elements of the population. The secret was closely kept, and David in his palace knew not that his throne was undermined. At last the hour has come. Absalom comes into the presence of the king, and with a suspicious show of piety asks leave to go to Hebron to hold a sacrificial feast. The father is only too glad to see in his wayward son the tokens of repentance, and willingly grants his request. Two hundred nobles of the realm accompany the young prince, supposing that they are going to a religious service, ignorant that they are aiding a rebellion. At the altar in Hebron he summons Ahithophel, the Talleyrand of his time, and gains his powerful influence and his astute counsels. Suddenly the trumpet is sounded; hill-top after hill-top catches the sound, and one voice seems to arise from all the land, "Absalom is king!" The news of the revolt is borne to David that all Israel has forsaken him, and gone after his son. The sorrow-smitten father and king sees it in the hand of God, and bows to the divine judgment. He leaves his palace and his capital, and a sorrowful procession wends its way across the Kedron, and over the Mount of Olives, nor pauses until it has reached the highlands of Gilead, and the sanctuary of Mahanaim. There David rests, and prepares to gather his friends to fight for his crown.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. It came to pass. As the fulfilment of Nathan's prophecy. Chap. 12, 10, 11. After this. After Absalom's return from Geshur, and his apparent reconciliation with David. Absalom. He was David's son by Maachah, the daughter of Talmai, a prince who reigned over the little province of Geshur, north-east of Palestine. He was trained by a heathen mother, which may account for some traits in his character. The handsomest youth in Israel, and of princely origin, he was flattered by all around him, and grew up with an ungovernable temper, a boundless ambition, and an utter lack of moral principle. If his conspiracy had succeeded, Israel would have fallen from its high place as the people of God to the level of the heathen nations around. Prepared him chariots. He set up a semi-royal state, as if to assert his claim as heir to the throne, and to make more gracious his flatteries to the common people. Horses. This is the first mention of horses among the Israelites. They had been recently introduced from Egypt, and were used exclusively by princes. Fifty men. Nobles in the East



still have footmen running beside and in front of their chariots. 1. Pride goes before a fall, and ambition often overleaps itself.

2. **Rose up early.** Public business in the East is transacted early, before the heat of the day. **The way of the gate.** The street leading to the palace, at the door of which the king was wont to sit to administer justice. **A controversy.** Rather, "a suit at law." Such persons as failed in gaining attention to their suits would naturally be discontented with the government, and fitting instruments for conspiracy. **Came to the king.** As in the East the king gives personal hearing to complaints, generally at the palace door. David had failed to attend to this duty, from his foreign wars, his buildings, his advancing years, and perhaps a tendency to a pleasure-loving life. **Absalom called.** Showing a condescension and an apparent interest to curry favor with the people. **Of one of the tribes.** Naming the particular tribe in his answer.

3. **Absalom said.** After inquiring into his case, and hearing his story. **Thy matters are good.** By flattering each man with a favorable opinion, he would excite his feelings against King David, and win regard for himself. **There is no man deputed.** Absalom insinuates that the king was neglecting his duty, and failing to appoint a substitute. 2. Criticism is always easier than administration.

4. **O that I were made judge.** Absalom made his interest in the public welfare contrast with David's apparent neglect. **Would do him justice.** It is always easier to promise justice than to award it; and when in his brief hour of success Absalom held the reins of power, he showed a pitiful lack of sense and judgment.

5, 6. **When any man.** Of the ordinary rank of common people. **To do him obeisance.** Showing him the homage due to a king's son. **Put forth his hand.** Staying his act of reverence, clasping his hand, and kissing him as an equal and a friend. **Stole the hearts.** Gained the love of the people by deceit and flattery. Well did Socrates say, "The most dangerous of tame beasts is the flatterer!" 3. Note how easily the currents of popular opinion are set in motion. 4. Note, too, that the voice of the people is not always the voice of God.

7. **It came to pass.** As the result of these flatteries, acting upon a discontented people, and in a time of peculiar opportunity. **After forty years.** The text here is evidently wrong, and probably should read four years, with Josephus and some of the ancient versions. The four years are to be reckoned from Absalom's return from exile. **Absalom said to the king.** The conspiracy was now ripe; for Absalom's agents were in every part of the kingdom, and there was danger of discovery in longer delay. **Let me go and pay my vow.** He knew the piety of his father, and knew, too, that nothing would please him more than an appearance of religion

in his son; so he adds to his crimes the cloak of hypocrisy. **Vowed unto the Lord.** It is not likely that Absalom had ever made any such vow, as his entire record is against the supposition. 5. Notice how one sin leads to another and a greater. **In Hebron.** This was Absalom's birthplace, and had been the capital of Judah before the conquest of Jerusalem. It doubtless contained many who were disaffected at the removal of the court, and would therefore be a promising centre of conspiracy.

8. **Thy servant vowed.** A vow was generally to offer some sacrifices, which were attended with a feast. **Geshur in Syria.** A small district north of Bashan, east of the Jordan, and probably the region now called El Ledjah. Here Absalom had remained for three years after his murder of Amnon. **Then I will serve the Lord.** By the offering of a special sacrifice and service of worship.

9. **The king said.** That no suspicion of the plot had reached David may be accounted for by the fact that he was living in a palace, apart from the people, and, conscious of his own integrity, did not think evil of his own son. **Go in peace.** David was pleased to see the signs of piety in his son, and was by his nature inclined to hope for the best in him. **Went to Hebron.** A city among the mountains of Judah, twenty miles south of Jerusalem, and the burial-place of the patriarchs.

10. **Absalom sent spies.** These men were to sound the feelings of the people, and gather in every place a following for Absalom's cause. **The sound of the trumpet.** Trumpeters were stationed upon the hills at convenient intervals for announcement throughout the country. **Absalom reigneth in Hebron.** This shows that Absalom's chief support was in the tribe of Judah, which was jealous of its independence and influence, and dissatisfied with the equality of the tribes under David, as well as with the loss of the capital. Even when the rebellion was over, Judah was slow in showing loyalty to David. 2 Sam. 19. 11.

11. **Went two hundred men.** Nobles of the court, invited to the feast at Hebron. **That were called.** Their presence with Absalom would give the appearance of a large and powerful support to his cause; they might be led to give it their adherence when surrounded by Absalom's friends; or they might be held as prisoners if they resolutely opposed him. **Went in their simplicity.** They were ignorant of the plot, but supposed that they were going to a sacrificial feast.

12. **Sent for Ahithophel.** He was one of the most shrewd men of the time, and his advice on public affairs was regarded as that "of an oracle of God." 2 Sam. 16. 23. Some have found a reason for his joining the conspiracy in the fact that Bathsheba, who had been wronged by David, was his granddaughter. 2 Sam. 11. 3; 23. 34. Yet David had made her his queen, she was now all-powerful in the palace, and her son was recognized as the heir of the throne; so that Ahithophel was conspir-

ing against his own family. He may have joined Absalom's party merely because he thought it would succeed, and his own power increased with it. **The Gilonite** A native of Giloh, in southern Judah. **David's counsellor.** The trusted adviser of the king. **While he offered sacrifices.** Absalom, about to offer sacrifice, sent for Ahithophel, to gain his presence, influence, and counsel. **The conspiracy was strong.** Sanctioned by the presence of the nobles, strengthened by the influence of Ahithophel, and the military power of Amasa, backed by the powerful tribe of Judah, and heralded through all the land, the rebellion sprung like magic into prominence, and seemed to represent the voice of all Israel. **Increased continually.** Popular movements rise and fall with great suddenness in the Orient, as witness the progress of the so-called False Prophet in Soudan.

**13. A messenger to David.** Bringing to the unsuspecting king and father the first news of the conspiracy. **The hearts of the men of Israel.** Meaning here the desires and the will. **After Absalom.** In accounting for David's sudden flight we must remember that he heard of the movement only when it was a success; and also he recognized it in the fulfilment of prophecy and the hand of the Lord.

**14. Let us flee.** Various influences and motives united to cause David's sudden flight; his ignorance of the extent of the conspiracy; his sudden alarm paralyzing the will; his desire to save the city from the terrors of a siege; the wish to gain time to organize his friends; and a submission to what seemed to be God's will. **Smite the city.** The king, ever thoughtful of others, would spare his capital from danger; and the result showed that his retirement before the storm was the wisest policy. He took refuge at Mahanaim, east of Jordan.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

**Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.** Exod. 20. 12.

#### OUTLINE.

1. A False Prince, v. 1-6.
2. A Lying Son, v. 7-9.
3. A Foul Conspiracy, v. 10-14.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 8, S. S. Hymnal.  
Saviour, like a Shepherd lead us.  
No. 10, S. S. Hymnal.  
Shepherd of tender youth,

I was a wandering sheep,  
I did not love the fold,  
I did not love my Shepherd's voice,  
I would not be controlled;  
I was a wayward child,  
I did not love my home,  
I did not love my Father's voice,  
I loved afar to roam.

The Shepherd sought his sheep,  
The Father sought his child;

He followed me o'er vale and hill,  
O'er deserts waste and wild:  
He found me night to death,  
Famished, and faint, and lone;  
He bound me with the bands of love,  
He saved the wandering one.

No. 269, S. S. Hymnal.

My Shepherd will supply my need.

TIME.—B. C. 1023.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Hebron.

CONNECTING LINKS.—1. The sin of Amnon. 2 Sam. 13. 1-22. 2. Banishment of Absalom for the murder of his brother, Amnon. 2 Sam. 13. 23-39. 3. Return of Absalom through the influence of Joab. 2 Sam. 14. 1-33.

EXPLANATIONS.—*Chariots and horses*—To make a great show and attract notice. *Men to run before*—Great men in the East have runners in advance to clear the way. *Rose up early*—In the East business is done early, while the morning is cool. *Way of the gate*—The gate leading to the palace, where the people came to see the king, who acted as judge. *Of what city*—He talked with the people to get their affection. *Oh, that I were made judge*—He pretended a deep interest in the people in order to make himself popular. *Do him obeisance*—Bowing before him as the prince. *Stole the hearts*—Made them forget all the brave deeds of David. *Forty years*—Probably this should be four years. *At Geshur*—He was there in exile for the murder of his brother. *Serve the Lord*—By offerings at Hebron. *Sent spies*—Men to organize the rebellion all through the land. *Went in their simplicity*—Nobles who would give honour to the cause, but did not know of the conspiracy. *Ahithophel*—Who was considered the wisest man of the time. *Let us flee*—David saw that the conspiracy was a punishment for his own sin, and bowed before the will of God.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. Absalom's rebellion. 2 Sam. 15. 1-14.  
Tu. Absalom's return. 2 Sam. 14. 21-33.  
W. David's flight. 2 Sam. 15. 15-23.  
Th. Conspiracy against Paul. Acts 23. 12-22.  
F. The duty of children. Eph. 6. 1-10.  
S. Hushai sent back. 2 Sam. 15. 30-37.  
S. The prayer of distress. Psa. 55. 1-17.

#### QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. A False Prince, v. 1-6. What royal escort did the king's son gather? What place of honour did he assume? Whose favour did he court? What did he suggest to them? How, besides, did he court favour? What did he accomplish by this course? Whom did he wrong by it?
2. A Lying Son, v. 7-9. What request did Absalom make of his father? What false statement did he make? How did the king treat his request? What does the wise man say concerning falsehood? Prov. 12. 22.
3. A Foul Conspiracy, v. 10-14. What treachery did Absalom intend? How did he make it known? Who went with him to Hebron? What royal officer joined the con-

spiry? What message came to the king? What did David propose to his friends? What did he fear?

**TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.**

Where are we shown in this lesson—

1. That wicked ambition leads to crime?
2. That pride and ingratitude in a child are open gates to rebellion?
3. That a bad son makes a sad home?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.—(For the entire school.) 1. What did Absalom do? "Stood beside the way of the gate." 2. What did he say to those who came to the king for judgment? "O that I were made judge!" 3. What was the effect of this? He stole the hearts of Israel. 4. Where was the rallying point of Absalom's rebellion? At Hebron. 5. What did David do when he heard that Absalom had rebelled? He fled.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Fili-al reverence.

**QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.**

1. **A False Prince**, v. 1-6. What motives led Absalom to purpose a rebellion? What measures did he take to promote it? How did he steal the hearts of the people? What spirit did he show toward the government? What is our duty toward the constituted authorities? Rom. 13. 1.

2. **A Lying Son**, v. 7-9. What is the command in the GOLDEN TEXT? How did Absalom violate this? How did he also show hypocrisy? How should we worship God? John 4. 24.

3. **A Foul Conspiracy**, v. 10-14. What was the plan of the conspiracy? Where was it put into action? Who was one of its strongest helpers, and what afterward became of him? 2 Sam. 17. 23. What contributed to the success of the conspiracy? How did David act, and why?

**PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.**

Where does this lesson illustrate—

1. The sin of flattery?
2. The sin of impiety?
3. The sin of hypocrisy.

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

What did Absalom prepare for himself? Horses and chariots and fifty men. Why did he do this? To attract the attention of the people. What was a great luxury in those days? Horses; only kings possessed them. Where did Absalom place himself? Beside the road to the gate. Why did he do this? To meet the people going to the king. What did the king hold by the gate early in the morning? A sort of court, to grant judgments. How did Absalom gain the hearts of the people? By flattery and false sympathy. What did Absalom pretend to David? That he wanted to go to Hebron to keep his vow. What was his real object? To call the people together, and make himself king. What did David say to him? "Go in peace." How many men did

Absalom take with him out of Jerusalem? Two hundred. For whom did Absalom send to help him? Ahithophel, David's counsellor. What did Absalom send throughout the tribes of Israel? Spies, to help his cause. How were the people to know when Absalom was proclaimed king? When the trumpets sounded. Who brought the bad news to David? A messenger. What did David do? He fled from Jerusalem.

**WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.**

Absalom—Absalom wanted to be king, so he deceived the people. He rebelled against his father. He sinned against God.

Yourself—Do you like your own way? Would you like to do just as you please? If you cannot obey your parents, how will you obey God?

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

**ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.**

**The Fast Young Man.**

I. HIS VANITY.

Chariots...horses...men. v. 1.

"Much praised...for his beauty." 2

Sam. 14. 25.

"Man looketh...outward appearance."

1 Sam. 16. 7.

II. HIS AMBITION.

O that I were made judge! v. 4.

"Lay not wait, O wicked man." Prov.

24. 15, 16.

"Greatest among you...servant." Matt.

23. 11.

III. HIS INSINCERITY.

Put forth his hand...kissed him. v. 5.

"By...fair speeches deceive." Rom.

16. 18.

"Flattereth...spreadeth a net." Prov.

29. 5.

IV. HIS FILIAL IMPIETY.

Absalom said unto the king. v. 7.

"Honour thy father." Exod. 20. 12.

"The eye that mocketh." Prov. 30. 17.

V. HIS HYPOCRISY.

I will serve serve the Lord. v. 8.

"Sacrifice...wicked...abomination."

Prov. 21. 27.

"Hypocrites...whited sepulchres." Matt.

23. 27.

VI. HIS TREACHERY.

Sent spies throughout...tribes. v. 10.

"Mine own...friend...against me."

Psa. 41. 9.

"Many rise up against me." Psa. 3. 1.

**ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.**

**Thoughts upon Absalom's History.**

1. Absalom's history shows the danger from a godless mother, and from worldly surroundings in childhood; his mother was a heathen princess, and his home was a palace.

2. Absalom's history shows the evil from a lack of parental control; had David fulfilled a father's duty, his son's career might have been different.

3. Absalom's history shows the evil resulting from ungoverned passions and a low standard of character.

4. Absalom's history shows how easily currents of popular opinion are formed, and how unjust they may be.

5. Absalom's history shows how base is that ambition which seeks power for its own sake, and not as a sacred trust for the good of men.

6. Absalom's history shows the wickedness of employing religion as a cloak for baseness and treachery.

#### CATECHISM QUESTION.

1. *What do you mean by the attributes of God?*

All the perfections of his nature.

2. *What do the Scriptures teach concerning God's attributes?*

That he is omnipresent and almighty, that he is omniscient and all-wise.

#### ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

THERE are cities, such as Lisbon and Constantinople, which, when viewed from the sea, present the most enchanting appearance, and with their terraces, fine buildings, and luxuriant groves, standing out in the clear atmosphere, with the bright blue encircling them above and beneath, and the sun lighting them up with a golden glory, look like a glimpse of fairyland. But when the traveller disembarks and actually enters the city, the illusion is suddenly dispelled. Not that the sun is less bright, or that the blue sky fades, but that they shed their radiance upon filthy streets and unsightliness of all kinds. As attractive as was the first view, so repellent is the reality. We shall find as striking a contrast in the figure brought before us in the passage for to-day.

We know the dark reality of Absalom's character so well, from his sad story, that we are apt to overlook the fascinating exterior he presented to the people of Israel. The only one of David's sons whose mother was a king's daughter, we may well believe that there was something specially high and royal in his demeanour, while in all Israel there was none who equalled him in beauty. Besides this, he dazzled the eyes of a show-loving people by the splendour of his retinue. A little haughtiness is often pardoned in persons of high rank and prepossessing exterior, but in Absalom there was nothing of the

kind to be discovered. It is a striking picture that the historian has drawn for us. We see the young prince rise early and hastening to the open space by the city gate where justice was wont to be administered. One applicant applies after another, each with some fresh tale of trouble or wrong. But (whether kept away by infirmity or neglect, we do not know) the king is not there to hear the causes. He has not even appointed a responsible officer in his place. There is no proper person to hear complaints or see wrongs righted. But as each man turns away disappointed, the handsome young prince accosts him, asks his name and business, and shows the greatest interest in his cause. Look at Absalom's words, (v. 3, 4,) what sympathy! what noble aspirations! Look at his manners: he rejects the homage of the grateful suppliant, and greets him as an equal. Beautiful in his person, magnificent in his surroundings, noble in his bearing, courteous in his manners, full of kindly speech and high sentiment, it is no wonder that men's hearts were won to him.

And, further, he made a profession of sincere piety. He must needs go to Hebron to perform a vow—to offer in his birthplace a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord.

If we could have gone through the cities of Israel at that time, we should probably have found the praises of Absalom on everybody's lips: "Just the sort of king we want," "A true friend of the people," would have been their judgment concerning him.

But a little later on, how different would matters have been! We should then have found the people ashamed of their former admiration of him, and the ready confidence they had reposed in him, and wishing David back again at Jerusalem. Chap. 19. 9, 10. And instead of his memory being held in any esteem, it is, on the contrary, loathed and despised by his nation to this day, for the black reality which lay under the fair and promising exterior.

There was, however, one little thing which ought to have warned men in time against Absalom. What did he say about his father to the complainants at the "gate?" "There is no man appointed of the king to hear thee." He shrank not from speaking ill of his father to any who came.

There is no greater or better test of the character and life of boys or girls than this: the way in which they act towards their parents. A boy may be clever, bright, apt in business, industrious; but if he disobeys his parents he will probably disappoint others too. There is a story of a gentleman seeking for his errand boy "a boy who obeyed his mother." A girl may seem amiable and at-

tractive, but if she neglects her father and mother she is not to be relied on.

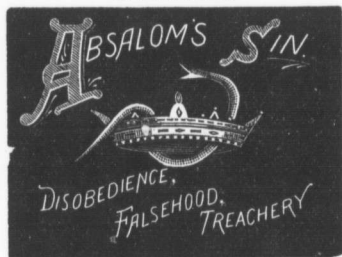
There are two lessons to be drawn from the picture of Absalom's fair exterior and repulsive reality :

1. Not to trust in our own exterior. There may be times when it is in one way or the other attractive—times when all will speak well of us. The outside life may make a good show, but unless there is "piety at home," the dark reality will come out some day, to our shame and sorrow.

2. Not to trust in the exterior of others. There are many young people bright, winning, fascinating, like Absalom. But before we trust ourselves to such a one—before we take such a one for a friend—let us try to find out something about the home life and the heart life. Dutiful sons and daughters will make reliable friends, and most especially if they seek to obey, not merely their earthly parents, but their Father in heaven.

#### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



EXPLANATION. Absalom is represented as a serpent trying to possess a crown. His sin was disobedience, falsehood and treachery.

SUGGESTION. Another design may be made by drawing the trunk of a tree, (two horizontal lines, with projecting, smaller lines for roots.) Write at bottom, Rooted in disobedience. Opposite the trunk write, Growing in deceit. Draw a limb and foliage, and write, Bearing fruit. Question the classes as to the kind of fruit such a tree would bear.

#### BEREAN METHODS.

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

A building in India suddenly fell, and it was found that the supports had been eaten through and honey-combed by a small worm. So David's throne suddenly tottered, but the germs of destruction had been long growing . . . Notice the elements in Israelitish history leading to this catastrophe : 1. Change

in David's character : neglectful of duty, pleasure-loving. 2. Alienation of the tribe of Judah. (See General Statement.) 3. Evil and unpopular influences around the throne ; Joab ; intrigues in court ; results of polygamy. 4. Taxes and tribute from foreign wars pressing upon the people, causing desire for change . . . Notice the influences and causes which aided to form Absalom's character : 1. A heathen mother ; 2. Early life in a palace ; 3. A father's neglect of training ; 4. Beauty causing flattery ; 5. Lack of moral principle . . . Notice the character of Absalom as here shown. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline, "The Fast Young Man.") . . . Against what sins are we warned in this lesson ? 1. On David's side ; 2. On Absalom's side ; 3. On the people's side . . . ILLUSTRATIONS. Napoleon said, "What France needs is good mothers." . . . Dangers to the young in our time from immoral literature ; leading boys to form gangs of bandits ; clubs for burning buildings, as in Milwaukee, recently, and in making the criminal a hero.

#### Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God's Way for Children.*

Use blackboard, and question upon the Golden Text. Whose word is this ? To whom ? What is it to honour ? etc.

Let children name any of David's troubles that they can remember. Now that he was a great, powerful king would he have trouble ? Yes, God lets trouble come to all his children as long as they live here. Tell the story of Amnon and Absalom, how they often quarrelled, and grew at last to hate one another. Show an apple and a bit of an apple-tree bough. These are quite unlike, and yet one bears the other. So murder is the fruit of hatred. But there could have been no apple-tree without a seed. So there was a seed of sin in these hearts which grew up into hatred, and then the fruit of murder followed. Warn children against little bickerings which all grow out of selfishness, the worm which is always trying to crawl into our hearts. Print, "Love is God's Spirit." "Hate is Satan's spirit." Which shall we choose ? Which does God choose for us ?

Tell of Absalom's absence from home and his return. When David saw sin in his heart he asked God to wash it away, but Absalom did not do this. So he came back to his father with the same old heart. David could not see his son's heart, and he believed that he had come back sorry for his sin. So he welcomed him and loved him just as of old. Tell how Absalom very soon went to work to steal the hearts of the people from his father.

Tell story of a wicked boy who stole all



the money that his father had and ran away leaving his own father to die in the poorhouse. Did he have love in his heart? No, he had only self-love, and this is what Absalom had. Tell of Absalom's artful ways, and how at last he had gained so many friends that David had to flee from his palace lest Absalom and his army should come there and kill him. Show a crooked branch, and tell that it was bent when young and tender. Absalom did not honour his father when a child. Now, he was a man, and he did not care for God's word either.

God knows the best way for children, and he tells us what it is. Call for Golden Text, and tell that in the next lesson we shall see how Absalom's disobedience led to his ruin.

#### Lesson Word-Pictures.

And what is that noisy, huzzahing retinue, dashing down the street, fifty men running ahead, trampling horses and clattering chariots following after? Ah, it is the king's son, the showy Absalom, who is the centre of this display. And here he is again, standing now at the city gate. What a handsome fellow, with symmetrical figure, with features sharply cut, with hair luxuriant and long-flowing, do we imagine Absalom to have been! It is a jostling crowd about him, some chaffering in trade, others intent upon a trial in progress, but the most are absorbed in their watch of the prince's movements. But why is Absalom here? Follow him with your eyes and see what he does, the crafty rebel. Up to the gate comes—Nahum from the hill country? Yes, it is Nahum, so fond of notice, so sensitive to praise, so jealous of any invasion of his rights. He comes to-day in no sweet mood to see if an old grudge that he has against a neighbour can come before a judge. Sensitive Nahum from the hill country, feeling so very solitary and so very small in the midst of that big, noisy crowd, notices the distinguished-looking prince at the gate, and what? Is the latter coming toward him? Does he wish to speak to him,

the unknown rustic? "Tis the king's son, Absalom," somebody is whispering to Nahum. And how Nahum's heart flutters! He bends his head and bows profoundly, while Absalom in a brotherly way puts out his hand, seizes cordially the bewildered booby and kisses him. Nahum is intoxicated with pride, to be thus selected from the crowd and kissed before all! Well, Nahum, your merit has waited long for recognition, but your hour has come at last. What will they say up the hill country about you, kissed by the king's son? "Of what city art thou?" inquires Absalom. "Thy servant is from the hill country," replies Nahum, bowing very low again. And now Absalom lowers a royal ear, and into it Nahum pours the story of his old grudge. What an honour to get so near that royal ear! "So—so! Indeed, I see! A plain case!" And Absalom wisely nuzzes his head. "Oh that I were made a judge in the land!" How he dishonours his father, and what a tickled, befooled Nahum! If he had gone a little farther, he might have found a judge. As it is, he goes home grumbling among his townsmen about "old David," but he is so charmed with "old David's" son! "Long live Absalom!" shouts Nahum. And now, one day, who are these men stealing over the land, whispering about a trumpet's sound and about Absalom reigning in Hebron? The spies! They quickly throw the country into a ferment. And Absalom himself is now stirring, two hundred fools at his heels, Nahum among them. The conspiracy goes like a wave over the land. It sweeps away even Ahithophel, David's trusted counsellor. The noise of its rolling reaches Jerusalem. The city is confused. The royal household flees. There they go, Cherethites, Pelethites, Gittites, strong men of war, yet hurrying off as if boys. There they go, the servants of the king, and there goes the king himself, mighty in war and yet a timorous fugitive. Ah, it is not so much a king as a father smitten to his heart by the treachery of a son.

B.C. 1023.]

### LESSON VII.—ABSALOM'S DEATH.

2 Sam. 18. 24-33.



24 And David sat between *a* the two gates: and *b* the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

*a* 1 Sam. 4. 13.—*b* 2 Kings 9. 17.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man

running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman said, *a* Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, *c* He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

*a* I see the running.—*c* 1 Kings 1. 42.

28 And Ahimaz called, and said unto the king, *b* All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said,

[Aug. 17.

Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

*b* Peace, or, Peace be to thee; Gen. 43. 23; Judg. 19. 29; 1 Sam. 26. 6; 1 Chron. 12. 18.—*c* Shut up; 1 Sam. 17. 46; 24. 18; 26. 8; 1-sa. 19. 4; Obad. 14.

29 And the king said, *d* Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaa answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.

*d* Is there peace?

30 And the king said unto him, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

31 And, behold, Cushai came; and Cushai said, *e* Tidings, my lord the king; for the Lord *d* hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

*e* Tidings is brought.—*d* Psa. 27. 2; 55. 18.

32 And the king said unto Cushai, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushai answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rose against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, *e* O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

*e* Chap. 19. 4; Prov. 10. 1; 17. 21, 25; 19. 13.

#### GENERAL STATEMENT.

From the unnatural hatred of his son, David fled across the valley of the Jordan, and rested not until he reached the ancient sanctuary of Mahanaim, among the hills of Gilead. Here he gathered his forces, under the leadership of the brave and loyal Joab, and prepared to fight for his crown. Absalom had lost his opportunity when he delayed the pursuit, and now the wave of revolution had stayed, the wiser view had begun to prevail, and a growing party was gathering around the old king. The two armies met in the wood of Ephraim, a thicket in Gilead, east of the Jordan. The veterans of David were more than a match for the larger but less disciplined host of Absalom, and after a day of fighting in the dense forest the victory rested upon the standard of Joab. Absalom was caught by his long hair in the boughs of a tree, and was slain by the hand of Joab, who therein wisely disobeyed the order of David. When success was assured, and the rebellion was no more, the young priest Ahimaa asked leave to carry the tidings to the king, who was watching at Mahanaim. But Joab knew that the message of Absalom's death would turn the sweetness of the victory into sorrow, and sent instead an Ethiopian slave to bear the unwelcome news. No sooner had the slave gone than Ahimaa renewed his request to go with tidings, and Joab now consented. The young priest, perhaps more familiar with the paths of Palestine than a foreigner, chose a better road, and reached first the resting-place of David. He brought the earliest news of the battle, but carefully avoided mention of Absalom's fate.

When the Ethiopian arrived soon after he spoke out the truth that Absalom the rebel was dead. Then sorrow came to David's soul, and from the chamber over the gate he poured forth his bitter cry over his lost son.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 24. David sat.** Awaiting the result of the battle, at Mahanaim, a city north of the Jabbok, on the east of Jordan. The place is not certainly identified, but at *Jorash*, which has the best claim, there still stands an ancient gateway, which may occupy the spot where David was waiting. **Between the two gates.** There were two gates, an outer and an inner, with the thickness of the wall between them. This formed a room, shaded and secure, where the king sat during the day while the battle was raging in the wood of Ephraim. **The watchman.** "The captain of the gate," or porter, whose business it was to open and shut the gate. **Went up to the roof.** Over the gate was a room, such as in Oriental cities is often used as a guard-room for police purposes, and above this was the roof, surrounded by a parapet. Here the porter stood watching for a messenger from the battle. **A man running alone.** After the victory was assured, Joab, the commander of David's army, sent as messenger with the news Cushai or "the Cushite," that is, the Ethiopian, and probably a slave. But when Ahimaa besought the privilege of also bearing tidings, he allowed him to follow the Ethiopian. Ahimaa took another and easier route, though a little longer; outran his predecessor, and was the one whom the porter now saw.

**25. The watchman cried.** Calling from the tower to the ground, where David was waiting. **If he be alone, there is tidings.** If he had been flying from a defeat, there would have been other fugitives with him. David showed his usual quickness of apprehension and sagacious judgment in so slight a remark. **He came apace.** In the East, trained runners accompany every army, and often are able in a day's journey to outrun a horse.

**26. Another man running.** This was the Cushite, or the Ethiopian, who had started in advance of Ahimaa, but had been distanced in the race. **Called to the porter.** The porter was his assistant in the management of the gate, who was now stationed where he could hear the watchman from above, and transmit the word to the king. **He also bringeth tidings.** We may imagine the beating heart of the old king, eager for, yet dreading, the news, which must in either event give pain to his heart.

**27. Ahimaa.** He was a young priest, the son of Zadok, who had already shown trustworthiness, skill, and courage, in bringing to David news of Absalom's plans (chap. 15. 27; 17. 17-21). Joab had at first declined to permit him to bear news of the battle, knowing that the message of Absalom's death would bring sorrow, and he preferred to let the

Ethiopian slave carry the evil tidings; but after Cush had gone a distance, as Ahimaaz was still eager to run, he allowed him, thinking that he would arrive after Cush. **Zadok.** He was the chief-priest in the line of Eleazar, the elder son of Aaron, as Abiathar was in the line of Ithamar, the younger son. The two were associated in the duties of the priesthood, and both were for David in the war, though at his suggestion they remained in Jerusalem with the ark, when the king fled from Absalom. **He is a good man.** David knew him well, and remembered how boldly and faithfully he had brought to him the word from Absalom's council. **Bringeth good tidings.** David rightly judged that one of such high position would not be sent with news of a defeat. 1. "The good tidings of the Gospel should always be borne by good men; and how welcome should they be to us for their message's sake." —*M. Henry.*

**28. All is well.** In the original, the one word "Shalom!" "peace!" expressive of prosperity and success. **Fell down to the earth.** Prostrating himself before the king, after the manner shown on Egyptian and Assyrian monuments. **Blessed be the Lord.** The young priest did not forget, in the hour of triumph, from whom the victory came. 2. It is well for us ever to keep in mind the Giver of all success. **Delivered up the men.** Literally "shut up the men," by thwarting and putting down their projects. **Lifted up their hand.** There was something unnatural and revolting in Absalom's rebelling against and seeking to destroy a kind father, while David refused to slay his bitter enemy Saul.

**29. The king said.** Better for David had it been if he had asked this question earlier; and of himself, rather than of another. He had failed to keep his wayward son safe from evil companions and from tempestuous passions; and his anxiety in that moment showed that he felt that all the wrong had not been on Absalom's side. 3. There are times when care comes too late, and must give place to remorse. **Is the young man Absalom safe?** Literally, "Is it peace to the youth Absalom?" The question shows the tenderness of the father overmastering the duty of a king; but its excuse lay in David's own guilty consciousness that his own sins had led to Absalom's crimes. 4. If children knew how deep and unselfish is the love of their parents, they might less often neglect it. **When Joab sent.** The text of this sentence in the original is probably wrong, and it should read, "When Joab the king's servant sent me thy servant." **I saw a great tumult, but I knew not.** This was false, for Ahimaaz knew that Absalom was dead (verse 20), but preferred to let the Ethiopian slave bring the unwelcome news.

**30. Turn aside, and stand here.** He takes his place among the courtiers surrounding the king, standing, for none might sit in the royal presence, and awaits a reward for his service.

**31. Cush came.** The Ethiopian, who

had started in advance but had been outrun by Ahimaaz. **Tidings, my lord.** The slave speaks bluntly, and without consideration for David's feelings. **The Lord hath avenged thee,** "Judged thee out of the hand of thine enemies;" meaning that God had given David justice in his cause.

**32. Is the young man Absalom safe?** As before, the uppermost thought in David's mind is for Absalom's life and safety. **The enemies of my lord... be as this young man.** Perhaps the slave did not know the tenderness of David's feelings, and spoke as one who looked at Absalom's rebellion in its true light. A crime it was, and Joab was politic in disregarding David's instructions and putting Absalom to death, for not otherwise could the throne be secure.

**33. The king was much moved.** It added to his agony that his son was cut off in the midst of his crimes, with no opportunity for repentance, and especially that his guilt was the fruit of David's own sins. 5. See in David's sorrow how surely sin brings to pass its bitter results. **Went up.** By the stairs beside the gate to the room above it, occupying the space between the two walls. **And thus he said.** Eight times he repeated his will over the lost son. There is an old Jewish legend that with each cry one of the seven gates of hell rolled back, and on the eighth the lost spirit of Absalom was admitted to Paradise.—*Dean Stanley.* **Would God I had died for thee.** Too late now the vain wish to die for Absalom, when once he might have lived for Absalom. Yet he mourned, until recalled to his kingly duties by the sharp rebuke of Joab. Then at last he took his place before the people, and went back in triumph to his throne. Absalom left one daughter, who became the ancestress of kings, and a patron of idolatry. His pillar in the King's Dale has long since perished, for the monument which now bears his name is of later date, and Absalom left no memorial save the record of wasted opportunities and a ruined life.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death.—Mark 7. 10.

#### OUTLINE.

1. A Father's Anxiety, v. 24-31.
2. A Father's Agony, v. 32, 33.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 275, S. S. Hymnal.

God of pity, God of grace.

Late, late, so late! and dark the night, and chill!

Late, late, so late! But we can enter still.  
"Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now."

No light had we;—for that we do repent,  
And learning this, the Bridegroom will relent.  
"Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now."

No light!—so late! and dark and chill the night—

O let us in, that we may find the light!  
"Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now!"

Have we not heard the Bridegroom is so sweet!  
O let us in, though late, to kiss his feet.

"No! no! too late! ye cannot enter now!"

No. 280, S. S. Hymnal.

Weeping will not save me.

TIME.—B. C. 1023.

PLACE.—Mahanaim, in the tribe of Gad.

CONNECTING LINK.—Battle of the armies of David and Absalom "in the wood of Ephraim." 2 Sam. 18. 1-23.

EXPLANATIONS.—*David sat*—Awaiting the news of the battle with Absalom in the wood of Ephraim, east of the Jordan. *Between the two gates*—The outer and inner gates, with an open space of the thickness of the wall between them. *Roof over the gate*—The top of the wall. *A man running*—This was Ahimaaaz, who had gone as a messenger from Joab after the battle. *If he be alone*—One running away from the battle would be followed by others. *Another man*—This was Cush, perhaps an Ethiopian slave. He had started first, but arrived after Ahimaaaz. *He is a good man*—He was the son of Jonathan, a priest. *All is well*—The victory had been won, and Absalom's army defeated. *Absalom safe*—As father, he loved his son more than his duty as king would allow. Had he been more careful in his own duty, he might have been less anxious now. *Joab... the king's servant*—Joab was the commander of David's army. *A great tumult*—The defeat of Absalom's army. *Knew not*—Probably he did not know that Absalom was dead. *Stand here*—In the company around the king. *Cushi came*—Who had started before Ahimaaaz. *Be as that young man is*—Absalom was slain by Joab, when he had been caught by his hair in a tree after the defeat of his army. *Chamber over the gate*—Between the walls. *O my son Absalom*—He felt that Absalom's death was in a large degree the result of his own sinfulness and neglect.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. Absalom's death. 2 Sam. 18. 24-33.  
Tu. Joab kills Absalom. 2 Sam. 18. 9-18.  
W. Messengers sent to David. 2 Sam. 18. 19-23.  
Th. David's lamentation. 2 Sam. 19. 1-10.  
F. The end of an evil man. Prov. 2. 10-22.  
S. Cursing of parents forbidden. Exod. 21. 17-17.  
S. Love to heavenly Father. John 15. 1-16.

#### QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. **A Father's Anxiety**, v. 24-31. For what was the king waiting? Why did he sit between the gates? What was told him? What hope did this news give the king? What was seen next? Who was the first messenger? How did the watchman recognize him? What news did Ahimaaaz bring? What question showed David's anxiety? What doubtful answer did he receive? What was the second messenger's name? What reply did he make to the king's first question?

2. **A Father's Agony**, v. 32, 33. What was David's next inquiry? Of what did Cush's answer assure David? How was the king af-

fectured? How did he show his grief? What was the cry of the bereaved father? What sentiment toward his wicked son did this cry show? What was written concerning disobedient children? [GOLDEN TEXT.] How had God shown his love toward us? John 3. 16.

#### TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That love hopes for the best?
2. That a son's sin is a father's sorrow?
3. That nothing can destroy a father's love?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.—(For the entire school.) 1. Where did David wait for news of the battle? Between the two gates. 2. Who were sent to convey the news? Ahimaaaz and Cush. 3. What did David ask of the messengers? "Is the young man Absalom safe?" 4. How did the announcement of Absalom's death affect David? He was much moved. 5. What did David say of Absalom? "Would God I had died for thee!"

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Parental responsibility.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **A Father's Anxiety**, v. 24-31. Where was David at this time, and how came he there? Over whom was he anxious, and for what reason? What had been the result of the battle? How was the news of the battle brought to David? Who brought the first tidings, and what were they? What was David's question? Did David recognize himself as having any blame in the conduct of his son? Was the death of Absalom just? [GOLDEN TEXT.]

2. **A Father's Agony**, v. 32, 33. How was the news of Absalom's death brought to David? How did David receive it? What did his sorrow show? Wherein was it right, and wherein wrong? What cause for his sorrow do we find in 1 Kings 1. 6? How was David induced to cease from his sorrow? 2 Sam. 19. 5-8. What measures did David take to regain the loyalty of his people? 2 Sam. 19. 9-15.

#### PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

How does this lesson show—

1. An example of fatherly affection?
2. A cause for fatherly sorrow?
3. The result of parental errors.

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What took place between the armies of Absalom and David? A great battle. Who was defeated? The Israelites under Absalom. Who was killed? David's son, Absalom. Where was David watching for news of the battle? In the tower-house between the two gates. What did the watchman see in the distance? Two men running singly. Of what was this a sign? That David's army had won the victory. What did Ahimaaaz call out to the king before reaching him? "All is well." What did he tell David when he fell on his face before him? That God had delivered up the men who were against their king. What was

David's first question? "Is Absalom safe?" Why did Ahimaaz answer as in verse 29? He did not have courage to tell the whole truth. Why did David tell him to turn aside? So as to hear the news from the second runner. What was Cush's news? "The Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee." What did the king say unto Cush? "Is the young man Absalom safe?" What was Cush's answer? "The enemies of my lord the king be as that young man is." What did this answer tell David? That Absalom was dead. [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.] What did David do? He went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept for Absalom.

#### WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.

Away from God—Absalom found sin, trouble, and a shameful death. With God—You will find peace, happiness, and a heavenly home. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death."

#### ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

##### The King at the Gate.

#### I. THE WATCHER.

1. Sat between the two gates. v 24.  
"Eli sat. . . his heart troubled." 1 Sam. 4. 13.

2. Lifted up his eyes. v. 24.  
"Watchman, what of the night?" Isa. 21. 11.

#### II. THE MESSENGERS.

1. A man running. v. 26.  
"Run, and not be weary." Isa. 40. 31.
2. Cometh with good tidings. v. 27.  
"How beautiful. . . that bringeth." Isa. 52. 7.

#### III. THE INQUIRY.

- Is the young man. . . safe? v. 29.  
"Besought God for the child." 2<sup>d</sup> Sam. 12. 16.  
"In the nurture. . . of the Lord." Eph. 6. 4.

#### IV. THE TIDINGS.

1. All is well. v. 28.  
"To righteous. . . shall be well." Isa. 3. 10.
2. Hath delivered up. v. 28.  
"All enemies under his feet." 1 Cor. 15. 25.
3. Be as that young man. v. 32.  
"Ungodly. . . like the chaff." Psa. 1. 4.

#### V. THE SORROW.

1. The king was much moved. v. 33.  
"A son that causeth shame." Prov. 19. 26.
2. Went up. . . and wept. v. 33.  
"Others which have no hope." 1 Thess. 4. 13.
3. Would God I had died. v. 33.  
"Yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5. 8.

#### ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

##### Lessons from Absalom's Fate.

1. Absalom's end shows, as in a picture, the final ruin which is sure to befall all whose plans are for self and self alone.
2. Absalom's end shows that a father's anxiety over his son will not save him when he has neglected a father's duty in the past.
3. Absalom's end shows that our acts have an influence affecting others beyond ourselves. David's sorrow was so deep because he saw in Absalom's death the result of his own sin.
4. Absalom's end shows that repentance and sorrow will not reverse the consequences of past sin.
5. Absalom's end shows that parental love may make one blind even to kingly obligations.
6. Absalom's end shows that no gifts or graces or endowments will supply the lack of character. Absalom's beauty and popularity could not save his name from everlasting disgrace.

#### CATECHISM QUESTION.

3. *What more do we learn concerning God?*  
That he is holy and righteous, faithful and true, gracious and merciful.
4. *What do you mean by the omnipresence of God?*  
That God is everywhere.  
Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.—Jeremiah 23. 24.  
[Psalm 139. 7-12.]

#### ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

WATCHING.—Surely, we all of us know something about this. Even little children have watched for the return of a father or sister, or the arrival of some stranger in whom they were interested. And some of them, perhaps, know that with which older people are so well acquainted—anxious watching—the face pressed against the window, the ear strained to catch the sound of approaching wheels, or, perhaps, the listening, minute after minute, for the postman's knock. Today we have before us the picture of

*An anxious watcher.*

On the high tower overlooking the gate of Mahanaim there stands a watchman, his gaze fixed upon the far distance. But the real watcher is below, waiting for the first tidings from the battlefield. And what is it that occupies his thoughts? On what is his mind fixed? Not on the issue of the battle to himself, not upon whether he shall have to flee for his life, or shall find himself again



king over Israel. The one matter which absorbs his heart is the safety of his son Absalom. All will sympathize with the feelings of King Edward the Third, of England, when he watched his son engaged with the French on the field of Crecy, or those of Queen Victoria, watching for news of the Duke of Connaught, in Egypt. But David was watching with loving anxiety for the safety of an undutiful, a rebellious son, who had stolen the hearts of his father's subjects, who had violently seized his father's kingdom, and who, without the least compunction, could contemplate his father's death. Chap. 17. 2, 4. The heart of the father passed over all this. He thought not of the rebel, the rival king, the cruel enemy. To him this merciless foe was "the young man Absalom." Vers. 5, 12, 29, 32. He could forgive everything, he could forget everything, if he might clasp his dear son once more. Truly a parent's love is wonderful. Children can never understand it; but they may consider it, and take it to heart. How often will the young go lightly into danger—danger to the body, and danger to the soul—forgetful of the anxious watcher at home—the father who has warned them, the mother who has pleaded with them. One would think that if he had known how his father had done all he could to insure his safety, and how he sat watching and trembling for him, the knowledge must have broken Absalom's heart. Every generous-hearted boy will say: "I never could have held out against such a father." Let him mind that he never willingly causes anxiety to his parents.

But One has said, even of a mother's love: "Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isa. 49. 15. This picture of the anxious watcher at the gate of Mahanaim gives us a faint insight into the heart of the Father above. The world is full of Absaloms who have risen up against their heavenly Father. "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." Isa. 1. 2. But does he cast them off? What did the woman of Tekoah say to David? "Yet doth He devise means that his banished be not expelled from him." Chap. 14. 14. And what does he say of the rebellious Ephraim? "I do earnestly remember him still." Jer. 31. 30. "When he was yet a long way off his father saw him"—there is the divine Watcher.

"We watch and we wait,  
And we stand at the gate,  
While the shadows are piled."

That is what divine love is doing.

But Absalom, unlike the prodigal in Luke 15, never came home. And our next picture is that of

#### *A royal mourner.*

The terrible news has come, at first vaguely and doubtfully, then plain and distinct in its bitterness—Absalom is dead—beyond the reach of his father's love, his father's care, his father's forgiveness. And the victory—that which gives David back his life, his home, his kingdom, his people, is turned to mourning. We should be inclined to think it a good thing that this heartless rebel, this wicked usurper, is out of the way, and can no longer bring trouble upon the land. But to David the slain man is "my son, my son, Absalom. Did he not meet with his just fate? Did he not bring it upon himself? Ah! David cannot think of that—"Would God I had died for thee!" Such is a father's love.

When young people get into trouble it is not they who suffer most. It was an ordinary mother, no noted heroine, who said to the sailor when the ship containing herself and her little ones was on fire: "If you will but save my children, I will consent to be burned in that flame." When "the bark that held a prince went down," seven hundred and fifty years ago in the British Channel, it was the king's son who met with a watery grave; but it was the father, Henry the Second, a king in no way noted for any excellence of character, who, from that day forth, "never smiled again."

David's wish that he might have died for his son was of no avail. But the Father in heaven gave his only begotten Son to die for the disobedient. The divine Son really gave his life for the rebellious children. "Hereby perceive ye love, (Rev. Ver.) because he laid down his life for us." Who will resist this love? Yet it may be resisted. And there are no more mournful words in the Bible than the divine lament (if I may so speak) over those who refuse to be reconciled: "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." John 5. 40. "How often would I have gathered my children together, . . . and ye would not." Matt. 13. 37.

#### BEREAN METHODS.

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

Draw the map, showing Hebron, Jerusalem, Jordan Valley, Mahanaim. Indicate the journey of David, and tell the story, and mark the supposed place of the battle. . . . A word picture: 1.) Of Absalom's death in the thicket; 2.) Of David's watching at the gate; 3.) Of the messengers and David's sorrow. . . . Draw out the practical lessons of two aspects of the lesson, first, concerning Absalom; and secondly, concerning David. Show how Absalom's fate illustrates the career of the fast young man of to-day, and how David's sor-

row illustrates parental love. . . . Do not forget to show the Christ in the lesson. If David loved his son, God gave his children still more. But David could not save Absalom, though he was willing to die for him. Our Saviour saves us by dying for us. . . . ILLUSTRATION. When a canon has been aimed and fired, the one who has discharged it may sorrow, may reverse the aim, may bury it in the earth, but that will not undo its destructive work. So when character has wrought out its legitimate tendencies in evil conduct, mourning and repentance will not change the results of errors and mistakes.

#### Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

**LESSON THOUGHT.** *Self-love leads to Death.*  
Review the story of Absalom's rebellion and the king's flight, calling out the fact that all this trouble came from Absalom's self-love. Ask if Absalom's conduct would have been different if he had loved God instead of self? How would he have treated his brother, his father, his God? He did not follow God's way, but his own. Let us see the end.

#### THE SON'S DEATH.

Recall Absalom's journey to Hebron under false pretences, the calling the people to him by the sound of the trumpet, Absalom and his army marching toward Jerusalem and David's army in pursuit. The battle and the tragical death of Absalom. The story, as told in 2 Sam. 15, 16, 17, 18, should be familiar to the teacher. Print, "The wages of sin is death," and question about Absalom's sin, leading children to see that it all resulted from disobedience to God's command. Call for the fifth commandment, and talk familiarly about obedience to parents, showing that to obey them is to obey God.

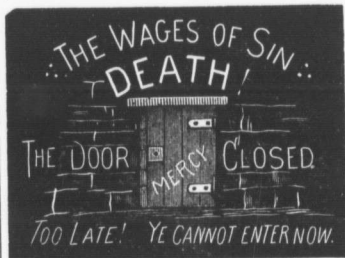
#### THE FATHER'S GRIEF.

Describe David, sitting in the gates waiting for news of the battle. Ask if children think the king loved his wicked, rebellious son. Yes, though he had been so disobedient and ungrateful, yet David loved him. Teach that so God loves his children when they are naughty, and waits and watches for them to come back to him, because he is our Father. Read the lesson, or tell the story of the way the king received the sad news, dwelling especially upon his lament, and teaching that this is a picture of the love which led our Father in heaven to send Jesus Christ to die for us. David wished that he might have died for his son; Jesus came and really died for those who did not love or obey him. Draw a crown of thorns, or pin up a picture of one, and ask who wore such a crown, and

why. Teach that our little acts of disobedience and rebellion are the thorns that pierce Jesus. If we love him we shall not want to hurt him. Call for Golden Text, and show how Absalom cursed his father by his disobedience. What punishment befell him? Yes, death, for God had promised it, and his promises never fail. Teach that disobedience to parents may not always be punished immediately, but it is sure to be, sooner or later, and that the only safe way is to obey God's word, and love him rather than self.

#### BLACKBOARD.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



Absalom's death followed quickly his sin of treachery. He had no hope in his death. He died in sin. The illustration of the closed door of mercy may be used with today's lesson. David loved his son even though he was in rebellion against him. He was ready to forgive him, and his heart was filled with anxiety for him. Absalom gave him no such opportunity. He died. The door was closed, and he was too late to enter.

**APPLICATION.** A sinner rebelling against Christ. The Saviour's love. The open door of mercy. The death of the sinner. "Too late! ye cannot enter now."

#### Lesson Word-Pictures.

And nothing from the battle yet? It has been fought somewhere, a terrible battle. Spearman and swordsmen have crashed against one another in sad, bloody confusion. Many have been slain, many wounded. Under a certain great, shadowy oak, a man is helplessly hanging, caught in the boughs while swiftly riding below and suspended by the head. He was hanging rather, but dart after dart was thrust into him, his body has been taken down and now is hid under a black heap of stones. As if the plague were there, all the people are fleeing away from it; and yet it covers a king's son, Absalom. Does the king know of it, know of the terrible battle, know of the accursed stone heap near the oak, hiding its dreadful tale of

blood?" Has no news come, brought by any rider, brought by any runner on foot, saying the king's crown is safe, and—what of Absalom? No tidings yet! The king is ignorant. Go up, O watchman, to the wall, and look off for some sign of a messenger! And there he stands on the rough, stony wall, his hand shading his eyes as he tries to pierce the veil of blue haze drawn across the distant hills. "Nothing!" he murmurs. But hold! Can you not see a black point away off on the slope of that hill like a fly crawling down? No, it is a ledge in the pasture of an old countryman, Zeruah." "But it is moving!" "Some animal; perhaps a sheep in Zeruah's sheep pasture." No, it is a man running! The messenger is coming, David. Be patient a little longer. But there is another black dot away off in Zeruah's sheep-pasture, and that is moving—and it is a man also—and a man running! Another messenger from the battle doubtless. How wildly the king's heart beats! What will they say? The first messenger is close at hand. It is Ahimaz, and how splendidly he runs! His robes are all gathered up, his girdle about the loins has been tightened,

and he runs like a gazelle. But what news, Ahimaz? Quick! Tell your story! And Ahimaz tells his story of victory at the feet of the king. How David straightens, lifting higher his rescued crown. But what about that man in the oak? Ahimaz knows nothing; at least tells nothing. But here is the second messenger, Cush, a fleet runner, and yet inferior to Ahimaz, who started behind him. Cush comes up panting, almost breathless, and with excited look tells also of victory. But that dead body under the stone heap, what about that? Will you tell of Absalom? "The enemies—of my—lord, the king, and—all that—rise against—thee to do thee—hurt, be as—that young man is," says Cush, catching his breath. What have you done, Cush? Did you bring one of Joab's darts, plucked out of the heart of Absalom, and did you smite the king with it? Look! It is no proud king now, who has saved his crown, but a bowed, moaning old father, with crown drooping, who goes up to the chamber over the gate, who weeps, who wails in bitter words, "O Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

B. C. 1017.]

## LESSON VIII.—THE PLAGUE STAYED.

[Aug. 24.

2 Sam. 24. 15-25.



15 So *a* the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men.  
*a* Chron. 21. 14; 27. 24.

16 And when the *b* angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, *c* the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough; stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing-place of *d* Araunah the Jebusite.

*b* Exod. 12. 23; 1 Chron. 21. 15; Psa. 104. 4.—*c* Gen. 6. 6; 1 Sam. 15. 11; Psa. 78. 33; Jer. 18. 5-10; Joel 2. 13; Jonah 3. 10.—*d* 1 Chron. 21. 15; Ornan.  
17 And David spake unto the Lord, when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, *e* I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

*e* 1 Chron. 21. 17.  
18 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, *f* Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of *a* Araunah the Jebusite.

*f* 1 Chron. 21. 18.—*a* Araniah.  
19 And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up, as the Lord commanded.

20 And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

21 And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? *g* And David said, To buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the *h* plague may be stayed from the people.

*g* Gen. 23. 8.—*h* Num. 16. 48.  
22 And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what semeth good unto him: *i* behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood.

*i* 1 Kings 19. 21.  
23 All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord thy God accept *j* thee.

*j* Psa. 20. 3; 119. 108; Ezek. 20. 40; 1 Pet. 2. 5.  
24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So *k* David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

*k* 1 Chron. 21. 24.  
25 And David built *b* there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the Lord was *l* entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

*l* Which became the site of the temple; 1 Chron. 22. 1.—*2* Sam. 21. 14; 2 Chron. 33. 13; Isa. 19. 22.

## GENERAL STATEMENT.

Not long after Absalom's rebellion, or perhaps (as some believe) not long before it, David sinned against God's will in numbering the people. The evil was not in taking the census

of Israel, but in cherishing the ambitious purpose which led to it. The success of the foreign wars, resulting in the conquest of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Syria, had made Israel supreme from the Wilderness to the Euphrates. David and his nobles imagined that now, while the twelve tribes were strong, and while Egypt and Assyria were weak, was the hour of opportunity to establish a great empire, rivalling those of Chaldea and Assyria, which had passed away. They planned to lead forth an invincible host, to cross the Euphrates and the Nile, to conquer the lands of the Plain and by the Mediterranean, and to make Jerusalem the capital of the world. But to do this was to set aside God's purpose for Israel, which was an inheritance infinitely greater than empire, even the possession of the truth. The divine plan was that Israel should bear the message of salvation, and not the sword of conquest, to all the world. If David had succeeded in his ambitious designs, he might have ranked in history beside Sargon and Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus and Alexander, as the founder of one of the great Oriental empires, but the kingdom of God would have lost its purity, and the salvation of the world might have been set back ten centuries. In love for his people the Almighty crushed their plans. In a single day seventy thousand of the people died, and boasting was turned to sorrow. Our lesson tells how the plague was stayed, just as it reached the capital, how out of its darkness dawned the morning of peace, and how the first steps were taken toward the founding of the temple, which was to be the greatest glory of Israel.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 15. So.** In accordance with David's choice, to suffer from the hand of the Lord rather than of men. [Read the General Statement, for an account of the circumstances.] **The Lord sent.** The pestilence came under a divine law and for a divine purpose, the discipline of his people. Isaac Taylor says, "These calamities come through the ordinary operation of law; but these laws have been so adjusted by the Divine Governor of the world, that through them, and without any miraculous interference with them, he visits moral evil with physical chastisement." **A pestilence.** Sudden plagues have always been very destructive in the East, from the heat of the climate, bad drainage, neglect of sanitary laws, and lack of medical knowledge. **To the time appointed.** An obscure clause; which would appear to mean, "to the end of the three days," but may mean, until the time referred to in the next verse. Some think this was a phrase meaning, "to the time appointed for the evening sacrifice." **From Dan to Beersheba.** Dan was the town at the source of the Jordan, and the northern limit of the Twelve Tribes. Its history is given in Judges 18. Beersheba was one of the homes of the patriarchs, on the border of the desert, and in southern Judah. The two places were one hundred and fifty miles apart. **Seventy**

**thousand.** This was the most destructive pestilence in Jewish annals. Sennacherib's army lost 185,000 in a night, and a plague in the Carthaginian army besieging Syracuse destroyed 100,000 men. 1. How sudden, how mighty, and how terrible, are the judgments of God!

**16. The angel.** We know but little about angels, but it is clear from Scripture that they are the messengers and executors of God's will, in temporal and spiritual things. **Stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem.** There seems to be an allusion to a visible appearance, perhaps not seen by all, but by those in a high state of spiritual enlightenment, or those specially chosen to receive the vision. In the history of our race God has more than once thus revealed himself. Such revelations, however, are not now necessary to spiritual character. **The Lord repented him.** Not that God changed his will or his feelings, or regretted what he had done; but he altered his plan as men altered their conduct, and changed his relation from wrath to mercy, as men changed theirs from sin to repentance. 2. Repentance is never an emotion, but always an act of the will. 3. God always repents when man does. **Stay now thine hand.** 4. God is always eager to show mercy, and delights in withholding his threatened judgments. **Was by the threshing-place.** A level place, smoothed like a floor, where grain was threshed by being trodden over by oxen. It was generally on an elevation, where the wind would carry away the chaff. This was on Mount Moriah, east of Mount Zion, and at that time outside the wall of Jerusalem. God stayed the angel at the same spot where he had stayed Abraham from sacrificing his son. **Araunah.** In 1 Chron. 21, called Ornan, and elsewhere spelled variously, as a foreign word in Hebrew letters. From his title in verse 23, it has been inferred that he had been the king of the Jebusites before the capture of the city. (Lesson I,) and had been spared by David. **The Jebusites.** A Canaanite race who dwelt in and around Jerusalem at the time of Joshua's conquest, and held their fortress through all the period of the Judges, until the place was taken by David early in his reign.

**17. David spake unto the Lord.** As we speak unto the Lord in earnest prayer. **When he saw the angel.** Whether others saw the angel besides David, the elders of Israel (1 Chron. 21, 16), Araunah and his sons, is not stated. **Lo, I have sinned.** David, a true penitent, takes all the blame upon himself, for he knew the extent of his own sin, but not that of others. 5. A true repentance of sin offers no excuse, but hides itself in the mercy of God. **These sheep.** The people, who were led by their rulers like a flock of sheep. Yet the people sinned with their king in pride and the worldly spirit. **Let thine hand be against me.** David, in offering his own life for the nation at the altar on Moriah, was a foretoken or type of Christ, offering his life for the world on Cal-

vary; but with the difference that David was guilty, while Christ was innocent. 6. Let us find the sinner's refuge in the smitten side of David's greater Son.

**18. Gad.** This was a prophet, who had doubtless been David's early companion in the prophetic school of Samuel at Ramah. 1 Sam. 19. 20. He joined him in the cave Adullam, and gave him counsel during the period of his exile. Afterward, he wrote the history of David's reign. 1 Chron. 29. 29. **Said unto him.** Speaking by divine direction; as the prophets lived in close fellowship with God. **Rear an altar.** The altar and its offerings were the outward tokens of a repentance of the heart and consecration to God; without which the form would be of no avail. **In the threshing-floor.** Because at that spot the angel was seen standing. 7. The place of the curse must be the place of the atonement.

**19. David....went up.** His heart must have trembled as he climbed the hill toward the being bearing the flaming sword; but he obeyed, though he might have thought that there he might die for his people. **As the Lord commanded.** 8. No servant of the Lord need fear to go where his Master has pointed the way.

**20. Araunah looked.** He was threshing wheat with his sons, when he saw the angel and hid in a cave. 1 Chron. 21. 20. He now sees David and the elders of Israel coming toward him. **The king and his servants.** David was accompanied by the elders of the people, all clad in sackcloth to manifest their sorrow and humiliation. 1 Chron. 21. 16. **Araunah went out.** From the cave where he was hidden, which may have been the hollow place under the ancient rock now standing on Mount Moriah. **Bowed himself.** The old king and the new, the Jebusite and the Israelite, met at the place of the altar, like Jew and Gentile meeting around the cross of a common Saviour.

**21. Wherefore the king is my lord.** In this address the Jebusite showed a kingly, generous, loyal, and religious spirit. 9. Araunah was the harbinger of the Gentile world bowing before the Son of David. **To buy the threshing-floor.** The careful reader of the Old Testament will see that the kingdom of Israel was not like an Oriental despotism, holding all life and property under the will of the king, but a regulated constitutional monarchy, respecting the rights of the people.

**22. Araunah said.** Showing that though a foreigner he had accepted the God of Israel. **Here be oxen.** Those with which he was threshing the grain. **Threshing instruments.** Sledges, armed underneath with spikes for breaking up the stalks, and shaking out the grain. **Instruments of the oxen.** Yokes, and other parts of the simple harness in use in the East. **For wood.** For the fire on which the offering was to be laid.

**23. Araunah as a king.** Some regard this as evidence that he had been the king of

the Jebusites during their independence, but others consider it as meaning "in a kingly, munificent manner." **The Lord thy God accept thee.** A wish that God would receive the offering, and have mercy upon the people.

**24. I will surely buy it.** For otherwise it would have been Araunah's offering, and not David's. **That which costs me nothing.** To offer that which costs nothing would be to contradict the essential idea of sacrifice. 10. Let us remember this principle in our offerings to the cause of Christ. **Bought the threshing-floor and the oxen.** For the immediate necessities of the offering, David purchased the level place on the summit of the hill. **Fifty shekels of silver.** Equal to \$27 37, the shekel being worth 54.74 cents. Afterward, when the place was chosen as the site of the temple, David purchased the entire hill for six hundred shekels of gold, or \$5,256. It is supposed that the spot is now covered by "The Dome of the Rock," miscalled the Mosque of Omar, under which rises a rough mass of native rock, seventeen feet above the level of the enclosure. This was probably the place of the altar in Solomon's temple.

**25. Burnt-offerings.** In which the entire animal was burned upon the altar, indicating full consecration to God. **Peace-offerings.** In which a part of the offering was eaten before the altar, as a token of restored fellowship with God. **Entreated.** Heard David's prayer, and withheld the plague.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel. 2 Sam. 24. 25.

#### OUTLINE.

1. The Hand of Destruction, v. 15-16.
2. The Voice of Supplication, v. 17.
3. The Altar unto the Lord, v. 18-25.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 111, S. S. Hymnal.

Lord, we come before thee now.

No. 109, S. S. Hymnal.

Oh, sometimes the shadows are deep.

No. 116, S. S. Hymnal.

Gracious Spirit, Love divine.

No. 123, S. S. Hymnal.

Try us, O God, and search the ground.

TIME.—B.C. 1017.

PLACE.—The threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, on Mount Moriah, the place where the Temple was afterward built.

CONNECTING LINK.—The people numbered. 2 Sam. 24. 1-14.

EXPLANATIONS.—A pestilence—This was because of the sin of David in numbering the people, an act of pride. *Time appointed*—Unto the third day; or, as some understood, until the time of the evening sacrifice. *Dan to Beer-sheba*—Two towns on the boundary, one in the north, the other in the south, of Palestine.



*The angel*—Who was fulfilling God's command. *The Lord repented*—God changed his mind, because the people and the king had changed theirs. *Threshing-place*—A level place used for threshing grain. *I have sinned*—It was David's sin that had caused the wrath of God. *Against me*—A noble nature never seeks to cast blame on others. *Gad*—A prophet of God. *An altar*—This stood on the place where afterward stood the altar of Solomon's Temple. *Take and offer*—The Jesubite showed the heart of a true worshipper of God. *Oxen for burnt sacrifice*—The burnt-offering must be of a domestic animal. *Threshing instruments*—Tools of wood for beating the grain. *Araunah, as a king*—Some think that Araunah had been the chief of the Jebusites before the taking of the city. *Cost me nothing*—Our gifts to God should be our own. *Burnt-offerings*—Sacrifices which were entirely consumed on the altar. *Peace-offerings*—Sacrifices which were partly burned and partly eaten at a feast before the altar.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M.* The plague stayed. 2 Sam. 24. 15-25.  
*Tu.* The cause of the plague. 2 Sam. 24. 1-14.  
*W.* The great plague threatened. Exod. 11. 1-10.  
*Th.* The great plague fulfilled. Exod. 12. 21-36.  
*F.* The plague for murmuring. Num. 16. 41-50.  
*S.* Punishment for sin. Ezek. 5. 11-17.  
*S.* The true repentance. Acts 2. 37-47.

#### QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. The Hand of Destruction, v. 15. 16. What calamity came upon Israel? On account of whose sin was it sent? How many people were slain? What city was in great peril? Why did the angel spare it? When did the pestilence cease?
2. The Voice of Supplication, v. 17. Who made intercession for the people? What plea did he make for them? What acknowledgment did he make? What atonement did he propose? What intercessor have the people of God now? Rom. 8. 34.
3. The Altar unto the Lord, v. 18-25. What people visited the king? What charge did he give to David? How was the command received? What reception did Araunah give the king? What did David say his errand was? For what purpose was the altar to be erected? What offer did Araunah make? What reason did David give for not accepting it as a gift? What is true giving?

#### PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

- Where are we shown in this lesson—
1. That punishment follows guilt?
  2. That God is long-suffering and merciful?
  3. That true sacrifice means self-sacrifice?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.—(For the entire school.) 1. What did the Lord send upon Israel? A pestilence. 2. What did the Lord say when the angel would have destroyed Jerusalem? "It is enough; stay now thine hand." 3. What did David say to the Lord? "Let thine hand be against me?" 4. What did Gad tell David to do? "Rear an altar unto the Lord." 5. What happened when David built

the altar and offered sacrifices and entreated the Lord? "The plague was stayed from Israel?"

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Atonement for sin. QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Hand of Destruction, v. 15. 16. What was the cause for the destruction? v. 10. What was the sin in the act of David? Why should the people suffer for the sins of the king? What visible manifestation was seen? Where was it revealed?
2. The Voice of Supplication, v. 17. Who offered prayer, and what did he pray? How did this show a noble spirit? What traits of true penitence are here shown?
3. The Altar unto the Lord, v. 18-25. Who commanded the altar to be built? Where was it built? From whom was the ground purchased? What character did the owner of the land show? Why was this especially generous in Araunah? What was David's answer to his offer? What was done for the altar? For what was the place of this altar afterward used? 2 Chron. 3. 1.

#### PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

How are we here shown—

1. That sin brings suffering?
2. That God hears prayer?
3. That our offerings to God should be of our own possessions?

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did God send upon Israel? A great plague. How many people died of the plague? Seventy thousand. Who stayed the hand of the destroyed angel at Jerusalem? The Lord. Where was the angel standing? By the threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusite. What is a threshing-place? A round plot of ground where corn is trodden out by oxen. What did David say unto the Lord when he saw the angel? "I have sinned." What did he ask of the Lord? To punish him, but spare his people. [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.] What was David commanded to do? To build an altar unto the Lord. Where was he to build it? In the threshing-floor of Araunah. What did David do? He went up to Araunah to buy the threshing-floor. Where was the threshing-floor? On Mount Moriah, north-east of Zion. What did Araunah do? He offered to give the king the threshing-floor and every thing else he wanted. What did the king reply? "Nay, I will buy it off thee." For what did David buy the threshing-floor and oxen? For fifty shekels of silver. Why did David refuse Araunah's offer? He would not offer sacrifices to God that cost him nothing? What did David offer upon the altar which he built? Burnt-offerings to stay the plague, and peace-offerings of thanksgiving when the plague ceased.

#### WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.

Little people sometimes forget—That God sees all their acts. That God knows all their thoughts. That if they forget him he will let them suffer. That if they disobey his com-

mands he will not count them among the people. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."

#### ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

##### The Acceptable Sacrifice.

#### I. THE SACRIFICE OF CONFESSION.

I have sinned. . . . done wickedly. v. 17.  
"Who confesseth. . . . shall have mercy."  
Prov. 28. 13.  
"If we confess. . . . forgive us." 1 John  
1. 9.

#### II. THE SACRIFICE OF SUBMISSION.

Let this hand. . . . be against me. v. 17.  
"Submit yourselves. . . . to God." James  
4. 7.  
"Thou, O God, hast proved us." Psa.  
66. 10.

#### III. THE SACRIFICE OF SELF-DENIAL.

Buy it of thee at a price. v. 24.  
"Tithes into the store-house." Mal. 3.  
10.  
"The liberal soul. . . . made fat." Prov.  
11. 24.

#### IV. THE SACRIFICE OF ATONEMENT.

Burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. v. 25.  
"The precious blood of Christ." 1 Pet.  
1. 19.  
"Reconciled. . . . death of his Son." Rom.  
5. 10.

#### V. THE SACRIFICE OF PRAYER.

The Lord was entreated. v. 25.  
"Come. . . . return unto the Lord." Hos.  
6. 1.  
"In every thing. . . . prayer and suppli-  
cation." Phil. 4. 6.

#### ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

##### Sin and Forgiveness.

1. Long-continued prosperity is apt to result in forgetfulness of God, worldly ambition, and sin.
2. Sin brings its own result of suffering and penalty: David's pride in his kingdom led to the plague which desolated it. v. 15.
3. God's judgment is closely associated with his mercy. He punished Israel in love, and he pitied before the prayer was offered. v. 16.
4. When God's wrath smites, is the time for confession of sin, and a recognition of justice. v. 17.
5. A true confession seeks no excuse for sin, but shows the spirit of entire submission to God's just punishment. v. 17.
6. Mercy is always associated with a sacrifice; and the offerings of the Old Testament were but symbols of the great sacrifice of Christ. v. 18.
7. Our offerings to God must be our own, and not the gifts of others; each must stand by himself before God. v. 24.

#### CATECHISM QUESTION.

5. What do you mean by the almightiness or omnipotence of God?

That God can do whatever he will.

6. What do you mean by the omniscience of God?

I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. —Job 42. 2.

Jesus said to them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. —Matthew 19. 26.

That God knows all things, past and present and future.

#### ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

THE enemies of truth have often asserted that the gospel story shows us, on the one hand, the divine Father full of wrath against sinful man, and, on the other hand, the Son of God appeasing his Father's anger, and by the sacrifice of himself wringing from God that pardon which he was unwilling to give. And so foreign to the natural mind is the right understanding of God, and of his ways, that men sometimes pray and entreat for mercy as though he were loth to give it, and must be importuned for that in which the Bible tells us he delights. Micah 7. 18. Such a lesson as the following gives the teacher an opportunity of grounding his scholars well in the opposite truth, namely, that God himself provides the sacrifice for the sin of men, that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," and that the first movement is not in the heart of man toward God, but in the heart of God toward man.

The history recorded in to-day's passage is not the story of an ordinary sacrifice, or simply of the removal of one of God's judgments. It is the introduction to the founding of that temple where, day after day, and year after year, the types of the great sacrifice to be offered on Calvary were reproduced. It shows how the spot was indicated which the Lord had chosen to "place his name there" (Deut. 12. 5; 26. 2) until he came, who is "Emmanuel, God with us."

As yet, David was unaware where the house of the Lord, which Solomon, his son, was to build, was to be erected. It was when the time of need came that this was revealed. When the sin of David had brought destruction upon thousands of Israel, and the terrible cry of mourning had arisen throughout the land, together with a fearful looking-for of further judgment (for there were two days of pestilence yet to come), then the place was pointed out where God would "hear from heaven, his dwelling place, and forgive." 1 Kings 8. 30, etc. And the first thing of which we read in connection with this is of

*God repenting.* "The Lord repented him of the evil." It is a remarkable expression, but used several times in the Bible. It must not be understood as implying that God had changed his original purpose, for we are told that "with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." What does it, then, mean? When we say, "The sun is melting hot," we do not mean that the sun has in any way changed, but that its heat is flowing forth unhindered. We associate with the idea of repentance a softness, a melting of the heart; in man this takes the place of former hardness; in God it is always present: "His compassions fail not." Lam. 3. 22. But when this compassion makes a way to manifest itself, when it flows forth full and unhindered to the sinner, we read of God repenting.

And what followed this in the heart of David? When the sun shines forth with melting warmth, the ice that has formed on the surface of the streams disappears, and again the unhindered current rushes onward to the sea. David's conscience had spoken before (ver. 10); he had bowed in submission to the just punishment of his sin (ver. 14); but now we find his heart utterly softening, and his prayer rising up to God that he alone might bear the remainder of wrath: "Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house." This was true repentance. And next we read of

*God providing.* The "repenting" of God is no mere passing over of sin. In mercy, he cannot forget justice. If the sinner is to be restored to favour, atonement must be made for the sin. And that is just what man cannot do. The sacrifice of David's life could not have stayed the consequences of David's sin. But when the compassion of God goes forth to the sinner he says: "Deliver me from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." Job 33. 24. And so the messenger was sent to tell David by what means the plague might be averted; the place was marked out where God would accept an offering—where God would "hear and forgive;" the foreshadowing, we know of that One "name... whereby we must be saved." Acts 4. 12. And there the king was directed to build an altar for sacrifice.

What was the response of David? Immediate obedience: "He went up as the Lord commanded." He was not content with having the appointed place and the necessary implements lent him. He must make them his own. And then, with a glad heart he offered "burnt-offerings and peace-offerings" in the chosen place, and there God accepted him, and "the plague was stayed."

*God moving toward man first.* That is

the great lesson we may learn from this history. But what should follow it? Man responding to God, as David did. When God says, "Seek ye my face," who will reply with David, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek?" Psa. 27. 8.

#### BEREAN METHODS.

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

It might be well to open with a picture or description of the "Dome of the Rock," in Jerusalem, where the rock of Araunah's threshing-floor may still be seen.... The causes of the pestilence, why it came.... Notice the spirit of pride and ambition from which David's sin arose.... How God punished David's sin.... The traits of the divine nature and character displayed in this story: 1. God's notice of sin; 2. God's holiness; 3. His justice; 4. His almighty power; 5. His pity, tenderness; 6. His willingness to hear and answer prayer.... The way of salvation for a sinner: 1. Confession of sin; 2. Recognition of God's justice; 3. Sacrifice; 4. Prayer.... How to come before God. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline.) ... ILLUSTRATIONS. The destruction of Sennacherib's host, when one hundred and eighty-five thousand men perished in a night. (2 Kings 19.)... Nebuchadnezzar's punishment for pride. (Dan. 4.)... The Rich Fool, in Christ's parable, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." (Luke 12. 13-21.)

##### Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Use of Prayer.* To be taught: 1. What a plague is. 2. How God uses a plague sometimes to show people their sins. 3. That sin is a plague, and how it may be cured.

1. Speak of some disease of which children have heard, as scarlet fever or diphtheria; tell that it sometimes comes into a town and spreads until many are sick. If it becomes very general, so that in nearly every house some one is sick or dead, it is called a plague. Tell of the terrible sickness which visited the city of London once, known as the Great Plague. Give some details if thought best, and read the first verse of the lesson, calling attention to the greatness of the plague which in three days destroyed seventy thousand people.

2. Tell the strange sight which David saw, an angel with a sword held out over the city. The sword means death. Then David knew that he had sinned and that God was displeased. Tell what David's sin was—pride. He was proud of his kingdom, the great number of his subjects, and that he may have counted the people thinking to make war and so increase his greatness.

Teach that God wants even kings to be humble and to depend upon him. Read David's prayer, and tell the remainder of the story. Sum it up in the Golden Text, showing that God is ready to forgive as soon as sin is truly repented of and put away.

3. There is a greater plague than any disease that can come upon the body. Talk about sin, telling what it does, and leading children to see how it kills the soul. The one cure for this plague is found in God's forgiveness of sin. Tell story of young girl who lived in a town where the plague broke out. She thought that those who loved God would not be touched by it, but found that many Christians died. Then she learned that God is the dwelling-place which no plague can enter. Print "God is our refuge," and teach that any child who fears the plague of sin in his own heart and wants to have it stayed has only to ask God and he will stop it. That is just what Jesus came into the world to do for us.

**Lesson Word-Pictures.**

For three days the pestilence has been raging. O days that were nights and nights that were years! The death-shadow might fall on any soul, and darken any place. Like sin, it is everywhere. Like sin, it kills what it touches. It suddenly hushes the prattle of the babe in its mother's arms, finds the shepherd and his flock in the most secluded valley, overtakes the traveller fleeing day and night from its dreaded presence. Only three days, and it is a land of death, of bitter wailing, of broken hearts. But look up into the sky above the threshing-place of Araunah, the Jebusite. Wonderful form of light, motionless, stately, silent, the dreaded angel of the Lord! No word, no movement, only that awful glory! Does King David see it? Yes, he is coming this way, bowed with grief, a terror in his face, his bewildered servants clustered about him. Run to meet the king, Araunah! There before the king, Araunah humbly bows his face to the earth. David stops. His servants stop. But let them not delay long. There is that still halting, awful form of light above the threshing-floor. And would David buy the thresh-

ing-floor to build an altar and offer sacrifices? Araunah is eagerly holding out his hands and tendering all things. No, the costless is worthless in sacrifice. Let Araunah take David's silver. There in the threshing-place they build an altar. I hear them breaking up the threshing instruments for fuel. They kindle the fire. They bring forward the oxen for sacrifice. The smoke rolls up in a dense cloud from the offerings. The king, his servants, Araunah and his household, look on in silence that is supplication. And the angel? He has faded out of sight like the white summer cloud melting into the air. The land is free from the death-shadow, driven away like sin by penitence and prayer. Babes prattle again in their mother's arms. The traveller unharmed continues his journey, and in sheltered valleys the shepherd-boy sings as he strikes his harp or leads his flock to the cool "still waters."

**Blackboard.**  
BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The shield of prayer is represented as stopping the sword of destruction. David prayed, and God heard him. This lesson teaches the importance of prayer.

ANOTHER DESIGN. Draw a hand, (place your own against the board, and trace a line around it,) and write the word "Destruction." Draw another hand, and write the word "Mercy." Over all write the words, "Prayer Changes," teaching that prayer changes the hand of destruction to the hand of mercy.

**B.C.]**

**LESSON IX.—GOD'S WORKS AND WORD.**

Psalm 19. 1-14.



1 The a heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork.

a Isa. 40. 22; Rom. 1. 19.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language a where their voice is not heard.

a Without their voice heard, or, without these their voice is heard.

4 b Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun;

b Or, Their rule, or, direction; Rom. 10. 18.

[Aug. 31.

5 Which is *b* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. *b* Eccles. 11. 7.

6 His going forth *c* is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

*c* Eccles. 1. 5.

7 The *c* law of the Lord is perfect, *d* converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple:

*c* Or, Doctrine; 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.—*d* Or, restoring.

8 The statutes *d* of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes:

*d* Neh. 9. 13.

9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are *e* true and righteous altogether. *e* Truth.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and *f* the honey-comb.

*f* The dropping of honey-comb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant *g* warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

*g* Prov. 6. 22, 23.

12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from *g* the great transgression.

*g* Or, much.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, *h* my strength, and my *f* redeemer.

*h* My rock.—*f* Isa. 44. 6; 47. 4.

#### GENERAL STATEMENT.

It is night over the hills of Palestine, and the psalmist stands upon the battlements of the Holy City, gazing up to the dark heavens, in which the stars, the sentinels of God, fulfil their ceaseless marches. To his poetic eye their glow is but the reflection of their Creator's glory, and to his ear they sing songs of faith and hope, which the dull unbeliever cannot hear. Through the night-watches the psalmist gazes until the stars pale under the dawn, and the landscape is flooded with the beams of the rising sun. Faith beholds in stars and sun alike only the messengers of the Almighty, and the psalmist sings the God whom the heavens reveal. Then from the works of God he turns to meditate upon the words of God, and chants the glory of the law, which is the bulwark of his throne, and his gift to men. He repeats with joy the names by which God's will is known, "the law," "the testimony," "the commandment," six in all, and shows in each that which constitutes its honor. Then, from God's law, he looks within his own heart, and catching a glimpse of its depths of evil, he strikes a sad strain of confession and of supplication, beseeching that sins of ignorance may be forgiven, and sins of presumption may be shunned; that the utterance of the lips and the thought of the heart may be acceptable to God, whose law is so searching, and whose might is so omnipotent.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 1. The heavens.** The psalmist, standing at night under the starry heavens and contemplating their glory, sees in it the glory of their Creator. **Declare the glory.** They declare God's glory, by showing his majesty, power, wisdom, and goodness as their Maker. **Of God.** The Hebrew word here is *El*, a name used to denote God's majesty and power, while *Jehovah* expresses his relation to men. **Firmament.** The visible expanse, the arch of the sky. **His handiwork.** The heavens show God's glory, by revealing him as the one who created them. 1. "There is a God" is the testimony of nature. 2. He is blind who cannot see God's hand in his works.

**2. Day unto day.** Each day proclaims the truth of creation to the next day, and thus the story is ever told. **Uttereth speech.** Literally, "poureth forth speech," as if overflowing with God's praise. **Night unto night.** 3. "Day bids us work for God, and night invites us to rest in him."—*Spurgeon*. 4. "Day and night are like two parts of a choir, chanting forth alternately the praises of God."—*Bishop Horne*.

**3. There is no speech nor language,** etc. There are two views of the interpretation of this verse. The older commentators gave it as translated in our present version, supplying the words in italics, which are not in the text. Most of the modern expositors omit the word "where," and translate: "No speech; no language; no voice is heard," yet they are eloquent to the believer's ear, telling of their Creator; and this seems to be the true thought of the passage.

**4. Their line.** Their measuring line; expressing the thought that the heavens extend over all the earth, and speak even in its remotest parts. The same stars look down on America and on Asia, and they sing the same songs to all lands in all languages. **In them.** In the heavens. **Set a tabernacle.** A tent; here referring to the custom of pitching the royal tent in the centre of the camp. **For the sun.** Who shines in the midst of the starry host like a king among his attendants.

**5. As a bridegroom coming.** The morning sun is here compared to a bridegroom coming forth in festal array, with beaming face and the desire of his heart satisfied. **Rejoiceth as a strong man.** The sun comes forth like a champion whose task is but play to his strength, and cheerfully enters upon his swift race. 5. God's instruments never flag in their appointed work.

**6. His going forth.** His daily reappearance after the seclusion of the night. **From the end of the heaven.** From the remote east, in which he seems to rise. **His circuit.** The circular path in which he moves through the sky. **Unto the ends of it.** To the farthest west, in which the sun goes down. **Nothing hid from the heat.** The rays of the sun penetrate everywhere, to the most hidden corners, sending light and heat, giving to both animate and inanimate

nature cheer and support. Take the sun out of the heavens, and all vegetation and life would soon come to an end. Notice in this metaphor of the sun (1) his dwelling-place like a king's tent; (2) his glory and majesty; (3) his power; (4) the extent of his rule; (5) his beneficial influence in nature. 6. All this is but a faint reflection of the Sun behind the sun.

**7. The law of the Lord.** From God's message in his works, the psalmist now turns to his utterance in his word, which surpasses by far the glory of the external revelation. To David this law was the Pentateuch, which was the only Bible then written. **Is perfect.** Free from error; containing all things essential as a law for human conduct; and arising to the loftiest elevation as a standard of morals. **Converting the soul.** Leading the soul of man back from sin to righteousness, and in this sense changing his nature through the efficacy of the Spirit of God, whose presence is always implied. **The testimony.** A second name for God's word, expressing the fact that it bears witness to the divine character and the divine ideal for human character. **Sure.** Standing upon a strong foundation and worthy of all confidence. **Making wise.** Giving wisdom, and that the very highest, to those who study it. **The simple.** This word, in the Old Testament use, means the untaught, the inexperienced, the open-hearted, ready to receive influence, whether good or evil. Such, by the study of God's word, become wise. 7. Let us choose the best things for the exercise and development of our powers.

**8. The statutes of the Lord.** A third name for God's revelation, referring to its enactments given by divine authority. **Are right, rejoicing the heart.** That is, the requirements of God's word are only what a rightly constituted nature would take pleasure in fulfilling. 8. Hence, if men complain of God's law, it is their hearts and not the law which are wrong. **The commandment.** A fourth name, almost equivalent to the one just before it, and noting the definite demands which it makes. **Pure.** The same word is used in Solomon's Song 6. 10, to express the clearness of the sun's rays. God's commands are clear and pure in their freedom from error. **Enlightening the eyes.** Removing the clouds of prejudice and making the path of duty plain.

**9. The fear of the Lord.** The fifth name, referring to the righteous reverence which God's law produces in the heart, a regard like that of a loving child to a tender father. **Is clean.** Promoting purity, making the heart holy and the life righteous. **Enduring forever.** God's revealed will needs no change; additions may be made, but its past utterances are not repealed nor altered. **Judgments.** The sixth name, pointing to the Lord as a judge, and his law as his judicial decisions, the standards of his government. **True and righteous.** Earthly judges may err or be corrupt, and thus pervert justice; but the sentence of the highest court is always righteous.

**10. More to be desired.** That is, the judgments or laws of God, making up in their aggregate his word. **Than gold.** Gold in all ages has been the rarest and most precious of metals, and the symbol of the best treasures. 9. The best riches are found in God's will. **Sweeter also than honey.** The symbol of that which gives the greatest enjoyment. **The honey-comb.** Literally, "dropping of honey-comb;" the purest of honey, not strained out of the comb, but that which overflows from it. Such, indeed, are the pleasures in the Lord's service.

**11. By them is thy servant warned.** God's commandments shed light on the path of duty, and point out the dangerous ways which are to be shunned. **In keeping of them.** Not only at the end of the way, as a final result, but all along the way, in the keeping of them. 10. "If there is so much for us in the wilderness, what will there be in paradise?" **Great reward.** The enjoyment of a quiet conscience, the purity of character, the consciousness of God's smile, and the hope of a glorious recompense.

**12. Who can understand his errors?** The psalmist here applies the infinite law to himself, and the thought changes the strain of his song. **Cleanse thou me.** Rather, "absolve, acquit," as it means remission of punishment, rather than personal purification. **Secret faults.** This should be translated "sins of ignorance;" the sins which a man does not recognize in himself, or which are unknown to others. 11. How few there are who understand fully the measure of their own sinfulness.

**13. Presumptuous sins.** Sins committed with full knowledge of their guilt, and therefore in open defiance of God; the opposite to the sins of ignorance named in the previous verse. **Not have dominion.** Sin is man's master if he allows it to enter his heart, and the only freedom is found in the service of God. **Then shall I be upright.** Literally, "complete," having a completeness of character, when sins of ignorance are removed, and sins of presumption are avoided. **Innocent from the great transgression.** Omit "the," and read, "innocent from great transgression." He who is careful not to commit conscious sin may not escape error, but will be free from deeper wrong-doing.

**14. Let the words.** The psalmist still has the law of God in his mind, and prays for conformity to it. If our words can be acceptable to God, and the thoughts of our minds pure, we shall be righteous. **My strength.** God, who gives strength to do his will. **My redeemer.** Who delivers his people from the power of evil.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

**Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.** Psa. 138, 2.

#### OUTLINE.

1. God in Nature, v. 1-6.
2. God in Grace, v. 7-14.

**EXPLANATIONS.**—This psalm gives praise to God for his glory as shown by his works in the

heavens, and for his greater glory as revealed in his written word, the law. *Firmament*—The arch of the sky. *Handywork*—The work of God's hand. *Day unto day*—One day tells God's glory to another. *No speech*—In every land the sun, moon, and stars tell the glory of God. *Line is gone out*—The rays of the heavenly bodies. *Tabernacle for the sun*—The sun's tent in the heavens. *A bridegroom*—One newly married and in the strength of youth. *Nothing hid from the heat*—All places feel the sun's heat. *The law of the Lord*—From the works the psalmist turns to the law of God. *Testimony*—The words or truths given in God's word. *The simple*—The ignorant who desire to learn knowledge. *Statutes*—Laws. *Rejoicing the heart*—The right heart is always glad to do right. *Clean*—Pure, without evil in it. *Judgments*—The acts of the Lord with regard to men. *By them*—By God's laws. *Presumptuous sins*—Those that are done openly in defiance of God's law. *My redeemer*—God who redeems us by his Son.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. God's works and word. Psa. 19. 1-14.  
 Tu. God's works are great. Eccl. 8. 11-17.  
 W. God's works are many. Psa. 104. 24-35.  
 Th. God's works for men. Psa. 8. 1-9.  
 F. God's word a light. Psa. 119. 97-112.  
 S. Christ the word. John 1. 1-14.  
 S. God praised for the word. Psa. 138. 1-8.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 142, S. S. Hymnal.

With joy we lift our eyes.

No. 149, S. S. Hymnal.

I sing the almighty power of God.

#### QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. **God in Nature**, v. 1-6. What in nature tells us of the glory of God? What teaches of the hand of a Creator? When is this revelation made? How far does this revelation reach? What does the New Testament tell us of the creation? Col. 1. 13-16. To what is the sun likened? Of what is it the source?
2. **God in Grace**, v. 7-14. What four attributes of the Word are here given? What benefits does it confer upon men? What does Solomon say of the fear of the Lord? Prov. 9. 10. Upon whom was the fear of the Lord enjoined as a duty? Deut. 10. 12. What value is given to the judgments of the Lord? What help is the word of the Lord in peril? What is the advantage of obeying God's law? From what sins do we need to be cleansed? Who knows our secret faults? Psa. 90. 8. How may we know our own sins? Rom. 3. 20. From what sins should we pray for deliverance? What prayer of the psalmist should we adopt?

#### TEACHINGS OF THE LESSON.

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. Knowledge of God's power through his works?
2. Knowledge of God's love through his word?
3. Knowledge of ourselves through his word?

THE LESSON CATECHISM.—(For the entire school). 1. What declares the glory of God? His works. 2. What is the law of the Lord? "Perfect, converting the soul." 3. What are the judgments of the Lord? "True and righteous altogether." 4. What does David ask of the Lord? "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." 5. What does David say the Lord is? "My strength, and my redeemer."

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—God the Creator.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **God in Nature**, v. 1-16. How is God revealed in nature? What does nature reveal concerning God? How does nature show the unity of God? What does the going forth of the sun reveal? To what extent may we know God from nature, apart from the Bible? What is said of God in nature in Rom. 1. 19, 20.
2. **God in Grace**, v. 7-14. What names are here given to the word of God, and what are their meanings? What is here said about the effects of God's word? Why is the word of God more precious than gold? What are the rewards of God's service here referred to?

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What declares the glory of God and shows the works of his hands? The heavens, or firmament. What story do they tell throughout all the earth? The story of God's greatness and wisdom. What did God make in the heavens? A tabernacle for the sun. What does the sun give to the earth? Light and heat. What is more perfect than God's works? God's law. [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.] What is God's law? Always right, pure, holy, and true. What does God ask of us? Obedience to his law.

#### WORDS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE.

God's word is true. God's word is just. God's word is holy. If you reject God's word you reject God. "Turn thou to thy God."

#### ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Traits of God's Law.

- I. A PERFECT LAW.  
The law of the Lord is perfect, v. 7.  
"A discerner of the thoughts," Heb. 4. 12.
- II. A WELL-FOUNDED LAW.  
The testimony... is sure, v. 7.  
"Impossible for God to lie," Heb. 6. 18.
- III. A JUST LAW.  
The statutes... are right, v. 8.  
"Just and right is he," Deut. 32. 4.
- IV. A PURE LAW.  
The commandment... is pure, v. 8.  
"Pure words, as silver tried," Psa. 12. 6.
- V. A STABLE LAW.  
Enduring forever, v. 9.  
"One jot... in no wise pass," Matt. 5. 18.

#### ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

God's Law and its Follower.

1. The follower of God, having his spiritual faculties quickened, can see God's glory and hear God's voice in nature, v. 1-6.



2. The follower of God, taking the law as his rule in life, finds his character renewed and built up by obedience. v. 7.

3. The follower of God, studying the law and meditating upon it, grows in wisdom. v. 7.

4. The follower of God finds his delight in obedience to God's law, which requires only what the well-constituted mind rejoices to give. v. 8.

5. The follower of God finds enlightenment and increased perception of spiritual things in the path of God's law. v. 8.

#### CATECHISM QUESTION.

7. How does the Scripture describe this knowledge?

It teaches that God knows every thought in man's heart, every word and every action.

Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.—Psalm 139. 2-4.

#### ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

An invalid German lady once received a visit of sympathy from the Queen of Sweden. She had heard much of her before, but the gentleness and kindness shown by the royal lady far exceeded the expectations formed of her, and in some verses addressed to her, the invalid remarks:

"The fairest jewel in thy crown  
Is the bright shining of thy love."

This may, perhaps, help us to understand the somewhat puzzling words of the Golden Text. It has been rendered differently in some versions, but there appears no doubt that the usually received translation gives the true sense of the original: "Thou hast magnified thy words above all thy name."

There are two ways of knowing a person—or, to speak more correctly, there are two degrees of knowing. We endeavor to make our young people acquainted with the various characters of Scripture, and with the great men and women of past generations. By reading their history, and in some cases their writings, a certain knowledge is obtained of them; so that to the questions, "Do you know Shakespeare?" "Do you know Homer?" a man may reply with some truth, "Yes, I do." In a similar manner we may know, or not know, the remarkable men and women of the present day. We have heard of their doings, their speeches, their opinions; we know them by report, by reputation, by name.

So with the knowledge of God. It is one thing to know him by name; it is another thing to know him by word. See how Moses felt when the "name" which he had known at a distance before was proclaimed by the word, the very voice, close at hand, of Jehovah. Exod. 34. 5-8. We hear of the greatness and power and providence of God, but little difference it makes in our daily life. And we shall see the meaning illustrated in the psalm chosen for to-day.

See what the word does:

*It converts the soul*—turns it right round. The name of one and another stands high in proportion to their words and deeds, and to what is manifest about them. In this way the invalid German poetess knew the Queen of Sweden, and when the royal visitor was announced, did not feel as though she were to meet an entire stranger.

When that voice reaches my heart, I can no more live to myself, but must give up heart and life to him who "died for me and rose again."

*It makes wise the simple.* Turning round we face a new way and new prospects, in which we are, as yet, unlearned; but through that word "the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Isa. 35. 8.

*It rejoices the heart.* I may admire a person whom I know by reputation, but it is the loving word to me that makes me glad.

*It enlightens the eyes.* Said the blind beggar who had been healed: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Problems insoluble before are open secrets to those who have heard the word. We know how much that has perplexed us may be made clear by personal interview and friendly conversation. So by the word of the Lord.

*It endures forever.* What I have heard of God may pass away from my mind, and influence me no more. But what he has spoken to my heart I can never forget.

*It is "true and righteous altogether"*—proved so in the daily experience of those who hear it.

*It is a warning word.* It is the voice of the guide, causing the traveller to turn his steps from the path of danger.

*It is a rewarding word*—as the "well done" of the teacher, the master, the general, the sovereign, the father—encouraging to still greater effort.

*It is a purifying word.* He who hears it longs and prays to have his heart, life, words, meditation, cleansed and rendered acceptable. No wonder, then, that

*It is a precious word*—"more to be desired than gold," etc. "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."

Have we heard the word, or are we content with knowing the Lord only by name?

## BEREAN METHODS.

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

Begin with a word-picture of the psalmist gazing up to the starry heavens, and looking at the rising sun. . . . Show what the heavens tell of God: 1. His glory; 2. His power; 3. His goodness; 4. The extent of his rule. . . . The words in this lesson naming God's word to men, and their meaning: 1. Law; 2. Testimony; 3. Statutes; 4. Commandment; 5. Fear; 6. Judgments. . . . The traits or attributes of God's law, as named in the Analytical and Biblical Outline. Let the references be searched out and read by members of the class. . . . What God's law is to God's followers, as shown in the Additional Practical Lessons. . . . The duties of the lesson: 1. See God in nature; 2. Study God's law; 3. Seek the character described in God's law; 4. Avoid the sins warned against by God's law, especially "secret sins" and "presumptuous sins;" 5. Keep the lips under God's law; 6. Have the heart in fellowship with God's law. . . . ILLUSTRATIONS. During the French Revolution, Jean Bor St. Andre, the Vendean revolutionist, said to a peasant, "I will have all your steeples pulled down that you may no longer have any object by which you may be reminded of your old superstitions." "But," replied the peasant, "you cannot help leaving us the stars."—*John Bates*. . . . "Where is your God? show him to me," said a proud heathen monarch to a devout Jew. "I cannot show you my God, but come with me and I will show you one of his messengers." Taking him to the open air he pointed to the unclouded sun, and said, "Look at that." "I cannot, it pains my eyes," said the monarch. "Then," said the Jew, "how could'st thou look on the face of him at whose rebuke the pillars of heaven tremble?"—*Plumer*.

## Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

**LESSON THOUGHT.** *God the great Maker.* Talk a little about praise. Whom do we praise, and why? Lead to the thoughts that we praise those who do great and good things. Tell of the building of Brooklyn Bridge, and of the praise the man received who was the chief builder. Show that if we praise a man for what he can do, we ought much more to praise the God who made the man.

## THINGS GOD HAS MADE.

Show specimens of, and name various things God has made. Lead from the thought of things upon the earth to the great earth itself. Give some idea of its vast extent, and then tell that this is only a very small part of the great universe. Read the first verse of the lesson, and talk about

the sun, moon, and stars. David says these all have a voice. Read verses 2 and 3. What do they say? Print "Praise be to God." Show a flower, and ask if flowers can speak. Speak of the beauty, fragrance, order of parts and life of the flower. These all tell of a divine maker. If the sun, moon, stars, and flowers all tell of God, what ought we to do?

## THINGS GOD HAS SAID.

How shall we hear God's voice to us? Teach that he speaks in all the things he has made, but he also speaks in a book, and David praised him for this book. Read verses 7 and 8. Ask what book it is that is worth more than gold, and let children help to tell why it is worth so much, showing that we should worship false gods, perhaps, as the heathen do, if we had never seen the Bible. Let several children recite Bible texts, and tell the story of a little boy whose Testament was taken away by a priest who threatened to punish him severely if he was found again with the word of God. But the boy had already learned many of the sweet verses by heart, and the priest could not take those away. We can have the Bible without any trouble. Let us praise God for it, by our words and by our lives. Print below words on the board, "For his works, and for his word." Sing "Wonderful words of life."

## Blackboard.

BY J. R. PHIPPS, ESQ.



## The law of the LORD is perfect!

**DIRECTIONS.** Make the clouds with white crayon, tinted with red. Draw the sun with yellow crayon. Everyone should memorize verse 14. Teach it to the little scholars in this way: [Touch the lips] "Let the words of my mouth, [touch the heart] and the meditation of my heart, [touch the eyes] be acceptable in thy sight, [touch the arms] O Lord, my strength, [touch the palms] and my redeemer." This is a good memory help.

## LESSONS FOR SEPTEMBER, 1884.

- SEPT. 7. Confidence in God. Psa. 27. 1-14.  
SEPT. 14. Waiting for the Lord. Psa. 40. 1-17.  
SEPT. 21. A song of praise. Psa. 103. 1-22.  
SEPT. 28. Third Quarterly Review.