

Sunday School

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FOR TEACHERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE



THE NATIVITY

—By Le Rolle

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SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 36

DECEMBER, 1902

No. 12

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About a year ago a well-written article was sent us for *The Banner*, "Should the Sunday School Close in the Winter," signed, "Sartor Resartus." As it was then too late for use at that season it was put on file for use in our October number. We have since learned that Sartor Resartus was that brave-souled young Christian worker, Mr. C. N. Evans, who since served his country in South Africa as faithfully as he served his God at home, and poured out the costly libation of his life upon the brown veldt of the Transvaal.

The amount of editorial forethought and forework in providing the lesson notes for the year are appreciated by few. The several churches prepare not merely their lesson notes a month in advance, but yearly issues of lesson helps and commentaries for the whole year. None of the churches surpass, none, we think, equal, the Sunday School literature of the greatest Methodist body in the world, the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States. Early in October came *The Illustrated Lesson Notes*, a volume of 400 octavo pages, reviewed in our last number. The same month came, first, *The Senior Scholar's Handbook*, neatly bound in leather, with lesson helps, maps, etc., for advanced students, then *The Young People's Lesson Helps*, a book of 233 pages, and *The First Lesson Book for Intermediates*, 208 pages, at the very low price of 15 cents each, by mail 20 cents. There is also a dainty *Golden Text Book*, with the lessons, Bible readings, facts about the Bible, in an elegant pamphlet at 30 cents per dozen.

The Christmas Guest.

REV. EDWARD A. RAND.

Cold, cold the night, white, white the
SNOW

Sharp flashing in the icy moon ;
And who as host will shelter give
My Lord and King who cometh soon?

No room for Him in all these homes
That are ablaze with festal cheer !
A palace each, but not one couch
For Him whose advent draweth near !

No host, no house ? Rise up, my soul,
Thou hast a chamber in this breast !
Make clean the room, set wide the door ;
Thy King shall be thy Christmas guest !

OUR PERIODICALS.

The best, the cheapest, the most entertaining,
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Methodist Book and Publishing House,

C. W. COATES,
2176 St. Catherine St.,
Montreal, Que.

TORONTO.

S. F. HURST,
Meth. Book Room,
Halifax, N.S.

Sunday School Banner

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor

TORONTO, DECEMBER, 1902

Young People's Day.

Bridge Street Church, Belleville, was well to the fore in celebrating it. The morning services began with a sunrise meeting at seven o'clock, followed by a praise and thanksgiving service at ten, and the customary morning service at eleven, the pastor, Rev. Dr. Crothers, preaching on the appropriate topic, "Youthful Dreams." At 7 p.m. a very bright and attractive platform meeting was held, at which addresses in reference to the special topic of the day were made by Rev. Dr. Crothers, Mr. William Johnson, and Mr. C. P. Holton. The report of the Intermediate and Junior Leagues showed a very healthy and gratifying state of affairs. Mr. William Johnson spoke on "Social Work and Reading Rooms," and his address showed him to possess a very deep acquaintance with and interest in his subject. The church of

the future must be open seven days in the week, and must look after strangers in the community with quite as much zeal as the charitable organizations look after the poor and needy. That is missionary work in its truest sense, and is being done in many places. Speaking of Bridge Street Church, with its library and reading-rooms, as a case in point, Mr. Johnson paid a tribute to the memory of the late Mrs. Nathan Jones, whose abiding influence had been felt in the work which had been multiplying and growing in efficiency from year to year, and which she was the direct cause of having started. Mr. C. P. Holton spoke on "Home and Foreign Mission Work." The home mission work of the E. L. of C. E., as enumerated by him, showed that the young people of Bridge Street Church were a great power for good in Belleville, while the fact that between the young people of Bridge Street Church and their conferrers of Picton, and the students of Albert College, they maintained a missionary, Dr. Wrinch, who labored for the Master in the North-West amongst the Indians, and whose expenses were met by the three societies mentioned above, shows that they are progressive and alive to the needs of the work.—Belleville Intelligencer, 13th October.

The Church versus The Saloon.

To be a child of God is to be an enemy of the saloon.

The stain of bar-room blood dishonors Christian government.

Any alliance with the liquor traffic will be an unholy alliance.

The church should see that civil law be brought in harmony with divine law.

To evangelize the ballot-box is the high commission given Christian citizenship.

"No more license, but suppression," is the battle-cry voiced by every Christian tongue, and heard in every Christian home.

The church is the divinely commissioned leader in all moral and social reform.

Shall saloonists dominate our churches, our schools, our culture, our enterprise, our capital, and subordinate the rights and interests of a patriotic and righteous majority to the lustful gainings of a selfish minority?

When the pulpit seeks to make men

good, and leaves it to law to make them bad, the work of the church is undone.

Rev. Dr. Rankin writes: "Whiskey must go; and if every preacher in the State will do his duty, the time of its going is not far off."

The Canadian pulpit is commissioned to go up and conquer for God the temple of Canadian manhood.

If God has instituted civil government for moral ends, the church should see that it is not used for immoral purposes.

Rum not only pulls the church from men, but pulls men from the church.

If a man's name has the right to be on a saloon-license petition, it has no right on the church list.

A license ballot has no place in the hands of a Christian man.

The temperance reform stands to-day "upon the heights of answered prayer."

"Forward!" is the word that comes ringing along the lines from the divine side of the conflict.

Every vote for the saloon is a vote against the church. Therefore vote for prohibition.

General Conference Echoes.

"Haven't they got the Western fever bad?" was the remark of several as they went home from the gathering in Bridge Street Sunday School rooms, after listening to the Rev. Dr. Crothers and Mr. Wm. Johnson for an hour dilate on the General Conference, Methodist Statistics, Winnipeg, Wheat, "The Rockies," Vancouver, etc. Both gentlemen were in their best form, and gave as interesting address as ever the walls of that historic church have echoed to. While it was evident that they must have been amongst the most diligent in attendance to their duties at the General Conference, and kept their ears open to what was said, they also had their eyes busy taking in outside scenes. If all the two hundred and ninety-eight delegates to the General Conference, who came from between the extremes of Newfoundland and Japan have become possessed of the West as Dr. Crothers and Mr. Johnson have, and talk about it as they did, the trek from the States of Minnesota, Dakota, Kansas, and Nebraska to Canada will be a small affair, as compared to what these delegates will accomplish in attracting people to "the granary of the world," as the now-famous Canadian arch in London termed our wheat-belt.—Belle-ville Intelligencer.

Methodist Magazine and Review for November.

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This number maintains its reputation for up-to-date interest. The Jew-baiting in Roumania and elsewhere is fully treated by the Editor, and in an article by the Rev. J. C. Seymour, on "Justice to the Jew," and one by the Rev. Dr. Harlan on "The Jew in Prophecy and History,"—a symposium of great current interest. A character-sketch of Lady Henry Somerset, who is soon to visit Canada, is also of current interest. Among the illustrated articles are, "The Highlands of Ontario," "The Daily Work of a Missionary in India," "In Dale-carlia," "Masterpieces of French Painting," and a character-sketch of the wise and witty Sydney Smith, all well illustrated. There are also articles on "The Earth's Beginnings," "Sketches of the General Conference at Winnipeg," by Dr. Chown, "The Solar Slave" and a short sketch of G. Campbell Morgan. The General Conference and other timely topics are discussed by the Editor. In this number begins a story of adventure by sea and land, of absorbing interest, by Frank Bullen. November and December numbers will be given free to new subscribers. Two or more copies to schools, \$1.60 each. Many schools have taken from two to ten copies of this magazine as being better and cheaper than library books.

Toronto: William Briggs. Montreal: C. W. Coates. Halifax: S. F. Huestis. \$2.00 a year; \$1.00 for six months.

An Offering or An Assessment?

Contributions from the children of the Sunday School should be made as much an offering to God as those from older members of the Sunday School; but how often the money given by the young people is appropriately designated as "collection"! While nobody ever says in so many words that an assessment is made on the children, there is a widespread feeling that "a penny" must go with every child. Away with such an idea! Make the giving a holy offering to God, and fewer pennies (but more money) will be found when the treasurer of the school counts up the amounts.—S. S. Times.

PUBLISHER'S ANNOUNCEMENT.

Fair Play for Canadian Papers by Canadian Schools is asked.

BECAUSE they are calculated to foster a healthy national spirit in our young people which no foreign periodical, however good otherwise, is likely to do.

BECAUSE they are as cheap and as large and as well printed, illustrated, and edited as any imported papers.

The Sunday School publications of the Methodist Book and Publishing House are edited by a Canadian whose ability as an author is recognized at home and abroad, and are produced by Canadian workmen. They treat of subjects of interest to Canadians generally. They are illustrated more fully than most other periodicals. They are as good value in every way you look at them—quality, quantity, and price—as any periodicals to be obtained.

Should we not have fair play? and if a preference is shown, should we not have the preference?

The Methodist Magazine and Review for 1903.

The December number of The Methodist Magazine and Review completes the fifty-sixth volume and twenty-eighth year of its publication. It was established to supply pure and healthy reading matter to our homes, and to encourage native talent and a love for elevating literature. Its columns during the past twenty-eight years bear witness how faithfully both of these purposes have been carried out. There is little doubt that many of the articles given to its readers would not have been penned, had it not been for the facilities which this magazine afforded for giving the thoughts written to the world. There is also little doubt that these and other articles, the bright pictures, wholesome fiction and poetry have brightened many an hour and given pleasure to thousands of readers. Nothing has appeared that would harm, but everything has been of

an intellectual and elevating character and of an exceeding high literary standard.

In these days of cheap and often pernicious literature every family should supply its members with wholesome reading matter, and encourage them to read it. You may be sure if what is good is not supplied what is not good will be sure to find its way in. We cannot keep out reading matter of some kind. Let us see to it that our reading matter is as wholesome as our food. The Methodist Magazine and Review can be safely given into the hands of every member of the home with confidence that they will receive nothing but good from its perusal.

Its articles on travel, invention, social progress, missionary effort, character-sketches of notable men and women, poetry and fiction, and its bright illustrations will refine and elevate the tastes of its readers and make them better citizens, better sons and daughters, better husbands and wives than the light and often trashy popular periodicals which are so largely taken.

See illustrated announcement for 1903.

WILLIAM BRIGGS,
Publisher.

Price to schools for two copies or more \$1.60. Many schools have taken from two to ten copies for circulation, as being cheaper and better than books.

Special Offer to Methodist Magazine and Review Subscribers.

Any subscriber to The Magazine, who will send us, with his renewal, a new subscription, either at the full \$2.00 rate or in connection with The Guardian or Wesleyan at the club rate \$1.75 will receive postpaid a copy of either of the following interesting stories by Dr. Withrow:

LAWRENCE TEMPLE,
BARBARA HECK,
VALERIA,
NEVILLE TRUEMAN.

These books are sold at 75 cents, and have had a very extensive sale. For each new subscriber obtained as above one of these books will be sent free. The new subscriber also will receive the November and December numbers of this year free, in addition to the numbers of 1903.

Onward.

Our Senior Paper

cannot be excelled for the money. Profusely illustrated. Eight pages per week, with special holiday number of sixteen pages. For 1903 arrangements have been made for a serial story, "All He Knew," by the author of "Helen's Babies," also "The Circuit Rider," by the late Dr. Eggleston, and an illustrated story by Dr. Withrow. Any one of these in book form would cost more than a year's subscription to Onward. In addition a series of portraits and sketches of distinguished Canadians, with stories of travel and adventure, poetry, and anecdote. Short lesson notes bearing on the International Series are a feature of each issue.

Pleasant Hours.

Our Intermediate Paper

Four pages every week of bright, original and carefully selected reading matter, and plentifully illustrated. A stirring serial of the days of Wesley will appear, and will bring before its readers a vivid picture of early Methodism of the Old Land, especially its trials and triumphs in Cornwall, with smuggling adventures and lots of life and "go," such as young people, and older ones, too, will thoroughly enjoy. Short serials by the author of "Sun Lake" will also be given, and other stories. The serial story is probably the most effective help towards retaining the interest of the scholars and securing their regular attendance. Short lesson notes, suitable for intermediate scholars, and bearing on the International Series, are given in each issue.

Sunbeam and Happy Days.

Our Junior Papers

Four pages of simple stories in short words and sentences adapted to the minds of the junior classes of our schools and copiously illustrated. The two papers are each issued fortnightly, one alternating with the other, and when both are taken forming a weekly paper. They may be taken separately or together, but if a weekly paper is desired both must be

taken. They contain lesson notes suitable for junior classes.

The Sunday School Banner.

Our Teachers' Help

This journal has for thirty-six years been recognized as the leading Sunday School Teachers' Help of this country. It has been enlarged and improved, and today is generally admitted to be unsurpassed as a lesson commentary for those having but a limited time to give to the preparation of the lesson. Nothing important is overlooked, but condensed and put in such a manner as to be readily understood by the teacher and communicated to the scholar. The Editorial Department contains suggestions and thoughts of much value to teachers and superintendents. The infant class teachers' department is not excelled by any publication.

The Berean Senior Quarterly.

Senior Scholars' Help

These advanced lesson notes, issued quarterly, are thoroughly adapted to the senior classes and Home Department of our Sunday School work. They contain a vast amount of general information regarding the geography, persons, utensils, customs of the people, and many other things that throw light on the lessons of the quarter. These notes are very instructive and interesting to those who read the Scriptures for pleasure only, and are likely to promote a much enlarged use of the Bible in the homes, because of the added interest the knowledge of these circumstances gives. Forty-eight pages per quarter, with maps and illustrations.

The Berean Intermediate Quarterly.

Intermediate Scholars' Help

This quarterly publication, which has been enlarged and improved, contains the full text of the lessons, responsive review service, questions and catechism for use by the scholars in the class and school-room. The enlargement from 16 to 24 pages, with colored cover (28 in all), places this important adjunct to the successful school as the cheapest and best publication of its class to be obtained.

The Berean Leaf.

Issued monthly, consists of four pages, containing text of the lesson, with questions and Golden Text. It is similar in character to the "Intermediate Quar-

terly, but does not contain the Responsive Review Service. Many schools, however, consider the monthly part as being more economical than the quarterly, as it is not so likely to be lost before its usefulness is over. We strongly commend the "Quarterly" as much the better value for the money.

Dewdrops.

Infant Class Help

Our little weekly of four pages for the infant classes, has lesson notes adapted to infant minds, an interestingly written Bible story, and is beautifully illustrated and printed in colored inks. Well adapted to interest and instruct the little people.

The Quarterly Review Service.

Published every three months for use on Review Sunday, the last Sunday in each quarter, by schools which do not use the "Intermediate Quarterly." Contains Review Questions, Responsive Readings, Hymns, etc. The "Intermediate Quarterly" includes this service.

Letter from a Veteran Sunday School Worker.

THE Rev. William Herridge, one of the oldest and most honored ministers of the Methodist Church, has for many years taken a profound interest in Sunday School work. He has established valuable prizes at Victoria University to encourage the study by the young ministers of improved Sunday School methods. He writes as follows on the need of the hour in our Sunday School work:

Please accept my hearty thanks for your kindness in sending me the printed copy of your plea before the General Conference for more aggressive work in our Sunday Schools. I most heartily sympathize with you in your important work, and with the views expressed in that paper. I am waiting the published proceedings of the General Conference to learn to what extent it has gone in granting your request, but I do hope the new committee or board has very extensive powers in dealing with the whole question of Sunday School work.

Our defect has been in our ministers

not giving sufficient time and labour to the child: a of their charge, and in not directing the Sunday School work of their charges, as it is necessary they should do, and must do, if we are to get a firmer hold on the intellects and hearts of our juveniles. The present tendency is in the right direction, but its progress should be quickened. It seems to me that we may learn more on Sunday School questions and work in England than from the United States. Large Sunday School conventions are not so popular with them as with us, but for real solid work they are in advance of us. The morning session of the Sunday School affords twice the time for teaching than our teachers have; while the invariable practice of the Sunday School at the close of its morning session being present at the public service affords the preacher an excellent opportunity for giving religious instruction, such as our ministers have not.

Have you noticed the large preponderance of Sunday School scholars over the number of communicants in the churches of the Old Land, and the preponderance of communicants over the number of Sunday School scholars on this continent? The accompanying figures will show this to be the case. The statistics relating to Methodism in England and to the churches of the United States, are principally from the United States Methodist Year Book of 1901.

The number of church members and Sunday School scholars in England and Wales, the United States, and Canada:

Denomination	Communi- cants	S. S. Scholars
Anglican, England and Wales	1,920,140	2,410,209
Baptist	353,634	503,492
Congregationalist	419,049	707,904
Presbyterian	73,349	85,930
Primitive Methodist	184,523	456,612
Wesleyan Methodist	548,924	964,172
Totals	3,470,519	5,126,319
M. E. Church, North U. S.	2,886,889	2,676,297
M. E. Church, South U. S.	1,482,665	811,579
Presbyterian, N. A.	2,110,431	1,806,161
Congregationalist	628,234	746,904
Anglicans, U. S.	680,205	434,560
Canada, Methodist	282,259	270,140
Totals	8,070,173	6,805,641

These figures were arranged two years ago, and may be relied upon as far as they go. It will be seen that while in England and Wales the Sunday School scholars outnumber the communicants by 1,646,300, in the United States and Canada the communicants outnumber the Sunday School scholars by 1,264,532.

But I must close. In doing so I must say that I think the literature you have provided for our Sunday Schools has been first-class in quality, and, I trust, with your many years' experience, the future will be increasingly successful. For several years before the Union of 1883 I had taken *The Methodist Magazine*, am taking it to-day, and never appreciated it more highly than I am doing this year.

Again wishing you great success in efforts to win youthful hearts to the Saviour,

Yours faithfully,

WM. HERRIDGE.

A New Serial.

With the November number of *The Methodist Magazine* and *Review* begins a new serial of great strength and beauty by that distinguished writer, Frank Bullen, author of "With Christ at Sea." It is a story of life among the lowly, and of stirring and romantic adventures by sea and land. It will run through the greater part of 1903. New subscribers will receive the November and December numbers free. We ought to have at least a thousand new subscribers.

Of "The Cruise of the *Cachalot*," by the same author, Kipling says:

"It is immense—there is no other word. I've never read anything that equals it in its deep-sea wonder and mystery, nor do I think that any book before has so completely covered the business of whale-fishing, and at the same time given such real and new sea pictures. I congratulate you most heartily. It's a new world that you've opened the door to."

We are glad to observe that the Metropolitan Epworth League, Toronto, announces a series of weekly studies and addresses on such subjects as "North-West Missions," by N. W. Rowell, K.C.; "Old Testament Prophets," by Professor McLaughlin; "How and What to Read," by Dr. Milligan; "Music," by Dr. Torrington; "Piety, Patriotism, and Politics," by J. R. L. Starr, B.A.; "Business Methods," by Mr. Chester D. Massey, and a special series of missionary topics by Miss McGuffin, Mrs. Sparling, Miss Cavers, and others. We anticipate great benefit to the League and its friends from this series.

The Wise Men.

BY CLINTON SCOLLARD.

The Wise Men wander across the world,
(O the Star in the sky!)
Bearing their godly gifts of gold,
(How the low wind whispereth by?
Whispereth
Of birth, not death,
With joy in its lifted cry.)

The Wise Men come unto Bethlehem;
(O the Star in the sky!)
A star is the beacon that guideth them.
(How the soft wind hasteneth by!
Hasteneth
The while it saith,
"O the Light of the world is nigh!")

The Wise Men kneel at an infant's feet,
(O the Star in the sky!)
And the loving mother smileth sweet,
(While the wind it hurrieth by,—
Hurrieth
As it gladly saith,
"O the hope of the world is high!")

The Wise Men rise, and they go their ways;
(O the Star in the sky!)
And all this happened in the ancient days.
(But the wind still gladdeneth by,—
Gladdeneth
At the death of Death,
That Life hath the victory!)
—S. S. Times.

Great Babylon.

Herman Hillprecht, who has been excavating mounds in Nippur, states that he will devote his life to deciphering the 23,000 tablets found while excavating. He said to a New York Sun representative recently:

"The contents of the tablets will altogether change the ideas of the world as to the state of civilization and knowledge of that early people. It will be seen that they knew, 2300 B.C., that the earth was a globe, and that their astronomers took the same view of celestial phenomena as we now take.

"Nippur is, in fact, sixteen cities, one built above the other. We have by no means reached the lower of the buried cities. Much of the Temple Library has been brought here, and it is now in the museum of the university here. The temple in that early period was not only

the place of religious worship, it was also the school, the college.

"Within the last four months our most important discoveries were made. The day before I embarked on my homeward voyage I had in my hand a tablet upon which were the minutest astronomical calculations as to the constellation Scorpion.

"One of the most interesting tablets is mathematical. The Babylonians, in the multiplication table, for instance, went far beyond us. Our multiplication table stops at 12; 12 times 12 is the highest. The Babylonian tables went up to 60. There children might have sung 60 times 60 in reciting the multiplication table. Indeed, for astronomical purposes, they carried the table out to 1,300; that is,

the results of multiplication up to 1,300 times 1,300 were tabulated. They wanted to know at once the result of large calculations. They did not want to be retarded in their work by arithmetical problems; that was why they extended the table so far.

"The Babylonian children would have been wonders in our view. Not only did they have to learn arithmetical tables carried out to four figures, but they also had to learn two languages, the Babylonian and the Samaritan, one a learned, the other a colloquial, language; and that in the schools of the lowest grades, and not as our children learn Latin in the high school, by the mouthful, but so thoroughly as to be able to speak and write them."

LESSONS AND GOLDEN TEXTS—FOURTH QUARTER.

Studies in the Old Testament from Moses to Samuel.

LESSON 1. Oct. 5.—**JOSHUA ENCOURAGED.** Josh. 1: 1-11. *Commit vs. 8, 9.* (Read Josh. chs. 1, 2.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Josh. 1: 9. Be strong and of a good courage.

2. Oct. 12.—**CROSSING THE JORDAN.** Josh. 3: 9-17. Study Josh. 3: 9 to 4: 7. *Commit vs. 15-17.* (Read Josh. 3: 1 to 5: 12.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Isa. 43: 2. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.

3. Oct. 19.—**THE FALL OF JERICHO.** Josh. 6: 12-20. Study Josh. 6: 8-20. *Commit v. 20.* (Read Josh. 5: 13 to 11: 23.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Heb. 11: 30. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.

4. Oct. 26.—**JOSHUA AND CALER.** Josh. 14: 5-15. *Commit vs. 12-14.* (Read Josh. ch. 14 and Num. 14: 1-24.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Josh. 14: 14. He wholly followed the Lord.

5. Nov. 2.—**CITIES OF REFUGE.** Josh. 20: 1-9. *Commit vs. 1-4.* (Read Psa. 46.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Psa. 46: 1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

6. Nov. 9.—**JOSHUA'S PARTING ADVICE.** Josh. 24: 14-25. *Commit vs. 14, 15.* (Read Josh. ch. 24.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Josh. 24: 15. Choose you this day whom ye will serve.

7. Nov. 16.—**THE TIME OF THE JUDGES.** Judg. 2: 7-16. Study Judg. 2: 7-19. *Commit vs. 18, 19.* (Read Judg. chs. 2-5.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Psa. 107: 19. They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.

LESSON 8. Nov. 23.—**WORLD'S TEMPERANCE LESSON.** Isa. 23: 17. Study Isa. 23: 1-13. *Commit v. 7.* (Read Isa. 23.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Isa. 23: 7. They also have erred through wine.

9. Nov. 30.—**GIDSON AND THE THREE HUNDRED.** Judges 7: 1-8. Study Judg. 7: 1-8, 16-21. *Commit vs. 19-21.* **GOLDEN TEXT:** Ps. 118: 8. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

10. Dec. 7.—**RUTH AND NAOMI.** Ruth 1: 16-22. *Commit vs. 16, 17.* (Read Ruth chs. 1-4.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Rom. 12: 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another.

11. Dec. 14.—**THE BOY SAMUEL.** 1 Sam. 3: 6-14. Study 1 Sam. 3: 1-14. *Commit vs. 7-10.* (Read 1 Sam. chs. 1-3.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** 1 Sam. 3: 9. Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.

12. Dec. 21.—**SAMUEL THE JUDGE.** 1 Sam. 7: 2-13. *Commit vs. 8-10.* (Read 1 Sam. chs. 4, 7.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** 1 Sam. 7: 9. Prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only.

Or, **CHRISTMAS LESSON.** Luke 2: 8-20. *Commit vs. 10, 11.* (Read Isa. 9: 1-7; Heb. 1: 1.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Luke 2: 11. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

13. Dec. 23.—**REVIEW.** Commit the Golden Texts for the Quarter. Read Lessons for the Quarter. **GOLDEN TEXT:** Psa. 90: 1. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

ORDER OF SERVICES—FOURTH QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

I. SILENCE.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. (Psa. 145, 8-10, 17-21.)

SUPP. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

SCHOOL. The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.

SUPP. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.

SCHOOL. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

SUPP. The Lord is high unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

SCHOOL. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

SUPP. The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

SCHOOL. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

III. SINGING.

IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.

V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.

VI. SINGING.

CLOSING SERVICE.

I. SINGING.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. (Psa. 84, 8, 10.)

SUPP. O taste and see that the Lord is good.

SCHOOL. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

SUPP. Many are the afflictions of the righteous:

SCHOOL. But the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

International Bible Lessons.

FOURTH QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

LESSON X. Ruth and Naomi.

[Dec. 7.

GOLDEN TEXT. Be kindly affectioned one to another. ROM. 12. 10.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

Ruth 1. 16-22. [Commit to memory verses 16, 17.]

[Read Ruth chapters 1-4.]

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

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

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

19 So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Na-o'mi?

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

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

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

Time.—Variously estimated from B. C. 1222 to B. C. 1180. **Places.**—The land of Moab, east of the Dead Sea. Bethlehem in Judea.

Home Readings.

- M. Sad bereavements. Ruth 1. 1-10.
 Tu. Ruth and Naomi. Ruth 1. 14-22.
 W. Ruth and Boaz. Ruth 2. 1-12.
 Th. Kindness of Boaz. Ruth 2. 13-23.
 F. Jonathan and David. 1 Sam. 20. 11-17.
 S. Brotherly love. 1 John 4. 7-21.
 S. Inseparable love. Rom. 8. 31-39.

Lesson Hymns.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 131.

Blest be the tie that binds
 Our hearts in Christian love;

AMERICAN REVISED VERSION.*

16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; 17 where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. 18 And when she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.

19 So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and the women said, Is this Naomi? 20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty: why call ye me Naomi, seeing Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, who returned out of the country of Moab; and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

The fellowship of kindred minds
 Is like to that above.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 372.

Wonderful story of love!
 Tell it to me again;
 Wonderful story of love;
 Wake the immortal strain!

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 328.

Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
 It is not night if thou be near;
 Oh, may no earth-born cloud arise,
 To hide thee from thy servant's eyes!

*The American Revision, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

Questions for Senior Scholars.

- Who went to the land of Moab with Naomi?
 Why did they leave their own country?
 Who married Ruth in Moab?
 Why did Naomi return to her former home in Bethlehem?
 Who accompanied her when she left Moab?
 Who insisted upon returning with her?
 How did she show her strength of affection?
 What sacrifice did her choice involve?
 Could Ruth foresee any advantage in going with Naomi?
 What would probably be her duty to Naomi?
 When did Naomi cease insisting upon Ruth's return to Moab?
 To what place did they come?
 How did the people of Bethlehem show their affection and esteem for Naomi?
 What does the name "Naomi" mean?
 What did she ask them to call her?
 To what did she attribute her sorrows?
 At what time of the year did they reach Bethlehem?

Questions for Intermediate Scholars.

- Ruth's Request* (verses 16, 17).
 Who was the other Moabite woman who went back to her home?
 Who were the two men, the husbands of these women?
 What had Naomi told the women to do?
 What had occurred to make Naomi want to return to Bethlehem?
 In what country did this occur?
 Why had Naomi and her family come there?
- Ruth's Resolution* (verses 18, 19).
 Who tried still to have her go back?
 Why did Naomi desire it?
 Do you suppose that, after all, she was glad Ruth would not go?
 What is said of her determination?
 Will good people sometimes thoughtlessly discourage us?
 What is necessary to continue an earnest Christian life?
 Can you give Ruth's beautiful words?
- Ruth's Reward* (verses 20-22).
 How did the people of Bethlehem receive them?
 What great honor came to Ruth?
 Whom did she marry, and who was a great descendant of hers?
 Who was her greatest descendant?
 In what town were both David and Jesus born?
 Of what nation was Ruth?

Questions for Younger Scholars.

- Who was Ruth? *A Moabite woman.*
 Who was Naomi? *A woman of Bethlehem in Judah.*
 Why was Naomi in the land of Moab? *Because of a famine in Canaan.*
 Where was her husband? *He was dead.*
 What were the names of her sons? *Mahlon and Chilion.*
 Whom did they marry? *Orpah and Ruth.*
 What became of the sons? *They died.*
 Where did Naomi wish to go? *To her old home.*
 Who went a little way with her? *Ruth and Orpah.*
 What did Orpah do? *She went back to her people.*
 What did Ruth do? *She went with Naomi.*
 Why? *Because she loved her.*
 What did Ruth find? *A good home in Bethlehem.*
 Who was her great-grandson? *King David.*
 Who was born in her family line? *The Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Lesson Catechism.

(For the entire school.)

- To what land did Ruth belong? *To the land of Moab.*
- With whom did she leave the land of Moab? *With Naomi, her mother-in-law.*
- What did she say of Naomi's people, the Israelites? *"Thy people shall be my people."*
- Whom did she choose for her God? *The Lord God of Israel.*
- Who were afterward descendants of Ruth? *David, the king, and Jesus Christ.*
- What is the GOLDEN TEXT? *"Be kindly"* etc.

The Church Catechism.

- Upon what is true religion founded? *True religion is founded upon the knowledge of God and of his will revealed to man.*
 John 17. 3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.
 Romans 10. 17. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

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THE LESSON OUTLINE.

Friendship Human and Divine.

I. CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP.

Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. v. 16.

Very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful. 2 Sam. 1. 26. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. 1 Pet. 3. 8.

II. STEADFAST FRIENDSHIP.

She was steadfastly minded. v. 18.

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Prov. 17. 17.

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Prov. 18. 24.

III. THE BLESSINGS OF AFFLICTION.

The Lord hath brought me home empty. v. 21.

Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope. Rom. 5. 3, 4.

Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Prov. 3. 12.

IV. CHANGES OF FORTUNE.

I went out full . . . home again empty. v. 21.

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich, in that he is made low. James 1. 9, 10.

Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. Psa. 119. 67.

V. THE FRIENDSHIP OF GOD.

The Lord hath brought me. v. 21.

All things work together for good to them that love God. Rom. 8. 28.

The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. Prov. 10. 22.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

The book of Ruth, from which our lesson is taken, is one of the gems of literature—the loveliest of love stories, an “exquisite little idyl,” a picture of social life in rural Judah during the early part of the period of the Judges. It is emphatically a *story*, but unquestionably true. It was not written as a chronicle immediately after the occurrence of the events narrated; Matt. 1. 5 gives a hint as to the early date of the events, while the opening sentence of the book itself comes down later than the age of the Judges, and the allusions to David and to customs “in former times” imply the comparative lateness of the writing. The authorship is unknown. As a historic document it doubtless had value because of the bit of genealogy in its last five verses, which connect Pharez, the son of Judah, with David, the son of Jesse, the line passing through Boaz, the husband of Ruth. But it had greater value, even to the Hebrew reader, because of the sheer beauty of its incidents and the exquisite simplicity with which they are recorded. Then, too, it contains a simple but direct lesson on the kind providence of God which rewarded the heroine’s love and faith. Our lesson is fitly introduced by the preceding verses. Elimelech, of Bethlehem, with his wife and two sons, had migrated to Moab. The name of his wife was Naomi, and of his sons Mahlon and Chilion. In Moab, Elimelech and his two sons had died, and Naomi in her bereavement turns to her home. When she had left there was a famine in Palestine; now plenty had returned. The widows of her two sons journeyed with her. When they came to the border Naomi lovingly bade them farewell, and gave them her best wishes for a renewal of happy days. But they loved her and could not bear to leave her. Naomi felt it to be her duty to urge their return. “They lifted up their voice, and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law,” and returned, “but Ruth clave unto her.” After further urgency on Naomi’s part our lesson begins. The whole book should be studied and our pupils be made familiar with the entire story.

Verses 16, 17. *Entreat me not to leave thee.* “Insist not on me forsaking thee.” *Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge.* This refers rather to the nightly halts than to the end of the journey. Ruth’s love for Naomi was genuine. She preferred privation and fatigue and the perils of travel with her mother-in-law to prosperity in Moab without her. *Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.* There is no verb

in the original, and one wonders that at least the American Revisers did not supply the copula “is.” Already Ruth claims affinity with Naomi’s race, and a share in the promises made by Naomi’s God. *Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried.* We of the West are apt to pass over such a phrase as this as a mere rhetorical extension of the thought already given. But we have only faint appreciation of the intensity of love for Fatherland which most

aces of humanity have had. The Chinese laundryman who economizes so that his remains may be taken back to China for burial; the Jew who toils and starves through decades in hope that in leisurely old age he may reach Jerusalem and be buried within sight of its beloved walls, are types of a passion which was almost world-wide until in these later years it has been destroyed by the craze for wealth. It was a solemn renunciation of the land of her nativity, a formal naturalization in Israel, that Ruth declared by these words. *The Lord* ["Jehovah"] *do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.* This was the most solemn oath that a Semite could take. "So" stands in misty indefiniteness as a kind of cloudy veil, two thirds concealing and one third revealing whatever horrid infliction could by dramatic sign be represented or hinted.—*Morison.* "More also" is added for intensity. She speaks of Death as "the great Divider."

18. *When she saw* [Naomi perceived] *that she* [that is, Ruth] *was steadfastly minded* [that is, determined] *to go with her* [that is, with Naomi], *then she left* ["off"] *speaking unto her.* Well did old *Andrey Fuller* write: "Ruth was a fixed star."

19. *They two went.* Two lonely women, through a country populous but self-interested. No strange sight, and therefore unregarded. But strange was the providence that marked this unnoticed pair for immortality in literature. Through the mountain passes of Abarim, out of the territory of Moab into that of Reuben, they left Mount Nebo on their right, and, descending by steep and stony gullies into the hot green valley of the Jordan, they crossed by ford, and climbed (probably) that rocky road which travelers from the East to Jerusalem and Bethlehem still take—the "Bloody Way," made famous to Christendom by our Lord's parable of the good Samaritan. *It came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them.* "Got into commotion about them." The same phrase is rendered in 1 Kings 1. 45 and 1 Sam. 4. 5 "rang again." *They* ["the women"] *said, Is this Naomi?* Ten years older than when she left, marked by sorrow as her adopted child, travel-worn and

weary—the familiar features still were there. We can readily supply other questions sure to be asked, about Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion, and most of all about Ruth. "Who is this beautiful girl?" Just as readily can we supply the familiar inference: "They have come back poor."

20. *Call me not Naomi* [which means Pleasant], *call me Mara* [which means Bitter]: *for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.* The conditions of town life in ancient Palestine are not familiarly known by us. But when this woman and her youthful companion walked through the crooked streets of Bethlehem in search of rooms for rent doubtless the humble people whom she accosted were astonished to find her in old age come down to their level. Bethlehem was a little town, so that the name and faces of the residents would be known by all.

21. *I went out full, and the Lord* ["Jehovah"] *hath brought me home again empty.* Husband, sons, and goods she took to Moab; she comes back without any. In profound reverence she attributes this change of circumstances to Jehovah. *Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord* ["Jehovah"] *hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?* One of the commentators says that in using these words Naomi was walking on the edge of a theological precipice where it is not needful that we should accompany her. If she made a mistake, however, it was probably in interpreting the mournful facts of her life as intrinsically evil. Certainly she was not mistaken in attributing them to the Lord. "Our times are in his hand."

22. The first section of this verse is a recapitulation of the narrative by which the writer gets ready for the next part of the story. The date of the return is *the beginning of barley harvest*, which is about the beginning of April or possibly the very last of March. Close after the barley crop came the wheat crop.

The rest of this story should be made familiar to the class. At least every member should read it all during the week preceding its study in class. They will be surprised by its beauty and charm.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

The book of Ruth, from which this lesson is taken, has but one aim, and that is the lineage and descent of David. It is a beautiful picture of Jewish home life built on Moabitish soil. The two characters around which the incidents

of the lesson center afford many beautiful and helpful suggestions and inferences.

Great reverses have come to the family. Not only is it impoverished, but it has been ravaged by death; and now the three women are left to

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face a serious and forbidding state of affairs. In the determination of the mother-in-law to return to her native land an opportunity is afforded for the exhibit of the lovely and lovable character of Ruth. Considering the age of the product, as well as the origin, it is a little surprising that so much of the cultured, the refined, the tender, should appear in this life.

Ruth exhibits a type of constancy that can only arise from one of the purest and most lofty and self-sacrificing minds that it is the fortune of man to find. She is apprised of what she is leaving, the scene of her childhood, around which the incidents and memories of her girlish life cluster, the friends who have become a part of her life by interweaving their lives into the fiber of her own soul. She also must appreciate that to which she goes. It is not a return to ease, luxury, and comfort, for they are empty and are only journeying to emptiness. All the surroundings are strange, and a measure of antagonism exists toward her nation. She is to make new friends, and her mother-in-law can promise her nothing in the way of recognition. She will be compelled to renounce her gods and take on the Israelitish vows and professions.

All these things might have deterred her from journeying with her mother-in-law. But notwithstanding all this, together with the persistent entreaty of Naomi, we can almost hear her plaintive plea, "Entreat me not to leave thee." It is a mild, persuasive, prevailing voice, for the depths of a loving soul are poured with it, so that Naomi is silent.

Loving devotion overcomes the anxiety of the mother-in-law's heart, and she discovers that such affection is strong enough and brave enough to endure and undergo all hardships. Ruth reaches the summit of eloquence when she gives vocality to her beautiful lyric in prose, verses 16, 17, and Naomi realizes that she has one friend and associate who, while no richer than herself in material things, yet in wealth of nature is beyond purchase price.

Ruth does not utter these beautiful, helpful thoughts as if she was just saying them, but she registers them with the common oath of the old Hebrew, and uses the name of Israel's God as though she was familiar with him. This, I think, will permit an inference as to the home life of these pure, worshipful people. Yahveh—God—must have been a household word with them, and in their abode his altar could be found, from which arose the incense of their daily devotions. It would seem, then, that this was the bottom fact in the character of Ruth, and out of this grew the much-admired qualities.

It is true other influences might have assisted her in her decision: a deep solicitude for the loneliness of the mother-in-law; an appreciation in memory of her own deceased husband; a characteristic sympathy of Ruth's affectionate nature; a conscious recognition of obligation to this aged pilgrim, an appreciation of the royal properties of a mother-in-law who could attach daughters-in-law to her person and presence after this fashion. Any and all these might have assisted her in her decision; but I prefer to think of her as intensely religious and influenced by the Spirit of God. While all these incidents are legitimate and helpful, the text will rather support the religious base as the soil out of which the conduct grew.

The beautiful life and unselfish devotion of Ruth have somewhat detracted from the magnificent life of Naomi; and as a consequence Ruth is always spoken of as the first, and Naomi as a sort of attachment necessary to the setting of Ruth. Ruth is trustful, confiding, and sacrificing. Naomi affords an opportunity in greatness of character for the exercise of these qualities. No one as large and generous as Ruth could love as intensely as she loved a nature much inferior to her own, so that whatever is great in the one finds its counterpart in the other.

The very attachment of Ruth rejects the hackneyed depreciation in reference to the mother-in-law; and if Naomi is not the rule she is at least the exception. She has performed the real part of a mother to this wife of her son, and now reaps the affectionate regard of this loving daughter. No true life ever spends itself in vain. That solicitous, tender, patient, thoughtful heart seeking to direct and assist another, under the blessing of the everlasting Father, usually reaps its reward in the reciprocal regard of the life so directed; and this I take to have been the relation of Naomi to Ruth.

They come to Bethlehem. Here a strange scene takes place. The residents note the strangers, and soon discover their former townswoman, but O, how changed! They question whether this is Naomi. She answers to the name, but very pathetically beseeches them, out of the depths of her sorrow, not to call her Naomi, the pleasant, but Mara, the bitter. She feels she has been dealt with severely. She does seem to complain, but she does not lose her faith. I think her cry is not complaint, but statement of the severity of the visitation, for she still seems steadfast in her confidence in God, as the declaration of Ruth would seem to indicate. For when Ruth says, "Thy God shall be my God," no protest falls from the lips

of Naomi. She fails at the same point where so many have broken down, in assuming that goodness and service should be a protection from test and trial.

"God chasteneth them he loveth." His effort is to make the good better, the bright brighter, and these are invariably accomplished through the severities of life. We may expect at the Master's hand treatment always seeking the enlargement of us; and while present personal loss may not seem on that line, God's view of the effect, if it could be revealed to us, would change our thinking of his dealing with us.

Thoughts for Young People.

KINDNESS.

The verses introductory to our lesson have much to say about kindness. Naomi recognizes that her daughters-in-law are full of loving-kindness to herself, and have been so with "the dead," and prays that Jehovah may deal kindly with them. Let us make a little study of human kindness.

1. *The foundation of kindness.* It is not built upon good nature, but upon the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. Good temper is largely dependent upon physical conditions; but kindness generally is dependent upon a correct creed and great grace. Doubtless some people inherit a more kindly disposition than others, but few are disposed to maintain kindness amid the conflicting interests of life except they take the Lord Jesus as their model, and none have the power consistently to maintain it without his grace.

2. *The sphere of kindness.* Charity (love) begins at home. The word "kindness" has the same origin as the word "kin." It is sympathetic kinship. But he who begins with self-sacrificing kindness at home cannot bound that gracious characteristic with any walls. It will overflow to neighbors, and will, like the good Samaritan, regard the neediest as the nearest neighbor.

3. *Difficulties in the way of kindness.* Two classes of people whom it is most difficult uniformly to treat with kindness are relatives and foreigners. An inherited civilization has made the average man measurably kind to the average man, but the graces of patience, forbearance, helpfulness, Christian tact, etc., are often hardly dealt with by circumstances in the household; while at the other extreme there is an instinct in many people which unreasonably turns nearly all races but our own into foes. Many, perhaps, reading this statement will be disposed at first to question its accuracy. But let us

look around us. Are Americans peculiarly fond of Chinamen? Are mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law proverbially confidantes and lovers? Many a daughter is less patient with her own mother, and many a son with his father, than they are with others whom they care little about. The heart of the man who can be thoroughly and uniformly kind at home, and thoroughly kind regardless of racial distinctions, has been touched by divine grace.

4. *The recompense of kindness.* Naomi's prayer (verse 8) is as sound in creed as it is pathetic in tone. "Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me." That prayer was answered in Ruth's case, and we doubt not in the case of Orpah; and the Lord's loving-kindness is the inevitable precious possession of all who love their fellows.

Teaching Hints for Intermediate Classes.

PRELIMINARY.

We will continue to employ the study and teaching outline used thus far during the quarter, namely:

HISTORY.
ENVIRONMENT.
RECORD.
OBJECT ILLUSTRATION.
EMPHASIZED TRUTH.
STUDY IN ADVANCE.

HISTORY.

In the book of Ruth we have a picture of country life during the period of the judges. It is of especial interest to the Christian because it contains the record of how a woman of Moab was brought into the royal Messianic line. (See Matt. 1. 5.)

ENVIRONMENT.

Time. Probably in the time of Gideon, B. C. 1222-1182 (?).

Places. Bethlehem, whence Naomi had set out and to which she returned with Ruth. Point out on the map the land of Moab, the early home of Ruth.

The book of Ruth. Nothing is known definitely of the author or of the date of composition.

RECORD.

In order to have the pupils understand our lesson story it will be necessary for them to have read the portion of the first chapter which precedes it or for the teacher to give the gist of it. The teaching may be done in connection

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with the two pictures around which we will group our questions:

1. *Ruth's choice* (verses 16-18). Who was Ruth? Where was she born? Whom did she marry? With whom did she wish to go? What did Naomi say to her? (verse 15.) What did Ruth reply? Have some one read aloud verses 16 and 17 and explain the meaning thereof. What was the result of this reply? (verse 18.)

2. *Naomi's return* (verses 19-22). Where had Naomi lived originally? (verse 1.) To what country had she set out? Why? Why did she return to Bethlehem? (verse 6.) Who accompanied her part of the way? Who came all the way? What did the people say when Naomi returned? What did Naomi answer? (Explain the significance of verses 20 and 21.) At what time of the year did Naomi return?

Note: The teacher should question the pupils briefly to ascertain the results of their reading of the book of Ruth during the week.

OBJECT ILLUSTRATION.

Bring to the class some grains of barley to impress the story of the famine which caused Naomi to leave Bethlehem and the story of the plenty which led her to return.

EMPHASIZED TRUTH.

Have the Golden Text repeated by several. Ask: Who wrote these words? To whom? Show how they apply to Ruth's love for Naomi, and teach that Ruth probably loved her mother-in-law because the latter had been kind to her. Ask: Who should be kindly affectioned? Where? When? Why? To whom?

When the teacher thinks that the pupils understand the meaning of the term "affectioned," and the answers to the above questions, have all print the following prayer:

LORD, HELP ME TO BE
KINDLY AFFECTIONED
AT ALL TIMES.

STUDY IN ADVANCE.

Ask the pupils: How many of you know the hymn the first stanza of which is:

"Hushed was the evening hymn,
The temple courts were dark;
The lamp was burning dim
Before the sacred ark;
When suddenly a voice divine
Rang through the silence of the shrine."

If the pupils are not acquainted with this hymn let each one copy this stanza, and ask

them to read during the week the Bible story on which it is based (1 Sam. 3. 1-10), and to copy this stanza in their Book of Heroes.
Review word "Affectioned."

By Way of Illustration.

Verses 16, 17. "A Moabite can join Israel, but not without quitting Moab and accepting the lot of the Israelite." During the early years of the American War of Secession a number of families declared themselves to be neutral, and sought by that means to avoid the hostility of both combatants. The result was most disastrous to themselves, not from any special cruelty on the part of either the Confederate or Union Armies, but from the inevitable course of things. They were like grain between the upper and nether millstones, and suffered more than they would have done had they steadily adhered to either party. The Old Testament call, "Come out from among them and be ye separate," and the New Testament reproach, "I would thou wert cold or hot," with the circumstances in which these sentences were uttered, are good illustrations of this truth.

Any citizen of Europe may become a citizen of Canada after a term of residence in this country and the taking of an oath of allegiance to the Person and Crown of the Sovereign of the Realm. Thus is fulfilled the truth: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Verses 19. "All the city was moved about them." "A newcomer to the fold of the Good Shepherd never fails of a welcome from the rest of the real flock."

Verses 20, 21. Things look dark sometimes, but turn out to be blessings. So the death of Lincoln did as much as his life had done for the union of the United States. So Livingstone's death did more for Africa than he could have done had he completed his task. Dante's failure to save Florence by his services as a statesman, and his consequent banishment, furnished the occasion and the motive of the "Divine Comedy." Captain Allen Gardiner and his six companions died by starvation on the coast of Terra del Fuego after repeated efforts to evangelize that desolate country. This led to a controversy about the utility of missions, and a fresh interest in Patagonia, which did more for the cause than the devoted pioneer could have accomplished.

"I once watched a series of dissolving views. It was a scene in Italy, representing a castellated ruin. But it was a dissolving view, and

with regret I watched it fade. As it faded another scene gradually took its place, and when the first had wholly gone there stood forth in majesty a splendid picture of sea, mountains, and sky. Man's work had given place to God's work; the eternal had taken the place of the transient. So when earth is hidden heaven begins to unfold its treasures; when the ephemeral scenes of time are shut out we are more than compensated by the glories which are eternal in the heavens."

Should the native of some distant world, on which the sun always shines, visit our globe, he would be filled with dismay as he beheld the sun disappear and darkness envelop nature as in a funeral pall. How would his astonishment increase as, amid the increasing darkness, myriads of worlds, of which he never dreamed, blazed forth upon his vision! Thus often adversity affrights us; but instead of contracting our blessings it reveals to us new sources of comfort, worlds of joy, hidden while the veil of prosperity hung about us.

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES.

No sweeter story was ever written than this, of the little family of four who went up from Bethlehem to Moab, and the two maidens who there joined fortune with them. The simplicity and pathos of the Bible writer cannot be excelled. It is a story of domestic love; of suffering, sympathy, unselfishness, purity, fidelity. We need to hear it over and over again to counteract the cold self-interest, the thirst for place and power, for money, for social position and pleasure, too often gratified at the expense of those virtues of the heart which, like flowers in secluded dells, are precious because God delights in them although no human eyes may see their charm.

This is a love story—love of the purest type. Our hearts will grow gentle as we take in its spirit. St. John, whose distinguishing grace was love, says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God." Cultivate love; live in love! do nothing to grieve love; love with all your might; you cannot love too much, for love is of God. It is the sweetest, dearest, most blessed thing in the universe; the most like heaven of anything left to this earth since the tragedy in Eden. Put God's love first, home love next, self-love last. Do not break your mother's or your father's heart by neglect. O, be careful never to wound any heart that loves you. Sins against love jar the harmony of cre-

ation; and what shall we say of sins against the divine love?

I cannot read in this story, as some have read, that Elimelech and Naomi brought misfortune upon themselves by committing sin in going to Moab. They were people of principle whose change of residence did not affect their religious belief or habits. They were true to the God of Israel though they lived in a heathen country. Ten years spent in such associations had their influence upon Ruth and Orpah. They respected a religion consistently adhered to, although so different from their own. Naomi was no bigot; she did not repel these young women by severe criticism of the way they had been brought up, but found the royal road to their hearts by gentleness and goodness. She was very unlike the woman who vowed years ago, and kept her vow until she died, that she would never speak to her husband, who was an atheist, until he should tell her that he believed in God. He never told her so. How could she expect it, with such an unloving spirit upon her part? And yet she prayed for him every day. Naomi's living was better than this woman's praying.

It was not easy to leave Bethlehem with its lifelong associations, but when Elimelech proposed it no doubt her first thought was, "It will be better for the boys," so she hopefully started on the long journey. Sorrow waited for her, and entered the new home with her. "Her husband died and she was left;" that is all there is to tell, but how much to live, to suffer, to endure! Far from friends, two boys to care for, Naomi alone with God. Then came two maidens with the cheer of youth into the broken household. Happily for their mother, Mahlon and Chilion made wise choices in marriage. But grief quickly followed joy, as is its way

"Since sorrow set her bleeding heart
On this fair world of ours."

The love of these three women grew closer and sweeter in affliction. Naomi forgot her own trouble in caring for others. She said, "It grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me." No wonder it was hard for Orpah to say good-bye to such a strong, sweet soul. No wonder Ruth entreated to go with her and chose her God for her own.

The story of Ruth's fortunes in the land of her adoption has phases strange to us whose usages are so different from those of that time and country. But it glows with the beauty of purity, integrity, and faith. All the city knew

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that her character stood, with Naomi's, for nobility and truth, above reproach. And the end of this love-story? A faithful heart tossed on rough seas through a long day, quiet at last in life's evening, in the love of those to whom she has unselfishly ministered, neighbors and friends rejoicing with her. Another heart, chastened by sorrow, "finding rest," as the beautiful Bible phrase has it, with a true, noble husband; and a child's sweet voice making melody again like that Naomi used to hear in Bethlehem-Judah long ago. Could Naomi and Ruth have known what we know to-day they would have seen a chain of little hands reaching from Obed's to the hand of the Christ-child in the manger in Bethlehem ages afterward; the hand of the world's Redeemer, the hand of Love and Might controlling the destinies of nations and men. God was making all things work for good even when Naomi thought he dealt bitterly with her.

History of Israel, vol. i, pages 153-156. Hill, *Companion Characters*, page 116. Payne, *Guides and Guards in Character Building*, page 191. Wharton, *Famous Women of the Old Testament*, page 103. Geikie, *Old Testament Characters*, page 176. Guthrie, *Studies in Character*, page 205. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*.

NAOMI.—Aguilar, *Women of Israel*, page 277. Balfour, *Women of Scripture*, page 104. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, vol. iii, pages 23-25. The Bible Dictionaries.

SERMONS ON THE LESSON.

Verse 16.—*The Pulpit*, London, vol. vi, page 193.

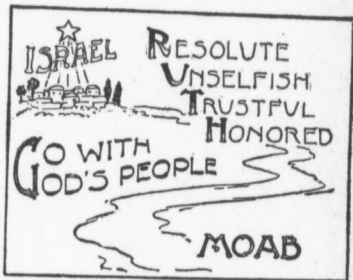
Verse 19.—Tiffany, *Pulpit and Platform*, page 169.

The Teachers' Meeting.

A good outline we quote from the *Illustrative Lesson Notes*: "I. Ruth. 1. The Appeal; 2. The Resolution. 3. The Acquiescence. II. Naomi. 1. The Inquiry; 2. The Reply".... A Study in Loving-kindness. (See THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.)... 1. Separation between friends is often necessary; 2. Separation occasions bitter sorrows; 3. Separation may be made a discipline of the soul's welfare; 4. Separation is often overruled by God's providence for the real good, prosperity, and happiness of those who are put apart; 5. But there is One that has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."... Consider the unselfishness of both Naomi and Ruth. How many considerations did Ruth recognize as involved in her well-settled choice? What quality of character in Ruth induced Naomi to yield to her? In what was Ruth an example to all who embrace religion? What sort of a future had she reason to expect?... Consider the usual results of following any present evident course of duty; the analogy between the circumstances, choice, and future of Ruth with Christian experience.

Blackboard.

BY THOMAS G. ROGERS.



All unwittingly Ruth in her resolute devotion to Naomi was treading a path which destined her to happiness and comfort, and an honorable place in the ancestry of Christ. Her character was sweet and strong, and we follow the beautiful romance with the thought that God honors faith and devotion, and leads unconsciously those who for love and conscience' sake are willing to share the lot of his people, with disregard for the sacrifices which such a purpose brings. To Ruth the loneliness and exile of her departure were forgotten in the companionship of Naomi and the growing knowledge of her God.

Library References.

BY REV. S. G. AYRES.

RUTH.—Houghton, *Ruth the Moabitess*. Taylor, *Ruth and Esther*. Stanley, *History of the Jewish Church*, vol. i, page 336. Ewald,

Coloring.—Houses and road, cream; names, red; "Ruth," white filled in purple; words, white; phrase, yellow.

LESSON XI. The Boy Samuel.

[Dec. 14.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. 1 Sam. 3. 9.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Study also verses 1-5. Read 1 Sam. chapters 1-3.]
1 Sam. 3. 6-14. [Commit to memory verses 7-10.]

6 And the LORD called yet again, Sam'u-el. And Sam'u-el arose and went to E'li, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 Now Sam'u-el did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8 And the LORD called Sam'u-el again the third time. And he arose and went to E'li, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And E'li perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9 Therefore E'li said unto Sam'u-el, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Sam'u-el went and lay down in his place.

10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Sam'u-el, Sam'u-el. Then Sam'u-el answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

11 And the LORD said to Sam'u-el, Behold, I will do a thing in Is'ra-el, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform against E'li all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of E'li, that the iniquity of E'li's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever.

Time.—B. C. 1134. Place.—Shiloh, in central Palestine.

Home Readings.

M. The Boy Samuel. 1 Sam. 3. 1-10.

Tu. The Boy Samuel. 1 Sam. 3. 11-21.

W. Wicked priests. 1 Sam. 2. 12-19.

Th. Judgment fulfilled. 1 Sam. 4. 10-18.

F. A father's counsel. Prov. 4. 1-13.

S. Children's praise accepted. Matt. 21. 1-16.

B. Christ and children. Matt. 18. 1-14.

Lesson Hymns.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 392.

Hushed was the evening hymn,
The temple courts were dark;
The lamp was burning dim
Before the sacred ark.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 279.

God has said, "For ever blessed
Those who seek me in their youth;

AMERICAN REVISED VERSION.*

6 And Jehovah called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. 7 Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him. 8 And Jehovah called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that Jehovah had called the child. 9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 11 And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. 14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated with sacrifice nor offering forever.

They shall find the path of wisdom,
And the narrow way of truth."

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 167.

To the work! to the work! we are servants
of God,

Let us follow the path that our Master has trod.

Questions for Senior Scholars.

1. The Call of Samuel.

What place did Samuel fill in the temple service?

What office did Eli hold?

In what sense was the word of the Lord precious?

What revelations are included in the term "open vision"? Where was the tabernacle erected?

Who did Samuel think called him?

How often was the call repeated?

* The American Revision, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

In what sense did Samuel not know the Lord?
What answer did Samuel give at the fourth call?

2. The Judgment upon Eli.

What interest would this judgment upon Eli have for the people?

What things were spoken of concerning the house of Eli? (See 1 Sam. 2. 30-36.)

How was the warning to be carried out?

In what respect was Eli guilty?

Who were his two sons?

What office did they hold?

Of what particular sins were they guilty?

What indicates the utter vileness of their iniquities?

Questions for Intermediate Scholars.

1. The Child Samuel Serving God (verses 1-3).

Who was Samuel's mother?

Why did she call him Samuel?

Where did she take him in her thankfulness?

Of what tribe was Samuel?

Could he become a priest?

What could he do in the house of God?

Whom did he help in his work?

Where did he sleep?

2. The Child Samuel Communing with God (verses 4-10).

When did this call of God come?

Was it a call to be saved or more like a call to preach?

Was Samuel a child of God before this?

Did he know the voice of God?

Who did he think called him?

How many times did God call him?

What did Eli say he should reply when God called again?

3. The Child Samuel a Prophet for God (verses 11-14).

What was Samuel called to do?

Are preachers sometimes called in childhood?

Was it a pleasant message God had for Samuel to take?

What hard truths do we sometimes have to tell men?

Questions for Younger Scholars.

What was the tabernacle now sometimes called? *The temple.*

Who was high priest? *Eli.*

Who were his sons? *Hophni and Phinchas.*

What kind of men were they? *Evil men.*

Who was Eli's helper? *Samuel.*

Who was Samuel? *The child of Elkanah and Hannah.*

What had Hannah done? *Lent him to the Lord.*

What did Samuel hear in the night? *A voice calling him.*

What did he think? *That it was Eli.*

How many times did he hear it? *Three times.*

What did Eli tell him to say? *"Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."*

What did the Lord say to Samuel? *Things that Eli needed to know.*

Did Samuel tell Eli? *Yes.*

What did Samuel become in doing this? *A prophet of the Lord.*

The Lesson Catechism.

(For the entire school.)

1. Where did Samuel first receive a revelation from Jehovah? *In the tabernacle of Shiloh.*

2. Under what circumstances was Samuel at the tabernacle? *He was ministering unto the Lord.*

3. What was peculiar about this first revelation? *God called, and Samuel knew it not.*

4. What was Samuel's answer when he learned that the voice was God's? **GOLDEN TEXT:** *"Speak, Lord," etc.*

5. What reason did God assign for his punishment of Eli? *Infulness to parental responsibility.*

The Church Catechism.

5. How hath God revealed himself and his will to man? *God hath revealed himself and his will to man in his works of creation and providence, and in the world's redemption by his Son, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.*

Psalm 19. 1. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

Children Called of God.

I. MINISTERING CHILDREN.

The child Samuel ministered unto the Lord. v. 1.

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 18. 3.

Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? Luke 2. 49.

II. THE LORD'S CALL.

The Lord called Samuel. v. 4.

I, the Lord, called thee by thy name. Isa. 45. 3.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called. 1 Tim. 6. 12.

III. RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL.

Thy servant heareth. v. 10.

Then said I, Here am I; send me. Isa. 6. 8.

The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. John 1. 37.

IV. COUNSELS TO THE YOUNG.

It shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth; v. 9.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not. Eccles. 12. 1.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Prov. 3. 6.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

No close historic connection can be made between the last lesson and this because of our ignorance of the chronology of the period of the Judges, but about the same social conditions prevailed during the life of Ruth and the boyhood of Samuel. There has been preserved for us a touching story of the prayer of Hannah for a son, and her dedication of her firstborn to the Lord. His father was Elkanah, of "Mount Ephraim." As soon as he was weaned the boy was taken up to Shiloh and accepted by the venerable old priest Eli as a "loan" to Jehovah. From that time his mother year by year made him a little coat and brought it to him, and returned with her husband to their home, having received a formal blessing from Eli. Samuel grew, like the Lord Jesus in later centuries, "in favor both with the Lord and with men." Great wickedness was at that time indulged in. The worship of Jehovah in the tabernacle was sadly degraded by Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli. Outside of the priestly functions and apart from the personal worship of devout individuals there was little attention to religion. There were no prophets. "The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision." Eli in the infirmity of old age was nearly blind. On the evening described by our lesson the boy Samuel "was laid down to sleep." The Lord called him, and he promptly answered, "Here am I," but ran to Eli, whose voice he thought he had heard. Eli said, "I called not; lie down again." "And he went and lay down."

Verses 6, 7. The second call of the Lord took Samuel again to Eli, and again came the response *I called not, my son; lie down again.* The reason why Samuel was thus repeatedly mistaken is given in verse 7: *he did not yet know the Lord* ["Jehovah"]. "Doubtless he would know Jehovah in a way in which the sons of Eli would not know him, that is, in his conscience and spiritual life, but he did not know him as one who personally revealed his will unto men." It is evident that "there was no proper order of persons from whose ranks the 'speakers of God' would naturally step forth." Samuel, we may conjecture, was about twelve years of age; so, at least, Josephus says. The exact time of the evening is indicated in verse 3 by the statement that it was just before "the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle." In Exod. 27. 20 it is said that the seven-branched candelabrum was to burn always, but "this apparently was to be by perpetually re-lighting it." So it was in the late night, just before morning, that God's voice was heard.

8. But though Samuel did not recognize the voice of the Lord Eli did. He had sadly failed in his recognition of Jehovah as the immediate ruler of Israel. He had committed the sin which under other circumstances was committed by Saul, and by Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. But already "a man of God" had warned him

of the consequences of his negligence of the priestly office, and his sinful indulgence of his sons, and he felt in his inmost sense that this voice that had disturbed Samuel's sleep was the voice of Jehovah.

9. So he very kindly tells Samuel to lie down again, and if the voice comes again to answer with voice and with heart, *Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.* The docile boy lay down.

10. *The Lord* ["Jehovah"] *came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel.* So there was something more than the voice. Samuel felt the presence of God, and answered as Eli had directed.

11. *I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.* We might translate "I do." Already the Almighty has set in motion the forces which are in a few years to bring about the disaster, so frightful and so unlooked-for that "the news shall, as it were, slap both ears at once, and make them smart with pain." The awful event was the capture of the ark, and the murder of the priests, and the ruin of the sanctuary at Shiloh. (See 2 Kings 21. 12; Jer. 19. 3.)

12. *In that day.* By the foretold calamity. *I will perform against Eli all things which* ["all that"] *I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end* ["from the beginning even unto the end"]. The word for

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"perform" means "stir up," "arouse," as if the prophecies already given had been asleep and at rest, but some awful morning they are all to wake and be fulfilled.

13. *I have told him that I will judge his house forever.* "Judge" here has the force of condemn and punish. "Forever" means "finally." His family shall become extinct. The reference is to the message of the "man of God." *The iniquity which he knoweth* ["knew"], and mildly disapproved of, but did not exert himself to stop. *His sons made themselves vile* ["did bring a curse upon themselves"]. The evil consequences of their evil conduct are inevitable. *He restrained them not.* The words will bear a stronger rendering. Eli's duty was to degrade his sons from their office; his sin was that he had not done this.

14. *Therefore.* Not merely because the majority of the family had committed abominable sacrilege, but because the head of the family, invested with full power, had not turned these sinners out. *The iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged* ["expiated"] *with sacrifice nor offering forever.* The question of the eternal salvation of these men is not here considered; but the awful temporal consequences of the crime of Eli's sons cannot be set aside by any sacrifice they now make. They had been sinning and sacrificing, making a formal atonement for one sin while they were

planning the next. The word for "sacrifice" here refers to shedding of blood; the word "offering" means an unbloody sacrifice. The warning given in 1 Sam. 2. 27-36 in place of softening the hearts of Eli and his sons had hardened them all. During all the time since Eli had "taken no steps to vindicate God's service from the slur cast upon it by an unworthy priesthood," And he, of all men, was responsible for the purity of God's service.

The chapter from which our lesson is taken continues through seven verses, telling how at the break of day Samuel "opened the doors of the house of the Lord." The "house" itself was a tabernacle, but there seem to have been gathered about it solid buildings. To have the key of this door is an evidence of the unusual authority already given to the youthful Samuel. The boy was afraid to tell Eli what he had heard, but the old high priest in the gentlest manner, but with an awful adjuration, called for all the things that God had spoken to him. Samuel told all, and Eli heard his doom with a humility that cannot but make the student of his history tender in the contemplation of his early sin. Samuel passed on from youth to manhood, "and Jehovah was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah."

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Samuel when but a very little boy was dedicated by his mother to the tabernacle service. He, in his earliest youth, was employed about the lamp of the Lord, which was kept continually burning by being continually replenished. Verse 1 of the chapter tells us, "The word of the Lord was precious" (rare) "in those days, and there was no open vision." Communication with the Lord in the prophetic vein had waned, because of the defection of the priests. Samuel did not know the Lord in this capacity, so that when he was called he immediately sought Eli and asked what service he wished him to render.

THE VOICE.

Samuel's name was distinctly pronounced, though no vision appeared. He aroused at once, with haste and anxiety to serve, only to be told by Eli that he should lie down again, he was not wanted. This, no doubt, puzzled the lad, for he was assured of the directness and distinctness of the call. If Eli had any suspicion that it was God calling Samuel he gave no evidence of that suspicion. He rather treats it

as a dreaming process on the part of the boy, without distinctly stating such.

In verse 7 we are informed that "Samuel did not yet know the Lord." This in no sense can mean that he did not have a personal acquaintance with the Father, for the after life of Samuel seems to go on the principle that he was never without that personal presence which is the rich inheritance of all his faithful followers, whether old or young. It can only mean that he was not in public capacity for receiving the message of the Lord and proclaiming publicly the word or vision that had come to him.

When for the third time this voice repeated the call, and Samuel, just as promptly and obediently as before, hastened into the presence of Eli with his aforesaid question, the old prophet and priest discerned the truth of the circumstance and instructed the youth "to go lie down," and if called he should answer, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." This is Samuel's first lesson in the reception of prophecy; and what an awful message came to him! To deliver it would test his character.

THE DREADFUL REVELATION.

Samuel follows the direction of Eli, when he is called for the fourth time; and rather than being startled, as we would suppose, owing to his youth and this being his first experience, he accepts the situation as a matter of fact, and holds "converse with God." God does not disclose the particulars of this revelation to Samuel, as this is not necessary, for he knows Eli will question the boy in the morning, and the revelation, at any rate, is especially for Eli; but only in the way of confirmation of former explicit declarations to Eli himself. The boy is not to be weighted with the particulars, and the indefiniteness of the message is sufficient to arouse the seemingly indifferent Eli.

The sons of Eli had brought disgrace on the service of the Lord by profaning the tabernacle; God had prophesied against them and their father, because he had not rebuked them for their sinfulness, and had not removed them from the altar service. Verse 11 informs us that when the visitation comes it will be as boxing the ears of the people (the ears shall tingle); and verses 12-14 speak of the complete blotting out of the house of Eli, and that no sacrifice will be acceptable for its sin. This does not imply that the individuals of the house might not be saved, but that the members of the house should no longer serve in the capacity of altar service.

This lesson carries its truthfulness on its face, in that these unknown things were revealed to a mere boy, that Eli's house was overthrown, and that the ears of the people did tingle through the loss of the ark of the covenant.

The lesson likewise reveals God's method with the sons of men; that fidelity begets large confidence, and that age has no monopoly in the reception of revelation. It teaches that the conduct of men is ever open to the eyes of the Father; and because speedy visitation does not come it is no assurance of forgetfulness. It also suggests in teaching the responsibility of parents to children, and that of the righteous to the unrighteous.

Thoughts for Young People.

HIGHER SERVICE.*

All young people worthy of the privilege of life are ambitious. They hold as a truth the beautiful poetic thought, "They also serve who stand and wait." But the hardest work they have to do is to "stand and wait." Longfellow speaks of the two duties of life as "to labor and to wait." The first one is much easier than the second. The career of Samuel, and especially

this incident of his early life, give a most instructive lesson in God's dealings with young people.

1. *There is such a thing as our being called to a higher service.* We talk about a call to the ministry, but the laity of the Church, both young men and young women, are providentially called to careers chosen by God just as really as Christian ministers. This narrative of Samuel is a record in spirit of what is being realized every day. So Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Saul were called. So like the fishermen of Galilee Christ calls men to leave their occupation to become fishers of men.

2. *Special fitness is required for higher service.* Samuel had been trained by a devout mother, and afterward amid the hallowed associations of the tabernacle. He had deep piety, and, in spite of whatever may be said by apparently successful worldlings, deep piety is required by all who take part in the conflicts of this world. Talk about a strenuous life, no strenuous life of worth to the world can be lived without deep piety. Fidelity is another of Samuel's traits, and is needed by all who would go up higher. He that is faithful in that which is least becomes fitted for all life's responsibilities. Natural aptitude is needed. God never puts a man in a position for which his natural powers when sanctified are unsuited. Many a person aspires to a position for which he is entirely unsuited. On the other hand, eager and constant desire to excel in any line is a nearly infallible evidence of talent along that line, even though all efforts for a time be blundersome. To learn and to endure is required. They must learn to say like Samuel, "Speak for thy servant heareth;" they must learn to say like Isaiah, "Here am I;" and like Saul, "What wilt thou have me to do?"

Teaching Hints for Intermediate Classes.

HISTORY.

Samuel was the last of the judges and a celebrated Hebrew prophet. He is considered one of the purest and noblest of Old Testament characters. The teacher should read all of the book of First Samuel that precedes our lesson text in order to have in mind the condition of Israel at the time when Samuel was called, and also to become familiar with Samuel's family relationships. A brief *résumé* of this reading should be given to the pupils.

ENVIRONMENT.

Time. It is impossible to give the exact date. Samuel was at this time twelve years of age, and Eli was seventy-eight years old.

Place. Shiloh, seventeen miles north of Jerusalem.

Israel's condition. While a few, like Samuel's parents, were truly religious, the mass of the nation were irreligious, and great looseness of morals prevailed.

RECORD.

To Intermediates the story of Samuel will be fascinating if properly narrated. We will leave the latter part of the lesson text to be considered by older pupils, while we confine our teaching to the

Call of Samuel. Question the pupils concerning the hymn suggested in last week's HINTS and on what they have read during the week about Samuel.

Samuel's first call (verse 4). Where was Samuel? What was he doing there? (verse 1.) What time was it? Who called him? What did he answer? Who did he suppose had called him? What did Eli say to him? (verse 5.)

Samuel's second call (verses 6, 7). Who called Samuel again? What did the latter do? To whom did he go? What did he say? What did Eli answer? Why did Samuel make the mistake of going to Eli? Have some one read aloud verse 7.

Samuel's third call. Who called Samuel the third-time? What did the latter do? What did he say? What did Eli now perceive? What did he tell Samuel to do? What did Samuel do?

Samuel's fourth call (verse 10). Who called Samuel the fourth time? What did the latter now answer? What did God then do? It will be sufficient to teach the pupils that the Lord sent by Samuel to Eli a message concerning his intention to punish Eli because of the wickedness of his family.

EMPHASIZED TRUTH.

Ask: Does the Lord call to boys and girls to-day? By what means? Have some one write down the answers, and when all have been given have them summarized somewhat as follows:

TO-DAY GOD CALLS BY HIS
WORD,
SPIRIT,
SERVANTS,
PROVIDENCES.

Teach that just as Samuel failed to recognize God's voice, so we to-day may not know that he is speaking to us. We should pray that we may recognize God's calls and be responsive thereto. Finally, ask all to print:

LIKE SAMUEL, I WILL SAY

SPEAK, LORD;

FOR THY SERVANT HEARETH.

STUDY IN ADVANCE.

It should be determined by the proper officials of the school whether the Christmas Lesson or the lesson on Samuel the Judge is to be studied for next Sunday, and the pupils informed accordingly.

Review word "Call."

By Way of Illustration.

The daily quiet virtues of life are the best. It is the bubbling stream that flows gently, the little rivulet that flows along day and night by the farmhouse, that is useful, rather than the swollen flood or raging cataract. Niagara excites our wonder, and we stand amazed at the greatness of God manifested there, as he pours it from the hollow of his hand. But one Niagara is enough for the continents of the world, while the same world requires thousands and tens of thousands of silver fountains and gently flowing rivulets, with their gentle, quiet beauty. So with the acts of our lives. It is not by great deeds, like those of the martyrs only, that good is to be done, but by the daily quiet virtues of life.—*Barnes*.

It is wise to make a good start and an early one. "That was a good prayer which the old-fashioned Methodist minister offered, 'O Lord, start us right, for if we get started wrong we are hard to turn.'"—*Christian Age*.

God reveals himself to his children. Somebody once asked, "How is it Mr. Bramwell has always something new to tell us when he preaches?" "Why," said the listener, "Brother Bramwell lives so near the gates of heaven that he hears a great many things that we don't get near enough to hear anything about."

Each morning of General Gordon's sojourn in the Soudan there was one half hour during which a handkerchief lay outside his tent. No one, no matter what his creed, color, or business, dared to enter the tent until this signal was removed. Everyone knew God and Gordon were in there together.

One of the Prussian monarchs sometimes rode in a plain carriage incognito. A man on the road asked if he might ride with him. He got into the carriage and, being inquisitive, asked, "Are you a lieutenant?" "No," said the king. "Are you a major?" "No," said the king. "Are you a general?" "No," said the king; "but I

am something higher than that." The man said, "Then you must be the emperor," and was overwhelmed. We ride with God in the chariot of his providence and sometimes know it not.

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

To explain the characteristics of a man they say we must go back to his mother, and still farther to his grandmother. St. Paul reminds Timothy of his obligation to stir up the gift in himself because of the faith of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. A Christian ancestry is a blessed inheritance. Never sell your birthright by dishonoring or turning away from the faith of your fathers. But children do not always walk in the footsteps of good parents. Sometimes they go far astray, for goodness is not inherited, or, rather, the grace that saves is not inherited; it must be the choice of each soul. Certainly the responsibility of right thinking and pure living is greater for those who have had Christian training than for those who have not. The sons of Samuel were not like their father, nor like their good, praying grandmother. Perhaps it was their mother's fault. Nothing is said about her, so we do not know. Mothers have great responsibility, although I sometimes think they are held for too much, and the fathers are relieved of their proper share. However, whatever mothers do, or leave undone, the final responsibility comes upon the sons and daughters for their own choice of right or wrong.

There is much in the story of the boy Samuel to encourage all who have the care of little children. He was a tiny child when his mother dedicated him to the Lord; a little boy when God called him and he obediently answered, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." Very young children may be taught the most precious thoughts of God. To our latest day and farthest reach of study they pass our understanding, and the older and wiser we grow we find that we enter the kingdom of heaven only "as little children." The blessed Spirit adapts his teaching to the tender heart of a child. Mothers, teachers, fail not to see your opportunity! Do not lose the sweet pleasure of sowing good seed before the tares have taken root.

A little fellow only eight years old asked, "Mother, what is it to give your heart to Christ?" His mother tried to make it plain to his understanding, and many times during that week she found him kneeling in prayer. One evening on her return home he bounded through the hall to meet her, exclaiming, "Mother, I've become a Christian while you've been gone. I

have, I have! I know I have, and I'm so happy I don't know what to do." His mother took him on her lap, saying, "Tell me all about it." After thinking a moment he said: "I was praying, and I thought of the little verse you taught me to say in our Sunday school concert when I was five years old:

'I know my heart is full of sin,
I am not fit for heaven,
But Christ has died upon the cross
That I might be forgiven;'

and, mother, I thought if he had God might forgive me just as well as not; and I told him so. And then I remembered that other little verse,

'Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so,'

and I thought if he did love me and he knew how much I wanted to be a Christian, and he could make me one, he would; and he did, and I love him ever so much; and he loves me too." From that hour he never wavered in his faith. Of course he was not perfection; who is? But when he did wrong he would say, "I am God's child, even though I have been naughty, just as I am your little boy, mother, even when I am not as good as I ought to be." This boy is a preacher of the Gospel now. If his mother had thought him too young to understand when he asked what it meant to give his heart to God he might have been, to her sorrow, something very different.

Have you, like Hannah, a burdened heart? Pour it out before the Lord and go away with a countenance no more sad, trusting him for the answer. When he gives what you have asked, whatever it is, give it back to him, thankfully, to be used in his service, and remember that the same voice which called the boy Samuel says of all little children, "Suffer them to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The Teachers' Meeting.

Peculiarities of Samuel's call: Time—youth; place—God's house; directness—a personal call; object—to make him a prophet; preparation—training in God's house; earnestness—three times; misinterpretation—thought it was Eli... Samuel's response: Prompt; repeated; reverent; obedient... Illustrations: Josiah, 2 Chron. 24. 1-3; Timothy, 2 Tim. 3. 15; Jesus, Luke 2. 42-52... What conditions render the word of the Lord precious or scarce?... Ex-

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plain the extinguishing of the lamps in the tabernacle.... The meaning of Samuel not knowing the Lord.

1160. Payson, *Sermons*, vol. iii, page 362.
Pitman, J. R., *Sermons*, vol. ii, pages 82, 118.

Library References.

SAMUEL.—Deane, *Samuel and Saul*. Steel, *Samuel the Prophet*. Blake, *Children of the Bible*, page 56. Deane, *David*, chapter i. Taylor, *Life of David*, Index. Chandler, *Life of David*. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, vol. iii. Guthrie, *Studies of Character*, page 262. Stanley, *Scripture Portraits*, page 43. Hill, *Companion Characters*, page 136. *The Expositor*, Third Series, vol. vii, pages 241, 342; Fourth Series, vol. vi, page 98. Baring-Gould, *Legends of Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 319.

ELI.—Maurice, *Patriarchs and Lawgivers*, page 336. Evans, *Scripture Biography*, vol. i, page 109. Geikie, *Old Testament Characters*, page 185. Dods, *Israel's Iron Age*, page 147. Candlish, *Scripture Characters*, page 21. Deane, *Samuel and Saul*, chapters i, ii. Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. i, pages 414, 421. Ewald, *History of Israel*, vol. ii, pages 408-411, 412, sq.

SERMONS ON THE LESSON.

Verse 7.—Brooke, *The Old Testament and Modern Life*, page 195.

Verse 9.—*The Homiletic Monthly*, vol. xi, page 151.

Verse 10.—Banks, *David and His Friends*, page 1. Brooke, *Old Testament and Modern Life*, page 209. *The Homiletic Review*, vol. xxxiv, page 313.

Verse 11, 12.—Saurin, *Sermons*, vol. v, page 25.

Verse 13.—Liddon, *Sermons*, vol. iii, No.

Blackboard.



Childhood is more amenable, by its innocency and disposition, to divine influence, and when to the child's own love for God is added the consecration of a devout mother's life is begun under the most favoring circumstances. In the light of his boyhood's history we wonder not that Samuel early in life received signal recognition by the direct voice of God. By the revelation concerning Eli he was commissioned with the message and authority of a prophet, and thus began that lifelong ministry in which he was the honored vicegerent of God. In pitiable contrast to his own early dedication and training is the lack of parental restraint, to which the wickedness of Eli's sons was largely attributable.

Coloring.—Hands, cream; phrases, yellow and white, blended variously with dark shades.

LESSON XII. Samuel the Judge.

[Dec. 21.

GOLDEN TEXT. Prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only. 1 Sam. 7. 3.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Read 1 Sam. chapters 4, 7.]

1 Sam. 7. 2-13. [Commit to memory verses 8-10.]

2 And it came to pass, when the ark abode in Kir'jath-j'e-a-rim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years; and all the house of Is'ra-el lamented after the LORD.

3 And Sam'u-el spake unto all the house of Is'ra-el, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ash'ta-roth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Phi-lis'tines.

4 Then the children of Is'ra-el did put away

AMERICAN REVISED VERSION.*

2 And it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode in Kir'jath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah.

3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. 4 Then the children of Is-

* The American Revision, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

Ba'al-im and Ash'ta-roth, and served the LORD only.

5 And Sam'u-el said, Gather all Is'ra-el to Miz'peh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6 And they gathered together to Miz'peh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Sam'u-el judged the children of Is'ra-el in Miz'peh.

7 And when the Phi-lis'tines heard that the children of Is'ra-el were gathered together to Miz'peh, the lords of the Phi-lis'tines went up against Is'ra-el. And when the children of Is'ra-el heard it, they were afraid of the Phi-lis'tines.

8 And the children of Is'ra-el said to Sam'u-el, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Phi-lis'tines.

9 And Sam'u-el took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Sam'u-el cried unto the LORD for Is'ra-el; and the LORD heard him.

10 And as Sam'u-el was offering up the burnt offering, the Phi-lis'tines drew near to battle against Is'ra-el: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Phi-lis'tines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Is'ra-el.

11 And the men of Is'ra-el went out of Miz'peh, and pursued the Phi-lis'tines, and smote them, until they came under Beth'-car.

12 Then Sam'u-el took a stone, and set it between Miz'peh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-e'zer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13 So the Phi-lis'tines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Is'ra-el: and the hand of the LORD was against the Phi-lis'tines all the days of Sam'u-el.

rael did put away the Baalim and the Ashta-roth, and served Jehovah only.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel.

8 And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah: and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah answered him. 10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us. 13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel; and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

Time.—B. C. 1120. **Place.**—Mizpeh.

Home Readings.

- M. Samuel the Judge. 1 Sam. 7. 1-13.
 Th. An upright judge. 1 Sam. 12. 1-7.
 W. Promise to penitents. Lev. 26. 40-46.
 Th. A merciful God. Deut. 4. 29-40.
 F. Intercession of Daniel. Dan. 9. 3-19.
 S. Prayer for others. 1 Tim. 2. 1-8.
 S. Answered prayer. Psa. 99.

Lesson Hymns.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 318.

From Greenland's icy mountains,
 From India's coral strand,
 Where Africa's sunny fountains
 Roll down their golden sand.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 298.

Glory to God in the highest,
 Glory to God! glory to God!

Glory to God in the highest,
 Shall be our song to-day.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 299.

Angels, from the realms of glory,
 Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
 Ye who sang creation's story,
 Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

Questions for Senior Scholars.

1. Repentance and Reformation.

How long did the ark remain at Kirjath-jearim?

Under whom were the Israelites in bondage?
 What signs should the Israelites give that their repentance was real?

What outward act of penitence did they perform?

What was their confession?

2. Samuel's Prevailing Prayer.

For what did the people request Samuel to pray?

How had the people prepared themselves for Samuel's prayer?

What indicates that the people were acceptable to the Lord?

Questions for Intermediate Scholars.**1. Samuel at Revival Work** (verses 2-4).

What had become of the ark of God?

Who had allowed it to be taken to the battle?

What became of Eli when it was captured by the Philistines?

What did the Philistines finally do with the ark?

Where was it then for many years?

What was Samuel doing all this time?

With what good results?

Where did he gather the people?

2. Samuel at Intercessory Prayer (verses 5-10).

What terror came to Israel while Samuel was praying?

Who were the Philistines?

When were they finally conquered, and by whom?

What did the people beseech Samuel to continue to do?

How did God answer?

What shows the greatness of this victory?

What three offices did Samuel fill at this meeting?

3. Samuel at Thanksgiving (verses 11-13).

How did Samuel plan to have this victory remembered?

Was this a common practice of the people?

What did he call the stone?

What does the word mean?

Questions for Younger Scholars.

When did the Lord call Samuel to serve him?

When he was a little boy.

What did he become? *A prophet and a judge.*

What was his work? *To keep the people faithful to God.*

Who troubled Israel? *The Philistines.*

Why? *Because Israel would not be true to God.*

What happened to them? *War, and the loss of their flocks and harvests.*

What did they do at last? *They begged Samuel to help them.*

What did he do? *He offered sacrifices and prayed for them.*

Who came upon them then? *The Philistines.*

How did God answer Samuel's prayer? *He sent a great thunderstorm upon the Philistines.*

What became of them? *They were scattered.*

What did Samuel set up? *A stone which he named Ebenezer.*

What does that mean? *The stone of help.*

The Lesson Catechism.

(For the entire school.)

1. How did Samuel urge the Israelites to obtain deliverance from the Philistines? *By turning to the Lord.*

2. What did he lead the people to do at Mizpeh? *To confess and seek God.*

3. What did the Philistines do when they heard of the meeting? *They came against Israel.*

4. How were the Israelites delivered from the Philistines? *Through the prayer of Samuel.*

5. What memorial of the victory did Samuel set up? *The stone Ebenezer.*

6. What did he say that the stone was to remind the people of? *"Hitherto has the Lord helped us."*

7. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? *"Prepare your hearts," etc.*

The Church Catechism.

6. What is the authority of the Holy Scriptures? The Holy Scriptures, written by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, alone give us certain and full knowledge of God and his will, and are the all-sufficient and only infallible rule of our faith and practice.

John 17. 17. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

THE LESSON OUTLINE.**Prayer as a Means of Strength.****I. PRAYER.**

I will pray for you. v. 5.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Matt. 6. 10.

For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Hab. 2. 14.

II. HUMILIATION.

Prepare your hearts unto the Lord. v. 3.

Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God. Jonah 3. 8.

Repent in dust and ashes. Job 42. 6.

I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of

Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God. Ezra 8. 21.

III. CONFESSION.

We have sinned against the Lord. v. 6.

We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee. Jer. 14. 20.

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. James 5. 16.

We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. Psal. 106. 6.

IV. FAITH.

The Lord our God will save us. v. 8.

Stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. James 5. 8.

I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me. Phil. 4. 13.

V. EBEN-EZEL.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. v. 12.

I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me. Psal. 40. 17.

The Lord is my helper; and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Heb. 13. 6.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

The awful sentence of Jehovah had been carried out, on Eli personally and on the nation. The ark of God, the symbol of everything sacred in Israel's national life, had been captured by the Philistines and taken in triumph to the temple of their god Dagon, in Ashdod. The idol was mysteriously overthrown, and disease scourged the city. Afraid that this was a sign of Jehovah's anger, but not yet so terrified as to willingly relinquish the ark, they carried it about from city to city, and wherever it went "plague, terror, and confusion" followed. At length they returned it, with a show of reverence, to Israel. It was at first lodged in Beth-shemesh, and later in Kirjath-jearim. The two chapters which tell this story should be read carefully.

Verse 2. *Kirjath-jearim* means "City-of-woods." It is now known as *Qiryat al-'inab*, a few miles northwest of Jerusalem (except, indeed, Lieutenant Conder's identification of it with *Erma*, near Beth-shemesh, be preferred). For seven months the ark had remained in the hands of the Philistines. It was not replaced in the sanctuary, nor did its transfer to Kirjath-jearim cause that place to be recognized as a central seat of worship. It was now *twenty years* since its return—years of unusual religious darkness. *All the house of Israel lamented after the Lord* ["Jehovah"]. The text is a vivid description of the tardily repentant people turning to cry after the God whom they had repelled from them. The margin, "was drawn together," which has excellent authority, shows us the spontaneous instinct that brought Israel together.

3. Samuel was now in the prime of early manhood. He was married and had children, and, whether or not as yet revered as national judge, he was at least recognized as a leader of men. *Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel.* If the marginal reading of the last verse be adopted we are to understand a great gathering of the heads of the tribes; but the phrase may mean that his words of "rebuke, warning, and exhortation" were repeated throughout the land. *If ye do return unto the Lord* ["Jehovah"] *with all your hearts* ["heart"], *then put away the strange* ["foreign"] *gods* and ["the"] *Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare* ["direct"] *your hearts unto the Lord* ["Jehovah"], *and serve him only:*

and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. This salvation from invasion was the only desire of the nation, and the prophet makes it conditional on repentance and obedience. But the repentance and obedience must be thorough. The tendency to cling to some form of idolatry, so hard to get rid of, tended directly to the destruction of the nation. Gen. 31. 19; Judg. 17. 5; 1 Sam. 19. 13; 2 Kings 23. 24, give instances of the reverence of teraphim, and that there was open idolatry is plain from Judg. 2. 12, 13; we have in an earlier lesson referred to Amos 5. 26 as showing that an idol had been carried by their fathers through a large part of the wilderness journey. And in addition to these hereditary tendencies there had been for centuries temptations to worship gods of the foreign nations among whom they had made their home. "Ashtaroth" we have already repeatedly defined as the Hebrew plural form for Ashtoreth, the female divinity of the Phœnicians, whose worship was very ancient and widespread, and its ceremonies abominable. Their hearts as well as their formal services must be given to Jehovah, and he must be "served only." For the Lord their God is a jealous God, and differs in this respect from most of the pagan divinities.

4. *Then the children of Israel did put away* ["the"] *Baalim* and ["the"] *Ashtaroth, and served the Lord* ["Jehovah"] *only.* A pleasing obedience to the prophet's command. No doubt they expected immediate delivery from the Philistine tyranny. But Samuel, as we now study him, is a national reformer, and he proposes,

so far as he can, to make this reform permanent.

5. *Mizpah* ["Mizpah"]. "The watchtower." It was near to Jerusalem. *I will pray for you.* More than any of the other national leaders of Israel, except Moses, Samuel was intercessor. Compare *Psa. 99, 6; Jer. 15, 1.*

6. *Drew water, and poured it out before the Lord* ["Jehovah"]. This doubtless was a traditional rite, a symbol of worship readily understood at that time, but not incorporated in the formal ritual of the nation. It may have typified penitence or purification. Compare *Jer. 9, 1, "Oh that my head were waters,"* and *Lam. 2, 19, "Pour out thine heart like water."* The people fasted as a further manifestation of their repentance and openly confessed, *We have sinned against the Lord* ["Jehovah"]. *Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah* ["Mizpah"]. We are to understand that he formally assumed the functions of national judge, which for years thereafter he exercised far more universally and thoroughly than any had ever done. Samuel's government was a logical precursor of the more centralized governments which were to follow.

By these verses we see that the nation was truly repentant.

7. *Philistines heard.* Such a gathering could not escape Philistine notice. *Went up.* From their cities on the lowlands to the seat of the Israelites in the mountain region. *They were afraid.* They were unorganized, without arms, and thoroughly cowed under their masters by a generation of servitude.

8. *Said to Samuel.* They had no confidence in themselves, but great faith in their leader's influence with God. *Cease not to cry.* "Be not silent from us from crying." The language here and elsewhere would indicate that the prayer of Samuel was a prolonged piercing cry. *Unto the Lord* ["Jehovah"] *our God.* They claim now an interest in Jehovah as their God, for they had renounced the service of idols. *That he will save us.* They had no arms and no power; if saved at all, it must be by the hand of God.

9. *A sucking lamb.* A lamb a few days old, representing a people young, helpless, and dependent upon their God. *Offered it.* Either by his own hand, as prophet, or by the hand of the high priest, Abitub, who may have been

present as a young man. *Burnt offering.* The sacrifice was wholly consumed upon the altar, and represented entire consecration to God. *Cried unto the Lord* ["Jehovah"]. Praying for the people while the sacrifice lay on the altar. *The Lord heard* ["Jehovah answered"]. The Revised Version is more accurate. The answer was given in the thunderstorm, as the voice of the Lord.

10. *As Samuel was offering.* The enemy paid no attention to these acts of worship, but probably deemed it a favorable time to begin the attack. *The Lord* ["Jehovah"] *thundered.* Here was a supernatural display of divine power in behalf of Israel. *With a great thunder.* Rather, "with a great voice." Loud peals of thunder from the heavens seemed like the voice of God shouting against the Philistines, and putting them in terror and confusion. *Discomfited them.* Put them in consternation and dismay. *They were smitten.* As Israel had been before them on the former occasion. (See 1 Sam. 4, 3, 10.)

11. *Pursued the Philistines.* "They improved the great opportunity thus granted them, and chased the terrified Philistines, and smote them, probably for several days. The word here rendered 'smote' is different from that rendered 'smitten' in verse 10. That denotes a judgment-stroke of heaven; this refers to the blows and slaughter incident to battle. The Israelites followed and beat down their foes until they came under Beth-car."

12. *Took a stone.* For a memorial monument of the nation's gratitude. *Between Mizpah* ["Mizpah"] *and Shen.* Both these names have the article, and may be translated as appellatives: "the watchtower and the tooth." Shen, which means a tooth, was probably some sharp, tooth-shaped rock or cliff, but its location is unknown. Samuel set up his monument at the place where Jehovah's help had been notably conspicuous, and called it *Eben-ezer*, which means "stone of help." It seems to have been erected at the place where Israel was smitten and the ark captured twenty years before. (See 1 Sam. 4, 1; 5, 1.) *Hitherto.* Up to this point; so far.

13. The events of the next chapter show that this subjugation was only relative, probably extending over the time of Samuel's active judgment.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

The baneful effects of the evildoing of Eli's family resulted in the loss, to Israel, of the ark of the covenant. The Philistines, who captured the ark, thought they had secured a great prize,

but found its possession only to be their overthrow; so that they were glad to return it, or permit the animals attached to the cart, on which they placed it, to return it themselves.

It came to Beth-shemesh, but the poor inhabitants of this locality suffered so severely, owing to their irreverence, that they sought its removal. It was then brought to Kirjath-jearim, and while it remained here, at the close of the long period of twenty years, the circumstances of the lesson take place.

"All the house of Israel lamented after the Lord." Their numerous misfortunes, their severe sufferings bring them to the point of realizing the cause of these things, and they seek to return to the Lord. This is a great sight, a whole people turning to God! Samuel, no doubt, has been doing some quiet but effective work, as he has been going up and down among those people in the capacity of judge, and they are now ready for the direct and pointed exhortations he delivers. He speaks plainly and positively, telling them to put away the idols, and especially that shameful and vile Astaroth, from among them, and serve the true and living God; and yet the Lord will deliver them from the hands of the Philistines. The Israelites heartsore and sad from their desolation, immediately followed these directions and prepared their poor bleeding hearts to serve the Lord only. This opened the way for the next great move on the part of Samuel, for he was intent on thorough reformation and spiritual quickening, so he gathered the great host in a great prayer service.

THE GATHERING AT MIZPEH.

In this gathering the Israelites show to a very great advantage, and the exhibit of their sincerity, probably born of adversity, is very marked. They begin by pouring libations of water on the ground, indicative of the non-return of their vows to them, and as Samuel is the chief director they follow him to the letter. They not only leave off the idol worship, but such a confession of sin is manifest as only hearts burdened with sin, in its conscious awfulness, can manifest. It is not enough to quit sinful practices, but righteousness and holiness must begin to be taken on, or the empty nature will seek again the destructive processes. It is a national consecration through individual repentance. God manifests himself to them, to their hearts' joy.

But in the midst of this holy service their old enemies, the Philistines, appeared, having been apprised of the gathering through their numerous spies. It might seem that God intends this incident for two purposes—that the enemy is always near a penitent soul, and that the presence of these people would afford him an opportunity of demonstrating the truthfulness

of Samuel's prophecy, "And he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

PHILISTINES PRESENT.

They came with sword and banner, thinking the Israelites an easy prey, as they were unprepared for such a contest. The Israelites had not come to fight, but only to "serve and wait." To have their devotions so rudely interfered with, when in humble mind and spirit, must have produced the extreme of confusion. More than this, they mistrusted themselves. "They were afraid of the Philistines." Their oft-experienced defeats had robbed them of their courage. So that now, even in the face of the recent promise, and their new return to God, they dare hardly hope for deliverance, much less for victory. Samuel alone, in this emergency, stands out the clear-cut, confiding servant of the Most High, for he in no sense relaxes in cool, deliberate, orderly service.

When the cry of battle is raised by the Philistines Samuel is in the midst of offering the burnt offering, and while dismay and utter rout might have been to Israel, a greater than the Philistines or Israelites mustered his forces against the rude, insolent aggressor. "The Lord thundered with a great thunder, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel." God is present with his children in their honest effort to approach him, and no matter what the interfering power, he affords and gives victory. Out of this victory originates Israel's Ebenezer. In the presence of such immediate deliverance and quick fulfillment of prophecy it becomes the Israelites to set up a memorial, for it is one of the memorable occasions of Israel's history.

When people are set right in the sight of God, and a resolute determination obtains to serve him, he is always found near and ready to give them the victory over their enemies. We have here a prominent exhibit of the effect of sin on the individual, and through him on the nation. We also see the marked readiness of God to receive his children when they are ready to come to him. We likewise see the great victory that awaits all who return to God, for the very incentive to their wrongdoing may be completely overthrown.

Thoughts for Young People.

1. *The powerful influence of one man.* Samuel was a much abler man than most of his day. But his great usefulness came from two qualities, both of which all of us may have. 1. Thorough godliness; 2. precipitateness, the power of projecting himself with force into the circum-

stances of the day. There is a beautiful proverb: "By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted." But the upright can only bless the city if they exert themselves. This is a very practical subject for young people. Samuel was young when he began, but he stood alone. Many a boy and girl shrinks from confessing Christ because he stands alone. Let us be encouraged by the blessing which followed Samuel's steadfastness.

2. *The conditions of God's blessing.* Put away your sins, and then God will stand by you. This is the burden of Samuel's teaching. This is a doctrine which young folk should take to their hearts, and in their own peculiar way should emphasize it upon others. True worship in all ages has been in danger of degenerating into mere forms and rites. The Romish Church and most of the Protestant denominations have again and again brought the "ark of God" into their theological struggles instead of seeking the true presence of God in prayer and humiliation.

Teaching Hints for Intermediate Classes.

HISTORY.

By reading the Scripture narrative between our lesson and that for last week let the teacher inform himself concerning the very dark period of her history through which Israel passed. The results of this reading should be concisely summarized for the pupils in order that they may the more easily understand our lesson text.

ENVIRONMENT.

Time. Perhaps 1131 B. C., but the date is uncertain.

Place. Mizpeh, where Saul was afterward anointed king. It was the religious center of Israel at this time.

RECORD.

We will consider our text according to the following outline:

ISRAEL

RETURNING TO THE LORD.
PRAYED FOR.
THREATENED.
DELIVERED.

1. *Israel returning to the Lord* (verses 2-4). What is meant by the term Israel? What was the religious condition of Israel? What gods had the people been serving? (verse 4.) Explain what is meant by Baalim and Ashtaroth. Where was the ark? (verse 2.) What did Samuel say to the people? How did the people answer this? Whom did they begin to serve again?

2. *Israel prayed for.* (verses 5, 6). At what

place did Samuel command Israel to be gathered? For what purpose? What did the people do at Mizpeh? What did they say? What did Samuel do? (Explain both the religious and the political significance of Samuel judging all Israel.)

3. *Israel threatened* (verses 7, 8). Who went up against Israel? Explain what is meant by the Philistines. How did the Israelites feel? What did they say to Samuel?

4. *Israel delivered* (verses 9-13). What did Samuel do? (verse 9.) To whom did he cry? With what results? How did the Lord discomfit the Philistines? Have some one read aloud verse 10. What did the men of Israel then do? What memorial did Samuel erect? Explain to the class the meaning of our word Ebenezer. Have some one read aloud verse 13, and explain its meaning.

OBJECT ILLUSTRATION.

The teacher may prepare a block of wood on which is printed EBENEZER, to represent the memorial stone that Samuel erected. Ask the class to recall some of the memorial stones about which they have studied. For example, the memorial in the Jordan, Josh. 4, 9, and Joshua's witness stone at Shechem, Josh. 24, 26, 27.

EMPHASIZED TRUTH.

God strove to teach Israel that he wanted their entire worship. Israel constantly turned aside from the Lord to worship other so-called gods. When they did so God left them to themselves, with the result that their enemies conquered them. The analogy between Israel and God's people to-day is very marked. God wants an undivided service. If his children yield it to him he blesses them in many ways. If they do not serve him he withdraws his help and they are overcome by their spiritual enemies. This truth may be illustrated from everyday life. When the pupils understand its import have them print:

I WILL SERVE GOD ONLY,
AND HE WILL DELIVER ME
FROM MY SPIRITUAL ENEMIES.

STUDY IN ADVANCE.

The teacher should very carefully study the HINTS for review Sunday and tell the pupils just what he expects of them on that day. All should be urged to study during the week the titles, Golden Texts, emphasized truths, and review words of the various lessons. Each one should be requested to bring to the class his Book of Heroes.

Review word "Enemies."

By Way of Illustration.

Verse 3. The first thing for any penitent sinner to do is to quit sinning. A captain at sea perceives that the steersman is steering the ship direct for the rocks. How is the danger to be avoided? By scrubbing the decks, or setting the men to the pumps? No! These things are good enough, but if the ship is to be saved her course must be changed.

Verse 5. We ought to pray for others whether they pray for themselves or not. As when one string of a lute is touched the others tremble, so Christians should be responsive to their brothers' troubles. As John Knox poured out his agonized soul in the constantly repeated prayer, "O Lord, give me Scotland, or I die," so we should pray constantly for our unsaved friends. God gave him Scotland in spite of queen and cardinal. And God will answer our prayers if they are offered with sympathy and faith.

Verse 11. "If God be for us who can be against us." There is a tradition among the Indians that Manitou was traveling in the invisible world and came upon a hedge of thorns, then saw wild beasts glare upon him from the thicket, and after a while stood before an impassable river. As he determined to proceed the thorns turned out phantoms, the wild beasts powerless ghosts, and the river only an illusion. When we march on obstacles disappear.

Verse 12. "The Lord loves to be loved, loves to be thanked, loves to have his children grateful." When Bishop Hutton, of Durham, was once traveling through his diocese he left his horse with a servant, retired from the highway, and knelt down in prayer. He explained that when a poor boy he traveled over that mountain without shoes or stockings, and disturbed a cow on that identical spot that he might warm his feet where she lay. He could not pass without thanking God.

A man woke on the first day of the new year, or thought he did, and was told he must wait a while for breakfast. He waited a half hour, an hour, two hours, and at last was beside himself with hunger and impatience. Just then he was ushered into a great hall where plates were laid for one thousand and ninety-five persons. His curiosity was greatly excited as he saw plates with eggs, and broiled meat, and bread, and toast, and cakes, and soup, and fish, and meats, and puddings, and pies, good things of all sorts—a meal apiece for a thousand and ninety-five men. "How thankful I would be," ejaculated the hungry man, "if I could sit down at one of these plates!" "Would you, indeed?" said his

guide; "would you be thankful? Then you shall have your breakfast at once. But these plates would do you no good. They are the ghosts of what you have already had. They are the three hundred and sixty-five breakfasts, the three hundred and sixty-five dinners, and the three hundred and sixty-five suppers you had last year. Let me tell you that you were not truly thankful for one of them; for a truly thankful man remembers God's past mercies as vividly as he delights in God's present mercies." The man awoke, for this was all a dream; but he had learned a wholesome lesson.

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

In 1 Sam. 4-7 are some things hard to understand. Yet these chapters teach lessons we need to learn and to heed. Sin and its consequences are not to be treated lightly; they are to be feared; they are real; they are destructive; and if persisted in they are fatal. God's word never fails. His warnings as surely as his promises are eternal truth. God is love; he is long-suffering, full of compassion and tender mercy. But love and mercy rest upon foundations of righteousness; and true love for him makes us reverence his commands and fear to offend him. He warned his people that they would fall before their enemies if they forsook him to worship other gods. But they forgot his counsel. Baalim and Ashtaroth seemed all well enough while life moved smoothly, but one day the Philistines set themselves in array against Israel, and they were frightened to find they had no power of resistance. They began to ask the reason why. Then they remembered how the ark of the covenant brought their fathers through the sea, and made them victorious at Jericho, and they said, "Let us send for it; perhaps it will save us from our enemies." So they placed once more in their midst the long-neglected symbol of Jehovah's presence, and for a while it checked the Philistines, for they had heard of the might of Israel's God. But soon they rallied for a stronger fight. "Never give up," they cried; "do not be slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you." Unity, determination, and desperate fighting won the battle for them. Israel was smitten with very great slaughter, and even the ark of God was taken. Years of humiliation, sorrow, perplexity, followed. "Without God, without hope," was true then, is true now, will be true forever.

Why was all this sad experience suffered? Samuel explains it. To turn to the Lord merely

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to be helped out of trouble was no better than heathen worship. Sending for the ark was a vain show; God himself came not with it. Samuel said, "If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." Prove your sincerity by a changed life; God looks at the heart, not at the outward profession. It sometimes happens now that people in trouble send for the ark of God. They ask the minister to pray for them; they go to church, a habit long neglected; they even join the church under pressure of their sorrow. But these things bring only transient relief. There is neither comfort in trouble nor deliverance from sin in the visible symbols of spiritual truth, nor in the rites of the Church. Comfort and victory are only found when by full surrender of our whole heart we find God himself.

The fight against sin in the world, in the community, in the heart, without God is a losing battle. Satan wins against human strength and wisdom every time. Education, environment, the present fads of philanthropy, touch only the surface. Sin breaks out in new forms. The visible Church and the use of Christian methods, alone, are powerless against evil. Satan carries them over into his own camp as the Philistines carried the ark, and uses them wherever he finds them better than his own devices.

There is but one successful way—a full surrender to God; putting away all that divides our love and service; accepting his plan of salvation by regeneration of the nature through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, in ceaseless dependence upon him in faith and prayer. Along this way every social reform and every soul longing for deliverance from sin may set up its Ebenezer, its waymark of progress, in the name and strength of the Lord.

The Teachers' Meeting.

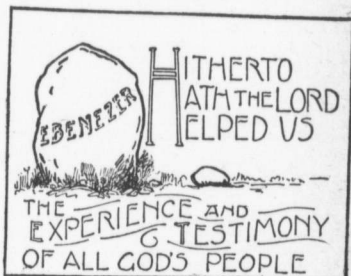
Recount the adventures of the ark after its capture. . . . Seek parallels to Samuel's preaching that God would deliver the Israelites if they would reject their false gods. . . . Explain Baalim and Ashtaroth, and the ceremonies of verse 6. . . . Why did the Philistines always come up against the Israelites when the Israelites were gathered together? . . . The characteristics of the Philistine conquest. The sort of servitude in which the Israelites were kept by them. . . . The religious lessons of the erection of the stone Eben-ezer. . . . Practical lessons: 1. The un-

changing love of God. 2. The true way to secure a "revival." 3. All victory to be looked for from God. 4. Stoop in penitence and rise in power. 5. The activity of Satan excited by the activity of the Church. 6. The inexhaustible resources of God. 7. In every life and at every step "Ebenezer" may be set up.

Library References.

Ewald, *History of Israel*, vol. ii, pages 419, 426. Stanley, *History of the Jewish Church*, vol. i, pages 344-366. Kitto, *History of the Bible*, chap. xv. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, vol. iii, pages 53-74. Freeman, *Bible Manners and Customs*, Nos. 49, 222, 304.

Blackboard.



Israel had shown inconstancy and waywardness, repentance when brought to realize the reproach and disastrous consequences of sin, but negligent of God and of his law when the warning and calamity had ceased to remind them of their iniquity. But God had been always faithful, and had never forgotten to be gracious when they sought his favor with contrite and lowly hearts. Their latest memorial to his name is that which every Christian may build at each step of the way, the Ebenezer, with its blessed light glowing over bygone days and years, and testifying that he will never leave nor forsake those who thus far have been his peculiar care. We may have many hallowed memorials in many scenes and times, but this monument is the sum of all others, and should be an acknowledgment to mark our daily path.

Coloring.—Stone, light brown; word, red; text, white; H, white and purple; lower phrase, light blue.

LESSON XII. Christmas Lesson.

GOLDEN TEXT. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2. 11.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Read Isa. 9. 1-7, Heb. 1.]

Luke 2. 8-20. [Commit to memory verses 10, 11.]

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them unto heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Beth-lehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Ma'ry and Jo'seph, and the babe lying in the manger.

17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Ma'ry kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

AMERICAN REVISED VERSION.*

8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. 9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: 11 for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Beth-lehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. 18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

Time.—B. C. 4. Place.—In the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Home Readings.

- M. Christmas Lesson. Luke 2. 8-20.
- Th. Simon's prophecy. Luke 2. 25-35.
- W. Return to Nazareth. Luke 2. 36-40.
- Th. The wise men. Matt. 2. 1-12.
- F. Into Egypt. Matt. 2. 13-23.
- S. Prophecy. Isa. 9. 1-7.
- G. The divine Word. John 1. 1-14.

Lesson Hymns.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 301.

Hark! the herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the new-born King,
 Peace on earth and mercy mild;
 God and sinners reconciled."

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 299.

Angels, from the realms of glory,
 Wing your flight o'er all the earth.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 302.

Hark! what mean those holy voices,
 Sweetly sounding through the skies?

Questions for Senior Scholars.

1. The Announcement to the Shepherds.
 In what country were the shepherds watching their flocks?

*The American Revision, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

What was the first heavenly appearance to them?

How were they affected by the vision?

What reason for not being afraid did the angel give?

In what sense is the angel's message good tidings to all?

Why is Bethlehem called the city of David?

What is the Saviour called in verse 11?

How were the shepherds directed to Jesus?

What followed the angel's announcement?

What was the anthem of the heavenly chorus?

2. *The Shepherds' Visit.*

What did the shepherds propose after the angels went away?

Who did they say made this known to them?

Where did they find Jesus?

How was the statement of the shepherds received?

What did Mary know of Jesus?

How did Mary receive the story of the shepherds?

What special reason had the shepherds for glorifying God?

To whom were the good tidings sent?

Questions for Intermediate Scholars.

1. *The Angels Announce Jesus* (verses 8-14).

When was Jesus born?

In what city was he born?

Who was his mother?

To whom was Christ's birth first told?

Tell the story of this angel visit.

What was the sign for recognizing Jesus?

Why was he not in a house?

What was the condition in life of his parents?

2. *The Shepherds See Jesus* (verses 15, 16).

What did the shepherds decide to do?

Was it still nighttime?

Did they recognize who it was that told them of Jesus?

In what spirit and manner did they go?

Where and in what condition did they find the infant Jesus?

What is it that shows the faith of these shepherds?

What was wonderful in all this story?

3. *The Shepherds Proclaim Jesus* (verses 17-20).

What message did the shepherds spread abroad?

What general expectation about Christ was then abroad?

Did the Jews expect Jesus in this way?

What effect had the shepherds' message?

Who thought about all this continually, and tried to know its full meaning?

What did the shepherds do upon their return to their flocks?

Do we find any trace in after years of the effect of this angel's message?

Questions for Younger Scholars.

What fields are near Bethlehem? *The shepherds' fields.*

Who watched their flocks there one night? *Some good shepherds.*

Who lived there long before? *Ruth and David.*

Who came down to the shepherds? *An angel.*

What did he bring? *Good news.*

Can you repeat his words? (Verses 10, 11.)

Who came then? *A heavenly host.*

What song did they sing? (Verse 14.)

Where did the shepherds go after this? *To Bethlehem.*

Whom did they find? *Joseph, Mary, and the Holy Child.*

Where did they find them? *In a stable.*

How did they go back? *Praising God.*

The Lesson Catechism.

(For the entire school.)

1. Who frightened the shepherds of Bethlehem? *An angel.*

2. What did he say? *"Fear not: . . . I bring you good tidings."*

3. Whom were they to find? *"A Saviour . . . Christ the Lord."*

4. How were they to find him? *As a babe in a manger.*

5. Who joined in a chorus of praise? *A multitude of the heavenly host.*

6. When the shepherds had found the babe what did they do? *They made known abroad the saying.*

7. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? *"For unto you is," etc.*

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

Good Tidings of Great Joy.

I. FROM HEAVEN.

The angel of the Lord; a multitude of the heavenly host. v. 9, 13.

That eternal life which was with the

Father, and was manifested unto us.

1 John 1. 2.

His angels spirits; his ministers a flame.

Heb. 1. 7.

II. TO ALL THE EARTH.

To all people. v. 10.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16. 15.

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised. Psa. 113. 3.

III. PLAIN AND SIMPLE.

Unto you is born this day a Saviour. v. 11.

A child is born. . . name shall be Wonderful. Isa. 9. 6.

The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Isa. 35. 8.

IV. MYSTERIOUS.

They that heard it wondered; Mary pondered. v. 18, 19.

Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. 1 Tim. 3. 16.

Which things the angels desire to look into. 1 Pet. 1. 12.

V. JOYFUL AND GLORIOUS.

Glory to God in the highest. v. 14.

Joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 5. 11.

Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus. Eph. 3. 21.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

This lesson is of perennial interest. It is not necessary to teach that Jesus was born on December 25. This cannot be proved; neither can it be disproved. It has been asserted that flocks could not have been kept in the field in December. But while the rainy season in Palestine brings sharp turns of wintry weather, it brings no such hardships to sheep or shepherds as they experience with us. The weather of twenty-one consecutive years was recorded by Dr. Chaplin, of Jerusalem, and in eight of these years there was no snow at all in December. Rain is not constant, and the fair days are "the most enjoyable that the climate of Palestine affords." The mean temperature is not far from fifty-two or fifty-three degrees. How a miscalculation of the year of our Lord's birth set our calendars irreparably wrong, and how we are now able approximately to correct that date, should be made plain to all pupils. In a time of intellectual darkness, when there was no general calendar in use, a Christian scholar named Dionysius was directed by his ecclesiastical superiors to ascertain the beginning of the Christian era so that henceforth all events might be dated from it. He used all the light he had, and according to the best scholarship of his day "the year of our Lord" was fixed as we have it. But more accurate knowledge of classic history, and closer study of the few chronological hints given in the gospels, have made it plain that our Lord's birth occurred a little before the accepted Christian era.

Verse 8. *In the same country.* Or "neighborhood;" in the vicinity of Bethlehem. *Shepherds.* Between Bethlehem and Jerusalem was Migdal Eder, a watchtower where the shepherds of the flocks destined for sacrifice gathered. Jews expected the Messiah to be announced from Migdal Eder and to be born in Bethlehem. Shepherds were, as a class, held in contempt; their manner of life had so isolated them from the ordinances that they were not expected to maintain religious observance. But these men doubtless were devout in heart. *Abiding in the field.* The men may have had tents or booths; sheep in Palestine are housed only in the coolest weather, and often their shepherds sleep on beds of grass or green branches without covering other than their heavy mantles. *Keeping watch.* Revised Margin: "Keeping night watches;" watching in sections, by turn. *Their flock.* It was a temple flock, probably, that they were caring for. If they had been sheep owners, each with a flock of his own, the allusion would have been to their flocks. To poetic fancy this presents a link of connection between Old and New Testament worship.

9. *The angel of the Lord came upon them.*

"An angel of the Lord stood by them;" suddenly appeared. The angels of Bible story seem always to have appeared as young men in white raiment. Wings are described by Isaiah (6. 2), Ezekiel (1. 6), and John (Rev. 4. 8), but they were not on messengers, but on mysterious "living creatures," "beasts," "cherubim and seraphim"—orders which seem to be quite distinct from the "angels of God." *The glory of the Lord.* A cloud of brightness that symbolized the divine presence. *Afraid.* The man does not live whose pulse would not flutter if the door of the invisible world suddenly swung open.

10. *The angel said unto them.* "In several ways this angel is a model for all preachers, these shepherds a model for all hearers."—*Van Oosterzee.* *Fear not.* "Be not afraid." Nearly all God's direct messages to men began with this kind exhortation. *Good tidings.* Evangel. Our words "gospel" and "evangelical" both come from this phrase. *Great joy.* Not only a real blessing, but an undisguised blessing—one that shall bring its gladness immediately with it. *To all people.* "All the people."

11. *The city of David.* A common collo-

quial name for Bethlehem. A *Saviour*. One of the striking facts about the Gospel story is the evident universal feeling that a Saviour was needed. The people then had no such theological conceptions as we. They simply felt that they were hopeless, both in their temporal and their spiritual surroundings. The Church was depraved, the nation was enslaved, the masses were wretchedly poor, the government was weak and wicked, and men's conceptions of divine truth were vague. Almost every thoughtful person in that day, pagan and Jewish alike, felt the need of a Saviour. *Christ*. The Jewish technical term for the Anointed One.

12. *A sign* ["the sign"]. Not an evidence of the truth of this angelic message, but an index, a guide, a pointer. *Swaddling clothes*. Tight wraps which engirdled the baby from head to foot and made free motion of the limbs impossible. They were used in all nations down to the last century. It was Rousseau who by his sarcasm led to the abolition of this barbarism from Christendom. To the shepherds it must have been a marvel that the Christ should be found in circumstances so like those of ordinary infants. *In a manger*. The only resting place to be found in the overcrowded caravansary.

13. *Heavenly host*. The armies of God. *Praising God*. The permanent employment of angels.

14. *Glory to God in the highest*. This was a doxology familiar to the Jews. It may mean in the highest heaven. The Jews believed there were three heavens, one above the other; with that in mind this glory of God would extend from the highest down to the earth and back again. Or it may mean glory in the highest degree. Or, Glory to The Highest (God). *On*

earth peace, good will toward men. "Peace among men in whom he is well pleased." This song may have been sung in fugue, like many of the Hebrew chorals.

15. *As the angels were gone away*. "When the angels went away." *Let us now go*. The sheep were left to care for themselves. *Thing*. Margin: "saying."

16. *Found*. Discovered after search. The Revision inserts "both" before *Mary and Joseph*. *The babe lying in a* ["the"] *manger*. More pictures have been made of this scene than of any other in earth's history. Mangers in the East are built of stone and mortar. Often the quarters for cattle are found under the same roof with the family rooms, though separated by a stone partition.

17. *Made known abroad* ["concerning"]. If, as we suppose, these men had charge of the temple flocks they would in the discharge of their ordinary duties meet ecclesiastics and other officials. So that probably the birth of the Messiah was proclaimed in the temple immediately. The agitation produced in Jerusalem by these stories and by the visit of the wise men must have been great.

18, 19. The shepherds shout the good news, but one woman with a richer knowledge than any, to whom the greatest of all revelations had been made, is quiet; her heart is too full. *Kept all these things* ["sayings"]. It has been ingeniously suggested that the real meaning of this phrase is, "memorized these words;" that is, prepared carefully a sufficient statement of all these transactions. This would support the very reasonable belief that Mary was Luke's authority for many of the details of his first two chapters.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

God many times produces the most startling effects in unthought-of places and at unexpected times. He can afford to be disregardful of man's methods of order, place, and time, and work in accordance with his own overwhelming thought of propriety. He can afford to perform in the most questionable conditions and await his time for the vindication of his conduct.

Prophecy concerning an event may induce a general expectancy, but not necessarily a definite detail as to character, effect, time, or place. Man, having in hand the production and the presentation of such a Being as the Saviour, with such infinite reaches of character and such manifest power and mastery, an heir to such a blazonry of glory, never would have sought out a few shepherds, tented on the lonely fields, to

be the heralds of such majesty. There is an incongruity, but the Father can suffer such incongruity, and can send his angels of light to the lowliest places of earth and the plainest of earth's people, for the purpose of proclaiming the greatest fact in the world's history—"God manifest in the flesh."

They were shepherds; their life was simple and afforded an opportunity for contemplation. Being Jews they would be familiar with the teachings of the law and the prophets, and their acquaintance with these may have been most extensive. A general expectancy of some great event pervaded the thought of the day, and these shepherds must have shared the more in the general expectancy, being possessors of the greater light. Undoubtedly, God knew to whom

to make his revelation in order to work out his own purpose in the event, and therefore selected the shepherds. We must note, at least, the manifest courage in these men, for we see how soon their fears were allayed when the angels addressed them. The descent of the heavenly messenger was sudden, an illumination encircled them, "and they were sore afraid." But with what reverence they stand and listen, as they are assured that it is not vengeance that has been brought by the visitor, but good tidings of great joy—just what they have been looking for; and many times have they conversed on the coming of this Messiah, and now, lo! he appears, for, says the angel: "A Saviour is born which is Christ the Lord."

This messenger gives his full title as the prophets have spoken of him, so that these men shall not be left to any guessing as to the personality of this Being of whom the angel speaks. Then verse 12 explicitly states what they shall find in their search for him. The babe, the swaddling clothes, the lying in a manger are not the miraculous things in the affair, but the appearance of the angel and his information constitute the miracle; the others are but the confirmatory evidence appealing to the senses of these early visitors to the birthplace of the Saviour. It is then that the whole starry sky bursts into song, and the angelic choir chants the joy of heaven come down to earth.

What a priceless vision! These lowly of the earth must have been transported with rapture as the sweet refrain floated on the night air about them. It does not take them long to decide what to do, everything is so real to them and so vital to their longing, anxious hearts. They come with haste and find Mary and Joseph and the babe as was told them by the angel. If rapture before, now an excess of rapture, and they immediately went forth publishing the glad tidings to the sons of men. The angels sang to them; now in turn they sing praises of thanksgiving to God for his rich gifts to men.

There is one great chorus common to heaven and earth, and it is so intense and so full of power and life that it is the common property of the universe—God's love to men. Since that day no event or person has given such inspiration to poet or vocalist, for the world is full of the poetry and song of the babe of Bethlehem. Men have found, as did the shepherds, the Saviour, and they have sought to have him born in their hearts, and their tongues have been unloosed to the tune of the angels' song, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

The worth of this incident is not in the marvelous vision, or the conduct of the watching shepherds, or the poetic fancy that has framed into choice phrase the facts here contained, or the melody arising from trained voices chanting this beautiful theme, but now and always in the reverent search of the heart for the indwelling presence of this ever-present, matchless Christ. May we find that he is the Saviour of the world, because we find him saving us.

Thoughts for Young People.

SIGNS OF THE COMING MESSIAH.

1. *God's revelation* comes when we attend to routine duties; "Picturesque Christians" are not in demand. It is to the priest performing his regular tasks, to shepherds caring for their flocks, to the business man attending to everyday duty, to the mother busy with humdrum household responsibilities, that God's messenger comes.

2. *The chorus of angels.* The heavenly hosts did not cease God's praise when the shepherds ceased to hear them. They simply went back to heaven, where their chorus of gladness continues to this hour.

"But with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath that angels' strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man at war with man bears not
The love-song which they bring.
O hush your noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing."

3. *Lying in a manger.* The Christ might have come on a higher range of society, but he never could have been the world's Saviour if he had not been on a level with the lowest. When men seek to raise a building they put their machinery down at the foundation, not at the top of the spire. When God seeks to elevate a race he touches the bottom layer.

4. *The wonderers and ponderers.* The shepherds started out astonishing everybody, because they were astonished themselves. Mary kept all these things in her heart, and pondered them. Both did right. Neither class should condemn the other.

Teaching Hints for Intermediate Classes.

INTRODUCTION.

That we should give our pupils the very best teaching concerning Christmas all Christian teachers are agreed, but many shrink from teaching the Christmas lesson because they de-

clear it is so well known to the pupils that there is little to be said that is new. This is perfectly true, but the class leader need have no difficulty in presenting the old truths in a most interesting manner. This can be done if the teacher have in mind exactly what he wishes to teach. To help crystallize the whole important story around a few facts the following questions are suggested. They should be asked by the teacher, answered by the pupils, and discussed by all:

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS?

To many it means nothing beyond the giving and the receiving of gifts, with a good dinner and much confectionery thrown in. But look at the word. Spell it thus: Christ-mas. Two thirds of the word is "Christ." The other part is the word "mass," which means a religious service. Christmas is a religious service in honor of Christ. How many look upon Christmas as the last day in the year upon which to have a religious service. In this respect our Roman Catholic friends keep nearer to the true ideal than do many Protestants.

WHY OBSERVE CHRISTMAS?

Let the teacher ask this question, and he will probably be astounded at the answers that he will receive. Let him teach that Christmas is observed because it is the anniversary of the birth of Christ. At this point have the class open their Bibles and read the lesson story. Then let the teacher ask and emphasize the answers to the following questions: When was Christ born? Where was he born? Under what circumstances was Christ born? Why was Christ born?

HOW OBSERVE CHRISTMAS?

Many will say by giving and receiving presents. Do not find fault with this answer, but use it to call attention to God's greatest gift to mankind. (See John 3. 16.) Explain that had it not been for this gift we would have had no Christmas. The conclusion is: A part, at least, of Christmas ought to be spent in thanking God for his great gift.

Ask each pupil these two questions: What have you done with God's greatest gift? What have you given to God in return for his gift? Have the Golden Text repeated by several, and try to have the pupils accept, love, and obey this Saviour, the anniversary of whose birth we celebrate, and show that giving themselves to God is the most fitting return which they can make for his great gift.

CONCLUSION.

"Christmas all the year round" is the motto of many Christians. Try to have the pupils understand what is the real Christmas spirit, and show them how much better off the world would be were it practiced all the time. Be emphatic in pointing out that each one may do his part toward having the Christmas spirit prevail. Urge all to begin from this time to so love Christ and to so live for him that each will be constantly doing his part to make it

CHRISTMAS ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

By Way of Illustration.

Verse 8. "There is nothing better than duty-doing day or night." Every successful man who lives in your neighborhood can be used as an illustration of this truth. It is when the boy does the boy's work well, is a good sweeper, is a prompt errand boy, is a courteous receiver of commands, and a cheerful deliverer of messages—it is when he does his ordinary duties well that business men call him to higher positions. A story used to be told of a French millionaire who, when a boy, sought a position and was refused. As he went away from the man who had refused him he saw a pin and picked it up, and the man was so impressed with his economy that he at once employed him, and his business-like qualities carved out a fortune for him. That story used to be told as an illustration of the importance of little things and the value of economy. It is really an illustration of the truth that our Bible story brings to the front, that it is people who do their ordinary work to whom the extraordinary opportunities come.

God honors the lowly and active. An American president, when asked what was his coat of arms, replied, "A pair of shirt sleeves." Lord Tenterden was proud to point out to his son the shop in which his father had shaved for a penny. A French doctor once taunted Flechier, Bishop of Nimes, who had been a tallow chandler in his youth, with the meanness of his origin, to which he replied, "If you had been born in the same condition that I was you would still be a maker of candles."

Verse 13. "God loves us more than we love ourselves. God rejoices more than we do in our acceptance of salvation." "If we should gather all the flowers that grow upon the mountain sides and in the valleys and heap them up before God he would not be richer than he is now, but when we bring ourselves to him, and affection after affection opens and exhales in his presence he is richer and his joys are greater."

—*Beccher*. He reveals himself as "a jealous God." This divine "jealousy" is an intense craving for responses to love. We are the children of a Father in heaven that cannot endure that we should transfer to another the love that belongs to him.

Versé 15. Not long ago there was a researcher of art in Italy who, reading in some book that there was a portrait of Dante painted by Giotto, was led to suspect that he had found where it had been placed. There was an apartment used as an outhouse for storage of wood, hay, and the like. He obtained permission to enter it, cleared out the rubbish, experimented upon the white-washed wall, and detected signs for the wished-for portrait. He tried on till the stern face of the Tuscan poet stood out in bold relief. So should we seek Christ.

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

"Unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour, . . . Christ the Lord." Do you hear the message in the Christmas chimes? They have no real meaning for you, you do not hear what they are saying, unless your heart responds:

"O Saviour! My Saviour! not cradled afar
With Mary at Bethlehem under the star;
He is born in my heart, my Saviour and King,
And that is the reason the Christmas bells ring!"

It is interesting to search out the names and titles given in the Bible to the Lord Jesus. They count more than a hundred; every one is suggestive of his office, his person, his work for us. All fulfill this prophecy that his name shall be called Wonderful. But the sweetest of all, the one we say over and over when we are weary and heavy laden and want rest, that by which we know him best, is this: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Some one has truly said, "There is more of power to strengthen, elevate, and cheer in the word *Jesus* than in all the utterances of man since the world began."

There are many illustrations of the power of this wonderful name. In the third chapter of Acts we read of the man at the beautiful gate of the temple, poor, lame, helpless, looking with beseeching eyes at Peter and John as they went in to pray, and Peter said to him, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk," and he went away leaping and singing for joy, through faith in that name, perfectly healed. When the seventy who had been sent out to preach returned they said, "Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through thy name."

Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you." So great was the power of that name when the apostles preached that the rulers in Jerusalem were afraid it would overturn their government and commanded that they should not mention it again. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

"Through him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame;
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with his name."

You have heard this blessed name so often it is familiar to you as your mother's; so familiar that you forget how very wonderful it is. Let me tell you the story of one who heard it for the first time. A woman in India visited the missionary physician, and found the doctor so full of sympathy that she told her all her sorrows. Her daughter had married and left her, her sons were dead, and she had no one to help or to care for her. Locusts had eaten up all the grain, fever had taken hold of the orphan grandchildren, and she was old, with a cough and rheumatism and failing eyesight, and she was altogether the most sorrowful old woman in the village. "Yes," said the missionary, "this is a sad world, but there is a better world beyond," and the poor woman listened eagerly. Putting her fingers to her forehead, drawn and wrinkled, she said, "Do you see, it is all written here—grinding, cooking, spinning, tired head, weary feet, live and die like a beast, all because we women have committed sin in a former life." "But," said the missionary, "Satan brought sin, and sin brought sorrow, but God loved us and sent his Son Jesus Christ to save."

"Ah yes, you know this, for you read all day; but what can we women understand?" "Yes, you can understand this; there is no one too ignorant for the Lord Jesus to save." "Well, give me my medicine and let me go home." She gets it, starts, comes back, and says, "Tell me his name again." Next day she returns and tells her troubles over, and says, "Tell me his name again." And as she goes away she repeats, "Tell me his name again before I leave."

Think of the music of that name in the dull silence of that poor soul! Think of its light in

ber darkness. Think of millions like her who have never heard it, and at this Christmas time resolve that you will know for yourself more fully than ever the power of the name of Jesus, and will help to make it known the wide world over.

The Teachers' Meeting.

I. *Geography.* Bring out the characteristics of "the same country;" the relation of Jerusalem to Bethlehem: "the watchtower of the flock." II. *Persons.* Many human beings were used by God as tools to bring about appropriate circumstances for the birth of the Lord. Get the class to suggest persons—for example, Cæsar Augustus, who levied the tax that brought Joseph to Bethlehem. Of what sort were "all they that heard it"? III. *Customs.* Shepherds watching their flocks by night. The oriental caravansary. The universal custom of "swaddling clothes" for infants. Probably the English translators never dreamed that the time would come when that phrase would need explanation. IV. *Angelic appearances.* Recall a few from both Testaments, and get the class to mention characteristics. Many of our conventional ideas concerning angels are unbiblical. V. *Meaning of angelic chorus.* A convenient line of thought: 1. The Midnight watch (God specially honors plain devout people); 2. The Midnight Song (some ignored and forgotten reasons for our rejoicing in the Advent); 3. The Midnight Visit ("Seek, and ye shall find"); 4. The Joyful Report (contrast the shepherds' conduct with Mary's, and bring out the advantages and disadvantages of such course; but we may do better than either: We can *wonder*, and *ponder*, and *ACT*, as they could not).

Library References.

CHRISTMAS.—The Christmas numbers of all religious papers always have something to say in regard to the history and customs of the day. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, page 140. *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. xii, page 144. Tiffany, *Pulpit and Platform*, page 86. *Preacher's Magazine*, 1898, page 531. Banks, *Christ Brotherhood*, page 127.

SHEPHERD LIFE IN JUDEA.—Willett, *Life and Times of Herod the Great*, page 111. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, vol. vi, page 169. Geikie, *New Testament Hours*, vol. i, pages 320, 321. Stapfer, *Palestine in the Time of Christ*, page 226. Tristram, *Eastern Customs in Bible Lands*, pages 109-120. Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, pages 184-187.

SERMONS ON THE LESSON.

Verse 8.—Fish, *Pulpit Eloquence of the Nineteenth Century*, page 54. *The Homiletic Review*, vol. xiv, page 545; vol. xxviii, page 542; vol. xxxvi, page 550.

Verse 9.—*The Treasury*, vol. v, page 416.

Verse 10.—Barrow, *Works*, vol. ii, page 115. *The Metropolitan Pulpit*, vol. ii, page 142. Edmondson, *Short Sermons*, page 231. *The Treasury*, vol. vii, page 479. *The Homiletic Monthly*, vol. viii, page 142. *The Homiletic Review*, vol. xxx, page 524; vol. xxxiv, page 43. Beecher, H. W., *Sermons*, Fifth Series, page 267.

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Verse 19.—Newman, J. H., *Fifteen Sermons*, page 312; also *Sermons*, vol. viii, page 311.

Primary Notes.



Whatever else the blessed Christmas tide brings to those who know its meaning, there is above all the sense of joy and gladness, awakened by the thought of those good tidings of great joy which the angelic messengers proclaimed. The song of long ago thrills our hearts with its sweet refrain, and the vibrant

chords respond in harmony with the glorious ideal which it is a Christian's privilege to labor for and love.

Coloring.—Heart, white and pink; hand, cream; drapery, purple; wording, white and orange, purple shaded.

FOURTH QUARTERLY REVIEW.

December 28.

Golden Text.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Psa. 90. 1.

Home Readings.

- M. Joshua Encouraged. Josh. 1. 1-11.
 Tu. Crossing the Jordan. Josh. 3. 9 to 4. 7.
 W. The Fall of Jericho. Josh. 6. 8-20.
 Th. Joshua and Caleb. Josh. 14. 5-15.
 F. Joshua's Parting Advice. Josh. 24. 14-25.
 S. Gideon and the Three Hundred. Judg. 7. 1-8, 16-21.
 S. The Boy Samuel. 1 Sam. 3. 1-14.

Lesson Hymns.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 344.

Come, let us anew our journey pursue,
 Roll round with the year,
 And never stand still till the Master appear.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 343.

Sing to the great Jehovah's praise!
 All praise to him belongs;
 Who kindly lengthens out our days,
 Demands our choicest songs.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 342.

Conducted by thy hand
 Safe through another year,
 Again, behold, we stand,
 O Lord, to worship here.

Review Scheme for Senior and Intermediate Scholars.

LESSONS I-VI.—HALF HOURS WITH JOSHUA.

LESSON I.—*Joshua Encouraged.*

Whom did Joshua succeed as leader? What wonderful promise was given to him? What power had he with the people? What is beautiful in his character? What does his name mean?

LESSON II. *Crossing the Jordan.*

Near what city did they cross? What was the condition of the river at this time? Who first entered the river? What rested in the river during the crossing of the peo-

ple? What did they take out of the river as a memorial?

LESSON III. *The Fall of Jericho.*

How many spies were sent to examine Jericho? Who saved their lives? What was the plan to capture Jericho? How many times in all did they march around the city? What was to be done with the goods?

LESSON IV. *Joshua and Caleb.*

When did these two men stand in a heroic way? What was promised Caleb then? Does he now claim this promise? Could he peacefully take possession? What is beautiful in his character?

LESSON V. *Cities of Refuge.*

How many of these cities were there? Who could find refuge in them? How long must he remain there? If guilty, would the city be a refuge? Who is our refuge even when guilty? Has our high priest died so that we are now free?

LESSON VI. *Joshua's Parting Advice.*

To what age did Joshua live? Where did he spend all these years? Where does he now call Israel? What is his last counsel? How is it received?

Joshua gives advice and delivers an exhortation to the people from whom he soon must part. It is an exhortation to fidelity, not to each other, but to the Most High God. Fidelity to God will carry with it fidelity to one's fellows, for it is the key to everything else.

LESSONS VII-XII.—HALF HOURS WITH OTHER HEROES.

LESSON VII. *The Time of the Judges.*

Into what sin did Israel frequently fall? What were some of the most horrible of the idols of Palestine? Who led the people in their successive struggles? What office did these men hold? Whom did they directly speak for and represent?

LESSON VIII. *World's Temperance Lessons.*

What evil has conquered many great heroes? What two nations fell as here recorded? Who is calling them to repent? What is the terrible effect of strong drink upon the mind? What upon the character?

LESSON IX. *Gideon and the Three Hundred.*

Who had enslaved Israel in Gideon's time? What was Gideon doing when God called him? What other name had been given him and why? How did God try Gideon's army? What would these tests show?

LESSON X. *Ruth and Naomi.*

Can you name all Naomi's family? Of what

nations were Ruth and Naomi respectively? Why did they return to Bethlehem? What was Ruth's great decision? How was she blessed for it?

LESSON XI. *The Boy Samuel.*

Who were the parents of Samuel? Why was he called Samuel? Who called him when a boy? Was this the call to be saved or had he been saved before? What did God now constitute him?

LESSON XII. *Samuel the Judge.*

What idols were the Israelites worshipping? Who labored long to bring them back to God? What occurred while they were praying at Mizpeh? How did God deliver the people? Where was the ark of God now?

The Lord had said to the Israelites, "Ye shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land" (verse 2). The people of the land were idolaters and all that the term implied. God wanted the children of Israel to keep apart and distinct from them, that they might not share in their idolatrous ways. As in another place he said, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." There can be no righteous compromise with that which is sinful. Hence we should keep ourselves aloof from all ungodliness.

Teaching Hints for Intermediate Classes.

NOTE.

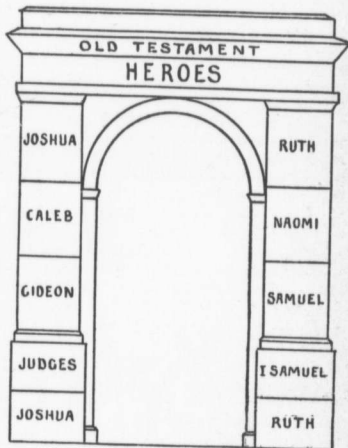
The following review HINTS have been prepared for those who have handled the various lessons of the quarter in accordance with the HINTS given in connection with each Lesson. The directions are for those who conduct the review in the class. With modifications, however, they may be followed in reviewing a school from the platform. For example, instead of having the arch outlined on a slate or pad, it may be reproduced on the blackboard, or on a large sheet of manilla paper. Instead of having the truth emphasized in connection with each lesson read from a pupil's Book of Heroes. It may be printed on brown paper, and exhibited to, and read by, the whole school at the proper time. In a review, especially when conducted from the platform, some pupils will grow restless, and it will be difficult to keep their attention. A change of position is always a rest, and therefore the exercises should be interrupted two or three times in order to allow the members of the school to rise and sing stanzas of well-known uplifting hymns.

PART ONE.

Rapidly call for the titles and the Golden Texts of the various Lessons. Very little or no time should be spent in comments.

PART TWO.

Have outlined on a slate, tablet, or pad an arch like the following without any lettering on it:



Ask a pupil to give you the word that recalls Lesson I, print it on the right of your arch, and quickly recall the lesson facts. Ask the name of the book of the Bible in which the lesson is found. Put it on the base of the arch. Ask the name of the hero whom the lesson brings to mind, and print that name in its appropriate place on the arch. Ask some one to read from his Book of Heroes the truth emphasized in connection with the lesson. Proceed in this way through all the lessons of the quarter.

PART THREE.

Have the Book of Heroes closed and put away, and pointing to the names of the various heroes ascertain what the pupils remember about them, so far as possible getting them to give the truths learned in the words in which they printed the EMPHASIZED TRUTH for each lesson.

The words that will recall the various lessons are: Encouragement, Jordan, Jericho, Inheritance, Refuge, Choice, Judges, Temperance, God's Arithmetic, Affectioned, Call, Enemies.

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

On the dreary desert march the Holy Spirit inspired Moses to cry, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." From the fretting crowd, from the unsettled wilderness life, how blessed to turn and look beyond the steadfast stars into the unchanging heavens, into the face of God! So the Spirit, the blessed Comforter, calls us, in the midst of change and weariness, to the same sure place of rest. Happy are we if we have found our home in God. A dwelling place—somewhere to stay and not feel that our belongings must be disturbed and every dear association pulled up by the roots—what a comfort for homeless people that such a thing exists! St. Paul counted having "no certain dwelling place" among his trials; and a trial it is indeed unless we have learned St. Paul's secret of being content wherever we are.

We may find what we call a home outside of God, but never one that will be permanent. Some happening breaks it up sooner or later. I can shut my eyes and see every corner of my childhood's sweet home—where the chairs stood, and the old tall clock with its solemn tick, and where father and mother sat when we gathered round the evening lamp to read and talk and sew. I can see every bush in the garden and the silver band of the river encircling the fields. It was home indeed, for love was there; but it is only a memory now. There have been other homes full of comfort, of cheer, and of love, but they are gone; and if any one of them were still mine it would not be the same because all who made it sweet and dear have gone somewhere else to live. So it is that every heart that beats is sooner or later homeless unless the Lord is its dwelling place. If he is we can sing with Madame Guyon:

"I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there."

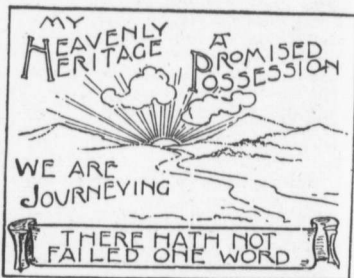
Dear member of my class, I want you to know the blessedness of living at home in God. This is the last Sunday of the year; what changes may come in the next twelve months no one can tell. But at home, in God, overturnings affect only outside things. The real home life of fellowship, food, and rest goes on, whatever comes. I want you to find this home while you are young, so that you may have a long life in him. There are people who have lived so long in one place that they seem a part of the house itself, and the house a part of them; you never think of one without the other. There are per-

sons who have dwelt in God so many years that we could not think of them without thinking of him in whom they dwell.

How shall you begin this home-making? Many Bible sayings tell us; but I think this one will make it easy and plain: "He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him." All his commandments are included in these: to believe, to obey, to love, to abide. Believing, you will start on the way home; obeying, you will find the open door and the Father's welcome; loving, you will share the shelter, peace, and plenty of the Father's house; abiding, you will go no more out forever, and whatever you ask it shall be done for you. So safe, so content, so rich, is the soul that dwells in God.

"Then stay at home, my heart;
Home-keeping hearts are happiest."

Blackboard.



The long pilgrimage with its changing scenes of joy and sadness, victory and defeat, finds its analogy in every human life. We do not know the experiences that await us on the morrow, nor how many or few will be our days. We know only that "we are journeying," and that there is a blessed goal beyond, to which we are guided by One whose word has been true and faithful, and who has promised us "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled." There are brief and pregnant truths in each lesson which serve as precept or example to illustrate the relationship we should sustain toward God and our fellows.

Coloring.—Landscape, cream, touched with light brown and green; sky, blue and yellow; scroll, light blue; text, red; upper words, white and red.

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RESPONSIVE REVIEW SERVICE FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER.

LESSON I.

JOSHUA ENCOURAGED.

Superintendent. Now after the death of Moses . . . the Lord spake unto Joshua, Moses' minister, saying,

Scholars. Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you.

Teachers. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

All. Be strong and of a good courage. (Golden Text.)

LESSON II.

CROSSING THE JORDAN.

Superintendent. As they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water,

Scholars. The waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap; . . . and those that came down toward the salt sea failed, and were cut off; and the people passed over right against Jericho.

Teachers. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

All. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. (Golden Text.)

LESSON III.

THE FALL OF JERICHO.

Superintendent. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times.

Scholars. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city.

Teachers. And the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

All. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down. (Golden Text.)

LESSON IV.

JOSHUA AND CALEB.

Superintendent. Caleb said unto Joshua, Forty years old was I when Moses sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espay out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. And Moses sware on that day saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance.

Scholars. Now therefore give me this mountain.

Teachers. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb Hebron for an inheritance.

All. He wholly followed the Lord. (Golden Text.)

LESSON V.

CITIES OF REFUGE.

Superintendent. Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge: That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither.

Scholars. And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

Teachers. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand. And he shall dwell in that city until the death of the high priest: . . . then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city.

All. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Golden Text.)

LESSON VI.

JOSHUA'S PARTING ADVICE.

Superintendent. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.

Scholars. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods.

Teachers. For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed.

All. Choose you this day whom ye will serve. (Golden Text.)

LESSON VII.

THE TIME OF THE JUDGES.

Superintendent. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.

Scholars. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

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

All. They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. (Golden Text.)

LESSON VIII.

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE LESSON.

Superintendent. Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower.

Scholars. The drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under feet.

Teachers. The priest and the prophet are gone astray through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

All. They also have erred through wine. (Golden Text.)

LESSON IX.

GIDEON AND THE THREE HUNDRED.

Superintendent. And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many. Proclaim, . . . saying, Whosoever is fearful, let him return. . . . And there returned twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

Scholars. And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men.

Teachers. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you.

All. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. (Golden Text.)

LESSON X.

RUTH AND NAOMI.

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

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

Teachers. So they two went until they came to Bethlehem.

All. Be kindly affectioned one to another. (Golden Text.)

LESSON XI.

THE BOY SAMUEL.

Superintendent. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I: for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.

Scholars. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Teachers. And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel.

All. Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. (Golden Text.)

LESSON XII.

CHRISTMAS LESSON.

Superintendent. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Scholars. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Teachers. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

All. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Golden Text.)

Superintendent. What is the teaching of Lesson I?

Class No. I. Joshua's source of courage is ours—God's presence and promise of help.

Superintendent. Lesson II.

Class No. II. God still does wonderful things for his people—marvelous conversions, triumphs over temptation and death, which encourage them to go on in the conquest of evil.

Superintendent. Lesson III.

Class No. III. This is a story of human effort linked with divine power. The simple announcement of the truth by weak and sinful men is the means through which the divine power destroys idolatry and establishes the kingdom of heaven.

Superintendent. Lesson IV.

Class No. IV. Faithfulness in early life brings reward in later years. Our promised land is won as Caleb's was, by fighting on our part and by divine help on God's part.

Superintendent. Lesson V.

Class No. V. Christ is our city of refuge. It is not the church, it is not the altar; it is Christ himself who is the one and only sacrifice for sin, and therefore the one and only hiding place to which the sinner can repair.

Superintendent. Lesson VI.

Class No. VI. Joshua's Decision Day service is an example to us. He urged the people to serve the Lord because of what he had done and would do for them.

Superintendent. Lesson VII.

Class No. VII. The only true and easy way to live a Christian life is to drive out every sin from the soul and let only the holy and heavenly remain. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things."

Superintendent. Lesson VIII.

Class No. VIII. Strong drink destroys the power of usefulness. It weakens the intellect. It prevents the judgment. It brings in every wretchedness. It shuts out every blessing. It closes heaven's gate against us.

Superintendent. Lesson IX.

Class No. IX. The value and power of God's workers are to be found not so much in numbers as in quality.

Superintendent. Lesson X.

Class No. X. Ruth's choice teaches us that true love is supremely desirous of the beloved presence. It is true about human love. It is true about heavenly love.

Superintendent. Lesson XI.

Class No. XI. God is calling every child as he called Samuel. He calls by his word, by conscience, by his attractive character, by various providences, by the invitations and influences of friends.

Superintendent. Lesson XII.

Class No. XII. The incarnation of Jesus Christ has made childhood and motherhood and the home forever sacred.

Primary Teachers' Department.

In Bethlehem.

LITTLE town, O little town,
With a star's light falling down
Like a veil of rosy light
Through the soft, blue Syrian night,
What within thy walls can be
That the star has come to thee?

It has led the Eastern kings
Through their long night-wanderings,
Until now its glory falls
Softly o'er thy still, white walls;
What hast thou to show to them,
Silent little Bethlehem?

Thou hast opened now thy gate
Where the kingly wise men wait,
And along a lowly street,
See, the star still guides their feet,
As the kings of Orient bring
Gifts and worship to their King.

Who in little Bethlehem
Wears the world's first diadem?
Look again; His baby brow
No sign-royal beareth now,
But—a mother's arms his throne,
Earth and heaven are his own!

MARY A. LATHBURY.

Primary Notes.

THERE is always danger lest in making preparations for the Christmas festival we become so hurried and worried by details that we fail to catch and hold the sweet Christmas spirit of love and peace ourselves, and therefore fail to impart it to our classes.

In the Christmas exercises held in the church it is wise and well to let the children sing the beautiful Christmas carols in groups, but is it ever wise or well to bring the little ones before the audience as individuals? Charming indeed it is to see the lovely child with unstudied grace mount the platform, and listen to the childish effort to "speak just right," but O how sad to one who realizes the ease with which the sweet self-unconsciousness of a child may be marred!

A SINGLE incident from real life may illustrate the thought. The Christmas exercises were unusually fine. The large audience was

delighted, and all went well until a tiny boy came happily forward, led by his teacher, to recite a piece of childish verse. The baby was scarcely four years of age, and of singular beauty and charm. How much this had to do with the teacher's selection and the mother's consent who shall say? As his teacher left him to face the audience he gasped and half turned to follow her. She stepped quickly to his side and whispered, "Go on," and the little man, dazed, terrified, undone, but obedient and loyal, stood his ground, and sobbed out every word of his pretty piece! Then running into the teacher's arms, he wept uncontrollably.

This is an unusual incident, you say? Yes, possibly, but how can the shy, sensitive spirit of a little child fail to suffer a wrench under such circumstances?

It is to be feared that in many of our schools the lesson teaching is largely displaced by the holiday preparation. The superintendent regrets it, but what can he do? The teachers are sorry, but what can they do? The school must be drilled, and it is difficult to get the children to attend a week-day drill. The primary teacher, however, can have more liberty than teachers in the main school in matters of detail. It is to be hoped that they will avail themselves of their privilege and in some way secure the little ones for the week-day rehearsals, thus keeping the sacred Sabbath hour open for the faithful teaching of the regular lessons. The drill and the rehearsal are all well so long as they do not crowd out the word of God nor distract the minds of the children from the dear old story of love and grace—never so winning or so easy to be impressed as at the delightful Christmas time.

It is only too apparent to all students of child life that there is a sad lack of reverence among the children of our day. The primary teacher has a rare opportunity to counteract this tendency, since she has the little ones during the most impressive period of their lives. God's holy day, God's holy book, God's holy name, we should constantly and prayerfully teach the children to revere. "This is God's day," "This is God's book," "This is God's name which we speak in prayer and song," we should never cease to repeat with the real spirit of reverence in our own hearts. Only so can it flow out to

little hearts. Let them see you reverently cheerful on the Lord's Day; let them see you handle the holy book with reverent air; let them hear you speak the holy name in reverent tones.

"Father, order all my footsteps,
So direct my daily way,
That in following me the children
May not go astray."

Giving.

Is it the duty of teachers to impress upon little children the importance of forming habits of giving? Some say that the child has nothing to give, and that it should not be taught to ask others for money to help on even good causes, and that its own little store of pennies should not be invaded by older people interested in building up good work.

The child is naturally generous as a rule. Possibly its willingness to give away its own comes largely from the fact that it knows nothing of values, but certain it is that in childhood, if ever, must the sentiment be formed in favor of giving to relieve the needs of others. The child's few pennies represent as much to it as do dollars to the adult, and more even, and so real self-sacrifice can be taught the child by showing it that the giving of the pennies is acceptable to God and helpful to our fellow-creatures.

Christmas is the giving time, and it is this special feature of the season that more than any other attracts the child. It comes to be associated in the little mind with receiving something much to be desired, and unless care is taken this will overshadow the thought of giving. The kindergarten does not approve of the child receiving at all from the kindergarten or the Sunday school at the Christmas season, reasoning that this side is sufficiently emphasized in the home, and that the season should be used by teachers to awaken in little minds and hearts love and sympathy and helpfulness toward others less fortunate than themselves. Hence the kindergarten Christmas festival consists entirely in the telling of the dear old story, the singing of the Christmas carols, and the bringing of the children's gifts to others. The little ones themselves receive nothing at this festival, and it is hard to find a happier company of children than one finds at such a time and in such a place.

In a certain primary class the birthday pennies throughout the year were sacredly kept un-

til the Christmas time. Then the pretty bank was opened, the money counted in the presence of the class, and the children told of some cases of need, and allowed to choose to which of these a gift should be sent. At one time a beautiful doll was purchased, and a committee of children (selected by themselves) went with the teacher to present it to a poor little shut-in who had never walked and who had never had a doll. Could those little givers ever forget the utter surprise and joy that shone in the sick child's face when she learned that the doll was all her own, bought with pennies given by the children, and given to her because Christmas is the happy giving time? And could the sick child fail to see in this something of the beautiful spirit of love and good will which Christ came to teach?

At another time coal was purchased for a poor old couple, and yet again warm clothing was provided for a sickly little one whose parents were too poor to properly care for it. The effort was made again and again to identify the little givers with the gifts by referring to them, and the poor people who received their gifts were tenderly remembered in prayer in the class.

This same class delighted in an occasional "giving-away party," when they brought toys, books, clothing, etc., to send to an orphanage or to be carefully given out among children in poor homes. There can be no doubt that tender impulses grew and strengthened under such training.

Children love to give. They need to be led and guided in it, and especially should they be trained to give systematically. A dear little baby girl of five years, who had heard about giving the one tenth to the Lord, resolved all by herself that she would do this. She had an "allowance" of five cents a week, and she always asked that two cents of this should be given to help somebody. "That is my tenth," said the dear little child.

Especial care should be taken never, under any circumstances, to portray need and suffering before children without offering them an opportunity to help in some way. By so doing the sensibilities aroused, finding no form for expression, are chilled, and after several experiences of this kind the child falls back upon the feeling that nothing can be done about it. The wise primary teacher will seek to train little children in the habit of giving while the heart is tender and the hand open, and where this is done faithfully and thoroughly there is little question that in mature years both hand and heart will be opened wide to the needs of our suffering humanity.

Five-Minute Additional Lessons.

[It is suggested that these lessons be given following the opening exercises, and be set apart from the lesson teaching by song or other exercises.]

Lesson I.

"Thou shalt have no gods but me;
Before no idol bow the knee;
Take not the name of God in vain;
Dare not the Sabbath day profane;
Give both thy parents honor due;
Hate not, that thou no murder do;
Abstain from words and deeds unclean."

"Steal not, for thou of God art seen."

Do you sometimes want very much a thing that does not belong to you? That want, if it should stay, would grow up into something that we call theft, or stealing. The heart takes the thing wished for first, then the wish creeps out of the heart into the hand, and before the hand has time to think and to say, "No! that is wrong; it is not yours;" the hand has taken it. Sometimes the wish gets into both head and heart and hand, and it is not easy to be sorry for the sin.

But there is the same old cure for everything, and that is *love*. Try first, when you are tempted, to love the heavenly Father, who has said we must not steal. Then try to love the one who owns the thing you wish for, and think how hard it would be for you to lose it, if it were yours, and try to do as you would be done by. Then think lovingly of father and mother, who would be grieved to know that you could take a thing that was not your own, and by that time the seed will have been brushed quite out of your heart by Love, who is God, and who sees all you think and all you do.

Lesson II.

"Thou shalt have no gods but me;
Before no idol bow the knee;
Take not the name of God in vain;
Dare not the Sabbath day profane;
Give both thy parents honor due;
Hate not, that thou no murder do;
Abstain from words and deeds unclean;
Steal not, for thou of God art seen."

"Make not a sinful lie, nor love it."

When God first thought about you it was just as if he had said: "Little child, come forth into the world, that you may learn how to live in the school of life, and then be brought home to your Father's house to live forever. You will be a blessing to your loving parents and to the world if you will begin by living *righteously*, or truly. If you would be my child *be true*. 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' There is nothing so precious as Truth, except Love, and you cannot have Love if you have not the Truth in

which to hold it. I give it to every little child. *Hold fast to it while you live!*"

The good God does not speak to you in just these words, but he tells you the same thing in many forms of words all through his word. Now you are a little simple, trustful child, for you are in the kingdom of heaven, and the angels are guiding you in good and true ways all the time, for it is written, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." When you are sometimes tempted to say a thing that you know is not true you will hear something in your heart saying, "No; do not say that! Tell the truth!" That is the Holy Spirit of the Lord speaking through your good angel to your heart. Listen for that voice, as little Samuel listened for the voice of the Lord in the temple, and *obey the voice*.

Lesson III.

"Thou shalt have no gods but me;
Before no idol bow the knee;
Take not the name of God in vain;
Dare not the Sabbath day profane;
Give both thy parents honor due;
Hate not, that thou no murder do;
Abstain from words and deeds unclean;
Steal not, for thou of God art seen;
Make not a sinful lie, nor love it."

"What is thy neighbor's dare not covet."

Two weeks ago we talked about the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." We said that the want for a thing was the little seed in the heart that grows up to be theft, or stealing. That "the heart takes the thing wished for first," then the wish creeps from the heart into the hand, and before the hand has time to think and say "No!" the hand has taken it.

Now that wish—that seed in the heart—is *covetousness*. It is really stealing with the heart. Our heavenly Father knew that the world he had made was full of beautiful and precious things made for his children, and yet he knew that it would not be best for us to have everything we want as fast as we could wish for it. We should soon become very selfish, and we should not prize the gifts of God as we ought. He gives us just what we need, and he reads our hearts, and knows if the things we long for most would make us selfish, or lazy, or proud, or forgetful of him, and he gives us only what is best. If our neighbor's children have more money, and toys, and pretty clothes, and pets, and journeys than we have, we will be glad for them, and wait for the gifts that our heavenly Father will give us. We will not steal with the heart, for then we should break the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet."

International Bible Lessons.

FOURTH QUARTER.

LESSON X. (December 7.)

RUTH AND NAOMI Ruth 1. 16-22.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Be kindly affectioned one to another." Rom. 12. 10.

Primary Notes.

BY JULIA H. JOHNSTON.



Introductory. Begin with talk about friends. How do we make friends, how keep them? How should we treat them? Should we care most about having them please us or about making them happy? When does a

friend need the greatest love and help, when all goes well or when in trouble? How can friends prove best their faithful love in time of others' trouble? By holding fast, and helping them then? How long should true love for a friend last? Have you good friends? Are you good friends? How do you show it?

Tell story of a man who was very rich and had many friends, who lost his money, and was not only poor but sick. Then he had a chance to tell who were his true friends. Many who called themselves such left him now and cared for him no more, but those who truly loved him came to him, loved him, did all they could for him in his need.

Illustrate true and false friendship by a very slender cord and a heavier one. Let two scholars hold the ends of each while you try the strength with various weights. A little weight will break the slender one, but the strong one will bear much, just as true love will bear the weight of poverty, sickness, and trouble, and not give way, but will hold up the friend. To-day we learn about a love that could bear so much that it would not let go of the loved one at all.

Thought journey. This can be made delightful and impressive. Go back to Bethlehem, David's town and Jesus's birthplace. Picture family of Naomi and Elimelech. Tell of the sad famine, the going away from home, the long journey to the land of Moab. Take the children with you in imagination. They ought to go with almost breathless realization of it all. Picture the new home in Moab's land, the daugh-

ters that came as wives to the sons, then the death of the father and the brothers, and the mother's loneliness and sorrow.

Going home. How different the going back of the lonely Naomi from the coming away of the family of four. Picture the return journey, the decision to go, the talk with the daughters, the starting off. Make a pictured road, and marks for the three travelers as they set off, the two daughters going to see their mother well on her way. Tell of the good-bye talk, make a mark for the place where they stopped for it, when Orpah went back along the way to her home, her friends there, her heathen gods.

Faithful Ruth. Deeply impress Ruth's faithful clinging to Naomi in her loneliness and trouble, showing her true love. Dwell upon Ruth's choice, leaving Moab for Bethlehem, her heathen home for Naomi, and her true God. Picture the arrival in Bethlehem, Ruth's wish to support her mother-in-law, her gleanings in the field, the notice taken of her by the rich Boaz, who afterward made her his dear wife, giving Naomi a home too. When Ruth's dear babies were held close to Naomi's breast, was it not a happy ending to the story that had such sadness in it? Was Ruth ever sorry for being kind? Are we? Ought we to be like Ruth?

Teach Golden Text and the duty of love to all, not only to the kind and good who love us.

Guideboard: Be kind. As we come back over the path we have taken we see this on the guide-board, "Be kind." When? Why? How? To whom?

Thought for teachers. Let us not miss or misuse this opportunity to influence our children in their early friendships for those of their own age and older. Children are easily angered and "won't speak" to little associates. Kind en-



thusiasm for lasting, faithful, all-enduring friendships, and set up high ideals. What sort of a friend is Jesus? Let us be like him.

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LESSON XI. (December 14.)

THE BOY SAMUEL. 1 Sam. 3. 6-14.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." 1 Sam. 3. 9.

Primary Notes.



Introductory. Attract attention by giving a little knock and waiting quietly to see if anyone notices it. Then speak in a low tone to some scholar, asking him to come to you. Some will hear and some will not.

Show that this is not because of deafness, but for lack of listening. Many things which are never heard might easily be, if one would but listen. Tell story of a boy who was told that mother would call him in when she wanted him. He was so full of play that he did not listen, therefore did not hear, did not answer. If we wish to learn we must listen, and if we wish to love we must learn what we can about the person or the thing that we ought to love.

Our lesson to-day is about a listening boy. His name is written in God's book. Drill upon title of lesson.

Thought journey. We must go back to-day and look at three pictures. They are all in that beautiful temple we have heard of. It is easy for our thoughts to go back there. Now let us imagine that we are all together in that temple, and the time is long ago. Look. We see a woman praying. She has come with her husband to worship in God's house, but she longs for a blessing that only God can give. She asks him for it with all her heart. Make this picture of Hannah praying for the gift of a little son a very tender one. Tell of Eli's mistake, and his comforting words when he heard about her wish and prayer.

Second picture: A father and mother bringing a little boy to God's beautiful temple, telling the priest his name, bidding him good-bye, leaving him there, because Hannah promised God she would, that he might serve in the holy house. Tell of yearly return of mother with little coat.

Third picture: Night in the temple, the lamp burning, Eli asleep, all quiet, a boy on his bed in one of the rooms, and hark! A voice calling him by name.

Who called? Samuel did not know. He had not heard that Voice before. He did the best

he could. It must be the priest, Eli, on whom this boy waited in God's house. He ran quickly to find out, after this thought came to him.

Tell of Eli's ignorance, the repeated call, the boy's going again and again to the priest, who knew at last whose voice had spoken.

The answer. Dwell on the fact that when spoken to one must reply. It is behaving most unkindly and impolitely not to do this. One should listen and answer, that he may learn much. Samuel obeyed Eli, and answered the Lord as he was told. Then God talked with him. By listening and answering Samuel learned much. Now he knew God, knew the Lord's voice, and understood, as never before. When the Father, God, came so close and called Samuel by name, do you not suppose that the boy was glad? What a wonderful thing it was! But the Lord speaks to every child now as truly as he did then to that boy in the temple. He knows each by name, and the very smallest child who knows who his Father in heaven is may hear the call and give the answer, "Here am I." "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." Drill on Golden Text.

Guideboard: Listen, learn, love. This is what our loving Lord wants us to do. Shall we turn away, be so busy with other things that we will not pay attention? Shall we refuse to answer, and never know what our Father wishes to say to us? Shall we learn so little of him that we shall not love him? No! No! Let us be like Samuel—listen and answer, learn and love. And how soon? Now. How strange it would have been if Samuel had said, "Please wait, Lord, till I am a man, and then I will answer, and learn and love!" O no! The time to answer is when God calls. Will you?

Thought for teachers. Let us be swifter than



Eli was to recognize God's call to the little ones, and to help them to understand who calls, how to listen and answer, how to learn and love.

LESSON XII. (December 21.)

CHRISTMAS LESSON. Luke 2. 8-20.

GOLDEN TEXT: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2. 11.

Primary Notes.



Introductory. This is to us indeed the "old, old story," yet ever sweet and new. We must remember that each year brings us the opportunity to teach it for the first time to some who have not been under our care

before. Begin with talk about gifts. Why do we give them and receive them at Christmas time? Who should give and receive? What gifts are prized most, those from our dearest ones or those who care little for us? To whom do we give our best gifts?

Dwell much on the unselfish way in which Christmas should be kept because Christ, the first Christmas gift, gave himself for us. The gift was his life. Was not that costly and precious? Ought we not to love the gift of God's dear Son above every other? Then if we are selfish and cross at Christmas time, discontented with what we get and unwilling to share with others, will Jesus think us very thankful and loving? Of all seasons this is the season of love—love to Christ and love to all.

Thought journey. Again we go back to the little town of Bethlehem. Picture the journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth, the crowded houses, the stable where Mary and Joseph stayed, the Babe in the manger. Familiar as the story is, there is none like it for freshness and charm, and each time we tell it and children listen it is sweeter, sweeter still.

PLACES,
PERSONS,
PRINCIPAL EVENTS.

Group the lesson facts around these three points, in your own mind. Use "doings" instead of events on blackboard, and explain that principal means "most important," most worthy to be remembered.

Portray the little town of Bethlehem. Show picture, if possible, as it is now. Picture the open field, with the flocks of sheep under the starry sky. Tell of the shepherds, the angels and their song, Mary, Joseph, the child Jesus,

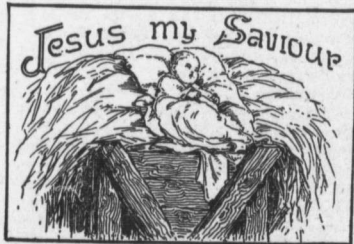
the visit of the shepherds to the stable where the baby lay. Drill on Golden Text till every child knows it.

The gift of Jesus is for all. Impress especially the angel's words that the tidings of joy were to be to all people. Also, that as soon as the shepherds had seen the infant Saviour they "made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child."

Influence the children, by all the joy of this happy season, to the sharing of gifts with the poor and the sending of the news to all who do not keep Christmas because they do not know Christ. This is the time to teach a missionary lesson. Pity for those who have no Christmas in which young hearts take such ecstatic delight, may well move them to do something for these.

Guideboard: Jesus is my Saviour. If he is a gift for all he is a gift for me. What is the gift? A Saviour. Picture a little shivering boy in the dark and cold on Christmas night, in danger of freezing and starving, and looking through the lighted window upon a family of children gathered around a tree, all so warm and happy, safe from the cold storm, at home with their parents, glad in each other and in the beautiful gifts. What good will it do the child to see all this unless he can share it? But suppose the father comes out, finds him, takes him in, gives him a place with the children, says, "You shall be my child. I will save you from starving. This is your place." Now the boy can say, "My father, my home." How different it all is! But he must take the gifts, or they will not be his. So we must take Jesus. Each one may say, "He is my Saviour." Will you?

Thought for teachers. If ever the heart should overflow with measureless love to the children it is at this season, and for sake of the



Babe in the manger, the little ones' Saviour and Friend. In the time of their joy let us lead them to him.

LESSON XIII. (December 28.)

REVIEW.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." Psa. 90. 1.

Primary Notes.

The following review exercise will need to be copied on slips and given out the preceding Sunday. Use lesson roll for titles and texts, but give out slips containing the little verses appropriate to each lesson, to twelve children to commit and recite in turn. Make little pasteboard guideboards for the twelve lessons, inscribing each with the special thought for the lesson it represents. Give these to twelve others, or, if class is not large enough, to the same children. Enlist the mothers in teaching these memory verses. On review day have children stand and repeat, each the part, in turn, the class giving title and text in concert.

Lesson I. Joshua Encouraged. "Be strong and of a good courage."

God spoke to Joshua himself
And told him to be strong.

He says the very same to us
In all our fight with wrong.

Guideboard: Be strong.

Lesson II. Crossing the Jordan. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

Across the river safe they passed,
God's people long ago,
And as he led and kept them all,
God is with us, we know.

Guideboard: God is with us.

Lesson III. Fall of Jericho. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down."

They trusted in the Lord their God,
And did as they were told,
And we should have such faith in him,
And be as strong and bold.

Guideboard: Have faith in God.

Lesson IV. Joshua and Caleb. "He wholly followed the Lord."

Like Joshua and Caleb too,
We should be strong and true,
And wholly follow God, the Lord,
And seek his will to do.

Guideboard: Follow the Lord wholly.

Lesson V. Cities of Refuge. "God is our

refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

The city gates wide open stood,
To save from harm and fear,
And I may to my Refuge run,
For he is ever near.

Guideboard: Run to the Refuge.

Here stop to sing the hymn verse:

Bless and help us, Lord, we pray,
As we hear thy word to-day:
With thy love our spirits fill,
Teach us how to do thy will.

Lesson VI. Joshua's Parting Advice. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

The people gathered all about
To hear a parting word.
"Choose God," was Joshua's advice,
And this I too have heard.

Guideboard: Choose Jesus.

Lesson VII. Time of the Judges. "They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses."

When God's own people sinned and strayed
He loved and pitied still.
We know that he will save us too,
Because he says he will.

Guideboard: Jesus saves.

Lesson VIII. Temperance Lesson. "They also have erred through wine."

Look not upon the wine when red,
But turn away in haste.
The tempting cup we must not drink,
Nor even touch or taste.

Guideboard: Touch not, taste not.

Lesson IX. Gideon and the Three Hundred. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man."

To Gideon's little faithful band
The Lord showed forth his power.
So we may let him lead us on
And trust him every hour.

Guideboard: Trust in God.

Lesson X. Ruth and Naomi. "Be kindly affectioned one to another."

The story of the loving Ruth,
So faithful, true, and kind,
Has given us a rule from heaven
Which we should seek to mind.

Guideboard: Be kind.

Lesson XI. The Boy Samuel. "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."

The tender story of this boy
Who heard his father's voice,
Should teach me, too, to hear and speak,
And in his love rejoice.

Guideboard: Listen, learn, love.

Lesson XII. Christmas Lesson. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

In Bethlehem's manger Jesus lay,
The holy, heavenly Child.
He is my Saviour dear to-day,
So strong, so meek, and mild.

Guideboard: He is my Saviour.

For Review. Text: Psa. 90. 1.

All recite:

The guideboards point the upward way,
To God, our dwelling place,
And when we reach our Father's house,
There we shall see his face.



Whisper Songs for December.

TENTH LESSON.

Like gentle Ruth of Bethlehem
Help us, O Lord, to be;
That we may love and honor those
Who love and honor thee.

ELEVENTH LESSON.

Like little Samuel of old
Help us, O Lord, to be;
That we may listen for thy voice
And follow only thee.

TWELFTH LESSON.

O holy Babe of Bethlehem,
Who in a manger lay,
Come make thy home within our hearts
And bless our Christmas Day!

THIRTEENTH LESSON.

If, Lord, thy home within our hearts,
We ever dwell with thee,
O bring us to thy home above
To dwell eternally.

Order of Service

FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

Fourth Quarter.

Teacher. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.

Class. Be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

All. For this God is our God forever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death.

SINGING.

WHISPER PRAYER.

"Gentle Saviour, God of love,
Hear us from thy throne above,
While we meet to praise thee here
In our Sunday school so dear.
"May the lesson taught to-day,
Find us ready to obey.
Make us what we ought to be,
Draw thy little lambs to thee."

Teacher. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

PRAYER. (Closing with the Lord's Prayer.)

GIVING SONG. (Followed by offering.)

RECITATION.

"There's not a child so small and weak,
But has his little cross to take;
His little work of love and praise,
That he may do for Jesus' sake."

T. God loveth a cheerful giver.

C. Freely ye have received; freely give.

All. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

ADDITIONAL LESSON.

QUIETING EXERCISE.

"We will raise our hands together,
We will all sit down together,
We will mind the rule of the Sunday school,

And all rise up together.

"We will raise our hands together,
We will fold our arms together,
We will mind the rule of the Sunday school,

And all sit down together.

"We will sit up straight together,
We will place our feet together,
We will mind the rule of the Sunday school,

And—all—keep—still—together."

LESSON TEACHING.

ECHO PRAYER.

CLOSING EXERCISE.

PRAYER. "Now the time has come to part,
Father, come to every heart;
Go thou with us as we go,
And be near in all we do."

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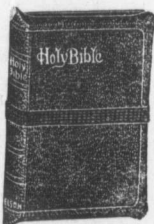
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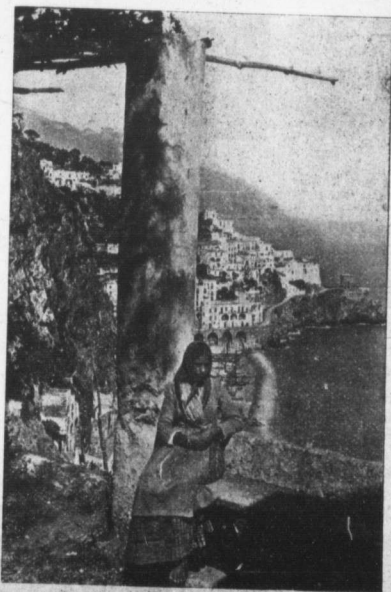
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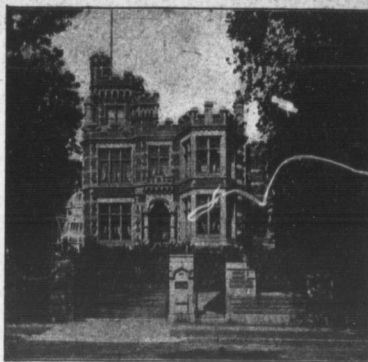
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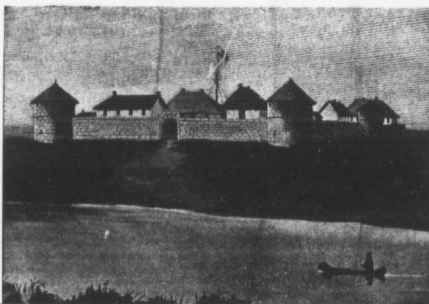
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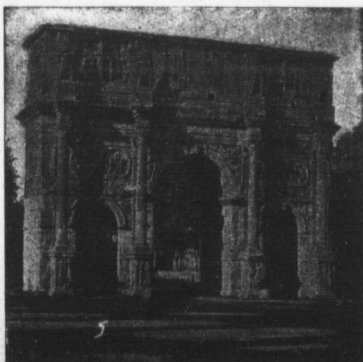
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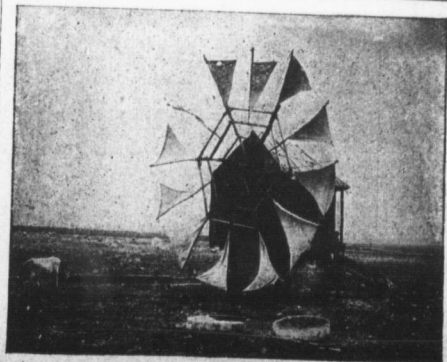
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