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The Teachers' Monthly.

Vol. II.

AUGUST, 1896.

No. 8.

OUR ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1895-6.

The S. S. report was presented to the General Assembly at an early stage, and in view of the important changes now necessary it was referred to a committee, who were instructed to report regarding the financial outlook and future management of the work. This committee appointed a small sub-committee consisting of Drs. Morrison and Warden, Messrs. J. A. Paterson, L. W. Johnson, and the Convener to give the whole matter more careful consideration and mature a deliverance. This sub-committee went minutely into the questions before them, and their recommendation was adopted and presented to the Assembly, but owing to fact that many members had gone home, it was thought advisable to postpone such an important matter for another year and meantime give presbyteries an opportunity of thoroughly discussing the best course to be pursued. It is hoped that liberal and progressive counsels will prevail and that another year will place this department of our church work on a permanent basis. Our statistics this year are not so full as we could desire, but we may safely number our S. S. army as embracing 2,200 schools, 18,000 teachers and officers, and 149,000 scholars.

In the course of *Higher Religious Instruction* it is gratifying to note that there has been steady progress all along the line. This is measured less by the increased numbers availing themselves of the advantages of the scheme, than by the greater excellence of the work presented. From 55 schools there have come up for examination 436 candidates, as compared with 385 last year. Of these 436 candidates, 317 have passed the examination and won diplomas, while 99 rank as prize winners, and 19 as medallists, as compared with 59 prize winners and 16 medallists last year. The interest in the Shorter Catechism keeps advancing, as evidenced by 210 diplomas having been issued for its correct recitation, as compared with 169 last year. The following is a statement of the present circulation of the Committee's publications as compared with the previous year. LEAFLETS—*Primary*, 4,332; *Intermediate*, 4,681; *Senior*, 20,648; total, 29,661. Last year the only leaflet published was the *Senior*, and at the time of reporting to the Assembly its circulation had reached 17,000. The increase is therefore nearly SEVENTY-FIVE PER CENT. QUARTERLIES—*Primary*, 2,363; *Intermediate*, 4,155; *Senior*, 9,889; total 16,407, as against 4,000 for the *Senior* alone last year, an increase of over THREE HUNDRED PER CENT. THE TEACHERS' MONTHLY now boasts of 4,390 subscribers, as against 1,600 last year, an increase of nearly ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE PER CENT.

The committee regard its finances also as in a very encouraging condition. The statement made in the Assembly that it was "getting deeper and deeper into debt" was a most unfair and misleading one, as the following table will shew:

	June 1894.	1895.	1896.
Total income.....	\$1,568 59	\$2,423 67	\$ 4,735 71
Liabilities.....	815 06	880 47	1,442 44
Value of subscription list to Lesson Helps.....	700 00	1,650 00	4,226 25
Increase of liability.....	415 51	65 41	561 97
Increase of value of subscription lists.....	500 00	950 00	2,576 25
Percentage of increase of liability.....	104	8	64
Percentage of increase in value of subscription lists..	250	136	156

No business man would consider that he was "going deeper and deeper into debt" if in one year he increased his business 156 per cent. while his liabilities increased but 64 per cent. On the other hand the very great success of our periodicals involves temporary embarrassment. We close the year ending April 30th with a deficit of \$1,442, we must therefore borrow the money necessary to print our periodicals up to the end of December. For this purpose and for other necessary expenses we shall require about \$5,000 over and above our probable receipts. In a few years the profits from our publications, together with the "Children's Day" collections, would easily overtake this deficit, but there is danger that due weight may not be given to this fact by presbyteries and that, laying stress upon the liabilities, they may overlook the substantial assets and vote to discontinue our publications. To meet this danger we have resolved to try and raise the whole amount required by an appeal to personal friends. We cannot reach many and therefore we ask the few to be generous. On their response within the next few months will depend altogether the continuance of our work. The Convener has already received several very handsome donations and hopes that all to whom his circular may come will respond with liberality.

Notes on the Lessons.

LESSON V—August 2nd, 1896.

David's Kindness. 2 SAM. 9: 1-13.

(Commit to memory verse 7).

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

PROVE THAT—We should remember the poor. Prov. 19: 17.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 70. *Which is the seventh commandment?* A. The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery. 71. *What is required in the seventh commandment?* A. The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behaviour.

LESSON HYMNS, *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 82, 133, 135, 41.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* David's kindness. 2 Sam. 9. *Tuesday.* David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. 20: 11-17. *Wednesday.* A sorrowful parting. 1 Sam. 20: 35-42. *Thursday.* A glad welcome. 2 Sam. 19: 24-30. *Friday.* Constancy in friendship. Prov. 27: 1-10. *Saturday.* A blessed memory. Job 29: 1-16. *Sabbath.* The love of Christ. Eph. 3: 8-19. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

By Rev. JAB. A. BROWN, B. A., Agincourt, Ont.

INTRODUCTORY. The eighth chapter contains a brief history of the wars that raised Israel from an oppressed and despised people, to the exalted position of a powerful and widespread empire. The supremacy of the Philistines was broken. It was probably at that time that several of David's "heroes" won their laurels in war (2 Sam. 23: 8-12). To-day's lesson marks the close of the first part of David's reign. Here David appears a true man and a noble prince.

LESSON PLAN. I. Thoughtful Inquiry. vs. 1-4. II. The Unfortunate Prince. vs. 5-8. III. The Magnanimous King. vs. 9-13.

I. THOUGHTFUL INQUIRY. 1. **David said—**The opportune season had come for David to make good his promise to Jonathan (1 Sam. 20: 14, 15). **Is there yet any?**—A thoughtful enquiry after the house of one that had been his chief enemy. "Love your enemies" (Matt. 5: 44). **Show him kindness—**The beauty and power of real kindness, a kind look, a kind word, a kind act, kindness to the needy is kindness shown to Jesus (Matt. 25: 40). **Jonathan's sake—**The tried, self-forgetful and true friend of David. "Hallowed associations are a great power in life." 2. **Zi'ba—**Evidently David had no personal knowledge that Jon-a-than had left any children. From this old servant that had remained loyal and faithful to the house of Saul the desired information was obtained. David was desirous of shewing kindness to any representative of the fallen monarch. 3. **The kindness of God—**Kindness in the highest degree. The thought of God's goodness and loving-kindness to David himself kindled in his heart a delight in showing loving-kindness to others. "God is love." And when the love of God dwells in the heart it manifests itself in acts of loving-kindness. No life is so unselfish as the christian life. "He that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Prov. 18: 24). **Hath yet a son—**Possibly Ziba knew of the sworn friendship that had bound David and Jonathan together. He knew that tidings of a son of Jonathan would be welcome news to the king. **Lame on his feet—**The effects

of an accident that befel him when five years of age (ch. 4: 4); expressive of his feeble power and helpless condition. Many are spiritually lame of foot in the service of God. 4. **Where is he?**—A personal and kindly interest taken by David in his old friend's son. **Ma'chir—**A man apparently rich in earthly possessions (ch. 17: 27), remembering Saul's heroic enterprise in behalf of his people he offered ready shelter and hospitality to his grandson. **Lo-de'bar—**A town east of the Jordan not far from Ma-ha-na'im.

II. THE UNFORTUNATE PRINCE. 5. **Fetched him—**Did not send a company of men to bring him by force, but sent and brought him in a kindly manner. **Mephibosheth—**Also called Meri-baal (1 Chr. 8: 34). **Fell on his face—**No doubt poor Mephibosheth was in great fear lest he should share the fate that usually befel the members of a "dethroned dynasty." **Reverence—**"Obeisance" (R. V.) After eastern manner. **David said—**How much there is in the way that a name is spoken whether with kindly interest or angry intent. 7. **Fear not—**These words would fall like the sweetest music on the ears of the dispirited, terror-stricken son of Jonathan. How often do we live in dread of that which has for its object our highest good. To all his children, as to Abraham, the Lord says, "Fear not; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15: 1). **Jonathan thy father's sake—**What a powerful influence and what a deep and lasting impres-

sion the life and unselfish conduct of Jonathan made on David. A beautiful illustration of the far reaching effect and influence of a noble, godly life. **All the land of Saul**—Not only the lands of Gib'e-ah but probably "Saul's estates generally." True friendship will be generous. **At my table**—David extended to Mephibosheth the kindly hospitality and friendship of his home, receiving him as a member of his own household. All true believers are received and adopted into the family of God (Rom. 8: 16-18). **8. What is thy servant**—David's kindness shown so overpowers Mephibosheth that in the gratitude of his heart he can scarcely find words suitable to the occasion. The more fully we know our true selves the more will we wonder at the goodness and loving kindness of the Lord shewn us.

III. THE MAGNANIMOUS KING. 9. Called to Ziba—Ziba was a strange mixture "of craft and fidelity and selfishness." He was now called to witness the king's munificent gift to Mephibosheth, and the privileges he was about to confer upon him. **10. Thy sons**—Fifteen in number (ch. 19: 17). **Thy servants**—Slaves, to the number of twenty (ch. 19: 17). **Shalt bring in the fruits**—

To Ziba and his sons was committed the management of the estates. Mephibosheth "would live at Jerusalem as a nobleman and Ziba, as is usual in the east, would pay a fixed proportion of the value of the produce to his master" (Pulpit Com.) It is well to study in this connection the incidents in after years that took place bearing on Ziba's treachery and false accusation of Mephibosheth and the reconciliation of David (2 Sam. 16: 1-4, 24-30). **11. So shall thy servant do**—Ziba made fair promises, but sooner or later the real character of a crafty, selfish nature will reveal itself. The unfaithfulness of Ziba came to light in after years. **12. A young son**—Meaning a little child. **Mi'cha**—He became the representative of the house of Saul, whose offspring became "leading men in the tribe of Benjamin until the captivity. **13. Dwell in Jerusalem**—"The story of Mephibosheth may be used as a little parable of the spiritual history of every one who is restored to God. (1) A prince; (2) lost; (3) Sought; (4) Found; (5) Self-abased; (6) Comforted; (7) Exalted; (8) ended with more than he had lost, and adopted as one of the king's sons." (Pulpit Com.)

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

By Rev. R. G. McBRIDE, M. A., Winnipeg, Man.

1. Leisure from conflict gives our best impulses opportunity to develop. We find that exemplified in the case of David. In the last lesson we saw how when he had an interval of peace in his striving life he felt himself moved to build a more permanent place of worship. Here we find him making enquiry as to whether there was any descendant of his old enemy Saul left that he might show him a kindness. Manifestly he could not have taken either of these steps if his hands were still tied by conflicts. It took his whole time to look after his military operations. All experiences fall into this same line. Nations in the throes of revolution, or internal agitation, or war with others, have no time for benevolent undertakings. European and American peoples in an armed camp had no time to help Armenia. Churches divided and vexed by factional fightings will do little in the cause of God and humanity. Individuals harassed in a life which is a running fight have no time for the gentler deeds of living. Let us strive to avoid all unnecessary conflicts, that our lives may have freedom for the nobler things.

2. If opportunities for doing good are not present we should look for them. David made special enquiry to find if there were any left of the house of Saul to whom he might do a kindness. This search for opportunity was a guarantee for the genuineness of his intention. We often find people who are profuse in their profession of willingness to do good, to perform deeds of charity, etc., but who say that no opportunity presents itself to them. It is quite clear that such people are not very much in

earnest. It is difficult to understand how any one can live in a world of trouble without finding opportunity for benevolent deeds, except on the principle that "there are none so blind as those who do not wish to see." In any case it is one of the marks of genuine intention not to wait till opportunities "present themselves" by running against us, but to go out and find them, if need be, by special enquiry.

3. The cases that most need our help have to be sought out. Mephibosheth was certainly one in great need of help. His lameness practically unfitted him for any active employment. He was the son of a fallen house. He was poor, as evidenced by the fact that he was in the house of Machir, and dependent on the charity and support of friends. And yet with all this he did not obtrude himself on the notice of David and claim (or even ask by his presence) for help from his father's greatest friend. And so all engaged in charitable work know that the most deserving are not the most clamorous. Too much assurance and brazenness in asking for help makes us from experience suspect bad habits as the source of the trouble so proclaimed, and leads us to feel that our charity in such a case might be misdirected. We should be prudent and discriminating in our doing of good, lest we encourage undeserving and vicious paupers. We should know that often the most deserving suffer silently, and have to be sought out and delicately assisted.

4. From this incident we can understand the better how David was a man after God's

own heart. As we read his whole life we see many things that are weak and sinful, and many falls through sudden temptation, but such an incident as this reveals his goodness of heart. It does so first because the enquiry made is not for the son or his friend, but for the house of one who had sorely persecuted him. There is true magnanimity there. It is overcoming evil with good. Then, it reveals a good heart, because there seems amongst men who have reached high places a disposition to forget their old connections and former associates. Such a disposition reveals meanness of mind, but is all too common. Its opposite reveals true goodness of heart.

5. *The humility of Mephibosheth (v. 8) would make David sure that his benevolence would not be abused.* The lame lad could not understand why David had summoned him, or could not see that he had any claim on David's consideration. He puts himself down to the lowest and David brings him into his own household and makes him rich. In that Mephibosheth becomes a type of the sinner who obtains the favor of God. We must abase

ourselves and realize that we have no claim upon God, and then he will make his strength perfect in our weakness, and out of our poverty of spirit will make us rich with all the fulness and the unsearchable riches of Christ.

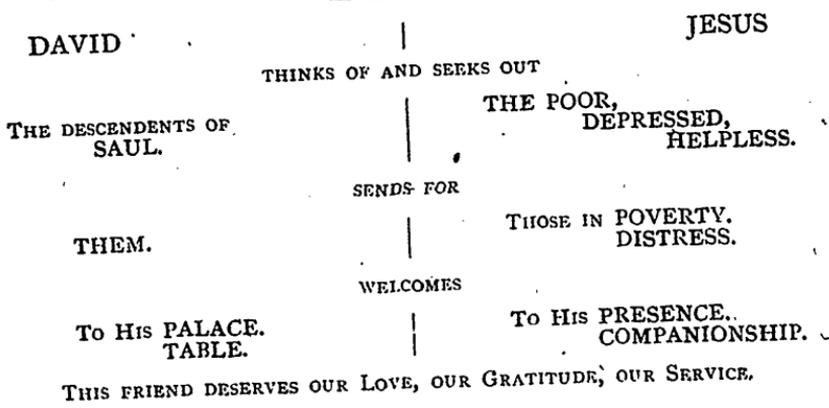
ADDED POINTS.

1. David was earnest enough to elevate a possible rival.
2. Outward misfortunes have some compensation in attracting sympathy.
3. One use of trouble seems to be the annihilation of selfishness in those who see it. It draws out our hearts.
4. We should be glad to show kindness to children for the parent's sake.
5. This good deed wrought for another's sake is some type of our salvation for Christ's sake.
6. God, for the sake of Christ, restores to us our patrimony.
7. Bread cast on the waters shall be found after many days.
8. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

THE BLACKBOARD.

By Rev. R. H. ABRAHAM, D. Sc., Burlington, Ont.

THE TRUE FRIEND.



LESSON VI—August 9th, 1896.
 David's Victories. 2 SAM. 10: 8-19.

(Commit to memory verses 11, 12).

GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Ps. 27: 1.

PROVE THAT—God's service requires courage. Deut. 31: 6.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 72. *What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?* A. The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words and actions.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 116, 176, 130, 119.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* David's victories. 2 Sam. 10: 8-19. *Tuesday.* A song of victory. Ex. 15: 1-11. *Wednesday.* Divine preservation. 1 Chr. 18: 1-13. *Thursday.* Trust in God. Ps. 144. *Friday.* Deliverance from God. Ps. 13: 32-50. *Saturday.* Praise for deliverance. Ps. 54. *Sabbath.* The soul's warfare. Eph. 6: 10-20. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. Upon hearing of the death of Na'hash, king of Ammon, David remembering past kindness shewn to him by Na'hash, sent a kindly message to Ha'nun congratulating him on his accession, and offering sympathy in connection with his father's death. The princes of Ammon evidently despised David, being jealous of his growing power. They persuaded Hanun that David's messengers were simply spies in disguise. After subjecting them to the vilest insults they sent them back. Knowing that David would not allow such an outrage to pass unavenged, they immediately prepared for war. They succeeded in getting the Ar-a-me'ans of Zo'bah, Re'hob, Ma-ach'ah and Tob to make common cause with them. These realms furnished 33,000 hired soldiers. Parallel passage 1 Chron. 9-19.

LESSON PLAN. I. In Battle Array. vs. 8-11. II. Enemies Vanquished. vs. 12-19.

I. IN BATTLE ARRAY. 8. Children of Ammon—Descendants of Ben-Ammi, a son of Lot. Gilead to the east of the Jordan was the chief portion of their possessions. "They appear to have led a wandering, predatory life, similar to that of the wild Arab tribes." **Came out—**"From their cities to the capital (Rab'bah), and put themselves in array before the gate." **Were by themselves—**"Who came and pitched before Med'e-ba" (1 Chron. 19: 7). **9. Joab—**David's nephew and the commander-in-chief of his army: brave, skilful, ambitious, but unscrupulous and revengeful. **The front of the battle was against him—**"The battle was set against him" (R. V.). The two armies of the Ammonites and the Syrians were drawn up facing each other, the former in front of the city Rab'bah, the latter in the plain in front of Med'e-ba; so that if Joab proceeded to attack the one, the other would be in his rear. **All the choice men of Israel—**Joab divided his forces. He selected the most competent and skilled of the army to march under himself to give battle to the Syrians, the more formidable foe. **10. The rest—**He left in charge of his brother Ab-i'shai, to keep in check the Ammonite army. **11. Thou shalt help me—**The brothers mutually agreed to watch each other's interest and welfare, and in a moment's time if need be, render assistance. "Mutual helpfulness is brotherly duty." (M. Henry). It is the duty of Christ's soldiers as brethren to consider one another's condition; to sympathize with and render timely help. Look "not every man on his own things" (Philip 2: 4).

II. ENEMIES VANQUISHED. 12. Be of good courage—It was a critical moment, a time of great peril; the interests at stake were great. In every worthy enterprise courage is essential to success. Virtue probably expresses the idea (2 Pet. 1: 5). "It is that quality of mind which meets difficulty, danger, pain or death, calmly and fearlessly." (Pulpit Com.) Joshua was exhorted of the Lord to "Be strong and of good courage" (Josh. 1: 6). All the noble deeds that have beat their marches through succeeding ages have proceeded from men of courage. (O. Felltham.)

Play the man—Act the truly manly part. No grander sight than seeing men acting the manly part. "Quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16: 13). **For our people—**Two noble incentives to faithfulness set forth. 1. "Our people." 2. "The cities of our God." Like Ne-he-mi'ah's words of encouragement to his faithful workers on the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 4: 14). True patriotism will quicken the spirit of heroism. "Love for one's country must be held in harmony with and in subordination to love for the christian brotherhood, united in spiritual fellowship and confined to no nation." It was all-important to prevent an Israelite city from falling into the hands of a heathen people, and have the rites of Mo'lech substituted for the worship of Jehovah. **Which seemeth him good—**Expression of their strong confidence in God and humble submission to his will. Faith in God is the root of all christian courage "and every christian excellence." "The battle is the Lord's" (1 Sam. 17: 47). **13. Draw nigh unto the battle (R. V.)—**However numerous and formidable our enemies may be we must not give way before them for a single moment, but courageously confront them and put them to flight. **They fled—**They retreated before the onward march of Joab's army. **14. They likewise fled—**The army of Am'mon, on seeing the Syrians fleeing, lost courage and grew disheartened. Cowardice on the part of leaders will infect instantly all the rank and file of their followers. **Returned—**No good reason can be given why Joab did not follow up his victory, unless the lateness of the season (ch. 11: 1), and the certainty of a long siege before Rabbah could be taken. **15. Gathered themselves together—**The Syrians had been broken and dispersed, but probably with small loss. They speedily make a new attempt to regain their lost honors and check the progress of David's kingdom. **16. Had-a-re-zer—**King of Zobah. **Brought out—**Troops were summoned from all parts of the Aran'ean states, with the view of making good their cause against the Israelites. He'lam—was made the common meeting ground. **17. Gathered all Israel together—**Whether

David for some cause was dissatisfied with Joab, or the enemies were too formidable for Joab to cope with, David places himself at the head of the army. **18. Seven hundred chariots**—The parallel passage in 1 Chr. 19: 18 has seven thousand. The errors of copyists arise from the practice of designating numerals by letters with one or more dashes to indicate hundreds, thousands, etc. **Forty thousand horsemen**—In 1 Chr. 19: 18 it

reads forty thousand footmen. The Syriac version gives us here very reasonable numbers, namely, "Seven hundred chariots, four thousand cavalry and much people." (Pulpit Com.) **19. Servants to Hadarezer**—This gives us some idea of Hadarezer's great power. **The kings**—The petty kings of Rehob, Tob, and Maacah now acknowledged the supremacy of David and became tributary to him.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *Once again we are taught the lesson of doing good to the child for the parent's sake.* We have no record elsewhere of the kindness shown to David by the now deceased king of Ammon, to which reference is made at the opening of this chapter, but it was doubtless some good turn done during David's exile. David did not forget the kindness, and upon hearing the news of his death, sent messengers with words of condolence to the son. Death revives and quickens our memory of good deeds done towards us. Not only is this the case when those near and dear to us are taken away and we see in a new light the countless deeds of love they have done for us almost unnoticed at the time, but often a death notice in some paper from a distance will cause some memory of a kindness done by the one deceased towards us. Thus David's resolution was vivified here and he sent, for the father's sake, messages of sympathy to the son. It is sometimes all that we can do, but this we ought to do, and we shall find a melancholy pleasure in speaking or writing to the child of the good deeds wrought for us by the parent; we should be well disposed to the child for the father's sake.

2. *Our actions, done with the best intentions, are often misconstrued and misinterpreted.* Actions we intend as friendly offices are sometimes looked upon as hostile demonstrations. This was the case here. David sent messengers on a peaceful and even mournful errand, and they were treated as spies specially sent by him for hostile purposes. Thus frequently, in one way or other, our actions are misunderstood. This was a constant grief to our blessed Lord himself. Once he wrought a great miracle with beneficent intentions, and the multitude thought he had displayed his power for a purpose and attempted to make him a temporal king. Perhaps part of the object of that special embassy from heaven to the Mountain of Transfiguration was to comfort Christ with the assurance that he was understood in heaven if not on the earth. The servant is not above his Lord in this. We will be misunderstood at times. The best course is to act so as to leave little, if any, excuse for misunderstanding, and then go satisfied that God knows our intentions are good.

3. *We bring great discomfort and trouble upon ourselves by being too suspicious.* It would make life easier for us to think that men intend to do us good rather than evil. At any

rate it would be better to assume that people intend to be friendly towards us until we have clear evidence that they intend hostility. When the master of Naaman the Syrian sent a letter to the king of Israel, desiring earnestly that Naaman be cured of the leprosy, that king suffered great misery through imagining that the king of Syria, under pretence of asking a service, was really seeking a quarrel with him. So here the Ammonites brought great trouble upon themselves by imagining David's message meant hostility. It is not a good sign to be over-suspicious of motives and actions towards us, and it is fruitful of much unnecessary suffering.

4. *Conflicts are sometimes forced upon us against our will.* David's wars are many of them defensive rather than offensive and aggressive, and therefore more easily justified, even to those who oppose war. Self-preservation seems to be one of the instincts of life, and hence self defence, even to the point of violence, is justifiable. The law holds a man blameless who even kills another under circumstances which justify him that he is in imminent danger of his own life at the hands of that other. In this case the insult offered to David's messengers, gross and wanton as it was, seemed to come to David as a deliberate declaration of hostility, in the face of which he had to prepare for war. When unjustly attacked, without our giving any provocation, there is a place where non-resistance ceases to be a virtue.

5. *It is fortunate when we can urge courage in conflict by appeals to the loftiest motives.* Joab, though in many ways a fierce and relentless man, had a strong ground on which to appeal to the valor of his men when he said: "Let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God." "Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just," says the poet. There is a divine side to patriotism. Another poet emphasizes that when he puts into the mouth of the Roman soldier the words:

"And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds
For the ashes of his fathers
And the temples of his Gods."

"God and my right" is a good device for the nation's shield if we always remember its full meaning. Let all our conflicts be on the side of God and home and humanity.

ADDED POINTS.

1. The good father does not always have a successor in his goodness.
2. David "cast his pearls before swine."
3. Some people look at all actions through the spectacles of their own meanness.

4. The Ammonites added insult to injury.
5. Mercenaries cannot defeat patriots.
6. It is wise to make prudent preparations even though we feel confident of victory.
7. Even reckless Joabs feel driven to God when danger threatens.
8. If God be for us who can be against us.

THE BLACKBOARD.

IN THE WARFARE AGAINST SIN

I. WE HAVE A **G**OOD CAUSE.
G LORIOUS CAPTAIN..
R AND ARMY.

II. WE NEED **C**OURAGE.
O MBINED EFFORT.
O NFIDENCE IN GOD.

III. WE ARE ASSURED OF SUCCESS.

"To him that overcometh."

LESSON VII—August 16th, 1896.

David's Confession and Forgiveness. Ps. 32: 1-11.

(Commit to memory verses 1-5).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."
Ps. 51: 10.

PROVE THAT—We should confess our sins to God. Ps. 32: 5.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 73. Which is the eighth commandment? A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal. 74. What is required in the eighth commandment? A. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 7, 173, 90, 146.

DAILY PORTIONS. Monday. David's confession and forgiveness. Ps. 32. Tuesday. The sinful nature. Rom. 7: 14-25. Wednesday. Hope for the penitent. Joel 2: 12-19. Thursday. Confession of sin. Ezra 9: 5-15. Friday. Prayer for forgiveness. Ps. 51: 7-19. Saturday. Cleansing. Ezek. 36: 22-31. Sabbath. Praise for pardon. Ps. 103: 1-18. (The I. B. R. A. Selections).

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. The long period of prosperity and unbroken success in the progress and development of the kingdom of Israel was suddenly clouded by the shameful and sinful conduct of their greatly admired and noble king. The story is told in 2 Sam. 11th and 12th chapters; Ps. 51 and 32.

LESSON PLAN. I. True Blessedness Declared. vs. 1-6. II. The Believer's Security. vs. 7-11.

I. TRUE BLESSEDNESS DECLARED. 1. depravity or perversity. The special remedy as applied to each, (1) "Forgiven," (2) "Covered," (3) "Not imputed," not charged to one's account. 2. No guile—He does not say no guilt, for all are guilty; but "no guile," no dissembling, no disguising, no glossing over. These two verses express an "outburst of rapturous thankfulness for the joy of forgiveness." 3. Kept silence—Referring to that period of bitter struggles of conscience and self-accusing that elapsed between

the time of David's grievous sin and his sense of forgiveness realised. Those that stifle their convictions may be said to keep quiet. **Through my roaring**—The state of the impenitent sinner is fittingly compared to "the troubled sea, which cannot rest, but incessantly casts up mire and dust." There is nothing so distressing, nothing that undermines the physical health or impairs mental vigor so completely and paralyzes spiritual power as the consciousness of wrong-doing. Thus it is with many "who are haunted with a sense of guilt, but will not abase themselves before God." 4. **Was heavy**—The hand of the Lord is against all such as do wickedly or delight in sinful pleasures. **My moisture**—"Freshness" or "sap." The godly man is "like a tree planted by the streams of water" (Ps. 1: 3). But the sinful man is like a tree dried up, withered, leafless. 5. **Acknowledged**—The true and only way to peace of conscience is to make sincere and frank confession of our sins before God. "If we confess our sins he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1: 9). The thoroughness of David's repentance may be learned from the expressions he uses: "I acknowledged," "have not lied," "confess." We must confess sin with shame and holy blushing, with fear and holy trembling. (M. Henry). **Thou forgavest**—It is God alone that is able to forgive sins. The Lord delights to multiply pardon to all that truly repent (Isa. 55: 7). 6. **Godly**—"One who is loved by God and responds to his love." **Pray**—All God's children are children of prayer. It is the delightful atmosphere in which the soul lives. **When thou mayest be found**—In a time of acceptance, while the door of hope is opened, and the day of grace lasts. "My spirit, saith the Lord, will not always strive with man" (Gen. 6: 3). **Floods of great waters**—Overwhelming calamities like a rough turbulent mountain torrent. **Shall not reach unto him** (R. V.)—Lifted on a plain above high water mark, no evil or harm can befall the children of God, for he is their wall of defence and their refuge (Isa. 26: 3; Ps. 46: 1).

II. **BELIEVERS' SECURITY.** 7. **My hiding place**—From impending dangers and threatening storms. Those that trust in the Lord are safe (Ps. 125: 2; Isa. 26: 3). It is a personal experience. "My." Religion is

personal. Its peace, joys, hope and delights are all personal. **Preserve me**—As the Lord did Moses when he put him in a cleft of the rock, and covered him with his hand (Ex. 33: 22). **Songs of deliverance**—Songs of victory. There shall be good cause to rejoice and to praise God. The battle is the Lord's (2 Chr. 20: 15). 8. **I will instruct thee**—They are truly blessed who reverently hear and heed the instructions and teachings of the Lord. The holy spirit is our great teacher (John 16: 13). **The way**—The right way, the narrow way, the safe way, the way of peace, and the way of life (John 14: 6). **I will guide**—"I will counsel" (R. V.) This last clause is more correctly rendered in the margin and means "I will watch thee closely while counselling thee." Right guidance is of the Lord. He leads his children forth by the right way (Isa. 107: 7). 9. **No understanding**—Dumb brutes, irrational creatures. "Sin is always irrational." To sin is to be beside one's self. Guided not by force or the rod, but by reason and moral suasion. God deals with sinners as a rational, intelligent and responsible being. There is a possible hint here of the stubbornness of human nature, its tendency to resist divine guidance. **Whose mouth**—"Trappings" (R. V.) To subdue it and compel it to go where it is wanted. "Man ought to need no such coercion to come near to God." (Bible Com.) **Lest**—"Else" (R. V.)—They cannot be controlled and brought into subjection. "In the Bible men are squarely likened to horses, and mules, and dogs, and hogs, and to other animals. Such comparisons are certainly forceful." (Peloubet). 10. **Many sorrows**—Inflicted either to bring them to themselves, like the prodigal, or "in punishment for invincible obstinacy." Sin will have sorrow and, if not repented of, everlasting sorrow (Gal. 6: 7). **Trusteth in the Lord**—Believeth, receiveth and relieth wholly and confidently in the Lord; as a client he putteth himself into the hands of the Lord. **Mercy**—"A ring of mercies, like a fiery wall, surrounds the pardoned, faithful soul, without a break through which a real evil can creep." (McLaren). 11. **Be glad in the Lord**—A life of communion with God is the happiest and most delightful life to live. The righteous have abundant cause for rejoicing, not in themselves, but in the Lord.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *The Bible is the pre-eminently faithful historical book.* There are people who claim that the Bible as history ought to be subject to the same rules of criticism as other historical books. Criticism will not hurt the Bible—it has stood its fires and will continue to stand them. But it may be well to remind people that there are important particulars in which the history of the Bible is above all other history, and therefore not always to be tried by

the same rules. This supreme faithfulness to fact is one of them. Other histories are colored with predilections and prejudices that gloss over the sins and weaknesses of the nation and the national heroes. The Bible alone dares to record things as they are. David's life had been full of excellence as an ideal soldier and statesman, but when he felt so lamentably, the facts are not obscured but recorded with the utmost faithfulness. Other cases such as that

of Noah's drunkenness and Abraham's duplicity will occur to our minds. The Bible is the only book true to life.

2. *We are taught the persistence of the sin principle in the human heart.* From his very childhood David seems to have been of a religious turn of mind. Doubtless his contact with the beauties and splendor of nature in his shepherd life had impressed him much with the ideas of God's goodness and power of God, as we find from his psalms of outdoor life. His selection by Samuel, under God's direction, to be Saul's successor tells of his goodness. His conflict with the giant speaks to us of his courage and faith in God. His anxiety to restore the true worship by bringing back the ark tells of his love of the truth. His kindness to Mephibosheth speaks of his generous and forgiving heart. And yet throughout all these years the sin principle in the heart lived on ready to break forth in outward manifestation whenever opportunity offered and watchfulness was released.

3. *Uninterrupted prosperity and comparative idleness are often fruitful of sin.* For a number of years David's career had been one of steady and even brilliant success. His armies were triumphant everywhere and his kingdom was increasing rapidly in material wealth. The kings of other countries had paid homage to him. Under these circumstances a man is apt to grow self-reliant and also dictatorial, imagining that the rest of the world is made for his use. He fell, too, at a time when he had comparative leisure. No great project was engaging his attention at the time, and idleness brings many temptations into a heart not kept filled with good purposes. The ideal level of commonplace prosperity and the time of idleness are trying upon the life, and demand much grace to withstand their influence.

4. *One sin leads to another in efforts to hide consequences.* David had no sooner fallen into one great sin than he found it necessary to add a second to it in attempt to prevent unpleasant consequences from the first. A lie, for instance, cannot stand alone; it requires other lies to prop it up from either side. Thus

the succession begins, and every sin has a numerous progeny. The moral is to beware of the beginning of sin. Keep unceasing watch over the life, that the first sin may not appear and lead to others.

5. *The soul will not be at rest till the sin is forgiven.* The third and fourth verses tell that in unmistakable terms. When David kept silence and tried to conceal his sin and ignore it, the weakness as of age crept on him and all the freshness seemed dying out of his life. Sin cannot be ignored or suppressed in that way. The problem of sin must be solved and its only solution is in the cross of the atoning Christ. Until the sinner comes to that cross he will carry the unrest and remorse everywhere, that come in consequence of sin.

6. *There is forgiveness for the blackest sin if we truly repent and confess it.* As we read the story of David we find unmistakable signs in his after life of the fact that God had blotted out his sins and restored him once more to his gracious favor. So will God do to every returning sinner. The religion that has not some message for the very worst, even at the very last, is not the religion of the Christ who forgave the repentant thief on the cross. There is hope for all. The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost, and to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

ADDED POINTS.

1. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.
2. Even the great saints were men of like passions with ourselves.
3. It takes a courageous prophet to unveil the sin of a king.
4. There is no royal road to forgiveness.
5. The cry of conscience will not down at our bidding.
6. Repentance and confession precede forgiveness and peace.
7. The forgiven are compassed with victories set to music.
8. The happiest man is he whose sins are covered by the blood.

THE BLACKBOARD.

SIN

HIDDEN.

DENIED

BRINGS

SORROW.

TROUBLE.

ACKNOWLEDGED.

CONFESSED

IS

FORGIVEN.

COVERED.

"I will confess my transgressions."

"If we confess our sins he is faithful to forgive."

LESSON VIII—August 23rd, 1893.

Absalom's Rebellion. 2 SAM. 15: 1-12.

(Commit to memory verses 4-6).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Ex. 20: 12.

PROVE THAT—Deceit will be punished. Ps. 55: 23.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 75. *What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?* A. The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbor's wealth or outward estate.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 65, 173, 69, 116.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Absalom's rebellion. 2 Sam. 15: 1-12. *Tuesday.* David's flight. 2 Sam. 15: 13-23. *Wednesday.* David's submission. 2 Sam. 15: 24-31. *Thursday.* Shimei's curse. 2 Sam. 16: 5-14. *Friday.* Absalom's wicked intent. 2 Sam. 17: 1-14. *Saturday.* Causing sorrow to parents. Prov. 19: 20-29. *Sabbath.* Rebellious children. Isa. 1: 1-9. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

EXPOSITORY NOTES.

INTRODUCTORY. The remainder of David's history is mostly a tale of decline. While his empire did not become less in extent, it grew disunited and restless. "David's crime in the matter of Uriah had broken the spell that seemed to be over his life, and since then the unity of the nation, its peace and its hearty boldness in all enterprises were gone, and its good fortune with them." How soon the fruit of David's misconduct was seen reflected in the misconduct of Amnon, his eldest son. Then follows the story of Absalom's hatred and revenge, his flight, and after five years banishment, reconciled and restored to his father's favor. Read chapters 13 to 16. Time, probably 1022 B. C. David 62 or 63 years old.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Plot. vs. 1-6. II. The Rebellion. vs. 7-12.

I. THE PLOT. 1. **After this**—Shortly after his reconciliation and regained liberty. **Chariots and horses**—"A chariot and horses" (R. V.) Contrary to the rule that forbade the kings of Israel to multiply horses. **Absalom**—The son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmi a heathen king, which would naturally make him less concerned about the peace of Israel. **To run**—It is a usual thing in the east for men of rank to be attended by runners on foot. 2. **The way of the gate**—Leading to the royal palace where the "king gave audience and administered justice." **Had a suit**—A case to be tried. At the gate of the city the elders were the judges, but with an appeal in all weighty matters to the king. **Called unto him**—As they were on their way to court they were intercepted by Absalom. **Of what city art thou?**—That he might learn the names of the city and tribe of each litigant. 3. **Good and right**—Apparently manifesting deep interest in each man's case and flatteringly assuring each in his turn that he had a good case and a worthy cause. **Deputed**—Always expressing deep regret, as it was impossible for the king to hear every case, that he did not appoint others to aid him in his duties. He spoke disparagingly of the existing form of administration of justice, insinuating the "king's inability and neglect." 4. **Oh, that I were made judge**—A striking instance of "ambition criminally indulged," in which was manifested the spirit of (1) self-conceit, (2) covetousness, (3) disloyalty toward

the king, (4) rebellion against God. He was truly "the representative of vain-glory and self-conceit." (Wordsworth). **Justice**—Seeking to impress them with the idea that under existing circumstances they could not obtain justice. 5. **Put forth his hand**—He acted as many an unprincipled and unscrupulous politician does in the present day during the heat of a political campaign. It is amazing how many are susceptible to the influences of the flatterer. "Ambitious projects are often carried on by a show of humility." (M. Henry). 6. **Stole the hearts**—Deceived them. Gained their affections by stealth, by (1) feigning anxiety in their affairs, (2) flattery, (3) affability and courtesy, (4) fair and lavish promises.

II. THE REBELLION. 7. **Forty years**—The transcribers have possibly made an error; it should read "four years," the period during which Absalom's popularity was growing and his conspiracy by arts and flatteries was being planned. **Pay my vow**—Under the cloak of a pretended religious vow, Absalom sought and obtained leave of his father to go to Hebron, alleging that the object of his visit was to hold solemn sacrificial services in "thanksgiving for being permitted to return home and being reconciled to his father. Indulgent parents are certain to train up self-willed, ungrateful children. "No villainy can be termed complete which is not disguised under the mask of religion, especially at those times when the profession of godliness is treated with

general respect." **Hebron**—His birthplace; it was also on the road to Geshur, whither, if need be, he could easily flee. **8. Vowed a vow**—There is no good reason for believing this to be true, but on the contrary it was a self-scheme, well planned and well executed at the fearful sacrifice of principle. I will serve—"Worship." The awful possibility of professing to serve God with the lips while the heart is far from him. **9. Go in peace** David never for a single moment suspected or called in question his son's sincerity. "David's confidence and want of suspicion were the results of a noble minded generosity." (Ewald). **10. Sent spies**—Spies or messengers were sent to different outposts throughout all the tribes of Israel, that they might be ready upon the giving of a certain signal to summon all the people to Absalom's standard. **Reigneth in Hebron**—The first impression that such a proclamation would naturally give the minds of the people would be either that David was dead or that he had resigned in favor of his son. Many ignorant of the real condition of things would flock to shew their loyalty to the newly appointed king. **11. Two hundred men**—Courtiers and men of rank. **Were called**—"Invited." Doubtless to go down to Hebron to be present and take part in the

sacrificial services, which Absalom declared was the purpose of their visit. **They knew not**—This clearly teaches that the plot was laid with the greatest possible secrecy. Had these wise men of rank known they would have refused. Their presence with Absalom would be most helpful to his interests, as the people at Hebron would think that he had a large following at Jerusalem. What artifices ambitious and unscrupulous men will resort to for the compassing of their selfish ends. **12. Ahithophel**—David's chief adviser, filling a responsible position; a man whom David trusted and whose counsel he prized. He became estranged for some cause or other. David's "familiar friend, in whom he trusted, which did eat of his bread" (Ps. 41: 9). **While he offered sacrifices**—"The sacrifices" (R. V.)—Which he had vowed and which were the pretext for his visit. The conspiracy was strong—Absalom's flatteries and little personal attentions to the people had gained the day. "The dash and reckless promises of a young and handsome man excited the popular mind and raised up pictures of great possibilities." (Pulpit Com.) Of One it was once true "of the people there was none with him." He was "despised and rejected of men."

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *Neglect of duty in child-training will recoil upon those neglecting it.* There seems no doubt of the fact that David did not give to his family the oversight that all children require. Under the circumstances we can scarcely imagine anything else than neglect possible. That family was large and grew up in separate dwellings, and almost as strangers to each other. The heathen mothers would pay little attention to their right upbringing. David had led a busy life, a great part of which was spent away from home on active service or otherwise. In that he has many successors in modern times, without reasonable excuse. Fathers who spend the day away at work, and in the evening go out to the club or other resort, so that the home life is practically nothing, need not be surprised if their sons become undutiful and throw off parental authority and home restraint at an early age.

2. *Hence David's sons brought sorrow on his old age.* The dastardly crime of Ammon, the elder brother, was the first step. That rankled in Absalom's breast till he slew Ammon and fled to Syria. After exile he returns, largely through the good offices of Joab. But David still errs in his treatment of his impulsive son. In refusing to see Absalom David practically heaped dishonor upon him and forced the strong, active lad into a life of comparative inactivity, which is always fraught with danger. If Absalom should have been allowed to return at all he should also have also have been allowed to come into the presence of his father. Different treatment might have drawn from Absalom

an acknowledgment of his guilt, without which he should not have been in any measure restored to favor. Absalom seems never to have understood how much his father loved him.

3. *Sudden cessation from war introduces situations requiring much attention.* David's had been a stormy reign and many people there must have been up and down the land who had been soldiers from their youth, and so in a measure indisposed to settle down to a quiet life and ordinary occupations. All such would be tinder to Absalom's fire. We have modern instances that bear out this idea. The combative instinct, when cultivated, grows very strong, and the sudden disbanding of armies has been succeeded by much lawlessness, unless the situation is carefully watched. Perhaps David was not giving the personal attention to the situation that he should. Absalom's conversation with any who had suits seems to imply that. Human nature has many sides, and changing circumstances demand the close attention of those in places of authority.

4. *But none of these things justify Absalom's treachery and deceit.* Nothing justifies the doing of wrong. No amount of wrongs make a right. His treachery was deliberate and cold blooded. He began to indulge in the lavish display of carriage and retinue which is so calculated to captivate the minds of Oriental people. Then he deliberately set himself to intercept all whose causes should have come before the king for judgment, and gave them to understand that the king was careless of their troubles, but that he would rectify all if

he had authority. He was as fruitful and lavish in promises and flattery as a modern politician on the eve of an election, and so he stole the hearts of the people from his father. There is unspeakable meanness in giving people to feel that those in authority in church or state are unfeeling and indisposed to rectify wrongs unless we have sure ground and evidence that such is the case. It would have been more manly and honest of Absalom to make these matters known to his father.

5. *Evils are made more intensely evil when done under the guise of religion.* When Absalom had completed his plots and plans with great skill and secrecy against his unsuspecting father, he asked leave to go on a religious errand to Hebron. Nothing is more perfidious than this. It is a sign of deep depravity when people profess to be working in the service of God and are really "stealing the livery of the

court of heaven to serve the devil in." Every reader can probably recall many instances of this in our own day. Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing.

ADDED POINTS.

1. A wrong-doer restored unconditionally is a continual menace.
2. A generous heart is slow to suspect treachery in others.
3. No stab is so deadly in pain as that received from those of our own households.
4. Hence we should even avoid the use of harsh words or unkind remarks.
5. Adversity tests the strength of friendship. Ahithophels fail us.
6. Darkness brings out the stars, so does trouble reveal true friends.
7. Kindnesses shown will bring their return.

THE BLACKBOARD.

THE INGRATITUDE AND DISOBEDIENCE

OF

ABSALOM

THE SINNER

DISHONORS

DAVID HIS

OUR HEAVENLY

FATHER.

"Honor thy Father and thy Mother."

DOES NOT PAY.—A record of train robberies is published in the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, in which it is clearly shown that the business is attended with much danger and is exceedingly unprofitable. In eight cases, participated in by twenty-two men, only \$840 was secured by the robbers, and this sum would not pay for their outfitting. Of the twenty-two men, all but one have been killed, executed, or sentenced to the penitentiary for from seven to forty-five years each, and two of them for life. Undoubtedly the last of the gang will be captured or killed soon. —*Cut Gems.*

A pianist of world-wide reputation came to a western city. The largest auditorium was crowded. The receipts for a single evening were \$2,750. On Sabbath night there was a grand mass meeting to express the sympathy of the Christian people in that city for the persecuted Armenians. A collection was taken up, which amounted to \$17.50—exactly one per cent. of what was paid to hear the great pianist. A hundred times as much to gratify musical taste, and, in some instances, no doubt, mere curiosity, as to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. When we see such contrasts between our benevolence and our selfishness, we are tempted to think that the millennium is yet in the far future. —*Herald and Presbyterian.*

Demosthenes once had great trouble in getting the attention of his hearers to a most important matter, so he commenced a foolish story about an ass, leaving it half told. On his hearers pressing him to finish it, he said, "O ye Athenians! will ye attend to me when speaking about the shadow of an ass, and will ye not attend to me when I address you on the most important affairs?"

Primary Department.

Edited in connection with the *Primary Quarterly for Little Folks*, by MR. & MRS. GEORGE H. ARCHIBALD, Montreal, P. Q.

LESSON V—August 2nd, 1896.

David's Kindness. 2 SAM. 9: 1-13.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "Lord, increase our faith." Luke 17: 5.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: Kindness.

III. REVIEW: What do you know about the tabernacle? What did David wish to build? Why did God not allow him to do it? What are some of the promises that God made to David? What was my prayer last week? (See *Primary Quarterly for Little Folks*).

IV. LESSON STORY: David, the shepherd-king, was a great king. His kingdom was now large and it needed a great deal of time and care, and he was kept very busy attending to the many things about it. Though he was kept so very busy, he made time to think about and look after, and be kind to any neglected ones. Although Saul had been so unkind to him, David showed a kind and forgiving spirit to him and his house. He sent for Ziba, an old trusted servant of Saul's, and said to him, "Is there not any of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God unto him?" Then Ziba told him about Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. He said he, being five years old at the death of Saul and Jonathan, was taken by his nurse from Jezreel. As she hurried away with him she let him fall, and he became lame in both feet. He was taken to the house of a friend away on the east side of Jordan, near Mahanaim, and had been there ever since. When David heard this he sent and fetched Mephibosheth. When he came before David he fell on his face, but David told him not to be afraid, for he would be kind to him for Jonathan his father's sake, and he would give him back all the land of Saul, and he should eat at his table as one of his sons.

V. HOW TO TEACH THE LESSON STORY: I want to tell you one, two, three stories. (Mark the figures 1, 2, 3 on the black-board). Our first story is about David, the "shepherd king." He was a kind king. Here tell the story of the old friendship between David and Jonathan and then tell the story of to-day's lesson. Our second story is about Jesus, "the great shepherd king." Hold up a white cross cut from paper, and ask the children where Jesus was born, and where he lived before he came to this world. Holding the cross up as high as you can

reach will attract the attention of the children as you tell the gospel story of Jesus giving his life for others.

VI. HOW TO TEACH THE APPLICATION: Our third story is not all written yet. It is about your life and mine. When it is finished, is it going to show kind deeds as David's life does? Is it going to be patterned after the life of Jesus?

LESSON VI—August 9th, 1896.

David's Victories. 2 SAM. 10: 8-19.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Ps. 27: 1.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: Fearlessness.

III. REVIEW: Though David was such a great and busy king, what had he time to do? Who was Mephibosheth? What did he do when he came before David? How did David treat him? What was my prayer last week? (See *Primary Quarterly* for Little Folks).

IV. LESSON STORY: David, the shepherd-king, gained many victories. Our lesson story to-day is about some victories he gained over his enemies. These enemies were doing much harm, and God told David to fight against them. David had learned to be brave when tending the sheep away out on the fields, long ago, when he fought the lion and the bear. His first act of war was fighting Goliath, the giant. He was fearless at all times, for he was not fighting in his own strength, and he knew that God would give him the victory-every time. When he killed the lion and the bear he said "God delivered him out of their paws." When he slew Goliath he said "the battle is the Lord's." He afterwards gained victories over the Amalekites, victories over the Philistines, and over the Moabites, and then as now we learn about him to-day, going to fight the Ammonites and Syrians, he knew he was sure to win. No, he was not afraid, for we have for our golden text to-day his own words, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

V. HOW TO TEACH THE LESSON STORY: When we know we are going to win a victory we are not afraid. David was not afraid because he knew God was going to win the victories for him. What are some of David's great victories? First, with the help of a picture of a lion and a bear pinned to the board and some picture or mark for the giant Goliath, David's early victories can be made vivid. The same may be said of the victories over Ammon and Syria.



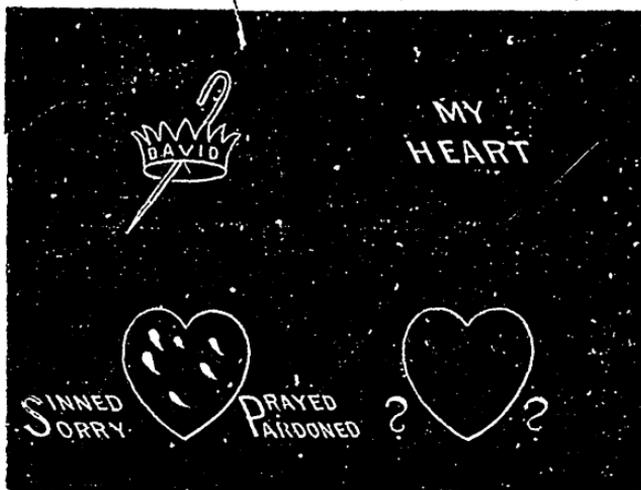
VI. HOW TO TEACH THE APPLICATION: David's greatest victories were over himself. Make the application just here—that the greatest battles are those that are fought within the human breast. Are you afraid of Satan? David was not, for he trusted in God. In the darkness the Lord was his light, in danger the Lord was his salvation. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

LESSON VII—August 16th, 1896.

David's Confession and Forgiveness. Ps. 32: 1-11.

- I. GOLDEN TEXT: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. 51: 10.
- II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: Penitence.
- III. REVIEW: What was our lesson story about last Sunday? Where did David learn to be brave? Why was he not afraid of his enemies? Who wrote the golden text? What was my prayer last week? (See *Primary Quarterly* for Little Folks).
- IV. LESSON STORY: David, the shepherd-king, wrote many beautiful hymns. They are called Psalms in the Bible. Some of them are about glad things and some of them are about sad things. We have one of them for our lesson to-day. At one time in David's life he committed a dreadful sin. It was so very bad that it seemed like a big blot upon his life, but he repented. He was very sorry for having committed that sin, and he told God about it. He did not come and tell God about it at once though, and he says that all the time he kept silence he was very unhappy and suffered very much. The only way to get rid of sin is to be very sorry for it and tell God about it and he will pardon it; but if we do not tell God we are sure to be unhappy. David knew that his heart was very wicked, and in another of his Psalms he wrote our golden text for to-day, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." The wicked are never really happy; it is only when the sin is pardoned, after we have told God all about it, that we are really blessed. The first word of the Psalm is "blessed," and that means "Oh how happy are those whose sins are pardoned!"

V. HOW TO TEACH THE LESSON STORY: We have seen already this Quarter that David "the shepherd king," was an obedient king, a faithful king; that he loved to worship God; that he trusted God; he showed kindness to others and last week we saw that he was a fearless king, because he knew God would win the victory for him. Although David was such good king and, as the Bible tells us, a man after God's own heart, yet he was not like Jesus—a perfect man. As you speak of David's sin, hold up a heart blotted with ink, and deeply impress the thought that sin makes the heart unclean. God opened David's eyes, and he saw that his heart was black with sin, and he was sorry; he cried to God (here teach the golden text) and he was pardoned. Here take the old heart



away and hold up another one, free from blots.

VI. HOW TO TEACH THE APPLICATION: Find out from the children their idea of sin. Lead them to see that they have sinned, so that when you hold up the two hearts, the clean and the unclean one, they will not claim, as they usually do, that theirs is the clean heart. As they see the need of pardon, teach them to ask God to give them a clean heart. This is one of the lessons that can be used to bring the children to the point of consciously receiving a new heart.

LESSON VIII—August 23rd, 1896.

Absalom's Rebellion. 2 SAM. 15: 1-12.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Ex. 20: 12.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: Loyalty.

III. REVIEW: What was our golden text last Sunday? What made David's heart unclean? Was he sorry for his sin? What did God do for him when he confessed 'his sin'? What was his prayer last week? (See *Primary Quarterly for Little-Folks*).

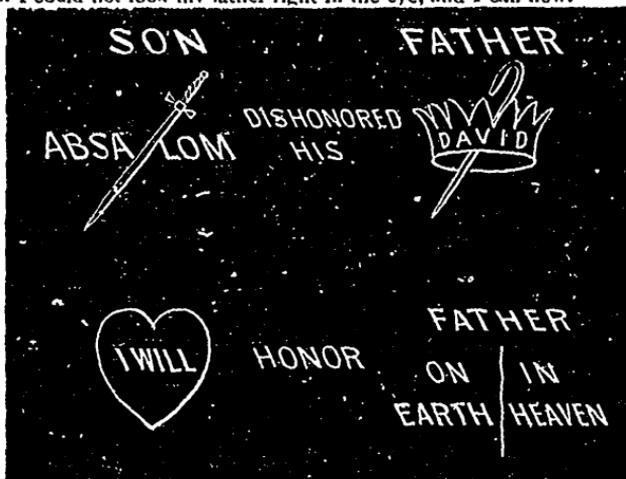
IV. LESSON STORY: David, the shepherd-king, is dishonoured in our lesson to-day. Our golden text, given many years before by Moses, is: "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Our story to-day is a sad one. Absalom was a tall, handsome and attractive young man, and was known all over the country for his beautiful hair. He was just the man who would have made a great king, so far as his appearance went; but handsome people are not always good people, and this is the sad part of our story to-day. Instead of honoring his father, he did just the opposite. He prepared him a chariot, and horses, and fifty men, and tried to get the people to make him king instead of his father. To do this he made a plot. He asked his father to allow him to go to Hebron to pay a vow which he had made. This his father, king David, allowed him to do; but instead of paying his vow, Absalom immediately sent men throughout Israel to tell the people at a given signal to proclaim him king in Hebron. The plot was a strong one and many people followed Absalom. We will learn in our lesson story next week what the end of it all was.

V. APPROACH TO THE LESSON: Our golden text is the fifth commandment and we will do well, not only to have the children thoroughly memorize it, but to clearly understand its meaning. Perhaps the greatest difficulty will be in making the meaning of the first word "honour" plain. What is it to honour father and mother? An illustration here will help to explain this thought. Tell a story of a little boy who honoured his father by doing what he knew his father would like him to do, instead of pleasing himself. A circus came to town and everybody knows how the music and the grand tent and horses set all the little boys a-going. A little boy was seen looking around the premises with a great deal of curiosity. "Hollica, Johnny," said a man who knew him, "going to the circus?" "No, s'r," answered Johnny;

"father don't like 'em." "Oh, well, I'll give you the money to go, Johnny," said the man. "Father don't approve of them," answered Johnny. "Well go for once and I'll pay for you." "No, sir," said Johnny, "My father would give me money if he thought it were best; besides I got twenty-five cents in my strong box, enough to go." "I'd go, Johnny, for once. It is wonderful the way the horses do," said the man; "your father needn't know it." "I shant," said the boy. "Now why?" asked the man. "Cause," said Johnny, twirling his bare toes in the sand, "after I'd been I could not look my father right in the eye, and I can now."

VI. HOW TO TEACH THE LESSON STORY: Tell it here as another illustration of the approach to the lesson.

VII. HOW TO TEACH THE APPLICATION; David honoured his father. When he was a boy he obeyed him. His father sent him to tend the sheep, and he went. He sent him to the battle-field for something to his brothers; he obeyed, and because he honoured his father, God honoured him by giving him victories over the lion, and the bear, and the Philistine giant. Absalom dishonoured his father and his days upon earth were short; but God has promised that if we honour father and mother our days will be long upon the land which the Lord our God giveth us. Seek, therefore, to do our Father's will. The will of our father on earth, and also the will of our Father in heaven.



FINANCIAL STATEMENT, 1895-6.

RECEIPTS.

Cash on hand, May 5th, 1895.....	\$ 30 16	
Contributions from Sabbath Schools.....	1,474 12	
Subscriptions and Supplies.....	3,261 62	
Borrowed.....	1,894 19	
		\$6,660 09

EXPENDITURES

Repaid borrowed.....	\$ 894 19	
Expenses of Publications, Higher Religious Instruction, Children's Day and Statistics.....	4,220 24	
General Expenses: Office help, travelling, postage, discounts, interest, etc.	689 31	
Amount of orders forwarded to other publishers, on the greater part of which commission was allowed.....	581 19	
Balance in hand.....	275 16	
		6,660 09

LIABILITIES.

Borrowed.....	\$1,000 00	
Notes maturing.....	2,916 19	
		3,916 19

PER CONTRA.

Balance cash.....	\$ 275 16	
Subscriptions unpaid.....	1,390 85	
Royalty on Class Registers, etc.....	31 27	
Cost of May and June publications (included in notes above).....	776 47	
		2,473 75

Whole deficit May 2nd, 1896.....	\$1,442 44
" " " 4th, 1895.....	880 47

Net deficit for 1895-6 alone..... \$ 561 97
(165)

CANADIAN HELPS FOR CANADIAN SCHOOLS.

Before entering upon the publication of lesson helps of our own, correspondence was entered into with the Presbyterian Board of Publication at Philadelphia, with a view of ascertaining whether some arrangement, similar to that obtaining between the Methodist churches of Canada and the United States, could not be made with regard, at least, to the republication in Canada of a Canadianized edition of the Westminster lesson helps and illustrated papers. The Committee offered to do the work of re-editing, printing and publishing, and pay a royalty on the subscription list, provided the Board would furnish duplicate plates of the periodicals in question and refer all orders from Canada to them. This proposal the Board declined to consider, and the Committee were unwilling to accede to any terms which did not place the whole business in Canada in their hands. The correspondence was closed by the representative of the Board declaring "It does not seem to me possible that we can arrive at any conclusion that would be satisfactory to us," and "I think it is hardly worth while for us to carry on any further negotiations."

In view of this failure to come to any satisfactory terms with the Philadelphia Board, your Committee were unanimously of the opinion that the time had come when our schools should be supplied with their own lesson helps, and that the large profits now going to swell the gains of a foreign corporation should be retained for the advancement of the work in our own church. The circulation these have reached during the first six months of their issue amply testifies to the cordial support that our schools are willing to give.

THE ASSEMBLY'S RESOLUTIONS.

The following are the resolutions of the Assembly regarding our work: First—"That in view of the comparatively small number of commissioners remaining, and the impossibility, at this Assembly, of giving adequate consideration to the recommendation of the committee, the S. S. committee be authorized to arrange for the carrying of the debt of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) incurred for another year, that in the meantime the work of publication be continued, and that the question of establishing a Board of Sabbath School publication, and the appointment of an editor, be referred to Presbyteries, to be reported on to next Assembly."

On this note (1) By rejecting the recommendation of the Assembly's committee, supported as it was by the ablest financiers in the church, such as Drs. Warden and Morrison, the committee are prevented from availing themselves of the very great saving, amounting to over a thousand dollars, which would be gained by removal of their headquarters to Toronto. With their utmost efforts they cannot expect to be in as good a position next assembly as if they had been permitted to remove to the more advantageous locality and place their work under the undivided attention of one person.

(2) By a reference to the first page of this number it will be seen that the \$5,000 is not a debt in the usual acceptance of the term. It rather represents capital borrowed in order to carry on a very flourishing business. Still the committee are very anxious to get the \$5,000, and urgently appeal to their friends to subscribe it in order that their publications may be wholly free from any liability.

(3) To speak of "establishing a Board of S. S. Publication" unfairly prejudices the case. The only question before the church is "Shall the S. S. Committee publish lesson helps for our Schools as the Record committee publishes the Record and the Children's Record." One is no more a "Board of Publication" than the other. No new machinery is proposed beyond what is now in operation.

(4) If the publication of these helps is to be continued, indeed, if the whole work of the S. S. Committee is not to collapse, some one must be set apart to look after this department. It is quite impossible to carry it on along with a pastoral charge. The appointment of an editor or manager will entail no new expense upon the church, for after this year the income from the periodicals and "Children's Day" collections will amply meet all charges.

(5) Presbyteries are respectfully asked to defer consideration of the remit until next March, when the prospects of our finances and subscription lists for 1897 will be known. The committee hope to place facts before them then which will help them to a wise and acceptable decision.

The second resolution of the Assembly was as follows: "The General Assembly requests that the whole collection taken up in connection with 'Children's Day' services be given to the Sabbath School Committee. Had this been done in every case last year there would have been no deficit on the work of the past twelve months. But many schools, not realizing the needs of the Committee, thinking only of the modest appeals of previous years, sent what was indeed a liberal donation from their standpoint, but which was only a small portion of what had been collected for the Committee in the envelopes supplied by them. The greater portion was given to some other scheme of the Church. The Committee think they are as much entitled to the proceeds of Children's Day services as any other of the Assembly's Committees to that on the day set apart for them.

With the October number the Convener will resume the preparation of the Notes on the Lessons. The MONTHLY will then be enlarged to thirty-two pages and will give a very full exposition of the lessons.

Teacher Training.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

TEXT-BOOK: REDFORD'S "PRIMER OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES."

ANALYSIS, NOTES AND ADDITIONS, by Rev. Professor Ross, B. D., Presbyterian College, Montreal, Quebec.

INTRODUCTION.

The evidences of Christianity, that is the arguments employed in defence of it, are usually called Apologetics from the *A*: ologies for the Christian religion addressed by some of the early fathers to the heathen emperors, when our faith was proscribed and its adherents persecuted. *Apology* now means an excuse for something wrong or improper, but then it meant a vindication of the beliefs and conduct of Christians against the slanders of their enemies.

It is not proposed in this study of the subject to present the arguments for the truths of natural religion, (*i. e.* the existence of God, &c.,) but only for those distinctive truths of Christianity which are common to all denominations of Christians.

A. DEFINITION OF CHRISTIANITY: The Christian religion is the system of belief and conduct originated by Jesus Christ, set forth in the Bible, always believed and generally practiced in the Christian church, and exemplified in the character of the Christian man. Thus there are four witnesses to be examined.

B. THE CAUSES OF OPPOSITION TO CHRISTIANITY:

- I. In Early Days:** (1) The State feared its political influence. (2) The rival religions, Judaism and Classic Heathenism) were jealous of it. (3) Every grade of ancient society had some ground for hating it.
- II. At the Present Time:** (1) *An evil heart.* To acknowledge that Christianity is true necessitates confession of sin, which is intensely humiliating to many. This wrong moral bias (*a*) clouds the full force of the evidence, and (*b*) sets the will in opposition to what is clearly seen. (2) *Discontent with the present constitution of society.* Many, who desire to better the condition of the poor by social changes, think Christianity stands in the way. Their opposition to it rests on the following misconceptions: (*a*) That true Christianity is responsible for the abuses of our social system. (*b*) That Christians must necessarily defend these abuses. (*c*) That the sole object of Christianity is to prepare a man for another world. (*d*) That an outward scheme of social reform will cure the ills which spring from sin. (*e*) That a condition of earthly good will finally satisfy a soul made in the image of God. (3) *Dissatisfaction with the errors and corruptions of Christian churches.* Unbelief is often a reaction from (*a*) Superstition, (*b*) Intolerance of other Christians. (*c*) Jealousy of the investigations of science or criticism, (*d*) Hard, mechanical dogmatism which is destitute of the spirit of Christ. In all these cases the abuses of Christianity are identified with its fundamentals. (4) *Attachment to certain theories of science or philosophy.* (*a*) A theory of God which declares that even if he does exist he can never be known. (*b*) A theory of the universe which is supposed to be fatal to Christianity. (*c*) A theory of the nature of man which makes moral obligation and religion both impossible. (*d*) A theory of the origin of the Bible which reduces it to the level of other books.

C. THE PURPOSES SERVED BY THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY: (1) They remove difficulties from the minds of honest enquirers. (2) They leave the determined unbeliever without excuse. (3) They justify the believer's faith at the bar of his reason. (4) They shew how Christian truth can meet every new system of error.

D. THE KIND OF EVIDENCE TO BE EXPECTED: This is determined by the nature of the subject and the limitations of the human mind.

- I. We have no right to expect:** (1) A logical demonstration. That is possible only in the case of such truths as have been assumed or implied in the principles with which a discussion begins. The opposite of any truth which has been demonstrated is not only false, but absurd and impossible. This is not true of anything which depends on probable evidence. (2) Evidence which will compel the assent of every man. A demonstration would scarcely accomplish this in the case of those whose hearts are in violent revolt against the truths. (3) Evidence which will meet every objection which can be raised. In such a vast, complex subject, incidental difficulties may be left unsolved, and yet the main line of truth may be reasonably well established.

II. We may expect: (1) Evidence which will establish that fair degree of probability which forms the basis of action in other departments of life. (2) Evidence which on the moral side is capable of verification. We can see the effect which Christian truth has upon many a sinner. (3) Evidence which is cumulative in its effect. When the evidence is made up of many particulars all pointing to the same conclusion, the probability is very much increased and in many cases becomes an absolute certainty.

E. AN OUTLINE OF THE EVIDENCE TO BE PRESENTED:

I. The evidence of Jesus Christ: He is superior to all other men. 1. *In his moral character.* (1) He claims sinlessness. (2) There is nothing in the narrative to overthrow this claim. (3) He displays a perfect character in a great variety of trying circumstances. (4) The more fully his whole life is known, the greater, wiser and holier does he appear. 2. *In his personal history.* (1) He healed all manner of sickness by a word, touch, or effort of will (2) He wrought supernatural changes in the realm of nature. (3) On three occasions he raised the dead. (4) He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. 3. *In the character of his teachings.* They are distinguished from the precepts of all other teachers by:—(1) Originality. (2) Simplicity. (3) Earnest tenderness. (4) Comprehensiveness. (5) Adaptation to the spiritual nature of every man. (6) The revelation of a relation of the soul to God which becomes a mighty moral and spiritual force. 4. *In his influence on men.* (1) He has produced a great moral change in the world. (2) He has stamped his character on the best and holiest men. (3) His personal influence has held the Christian church together for nearly nineteen centuries and is daily extending his power. Such a character and history cannot be accounted for by any natural causes; therefore we conclude that Jesus must be divine.

II. The evidence of the Bible and especially of the New Testament: 1. *The office of the Scriptures to Christianity is threefold.* (1) They form a history of the facts on which Christianity is founded. (2) They contain a statement of the doctrines believed by Christians. (3) They prescribe the rules of obedience to Christ which Christians ought to follow. 2. *The claims which are made for these scriptures.* (1) They are genuine, that is, they were written at the age to which they are assigned, and by the men, or class of men, to whom they are ascribed. (2) They are authentic; that is, they relate matters of fact as these really happened, and they have come down to us substantially as their authors composed them. (3) They are of superhuman authority. (4) Their teachings are better adapted to the spiritual wants of men than those of any other book.

III. The evidence of the Christian Church: (1) Since the days of Christ there has always been a society believing the doctrines, practising the rites and exhibiting the character of Christian men. (2) Its members could not have learned this life from their neighbors, for Christian morality was far in advance of Pagan. Therefore it must be traced back to the teaching of Christ and his immediate followers. (3) At the end of the first century this society existed in many countries, and was everywhere in possession of the books of our present New Testament. (4) It would have been impossible, between the death of Christ and the end of the first century, to have imposed upon this society a mass of legendary matter of a character wholly different from the facts on which the church was at first founded. (5) The central fact believed in by all Christians, from the founding of the church, was the resurrection of Christ. (6) This society has repeatedly shown the vitality and authority of the truth which is its foundation, by throwing off the errors and corruption which have gathered around it, and returning to its primitive faith in Christ.

IV. The evidence of the Christian man: 1. *He is a better man morally than others.* (1) He has a deeper sense of the evil of sin. He shrinks not only from the act but from the thought of evil. (2) He has a higher ideal of holiness. It is not a law, but a living, perfect example. (3) He has a more powerful motive to goodness. It is not merely a sense of honor and love to a personal Redeemer. 2. *He is happier.* (1) His crushing burden of guilt is removed by the atonement. (2) He has an infinitely perfect object of affection. (3) He has a new conception of the purpose of all the trials of life. (4) His central ground of happiness is not affected by death itself. 3. *He is more useful.* (1) Christ has revealed to him the true value of man. (2) His response to Christ's love takes the form of service to man. (3) His own experience enables him to meet the deeper needs of men. 4. *All these elements of character are in proportion to the sincerity and strength of the man's Christianity.* (1) The hypocrite does not affect the argument. He is not a Christian. (2) There is room in Christianity for ceaseless progress. (3) Any man, however degraded, may become a Christian.