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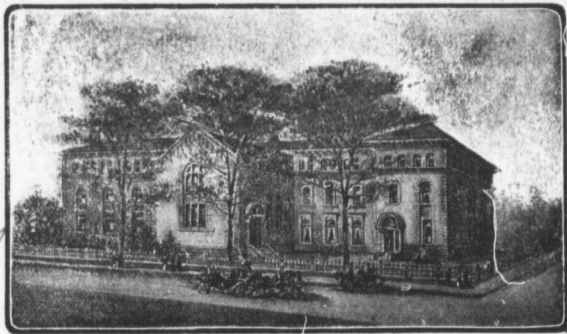
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The Teachers Monthly

Rev. R. Douglas Fraser, M.A., Editor
Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D., Associate Editor

Vol. IX.

November, 1903

No 11

No more delightful six months' course of studies could be imagined than that from January to June, 1904—a sketch of our Lord's life and work on earth from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. These and the lessons for the second six months will be found on a later page.

Every order for our Lesson Helps and illustrated papers is filled the same day that it arrives. But from the middle of December onward, and especially at the Christmas and New Year's time, the post office authorities are hard put to, to grapple with the mails. Everyone wants to send things at the same time. It is not surprising if there are delays. Moral—Order your Sabbath School supplies early. Then you will be perfectly sure of no break in receiving them.

SOLOMON

By Rev. Clarence Mackinnon, B.D.

Why is it, that on the shore where lie beautiful pebbles, the casual eye will pass them over, but stop, arrested by some broken fragment of a fossil shell, disclosed in the fissure of a rock?

Because of its living interest. It was once the tenement of a live animal. Obedient to instinct, this plastic organism toiled and died; and the mind reconstructs from the fragment the forgotten story of the past.

So the chapters of the Bible which treat of Solomon's reign, fragmentary as they are, mostly long enumerations of building materials, names of priests and Levites and the officers of the court, glow with strange

interest, when we begin to construct behind them the warm, passionate personality, of whose thought and will they are the partial expression.

Other nations have fabled great monarchs, whose touch could convert to gold, but here is a real king, seemingly happy in that his wishes have but to be uttered that they may be realized; the world lies at his feet. The glory of Solomon is the dream of ambitious youth. What then is its forceful lesson?

"'Tis but the moral of all human tales;
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
First freedom, and then glory; when that
Wealth, vice, corruption—barbarism at
last."

Never did rosy-fingered Aurora, daughter of the dawn, paint with more hopeful colors the glory of the coming day, than did the noble youth of Solomon give promise of the splendor of his reign. Inheriting a powerful kingdom from his father, acclaimed king by a magnificent popular outburst of patriotism, the Lord came to him in a vision at Gibeon and proffered the request that could be so readily abused, "Ask what I shall give thee." And Solomon replied, "I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. . . Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people?"

"He was a king who asked for wisdom,
To the end he might be king sufficient."

The prayer was granted. From the knowledge that spoke of the cedar of Lebanon and the hyssop that springeth out of a wall, to the

deep moral insight that could penetrate to the secret springs of human action, the wisdom of Solomon became deservedly famous. Kings sent to hear him speak. Great was the glory of his noontide. His political sagacity taxed the wealth of the Indies, the resources of Lebanon, and even the spoils of Malabar, if the guesses of modern scholarship be correct, to adorn Jerusalem. Silver "was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon." The Queen of Sheba, when she had seen his house, his table, his retinue, his cup-bearers, and his ascent to the house of the Lord, had no more spirit in her. "Behold the half was not told me." Nor was he unmindful of Him who had so bountifully answered his prayer; the temple, the religious pride of Israel, was erected under Solomon's guidance.

But it takes a steady hand to carry a full cup. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" As the Arab legend has it, the jeweled staff on which Solomon leant, was secretly eaten by a worm. The obsequiousness that always bowed the knee and inspired the flattering tongue, developed the despot. The wanton eye of ambitious womanhood called forth the sensualist. He became proud, arrogant, effeminate. His successful marriage to Pharaoh's daughter was perhaps the first step to his fall. Nor has he been the last, who, sacrificing domestic happiness to worldly ambition and self-indulgence, has robbed life of its truest bliss and sought in vain in other channels for equal compensation. His seven hundred wives, princesses, might make a magnificent and even formidable array, but could not take the place of one faithful companion. Further, sensuality degenerates into superstition. So was led this

"Uxorious king, whose heart though large,
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul."

The familiar legend of his death, if not based on fact, is prompted by truth. Robbed and crowned, he entered the temple. As he leaned on his staff, his white locks falling over his gorgeous robes, God's call came to him. Cold and rigid, the death stare in his

eyes, his body remained standing. His courtiers still overawed by his glory, feared to approach, until a mouse ran out and nibbled his shoe string. Then Solomon in all his glory, fell prone upon the earth, "dust to dust." So passes away the glory of the world. "Vanity of vanities," saith the Preacher, "vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

Sydney, N.S.

TEACHER TRAINING

By Professor Walter C. Murray

XXIII. THE GRADED LESSON IN THEORY

In our survey of the mental growth of the young, we found that the child was absorbed in the things of sense and quick to imitate others; that the boy delighted in action—in adventure and struggle; that the youth's chief interests were in the logical and the social, and that he was beginning to penetrate into the inner meaning of things. Later in life comes the reflective or philosophic habit.

What studies are suitable for each stage of mental development?

WHAT MENTAL FOOD

does the child of five, the boy of ten, the youth of fifteen require? It may perhaps seem strange to hear algebra and grammar spoken of as mental food, yet our courses of instruction are really bills of fare, and the likeness goes beyond the resemblance between unpalatable dishes flavored with French names, and common-place studies decorated with pedantic nomenclature. Fortunately, we may neglect courses of study prescribed or prescribable for Public Schools, and confine ourselves to the needs of the Sunday School. If

OUR DIAGNOSIS

of the characteristics of the different stages of mental development be correct, the studies of the child should appeal to the senses and satisfy his interest in persons: those of the boy should centre about stirring scenes of adventure; those of the youth should appeal more to reason and relate to the doings of men in societies and involve some interpretation of character.

The stories of the children of the Bible

told in simple and graphic language are the proper food for the child. The adventures of Jacob, the battles of Joshua, the escapes of David, and the perils of Paul hold the interest of the boy. The rise and decline of the "peculiar people," the brotherhood of the apostles, the growth of the early Christian Church, appeal to the newly-awakened social interest of the youth, while the unfolding of the new life within quickens his appreciation of the spiritual experiences of Jacob, of Joseph, and of David. To him more than to any other does the story of the growth of the kingdom of God, unfolded in the New Testament, appeal with power. It is not until the approach of the years of maturity that the prophets, the doctrinal epistles, the philosophies of Job, Ecclesiastes and Proverbs are read with interest and studied to advantage.

If the studies of the Sunday School were so arranged that the scholars could

BEGIN WITH THE SIMPLE STORIES

and poetry of the Bible; proceed to the adventures of the Old Testament and the Acts of the Apostles; then trace the growth of Abraham's seed, the rise and fall of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the vicissitudes of the Exile and Restoration, the growth of the Christian church, and dip more deeply into the inner life of the great leaders of the Jewish people; and, finally, under the wise leadership of the pastor, unravel the mysteries of the prophets, grasp the philosophies of Job and the Books of Wisdom, see the spiritual beauty of the Psalms, and think out the theology of Paul; then, it might be possible for our young people to make the Book of books their book.

As the boundaries between childhood and boyhood, or between boyhood and youth, are not set off by definite lines, so the lessons should shade imperceptibly one into the other. Instead of dividing the studies of the Bible into four groups or grades, we should rather arrange them into

ONE ORDERED SERIES,

beginning with the story of Jesus and ending with the theology of Paul. The main thing is the ordering of the lessons, not the breaking of them into groups. The order should

be based on the capacity of the pupil. If some such method of arranging the lessons be not adopted, I believe the biblical order, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation, better than the present helterskelter method of skipping from Timothy to Samuel, from Peter to the Psalms. A jumble of stereoscopic views may interest and amuse, but they fail to give true and adequate ideas of the greatness of the plains or the grandeur of the mountains.

THE GRADED LESSON

does not necessarily mean a graded school. The public schools in the country are ungraded, yet the lessons are graded according to the capacity of the pupils.

Nor does the graded lesson mean a supplemental lesson. At present the teacher has less than half an hour for teaching the lesson for the day. This time is short enough. It would be far too short for both the International and Supplemental Lessons. Besides, if the attention of both teacher and taught be divided between two lessons, little will be accomplished.

Graded Lessons do not mean a series of moral truths or a system of ethics illustrated by Bible stories. Such a course for beginners was recently prepared by the International Committee. We wish not ethics but the Bible. The Bible stories will teach their own lesson. Abstract truths, no matter how well illustrated, are beyond infants. Concrete stories appeal to them and will in time convey their own truth.

The Graded Lesson should present Bible stories as far as possible in the language and order of the Bible. Though it would not be wise to begin with the story of Adam and Eve and end with the story of Jesus, yet it is advisable to tell as much of the story of Moses, for example, as little children can grasp, before passing on to another.

Difficulties and objections we must reserve for another article.

Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S.

Write for Booklet containing full information regarding the Teacher Training Course, to Rev. J. M. DUNCAN, B.D., Confederation Life Building, TORONTO.

LESSONS FOR 1904

SIX MONTHS WITH THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS
(MATTHEW, MARK AND LUKE)*First Quarter*

1. Jan. 3. The Boyhood of Jesus. Luke 2: 40-52. Golden Text: Luke 2: 52.
2. Jan. 10. The Preaching of John the Baptist. Matt. 3: 1-12. G. T.: Matt. 3: 2.
3. Jan. 17. The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus. Matt. 3: 13-4: 11. G. T.: Matt. 3: 17.
4. Jan. 24. Jesus Rejected at Nazareth. Luke 4: 16-30. Golden Text: John 1: 11.
5. Jan. 31. Jesus Calls Four Disciples. Luke 5: 1-11. Golden Text: John 8: 31.
6. Feb. 7. A Sabbath in Capernaum. Mark 1: 21-34. Golden Text: Luke 4: 40.
7. Feb. 14. Jesus Forgives Sins. Mark 2: 1-12. Golden Text: Mark 2: 10.
8. Feb. 21. Jesus and the Sabbath. Matt. 12: 1-13. Golden Text: Matt. 12: 12.
9. Feb. 28. Hearers and Doers of the Word. Matt. 7: 21-29. G. T.: James 1: 22.
10. March 6. Jesus Calms the Storm. Mark 4: 35-41. G. Text: Psalm 107: 29.
11. March 13. Death of John, the Baptist (Temperance Lesson). Matt. 14: 1-12. Golden Text: Rev. 2: 10.
12. March 20. Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand. Matt. 14: 13-23. G. T.: John 6: 35.
13. March 27. REVIEW. G. T.: Matt. 4: 23.

Second Quarter

1. April 3. Jesus visits Tyre and Sidon. Mark 7: 24-37. G. T.: Heb. 11: 6. (Or Easter Lesson. John 20: 11-18. G. T.: v. 20.)
2. April 10. Peter Confesses the Christ. Mark 8: 27-38. Golden Text: Matt. 16: 16.
3. April 17. Jesus Transfigured. Mark 9: 2-13. Golden Text: Mark 9: 7.
4. April 24. The Mission of the Seventy. Luke 10: 1-16. Golden Text: Luke 10: 2.
5. May 1. Prayer and Promise. Luke 11: 1-13. Golden Text: Luke 11: 9.
6. May 8. Watchfulness (Temperance Lesson). Luke 12: 35-48. G. T.: Luke 12: 37.
7. May 15. The Prodigal Son. Luke 15: 11-24. Golden Text: Hosea 6: 1.
8. May 22. Jesus Teaches Humility. Mark 10: 35-45. Golden Text: Mark 10: 45.
9. May 29. The Passover. Matt. 26: 17-30. Golden Text: 1 Cor. 5: 7.

10. June 5. Christ's Trial Before Pilate. Mark 15: 1-15. Golden Text: Luke 23: 4.
11. June 12. Christ Crucified. Mark 15: 22-39. Golden Text: 1 Cor. 15: 3.
12. June 19. Christ Risen. Matt. 28: 1-15. Golden Text: 1 Cor. 15: 20.
13. June 26. REVIEW. G. T.: Phil. 2: 9.

SECOND SIX MONTHS—FROM SOLOMON TO
ISAIAH*Third Quarter*

1. July 3. The Kingdom Divided. 1 Kings 12: 12-20. G. Text: Prov. 16: 18.
2. July 10. Jeroboam's Idolatry. 1 Kings 12: 25-33. Golden Text: 1 John 15: 21.
3. July 17. Asa's Good Reign. 2 Chron. 14: 1-12. Golden Text: 2 Chron. 14: 11.
4. July 24. Jehoshaphat's Reform. 2 Chron. 19: 1-11. G. Text: 2 Chron. 19: 11.
5. July 31. Omri and Ahab. 1 Kings 16: 23-33. Golden Text: Prov. 14: 34.
6. Aug. 7. God Taking Care of Elijah. 1 Kings 17: 1-16. G. Text: 1 Peter 5: 7.
7. Aug. 14. Obadiah and Elijah. 1 Kings 18: 1-16. Golden Text: 1 Kings 18: 12.
8. Aug. 21. Elijah on Mount Carmel. 1 Kings 18: 30-46. G. Text: 1 Kings 18: 21.
9. Aug. 28. Elijah Discouraged. 1 Kings 19: 1-8. Golden Text: Ps. 120: 1.
10. Sept. 4. Elijah Encouraged. 1 Kings 19: 9-18. Golden Text: Isa. 41: 10.
11. Sept. 11. Elijah Taken up into Heaven. 2 Kings 2: 1-11. G. T.: Gen. 5: 24.
12. Sept. 18. Israel Reproved. Amos 5: 4-15. Golden Text: Amos 5: 6.
13. Sept. 25. REVIEW. G. T.: Ps. 103: 8.

Fourth Quarter

1. Oct. 2. Elisha Succeeds Elijah. 2 Kings 2: 12-22. Golden Text: 2 Kings 2: 9.
2. Oct. 9. The Widow's Oil Increased. 2 Kings 4: 1-7. Golden Text: Ps. 37: 3.
3. Oct. 16. Elisha and the Shunammite. 2 Kings 4: 25-37. Golden Text: Rom. 6: 23.
4. Oct. 23. Elisha and Naaman. 2 Kings 5: 1-14. Golden Text: Jer. 17: 14.
5. Oct. 30. Elisha at Dothan. 2 Kings 6: 8-23. Golden Text: Ps. 34: 7.
6. Nov. 6. Joash, the Boy King. 2 Kings 11: 1-16. Golden Text: Prov. 29: 2.
7. Nov. 13. Joash Repairs the Temple. 2 Kings 12: 4-15. G. Text: Neh. 10: 39.

8. Nov. 20. Isaiah's Message to Judah. Isa. 1: 1-9, 16-20. G. Text: Isa. 1: 16, 17.
9. Nov. 27. World's Temperance Sunday. Isa. 28: 1-13. Golden Text: Isa. 28: 7.
10. Dec. 4. Hezekiah Reopens the Temple. 2 Chron. 29: 18-31. G. Text: 1 Sam. 2: 30.
11. Dec. 11. Captivity of the Ten Tribes. 2 Kings 17: 6-18. G. Text: 1 Pet. 3: 12.
12. Dec. 18. REVIEW. G. T.: Luke 4: 8.
13. Dec. 25. The Prince of Peace (Christmas Lesson). Isa. 9: 1-7. G.T.: Isa. 9: 6.

ABOVE PRICE

Everywhere in the civilized world to-day, including the Sunday School, there is a new and sincere interest in childhood, and there is certainly a recognition in Sunday School circles that the Primary class is the most difficult to teach successfully. It takes an expert to deal with children, and it is rare to find a young man or woman who is a thoroughly trained teacher, who is deeply religious, and in addition to this, possesses all of the qualifications which go to make one successful with little children. Surely the price of such an one is above rubies.

I am not surprised at all when people tell me that they are willing to pay money for say that, so far as my experience goes, the teacher of this sort; although it is fair to best teaching is still in the hands of the unsalaried teacher.—Mary Adair, at Knox College Summer School.

THE FIRST ONE THERE

"Last Sunday thirteen classes in the school gathered in their places, visiting and talking with each other, but *without their teachers*. These had not arrived.

"No moment is so important to the teacher, and no opportunity so priceless, as when the scholars are assembling. This is the teacher's golden chance, and the teacher should be *the first one there*.

"The teacher who is in his place before any of the scholars are, to greet each as he comes, and thus get into his heart, will find it much easier to teach, and his work will be more effective."—The Helper.

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BIBLE DICTIONARY FOR FOURTH
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A-bi'-na-dab. A man of Kirjath-jearim, in whose house the ark found accommodation for twenty years after it was sent back by the Philistines, 1 Sam. 7: 1, 2; 2 Sam. 6: 3; 1 Chron. 13: 7.

Ab'-sa-lom. The third son of David. His mother was Maach, daughter of Talmi, king of Geshur. After his defeat in the rebellion against David, he was killed by Joab and his followers, while entangled by his hair among the spreading branches of an oak, under which he had been riding, his mule having run away.

A-bi-ma'-az. A son of Za'-dok. He was the first to bring David tidings of the victory over Absalom.

A-bi'-o, Uzz'-ah. The two sons of Abinadab who drove the cart on which David was taking the ark to Jerusalem, 2 Sam. 6: 3, 4.

A-hi'-tho-pheh. One of David's counselors, a man of great sagacity, but morally untrustworthy. He joined in the rebellion of Absalom, and hanged himself when Hushai's counsel was preferred to his own.

Ba'-al-e. The same as Kirjath-jearim, a town of Judah.

Cush'-i. In 2 Sam. ch. 18, the Rev. Ver. substitutes for this name, "the Cushite," a native of Cush or Ethiopia, the country lying in Eastern Africa, south of Egypt.

Da'-vid. Son of Jesse and second king of Israel. According to the ordinary reckoning he reigned from 1055 to 1015 B.C. His life may be divided into four periods, namely: (1) Youth; (2) Years of wandering; (3) Reign over Judah; (4) Reign over all Israel.

E'-gypt. The country watered by the Nile, divided into Upper Egypt, or the valley of the Nile, and Lower Egypt, or the delta formed at the mouth of the same river.

Eth'-a'-nim. The seventh month of the Jewish year, also called Tisri. It corresponded to parts of September and October.

Ge'-shur. A portion of Syria on the east of the Jordan adjoining the north border of the Israelitish territory. David married a daughter of Talmi, a ruler of this territory.

Gib'-e-ah. See 2 Sam. 6: 4, where this word occurs, the Rev. Ver. gives instead "the hill."

Gib'-e-on. A city of Benjamin in which the tabernacle was erected for a time in the reign of David and Solomon. Its modern name is el-Jib, about six miles north-west of Jerusalem.

Gi'loh. A village in the hill country of Judah.

Gi'lo-nite. A native or inhabitant of Giloh, as Abithophel, 2 Sam. 15: 12.

Gitt'-ite. A native or inhabitant of Gath.

Heb'-ron. A town in the hill country of Judah, about twenty miles south-west of Jerusalem. It was David's capital during the seven and a half years of his reign over Judah. Here Absalom raised the standard of rebellion.

Ho'-reb. The mountain in the peninsula of Sinai where the law was given to Israel. The name is practically the same as Sinai.

Is'-ra-el. A name given to Jacob and his descendants.

Je-ru'-sa-lem. The sacred city of the Jews, where David fixed his capital.

Jo'-ab. A nephew of David, and one of the leaders in his army.

Ju'-dah. The territory assigned to the fourth son of Jacob and occupying the greater portion of Southern Palestine.

Le'-vites. The men of the tribe of Levi, charged with the duty of helping the priests, by taking care of the tabernacle and making preparation for its services.

Mo'-ses. The great Israelitish leader and lawgiver. He was a Levite belonging to the family of Kohath.

Na'-chon, Pe'-rez-uzz'-ah. Nachon was the designation of a threshing-floor at which Uzzah was struck dead (2 Sam. 6: 6), and which was hence called Perez-uzzah, that is, "breach of Uzzah."

Na'-than. A well-known prophet in the reign of David and Solomon.

O'-bed-e'-dom. A Gittite living between Kirjath-jearim and Jerusalem, in whose house the ark was left by David.

She'-ba. A people and country of south-western Arabia. They traded, not only in the gold, precious stones and spices of their own country, but also in the products of India and Ethiopia. In the days of Solomon, like Ethiopia in the times of the Acts (Acts 8: 27), Sheba was ruled by a Queen.

Sol'-o-mon. The son of David and third king of Israel. He was born at Jerusalem, and became king in 1015 B.C., at the age of 18 or 20. He reigned forty years. He was famed for his wisdom and the splendor of his court.

Syr'-i-a. Properly Aram, a country occupying a plain to the north-east of Palestine.

Za'-dok. Early in David's reign joint high-priest with Abiathar and later sole high priest.

Zi'-on. One of the hills on which Jerusalem stood. After the building of the temple it included Mount Moriah, the temple hill. It is often used for the whole of Jerusalem.

International Bible Lessons

Studies in the Old Testament from Samuel to Solomon.

LESSON CALENDAR: FOURTH QUARTER

1. October 4	David Brings up the Ark.	2 Sam. 6: 1-12.
2. October 11	God's Covenant with David.	2 Sam. 7: 4-16.
3. October 18	David's Confession.	Ps. 51: 1-17.
4. October 15	David's Joy Over Forgiveness.	Ps. 32.
5. November 1	David and Absalom.	2 Sam. 15: 1-12.
6. November 8	David's Grief Over Absalom.	2 Sam. 18: 24-33.
7. November 15	David's Trust in God.	Ps. 23.
8. November 22	The Curse of Strong Drink.	Prov. 20: 1; 23: 20, 21, 29-35
9. November 29	David's Charge to Solomon.	1 Chron. 28: 1-10.
10. December 6	Solomon's Wise Choice.	1 Kings 3: 4-15.
11. December 13	The Dedication of the Temple.	1 Kings 8: 1-11, 62, 63.
12. December 21	The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon.	1 Kings 10: 1-10.
13. December 27	REVIEW.	

LESSON V.

DAVID AND ABSALOM

November 1, 1903

2 Sam. 15: 1-12. Study vs. 1-23. Commit to memory vs. 4-6. Read 2 Sam. chs. 13, 14.

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

2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

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

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

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

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

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

8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abide at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.

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

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

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

12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Geth, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

Revised Version—1 a chariot; 2 any man had a suit which should come; 3 took hold of; 4 at the end of; 5 indeed bring me again to Jerusalem; 6 is king; 7 that were invited, and went; 8 the.

GOLDEN TEXT

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

DAILY READINGS

M. —2 Sam. 14: 25-33.	The king's son.
T. —2 Sam. 15: 1-12.	David and Absalom.
W. —2 Sam. 15: 13-23.	A sad flight.
Th. —2 Sam. 15: 24-37.	David's trust.
F. —2 Sam. 17: 1-14.	Absalom's wicked intent.
S. —Prov. 19: 16-26.	The unfaithful son.
S. —Mark 7: 9-13.	Honor to parents.

CATECHISM

Q. 100. What doth the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's prayer (which is, *Our Father which art in heaven*) teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as chil-

dren to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

TIME AND PLACE

About 1023 B.C., eleven or twelve years after David's sin and repentance. The rebellion of Absalom probably took place in the thirty-second year of David's reign. The places are Jerusalem, where David's palace was situated, and Hebron, David's first capital, and the city in which Absalom began his open rebellion. Hebron was twenty miles south of Jerusalem.

LESSON PLAN

I. Absalom the Flatterer, 1-6.
Winning the hearts of the people from their king

II. Absalom the Hypocrite, 7-9.
Covering his crime with religious pretence.

III. Absalom the Rebel, 10-12.
Causing himself to be proclaimed as king.

LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise, 255: 290; 7 (Ps. Sel.); 245; 259; 380.

EXPOSITION

By Rev. W. G. Hanna, B.A., Mount Forest, Ont.

Connecting Links—The events of the Lesson are generally assigned to the latter part of David's reign. Chs. 13 and 14 re-

late the murder of his brother by Absalom at a sheep-shearing festival to which all the king's sons had been invited, and

Absalom's flight to Geshur where he remained three years. Though he was then allowed to return, it was two years longer before the king would receive him into favor.

I. Absalom the Flatterer, 1-6.

V. 1. *After this*; that is, after receiving the kiss of restoration from his father, Ch. 14: 33. He enters now on a shameful course of plotting to obtain the kingdom. *Absalom*. For the name of the mother of this third and favorite son of David, see 2 Sam. 3: 3. He was handsome, vain, ambitious and unprincipled. His life was a tragedy with much of dishonor and nothing of dignity. *A chariot and horses* (Rev. Ver.). Absalom set up a state carriage and royal equipage in imitation of foreign kings, an innovation in Jerusalem. *Fifty men to run before him*; to impress the people with his magnificence.

V. 2. *Absalom rose up early*. The words describe, not merely a single act, but a custom. Absalom wished to appear a diligent public reformer. In the hot countries of the East public business is transacted in the early morning. *Beside the way of the gate*; the city gate, the place of public business, or perhaps the palace gate. *A suit which should come to the king for judgment*. (Rev. Ver.). Minor matters were settled by local judges, but suits of higher importance were adjudged by the king in person. (Compare Ex. 18: 22; Deut. 17: 8, 9.) *Absalom called unto him, and said*. He manifested a particular personal interest in each litigant's case by enquiring into all the details. *Of one of the tribes of Israel*. By thus finding out the locality to which each person belonged, he was able to scatter widely the seeds of rebellion.

Vs. 3, 4. *See, thy matters are good and right*. Thus Absalom treacherously sought to secure good-will for himself, and create prejudice against David, should he give a contrary judgment. *No man deputed of the king to hear thee*. The insinuation is, that David was neglectful of the people's interests and that no one was so fit to discharge the neglected duty as Absalom himself. *Oh that I were made judge in the land*. Who would be so likely to give decisions satisfactory to

those addressed as Absalom himself?

Vs. 5, 6. *To do him obeisance*; pay homage to him as a superior. *Put forth his hand, and took him and kissed him*. He waived the homage due to the king's son, and treated the one prostrate before him as an equal and friend. This is a most vivid picture of an artful schemer at work. "We are reminded," says Professor Blaikie, "of Charles II. taking the Covenant to please the Scots, and get their help towards obtaining the crown." *So Absalom stole the hearts*. He was a thief, stealing the affections of the people from his father and winning them for himself.

II. Absalom the Hypocrite, 7-9.

Vs. 7, 8. *After forty years*. Probably the true reading is "four years" as in the margin of Rev. Ver., and the time is to be reckoned from the date of his restoration to his father's favor, ch. 14. *Go and pay my vow*. He adopted the guise of religion, as likely to weigh more with his father and throw him off his guard. *In Hebron*; his birthplace, and therefore appropriate for such a service. There, too, David had been declared king, and by reason of association, it would be all the more suitable for the inauguration of rebellion. *While I abode at Geshur*. It was now six years at least (see ch. 13: 38; 14: 21, 28; 15: 7, as explained above); a suspiciously long time for an unfulfilled vow. *Then I will serve the Lord*; I will "do a service," offer a sacrifice or perform some special act of worship.

V. 9. *Go in peace*; ill-placed trust. *Went to Hebron*. At his birthplace he would be likely first to find active sympathizers, and being on the way to Geshur, retreat thither would be all the more easy in case of failure.

III. Absalom the Rebel, 10-12.

V. 10. *But Absalom sent spies*; to ascertain how each section was affected toward him, and to prepare his friends for action. *The sound of the trumpet*; the signal for revolt and the gathering of his supporters. A succession of trumpeters was likely arranged, so that he could be proclaimed by "a telegraph of sound," on the same day all over the country.

Vs. 11, 12. *Two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called*; probably men of dis-

inction at David's court, invited to be Absalom's guests. These were to be detained as hostages, in case they should not support the rebellion. *They knew not any thing*; thinking they were going to a religious service, so adroitly did Absalom plan that their influence would, to the public view, seem to be on his side. *Sent for Ahithophel*; David's chief counsellor, ch. 16:23. The conspiracy must have been strong, to win a man of such

sagacity. *While he offered the sacrifices* (Rev. Ver.). See v. 7. Religion was used as a cover for his black villainy. *The people increased continually*; so shrewdly had all the preliminary steps been taken.

Vs. 12-23. David is informed of the rebellion, and flees from Jerusalem with his household. Ittai of Gath, though a stranger, joined him as he passed over Kidron. In ch. 18:2 Ittai appears as a military leader.

APPLICATION

Rev. W. J. Clark, London, Ont.

And it came to pass after this, v. 1. Absalom was an ungrateful son, a self-seeking man, a vile traitor, and yet we may learn even from his actions. He professed an affectionate interest in behalf of his father's subjects. Had his profession been real, what a power for good he might have exercised! There is no surer way of gaining power over our fellows, and power that we may exercise for good ends, than just to take an interest in them and in their affairs. If we do that, and those with whom we have to do are persuaded of our honest intent, it will give us immense influence over them, which we may use for their welfare.

And it was so, that when any man came nigh, v. 5. We are all sensitive to courteous treatment. It is not only what we do that affects men, but also the way in which we do it. A dinner is a much more appetizing meal when it is nicely served. Fine manners are the fine dishes on which our dispositions may be presented to others. And we may be courteous without being dishonest. If the courtesy of a bad man has such power, how much more will the courtesy of a good man affect favorably all with whom he is brought in contact. There are few graces that make such rich returns as the grace of a genuine courtesy.

Absalom stole the hearts, v. 6. It is a frequent trick of the tempter to lead men astray by perverting the noblest qualities to evil ends. He uses the tactics of one who should poison the wells from which people drink, so that a means of life becomes an agent of death.

Let me go and pay my vow, v. 7. All deception is to be condemned, but the worst of all

deceptions is when one makes a pretense of worshipping God a cloak to advance wicked devices. And yet it has often been done in the world's history. And the sad side of it is that, when some man is shown to have professed devoutness for a selfish purpose, and his hypocrisy has been unveiled, unthinking people will look upon this happening as a slur upon religion. One might as well despise good money because there are counterfeiters of it made. In a case like Absalom's or that of Judas there is a warning for us to shrink with fear and trembling from the temptation to profess piety for some selfish advantage. But it furnishes no sufficient ground for concluding that all religious profession is a sham and a pretence.

But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes, v. 10. How the clever wicked man leads the thoughtless into wickedness! These men who are here brought before us may have been loyal to the king, but they were ready to be led by this gallant young prince, and likely enough the penalty of their thoughtlessness was death on the field of battle. The same story is being told every day of boys and girls who mean no harm but who are easily led, and who do not look ahead to see what the probable results will be. Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as by want of heart. Many a well-meaning youth has allowed himself to be led by companions down to ruin, because he did not enquire as to whether he was being taken. We have no right to yield ourselves to the guidance of another without some knowledge of where he is wishing to take us.

And Absalom sent for Ahithophel, v. 12

The cunning, unprincipled scoundrel often has the advantage over the honorable man. Indeed, there are those who lay their plans so cunningly that all through this life they have at least outward success. But frequently the success that is based on wickedness and dishonor comes down to crashing ruin, such as happened in the case of this ambitious man. So, if we see the wicked

prosperous, let us have patience. God may seem, to our thinking, a slow paymaster, but he always pays according to what one has earned. "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb." But the reward of the righteous is certain at the end.

POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

By The Associate Editor

An over-indulgent father is likely to have a rebellious son. v. 1.

Flattery is one of the meanest forms of fraud. v. 3.

Self-seeking must be disguised if it is to succeed. v. 4.

We need not be rude in order to be righteous. v. 5.

Deceit is a poor foundation on which to build our lives. v. 6.

The hypocrite may escape the detection of men, but God sees through his pretence. v. 7.

The greater the confidence placed in us, the baser our betrayal of it. v. 9.

The head may wear a crown while the heart is enslaved by sin. v. 10.

We should know whither we are being led, before we consent to follow. v. 11.

Cleverness requires the control of conscience. v. 12

From the Eastern practice of transacting public business at the gate of the city, or the gate leading to the king's place, "the Sultan's government is still popularly called in Turkey 'the Sultan's Gate,' and the Sublime Porte, which is the French translation of *Bab-i-Humayoon* (the high gate), the name of the principal gate of the palace at Constantinople, is used by us as a title of the Turkish government."—Cambridge Bible.

Ourself and Busby, Bagot and Green
Observed his courtship to the common
people;

How he did seem to dive into their hearts
With humble and familiar courtesy,

What reverence he did throw away on
slaves,

Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of
smiles. —King Richard II.

A protracted illness, unfitting David for his personal duties and for superintending the machinery of government, might have furnished Absalom with the pretext for his lamentation over this want (of officers to administer the law). It gives us a harder impression of his villainy and hardness of heart, if he chose a time when his father was enfeebled by disease, to inflict a crushing blow on his government and a crowning humiliation on himself.—Blakie.

"So, the struck eagle stretched upon the
plain,

No more through roiling clouds to soar
again,

Viewed his own feather in the fatal dart,
And winged the shaft that quivered in his
heart;

Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel
He nursed the pinion which impelled the
steel,

While the same plumage that had warmed
his nest,

Drank the last life-drop of his bleeding
breast."

"In Hawthorne's, *Mosses from an Old Manse*, there is a strange story of Rappacine's daughter. The father was a chemist, who was investigating poisons, and had a charming garden in which every plant and flower was poison. His beautiful daughter lived in this poisonous atmosphere till her own breath was poison, and the bees and insects which came within its influence fell dead at her feet. Absalom was surrounded by in-

fluences like these, and his life was ruined by them. What a power for good he might have been had he used his attractiveness, his skill and his position for his father, his country and his God!"

Our rebellion against God is just as cruel and mean and causeless as was that of the wicked son of David. And, if we continue

in it, it will leave us where it left him. It will fail and the love of God will remain. The "world" that boasts so loudly and does not know God, has great power and pomp and popularity, but it is weak and rotten. No weapon formed against God shall prosper, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.—Pilgrim Teacher.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST

By Rev. Professor Ross, D.D., Montreal

JUDGMENT—In most of the country towns of the Turkish empire the Cadi still has his seat at the gate, and around him there gathers a noisy crowd of litigants, each one vociferously arguing that his case ought to be heard first. The secretary sits near the judge, and when one of the applicants succeeds in slipping something into his hand the secretary whispers to the judge, and this man's case is soon called. In Arabia some of the tribal kings sit at the gate to administer justice after the primitive fashion. All their subjects have free access to them. Their method of reaching a decision is most direct and summary, and from their judg-

ment there is no appeal.

Vow—It is not uncommon in the court of the Sultan for a man who has been engaged in a plot, and fears that he is suspected, or who has in any way awakened the resentment of those above him, to ask permission to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. According to Mohammedan law this permission cannot be refused, because the religious obligation of the pilgrimage takes precedence of all civil duties. Thus the modern schemer escapes from the immediate consequences of the plot, gains time for his share in it to be forgotten, and comes back in the odor of sanctity to try something else.

TEACHING HINTS AND HELPS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Bible Class Teachers

By The Associate Editor

Two main thoughts are suggested by a study of this passage:

I. THE NATURE OF ABSALOM'S SIN. In this sin we may distinguish three elements:

1. *Ingratitude towards his father.* Picture the baseness of a son taking advantage of the old age, and perhaps the sickness of his father, to further his own selfish ambitions. What a shameful return for the kindness, nay, the over-indulgence with which he had been treated! It will be easy to excite the indignation of the class in view of such conduct. But they should be reminded that, according to such passages as Isa. 1: 2, 3, our conduct towards God has been of the same kind.

2. *Deceit practiced upon the people.* Bring out in detail the vivid picture of the handsome youth, taking his stand, morning by

morning, at the gate leading to the king's palace, greeting every comer with a kindly smile and a familiar kiss, enquiring with interest into their affairs, approving their cause, expressing the wish that they might obtain justice, insinuating at the same time that the king must be growing neglectful, and that he himself was the man to be at the head of affairs. Now turn to some of the temptations to deceit in the social, commercial and political life of modern times. Impress the truth that success won by such conduct is at best only temporary. Enforce the lesson of Ps. 37: 2, that wickedness must end in failure.

3. *Hypocrisy manifested in religious service.* Bring the scene at Hebron before the class. Point out the folly of attempting to deceive God, in view of such statements as are found in Ps. 139: 1-12. And show the wickedness of hypocrisy from the denunciations of our Lord in Matt. ch. 23. Make it clear that we are guilty of this sin, if in any way we make religion simply a means of selfish advantage.

II. THE INEXCUSABLENESS OF ABSALOM'S SIN. This appears from two considerations, first, that as the king's son, he had opportunities of gratifying any lawful ambition: his position and talents made it possible for him to acquire immense influence in the nation; secondly, that he had just been forgiven for a great crime, and this fact should have kept him loyal to the king. Not less is our rebellion against God without excuse. We depend upon Him for life and all its blessing, and His kindness has filled our lives with good. And more than this, His love has formed a way of salvation for us through the death of His own Son. In our condemnation of Absalom's sin, we should not forget the blackness of our own. But let us remember that there is pardon and cleansing, Isa. 1:18; 1 John 1:9. The God who deals so sternly with the obstinately rebellious is very tender to the penitent.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

By The Editor

Perhaps this is a lesson for "grown-ups" rather than for children; but there is an Absalom in the making in every boy or girl who forgets to obey God's holy Commandments, and it is easier to bring the child to a better way, than to bring back the full-grown man into the path of right. Be very earnest therefore with this lesson. But go about it wisely and tenderly.

How would it do, as a very first word, to ask—"How many Commandments are there?" and then to ask the class to repeat them one by one. Curiosity, and therefore interest, will thus be aroused. Possibly the class may discover before the lesson is ended, why they were asked to say the Commandments.

Absalom—a new name in the history. It will be worth while to make a word picture of him, as complete as possible. The materials are at hand in the preceding chapters—a splendid young prince, but spoiled son. Bring his story up to ch. 14:33.

With what a sharp jerk the "after this" of v. 1 of our lesson comes in. The splendid Absalom is to play a bad part.

The class will follow the details of vs. 2-6 with interest: full explanations are given

in the Exposition and Light from the East. How many of the Commandments, and which of them, does this fawning, scheming young prince break? Show that his breaking of the Tenth Commandment was at the root of it all; and close upon this his breaking of the fifth. Ask the scholars to keep track of Absalom, to see how he forfeits the blessing attached to that Commandment.

Four years (v. 7, Rev. Ver.) later—time for sin to eat deep into even the strongest nature, as it had certainly eaten into that of Absalom. Which Commandment is disobeyed in vs. 7, 8? Every scholar will reply, "the Ninth"; an accomplished liar this young prince has become. And the Third Commandment also, for God's name is grossly dishonored. Of course the teacher will explain fully about the making of vows, and the offering of "a service" or sacrifice. Draw attention also to the contrasts between father and son in v. 9. Which is worthy of honor and imitation?

The closing part of the lesson is full of action. The plot ripens fast. Absalom grows bolder. He drags—as transgressors love to do—others into his transgression, some of them (v. 11) innocent of evil intent, others like the crafty Ahithophel, well aware of what they were doing. Does not Absalom—and the same is true of those who knowingly joined in his plot—break the sixth Commandment also? He is ready for slaughter, if there be need. All unlawful war is murder.

Ps. 119:9 will make a good ending.

Some Test Questions

Who was Absalom?

Describe his splendor.

Where is public business done in the East?

At what time?

How did Absalom win the hearts of the people?

What insinuation made against David?

What pretence did Absalom make?

Tell about his plan of revolt.

Whom did he invite to Hebron?

With what purpose in view?

What do we learn as to:

- (1) The results of defective family discipline illustrated in the Lesson?

- (2) The meanness of ingratitude ?
- (3) The wickedness of hypocrisy ?
- (4) The prosperity of the wicked ?

Prove from Scripture

That flattery is powerful.

For Special Study

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous.)

1. The character of Absalom.
2. Hebron.
3. Duties of children to parents.

The Catechism

By the Associate Editor

[For Examination in Doctrine in the General Assembly's Teacher Training Course.]

Ques. 100. *The Lord's Prayer—its preface.* In the preface to the Lord's Prayer three thoughts are prominent :

1. *The Fatherhood of God.* Even the heathen had some dim notion of God as a Father in the sense of His being our Maker, the One to whom we owe our existence. In his address on Mars Hill, Paul reminded the Athenians that this truth was taught by some of their own poets, Acts 17 : 28.

In the Old Testament, God is more clearly revealed as a Father, but chiefly in relation to the nation rather than the individual, and in the character of Maker, Protector and

Ruler, Num. 11 : 12 ; Deut. 32 : 6 ; Jer. 31 : 9 ; Mal. 1 : 6 ; 2 : 10. Such passages as Ps. 68 : 5 and Ps. 103 : 13 come nearer to the idea of divine Fatherhood found in the New Testament.

Coming to the New Testament, a "chief feature of the teaching of the Gospels is contained in the word 'Father.'" Three points may be noted in the teaching of Jesus regarding the Fatherhood of God. (1) It is addressed to His disciples as such, Luke 12 : 32. (2) The consciousness of this Fatherhood is awakened by hearing His Word, Matt. 11 : 27. (3) The right to enjoy and feel this relation depends on receiving Him and believing in Him, John 1 : 12.

The Epistles state the doctrine of the believer's sonship in a fuller form, and state more explicitly its ground in the work of Christ (Gal. 4 : 3-5), and the means through which it is enjoyed, 1 John 5 : 1. Besides, they exhibit this truth as it appears in the experience of the Christian, Rom. 8 : 16, 17.

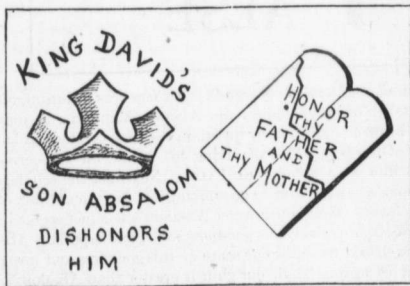
2. *The Greatness of God.* He is "in heaven" while we are on the earth. This means that He is infinitely exalted and is to be approached with reverence, Ps. 11 : 4 ; 123 : 1.

3. *The Unity of Believers.* This is suggested by the word "our." Those who call God, "Father," must regard one another as brethren, Matt. 23 : 89.

FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

By Mrs. Jessie Munro Johnston, North Bay, Ont.

Introduction — Tell a story showing the meanness of a boy who does underhand things—a sneak. Build a throne of blocks (or outline on the board).



What is a throne for? Name the king who sang that glad song because God had forgiven him his sin. Draw the crown symbol and print DAVID.

Lesson Subject—God showing His love by teaching parental respect.

Lesson—King David had several little sons, and they grew to be big men. We are to hear about one of them named Absalom. How pleased fathers are to watch their little boys and girls growing to be men and women! How they hope their boys will be good men!

Absalom was a beautiful boy (ch. 14 : 25), but remember, "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart," 1 Sam. 16 : 7. Absalom had a bad heart. He was a sneak. His father David had been angry with him, but had forgiven him. Absalom now shows his meanness.

Absalom's Plot—He wanted to be king. Describe his plan of making friends for himself and enemies to the king, vs. 2-6.

Absalom's Punishment—The story of Absalom's punishment and sad death may be told, ch. 18 : 9-17 (but be careful not to encroach too much on the next lesson).

Parental Love—How shown? What great love and respect we should give in return!

Golden Text—How can we honor our parents? God promises reward to those who do so.

Our Heavenly Father—Speak of His love : "Like as a father pitieth his children" (Ps. 103 : 13); "As one whom his mother comforteth" (Isa. 66 : 13); "Them that honor me, I will honor," 1 Sam. 2 : 30. In honoring our parents and the aged we are also honoring God.

Honored—"One day a little German girl named Jeannette witnessed a great army re-

view. Thousands of people crowded around the grand stand, before which the Emperor was to watch the passing regiments of soldiers. Jeannette was seated on the stand. She saw a feeble old woman trying to get where she could see. Jeannette said to herself, 'It is not right for me to sit here when I am well and strong, while that poor, feeble old woman can see nothing. I ought to honor old age, as I want some one to honor me when I am old.' So she gave her seat to the old woman and went and stood in the crowd.

"While she was standing on her tiptoes, trying in vain to see, a courtier of the Emperor, covered with gold lace, elbowed his way to her side and said, 'Little-girl, Her Majesty wishes to see you in the royal box.' When the abashed child stood before the Empress, she graciously said, 'Come here, my child, and sit with me. I saw you give your seat to that old woman, and now you must remain by my side.'"

What I Have Learned—I should honor my parents.

Blackboard—On the crown symbol print KING DAVID'S SON ABSALOM DISHONORS HIM. Outline Commandment tables. Print HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

By The Associate Editor

THE FAIR FALSE

Begin by asking for a description of Absalom's appearance. His face was beautiful, his form was graceful. Special notice is taken of his splendid hair. Absalom THE FAIR, he may well be called. But what about his heart? Bring out by questions the base conduct which revealed his character. His flattery of the people, his deceiving his father, his hypocrisy are the points. His actions showed him as Absalom THE FALSE. Next, get the scholars to tell how David had treated Absalom, allowing him to go unpunished for the murder of Amnon, and at last restoring him to favor. How much worse Absalom's conduct seems in the light of this kindness. Now turn attention to God's goodness to us, and especially His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. How should we show our sense of this goodness and love? Surely by loyal obedience. If we rebel against God, our guilt is greater than Absalom's, because God's love is greater than David's.

Lesson VI.

DAVID'S GRIEF OVER ABSALOM

November 8, 1903

2 Sam. 18 : 24-33. Commit to memory vs. 31-33. Read 2 Sam. chs. 15-20.

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

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

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

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

28 And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed be the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up

their hand against my lord the king.

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

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

31 And, behold, Cush'ri came; and Cush'ri said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

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

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

Revised Version.—Now; 2 of; bowed himself before the king with his face to the earth; 4 is it well with the young man Absalom; 5 even; 6 the Cushite; 7 for.

GOLDEN TEXT

Prov. 17 : 25. A foolish son is a grief to his father.

DAILY READINGS

M. — 2 Sam. 18 : 1-8.	A sad day.
T. — 2 Sam. 18 : 9-23.	A sad end.
W. — 2 Sam. 18 : 24-33.	David's grief over Absalom
Th. — 2 Sam. 19 : 1-14.	Victory and tears.
F. — Prov. 17 : 15-25.	A foolish son.
S. — Isa. 1 : 1-9.	Rebellious children.
S. — Lam. 3 : 17-33.	Comfort in sorrow.

CATECHISM

Q. 101. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition (which is, *Followed be thy name*) we pray, That God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

TIME AND PLACE

About 1023 B.C.; Mahanaim, David's temporary capital, a strongly fortified town situated east of the Jordan and near the Jabbok. This had been the capital of Ish-bosheth's kingdom, ch. 2 : 8. The battle was fought "in the wood of Ephraim," a forest of Gilead, east of the Jordan, and within a day's journey of Mahanaim, ch. 19 : 2.

LESSON PLAN

I. Tidings Awaited, 24-27.

By King David concerning the battle.

II. Tidings Received, 28-32.

From Ahimaaz and the Cushite.

III. David's Grief, 33.

Over the death of his son Absalom.

LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise, 46 ; 10 ; 34 (Ps. Sel.) ; 125 ; 129 ; 578.

EXPOSITION

Connecting Links—As David left the city, when driven out by Absalom's rebellion, he sent back the ark of God, which Zadok and the Levites had brought to him, ch. 15 : 25. From Olivet he sent back Hushai to thwart the course of Ahithophel and forward tidings to him, vs. 32-37. Other events of the king's journey narrated are the kindness of Ziba and the cursing of Shimei, ch. 16 : 1-14. In the meantime Absalom occupied Jerusalem, v. 15. Hushai pretended allegiance to Absalom (vs. 16-19), who, instead of acting on the advice of Ahithophel to attack David at once, followed the counsel of Hushai to make a levy of all the tribes and lead them into battle himself, v. 20 to ch. 17 : 14. Hushai then sent word to David, who had time to prepare for the conflict in the forest of Ephraim. There the army of David, led by Joab, Abishai and Ittai defeated that of Absalom, who was slain, chs. 15 : 23 to 18 : 15. Joab then recalled his

troops from the pursuit of the followers of Absalom (v. 17), and messengers set out to bring tidings to David, vs. 19-23.

I. Tidings Awaited, 24-27.

Vs. 24, 25. *Between the two gates.* The two gates are the outer and inner gates of the city gateway, between which there was a small court, in which David was sitting anxiously awaiting tidings of the battle. He had given charge to Joab to "deal gently" with Absalom, v. 5. *The watchman*; perhaps the chief of the sentries, Jer. 37 : 13. *Went up*; to watch for a messenger bearing news from the battle-field. (Note the figures of Ezek. 33 : 1-7 and Hab. 2 : 1 derived from this usage.) *To the roof over the gate unto the wall.* The flat roof, doubtless surrounded by a parapet, was built over the gateway and extended to the outer wall of the city. *If he be alone.* If the army had been defeated a number of fugitives would come together. A single runner

must be a messenger with tidings. *Came apace*; "In the ancient East trained runners accompanied every army, and sometimes in a day's journey were able to outrun a horse."

Vs. 26, 27. *Called unto the porter*; the gate-keeper, who would pass the tidings on to the king. *Behold another man running alone*. Joab had sent (v. 21) Cushite—Rev. Ver., "the Cushite,"—that is, an African, probably a slave, to bear the tidings of the victory to David. Ahimaaz had also obtained permission to go on the same errand, and, choosing an easier path, he had outrun the Cushite, vs. 21-23. *He also bringeth tidings*. A more accurate and complete report might be looked for from a later messenger. *He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings*. The king rightly thought (see v. 20) that Joab would not have sent a man of such distinction to carry evil tidings, nor that he, as a friend of David, would hasten on such an errand. As a friend of David, Ahimaaz desired to carry the welcome news of victory to the king and to break quietly to him the sad fate of Absalom. "The word 'good' may also mean that Ahimaaz was too brave a man to have fled from the battle (1 Kings 1:42), and must therefore have come on an errand from Joab." (R. Payne Smith.)

II. Tidings Received, 28-32.

V. 28. *Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king*. In his eagerness he could not wait till he came near to tell the whole story, but shouted from a distance, "Shalom!"—"Peace"—*All is well*. It was the usual word of greeting, and was specially appropriate at this great crisis in David's life. *Blessed be the LORD thy God*; "Jehovah thy God," who hath protected thee and thy cause as His own. *Hath delivered up the men*; put them in the king's power, instead of allowing them liberty to work him further injury.

Vs. 29, 30. *Is the young man Absalom safe?* How passionately David loved his wayward son. The youth of Absalom is mentioned, not, as though it was an excuse for him. Perhaps the king's anxiety was deepened by the thought of how merciless Joab might be. But most likely he thought chiefly of the awful message through Nathan (ch. 12:10), the fulfilment of which had already begun in

the death of Amnon. *The king's servant*; the Cushite who was following. *Me thy servant*; a fine personal touch. *I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was*. The king's distress appalled this brave soldier. He could not bear to break the bad news. *Turn aside, and stand here*. The stricken heart is sensitive to evil. David felt instinctively that the worst had not yet been told.

Vs. 31, 32. *And, behold, the Cushite came* (Rev. Ver.). He was the bearer of similar tidings, but in a far different tone. *Tidings, my lord the king*; "Let my lord the king receive the good tidings, that, etc." (Cambridge Bible.) *For the LORD hath avenged thee*; "Jehovah hath procured thee justice." God had providentially caused him to triumph and delivered him from his enemies. *Rose up against thee*; a suitable expression to represent rebellion against a lawful monarch. *Is the young man Absalom safe?* In its awful suspense this is the one thing the father's heart wishes to know. *The Cushite answered* (Rev. Ver.). His reply expresses his loyalty to his king, but leaves no doubt as to the fate of Absalom. He faithfully discharged his commission from Joab, but pierced the king's heart with bitterest anguish.

III. David's Grief, 33.

V. 33. *Much moved*. The Hebrew conveys the idea of great agitation of body. He was seized with violent trembling. *Went up to the chamber*; where he would be more secluded in his sorrow. His crown was saved, but his heart was broken. *And wept*. His grief found the freest expression. So vivid is the description of this verse, that it must have come from one who had first-hand knowledge of the facts. *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom!* The deepest grief finds expression in sudden outbursts, using single words or short clauses, not complete sentences. *Would God I had died for thee*. So Moses (Ex. 32:32) and the apostle Paul (Rom. 9:3) would have gladly offered themselves a sacrifice for others. But the bitter poignancy of David's grief lay in the fact, that the death of Absalom was the punishment and result of his father's sins. Then, too, he was cut down at the height of his

rebellion and unpardoned, whereas David was pardoned of God and ready to die. There is not in the whole of the Old Testament a passage of deeper pathos than this. We are reminded of Him who, when He saw the destruction which rebellious Jeru-

salem was bringing on itself, wept over the city. David continued to lament the death of his son until Joab roused him from the extravagance of his grief to a sense of his duty, and saved him from flinging away the fruits of victory.

APPLICATION

And David sat between the two gates, v. 24. We may imagine the turmoil of the king's mind. All else would pass away from his thought except the news that might come at any moment. To most, if not to all, there come such periods of anxious waiting. By a sick bed, where the watcher hears every tick of the clock, while his whole soul is hanging on the thought of what the passing moments may bring. These periods of strange emotion cannot be described. What is the best preparation for such life crises? There can be no doubt about this. If, in the quiet, uneventful days, one learns to stay himself on God, and sets his confidence on Him, then in the time of trial he will not be put to shame. Instinctively, when the tide of emotion rises to its highest, and it seems as though human nature could stand no more, the godly man will cast himself on the divine aid, and it will not fail him.

He thinketh the running . . . is like the running of Ahimaaz, v. 27. There are certain gestures and bodily movements that are peculiar to each individual, and by which he is recognized even at a distance, and which are characteristic of the man. One of the poets puts this in striking words, when he says concerning a certain man, one can "read rascal in the motions of the back and scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee." We cannot hide ourselves, and when one is recognized by those who know him, they have certain thoughts as to his character, even as David, who, when the watchman tells him that he thinks it is Ahimaaz, responds, "He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings." It is wise to remember that in like manner people day by day are saying concerning us that we are good or bad, and the general judgment is probably not far from correct.

Blessed be the LORD thy God, which hath delivered, v. 28. We have here evidence that

the king's word concerning the character of Ahimaaz was a true word. He who had been in the midst of the battle, must have known how much the result was dependent on the skill of Joab and the bravery of those who followed him. But he saw behind all these instruments the working of the power of God, and so, while he rejoices in the triumph that has been achieved, he does not forget to ascribe thanksgiving to God, for he is conscious that it was the divine blessing upon them that had given the victory to the army of the king. This is a truth that should always be in our hearts, even if we do not at all times give audible expression to it. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory." Such a remembrance will save us from many faults and follies.

Is the young man Absalom safe? v. 29. When the heart is filled with a great love there is room for nothing else. The re-establishment of his throne was to David a secondary matter compared with the safety of Absalom, over whose childhood and youth he had been dreaming as he sat waiting for the tidings. And in the heart of every one there is some great love that has the control. It is a matter of supreme importance to us who has the first place there. Christ claims that place from every one of us. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me," Rev. 3: 20. If we give Christ the first place, then no evil will overpower us.

And behold the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, v. 31 (Rev. Ver.). There is room in the service of God for the greatest differences in temperament and capacity. The tender-hearted Ahimaaz and the blunt Cushite, showed their loyalty to the king, each in his own way. It is to be borne in mind that each of us has his own peculiar gift, and we need

not be troubled if it is not given to us to do that which our neighbor can do. What God asks of each one is, that he strive to make the best of his own powers.

The enemies of my lord the king . . . be as that young man is, v. 32. Sad as the fate of Absalom was, we cannot but feel that it was just. He reaped what he sowed. No one is surprised when a wicked man suffers. What puzzles us is that sometimes the wicked prosper while the righteous are in distress. In every manly heart there is the conviction, that the wicked ought to be punished, and that, here or hereafter, they

will be punished as they deserve.

And the king was much moved, v. 33. The king was ready to die for his son, but even that great love could not save Absalom against his will. God calls on each one of us to forsake sin and to engage in His service, and a godly father or mother, or friend, cannot help us, no matter how great their love or desire to do so, unless we yield ourselves to the divine will and purpose. Our salvation is a personal matter. In securing it we must deal directly with God. Our wills are our own. It is ours and ours alone to surrender them to God.

POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

For waiting, as well as working, God gives us grace. v. 24.

Every Christian should be a bearer of the gospel tidings. v. 26.

A good life adds weight to good counsel. v. 27.

Concealment of the truth is a form of deceit. v. 28.

Personal and family ties should not interfere with our public duty. v. 29.

The attempt to evade facts is useless and foolish. v. 30.

A loyal heart may lie behind bluntness of speech. v. 31.

The conscience of mankind approves the punishment of the wrong-doer. v. 32.

We may save ourselves future regrets by present faithfulness. v. 33.

"His estranged, misguided Absalom—
The proud, bright being, who had burst
away

In all his princely beauty, to defy
The heart that cherished him."

—Willis.

The main thing to be considered in every action of a child is how it will become him when he is bigger, and whither it will lead him when he is grown up.—Locke.

They who provide much wealth for their children, but neglect to improve them in virtue, do like those who feed their horses high, but never train them to the manage.—Socrates.

Dr. W. M. Taylor says, "In a report of the Liverpool Observatory I once read this statement, as a reason why ship-masters ought to have their chronometers daily compared with the true time, and their variation rated: 'The error of a second a day may in the course of a voyage sink a ship.' So the variation of Absalom's conduct from the right standard, constantly persisted in, at last brought disaster and death upon himself and broke his father's heart."

A wicked man is reckoned according to his deserts, when history makes up its final verdict. Anyone who goes in these modern times to Jerusalem will find the men and women and boys still flinging stones against what is called the "Tomb of Absalom," to show their detestation of a rebellious child, Prov. 10: 7.—C. S. Robinson.

This passionate outburst of grief was due not only to the tenderness of affection, which was so striking a trait in David's character, but to the bitterness of the thought that the rebel, the would-be parricide, was thus—

"Cut off even in the blossom of his sin,
No reckoning made, but sent to his account
With all his imperfections on his head;"

and that this terrible catastrophe was the fruit and punishment of his own crimes. The heart-broken cry, "Would God I had died for thee!"—was not only the utterance of self-sacrificing love, but the confession that he had himself deserved the punish-

ment which fell upon another. Compare ch. 24: 7.—Cambridge Bible.

To understand this passionate utterance of anguish, we must bear in mind not only the excessive tenderness, or rather weakness, of David's paternal affection towards his son, but also his anger that Joab and his generals should have paid so little regard to his command to deal gently with Absalom. With the king's excitable temperament, this entirely prevented him from taking a just and correct view of the crime of his rebel son, which merited death, and of the penal justice of God which had been manifested in his destruction.—Keil.

Light from the East

RUNNING—A class of professional messengers existed in many lands, who were trained to speed and endurance by special exercises. They were a recognized part of the king's retinue, and were used to carry

orders from one part of the army to another, and to convey the royal mandates to distant sections of the kingdom. They were often employed by wealthy persons—the modern footman is a survival of the ancient runner. In Persia and Egypt they were sometimes mounted on horses or dromedaries, and constituted a kind of postal service, and carried letters, not only through their own country, but to distant nations. The institution still lingers in the East as a part of royal state. When I was approaching the great bridge over the Nile at Cairo one day, I was startled to see two well-dressed gentlemen come running abreast at a high rate of speed through the crowd, which parted before them. They passed me before I could realize what it meant; but just then I caught sight of the Khedive's carriage, containing his two daughters, driving swiftly after the runners. (Compare 2 Sam. 15: 1.) These rapid runners took the place of our telegraphs.

TEACHING HINTS AND HELPS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Bible Class Teachers

This is a Lesson on the Consequences of Sin. These are illustrated in the case of both David and Absalom.

1. *David*. Picture the king, an old man now, driven from his palace and his capital, and forced to betake himself to Mahanaim. Describe the gathering of the two armies and the battle in the forest of Ephraim, with its crushing defeat for Absalom, and the sad death of the rebellious son. Then turn attention to David sitting in the gateway of the city, waiting for tidings of the battle, and most anxious about the fate of his son. The two messengers, the tidings they brought, and its effect on the king, should be dwelt upon.

Now, trace the connection between David's sorrow and his sins. For one thing, he was at fault when he had taken as his wife the heathen daughter of the king of Geshur, the mother of Absalom. How could he expect that a son trained by such a mother would bring him happiness? Then David was evidently very lax in his family discipline. He

made no effort to punish Absalom for the murder of Amnon; and even restored the offender to his favor, without requiring any satisfaction for his crime. And worse than all, the sons of David, and Absalom among them, had before them the knowledge of their father's great sin. There was little in his example to influence them to restrain their evil passions. However greatly we may pity David the king and the father, truth compels us to hold that in the suffering brought upon him by the rebellion of Absalom he was reaping as he had sown.

2. *Absalom*. Sketch the history of this unfortunate prince. We see him, a young man famed throughout the land for his beauty of face and form. But he never learned the most important lesson of controlling his ambitions and passions. For the crime of murdering his half-brother, Amnon—under great provocation, it is true, but still without sufficient justification—he was banished for three years from his home and country. Then, immediately after his return, his unbridled ambition led him to begin and carry on a base plot against his trusting father, a plot which grew into actual rebellion. We may think the words

of the Cushite too blunt and inconsiderate, but he had right on his side when he declared that Absalom had met his deserts, when he was slain by Joab and his followers. Two practical lessons may be drawn from this sad story. The one is, that, if we would escape the misery which always follows upon sin, we must be on our guard against sin. If we do not wish to reap the harvest, we must not sow the seed.

The other lesson is, that, when we have sinned, the best thing for us to do is to confess our sin and seek forgiveness. David was better off than Absalom because, while both had sinned, the father had sought and found pardon, while the son died, so far as we know, unrepentant and unpardoned.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

The passage describes an old man's grief. The cause was a son's folly. It may be well to begin with the Golden Text. The lesson is a demonstration of its truth. Let the Golden Text be repeated by the class, perhaps re-and-re-repeated, until it sinks in.

The teaching process will consist in bringing out, first, Absalom's folly, and then, the grief—prolonged, awful, desolating—which it brought upon his father.

Absalom's Folly—Absalom was a splendid specimen of manly beauty (read ch. 14 : 25, 26), the very flower and crown of his nation's manhood, so far as build and looks went.

All the sadder that he was so foolish! Good looks, a good physique, do not necessarily mean strength or worthiness of character. They may be even a snare. In the case of Absalom, they led to vanity, which was one element in his folly. A vain man is so taken up with looking at himself, that he has no eyes for what is about him, and so may readily stumble.

He first comes upon the scene as the slayer of his half-brother. He had provocation, but was wrong in not seeking punishment in lawful ways.

The three years' banishment at his father-in-law's in Geshur (2 Sam. 13 : 38) were spent in meditating on an evil plan. His father was growing old. How easy it would be to thrust him off the throne and seize it for himself! Ambition is noble; but this

was ambition gone wrong, and hence folly and sin.

It is too long a story, how Absalom was brought back, and how, after two years, he was finally and fully forgiven by his father (ch. 14). He should have been a better man for this tender treatment, but he was only keener than ever in his evil purpose—another mark of folly.

The conspiracy, described in the last lesson, was the outcome of his foolish and wicked purpose to rob the king of his throne and to dishonor a loving father in his old age. The certainty of great loss of life did not seem to count with Absalom.

A sad case of sinful folly is that against this magnificent-looking man, a folly ending in the wrecking of his plans and in untimely and unhonored death (ch. 18 : 9-17); and the earnest teacher will find many opportunities in the describing of it to warn and advise his scholars.

David's Grief—The lesson describes only the final scene. Take Absalom's folly step by step as outlined above, and show how the father's heart must have been grieved and his life saddened; and then dwell on the suspense of that terrible battle day, and the avalanche of woe that fell with the fatal news, upon the stricken father. Blame David as we will for his own follies and sins, and for his indulgence of this spoiled son, we cannot acquit Absalom of his share of the sin and shame.

Some Test Questions

- What battle had been fought?
Where did David wait for tidings?
About what was he most concerned?
Where did the watchman stand?
What messengers came from Joab?
What did Ahimaaz tell the king?
What did he conceal?
How did the Cushite make known the fate of Absalom?
What was the effect on the king?
What do we learn as to :
(1) Messengers in the ancient East?
(2) The justice of God in punishing sin?
(3) The connection between sin and suffering?
(4) The personal nature of salvation?

Prove from Scripture

That our sin may bring sorrow to others.

For Special Study

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous.)

1. The death of Absalom.
2. The folly of sin.
3. Sin and suffering.

The Catechism

[For Examination in Doctrine in the General Assembly's Teacher Training Course.]

Ques. 101. *The Lord's Prayer—its first petition.* The subject of this petition is the same as that of the Third Commandment—the right use of the name of God.

The name of God is just God Himself as He is made known to man. He has revealed Himself in many ways. He speaks to us in nature (Ps. 19 : 1) ; in our own mind, for we are made in His image (Gen. 1 : 26) ; in His written Word ; in His ordinances ; and especially in Christ Jesus, John 14 : 9 ; Heb. 1 : 3.

"Hallowed" may mean either rendered or set apart as holy, or made known as holy. Here, it must have the latter meaning. We hallow the name of God when we make known the holiness which already exists in Him.

The word "glorify" is practically equivalent to "hallow," in this question. The

great purpose of God in all His works is to manifest His own perfections, Rom. 11 : 36 ; Rev. 4 : 11. We fulfil the highest end of our existence when we live so as to further this purpose.

Since we are constantly failing in our efforts to glorify God in our own lives (Rom. 3 : 23), we need constantly to pray that He will enable us and others to do so.

Further, we are taught by this petition to pray that all those things which now dishonor the name of God, may be so overruled and directed as to bring honor to Him. Such things are the blasphemy of His name (Ps. 74 : 18, 22 ; Isa. 52 : 5 ; Rom. 2 : 24) ; the denial of His providence (Ps. 73 : 11 ; 2 Pet. 3 : 4) ; the ridicule of His plan of salvation (1 Cor. 1 : 23) ; the rejection of His Son (Isa. 53 : 3 ; Matt. 21 : 39 ; Acts 3 : 13) and the persecution of His church (Ps. 2 : 2 ; Acts 8 : 1.) The chief aim of all missionary enterprise is to make God known among the heathen, that He may receive honor from them, Ps. 67 : 1, 2.

"The three petitions which come first are those which look to the things of God. Of these, the one mentioning God's name is given first, because our first duty is to give Him the honor due to His name, and unless we pray in that spirit we shall pray unworthily in all our petitions." (Salmond.)

FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

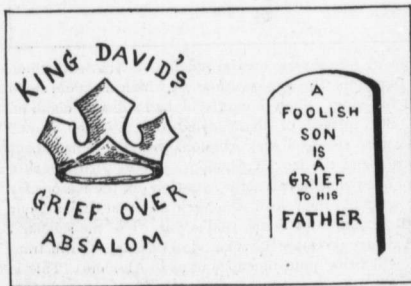
Introduction—In one of George Macdonald's books, little Gerard is a beautiful invalid boy. One day, as he sat in the window delighting himself with the sight of a sunset,

he exclaimed: "Oh mama, how I would like to help God paint the sky!"

"My darling," said his mother, as she clasped him to her heart, "you are helping God paint the sky, for you make the sky of my life very, very bright."

Then was little Gerard glad in his heart.

Little children may put many a touch of rosy sunset into the sky that overhangs their homes. Every pleasant smile, every gentle word, every cheerful deed,



is a stroke of the brush that adds beautiful colors to the home-skies, and so makes every day brighter. This is "helping God paint the sky."

Recall the story of this son, who made the sky very dark for his father, by dishonoring him and fighting against him.

Lesson Subject—God showing His love by telling of a father's love.

Lesson—Outline a wall, with double gates (or use building blocks). Within the gateway sits King David. Here is Mahanaim, where David has taken refuge from the army of soldiers that Absalom has gathered to fight against him. Describe walled cities. Picture the watchman at the gates, whose business it is to see who goes out and comes in the gates. Describe the roof above the gateway, where he goes, so that he can see a long distance off. King David sits in the gateway, so as to get the first news of the battle. He is growing impatient! He sends the watchman up to look again if there be any sign of a messenger! Picture the watchman gazing in every direction! See! there is a speck in the distance! Yes, it is a man running alone! The watchman cries down to the king, v. 23.

See! there comes another man away behind the first! Who are the messengers? What news do they bring? v. 27.

Here at last is Ahimaaz. "What word?" asks the king. "All is well," is the reply, v. 28.

A Father's Love—"Is the young man Absalom safe?" The father's love is strong still. He yearns for his erring son. The second messenger, Cush, tells the news of Absalom's death, v. 32.

Listen to the weeping of the father, v. 33. Should we not be very careful not to grieve our dear fathers and mothers who love us so much?

Golden Text—"Foolish" means acting in a thoughtless, heedless, careless, naughty way.

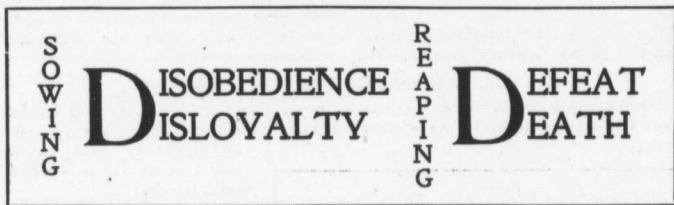
Making Parents Glad—(Prov. 23:24, 25) "Thy father and thy mother shall be glad." (Mention ways of making them glad.)

Grieving Our Heavenly Father—How grieved our heavenly Father is when we are foolish or bad!

What I Have Learned—I should be true to my God, my parents, my friends.

Blackboard—On the crown print KING DAVID'S GRIEF OVER ABSALOM.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW



It will be better to centre attention in this review on the sad fate of Absalom, which brought so great grief to his father. Bring out the two relations in which Absalom stood to David, (1) as his father and (2) as his king. Show how David had a double claim on Absalom's obedience and loyalty. But instead of these, what did Absalom show? DISOBEDIENCE and DISLOYALTY. These were the seed that Absalom sowed? What about the harvest? Question about the battle and the fate of Absalom. He met with DEFEAT and DEATH. Now, enforce the duty of obedience to parents. Question out the reasons for this obedience, such as their superior wisdom, their love, the very fact that they are our parents, the command of God, and the example of Jesus, God's Son. Use the scholars' knowledge that the same kind of seed always produces the same kind of plant, to illustrate the truth that disobedience to parents will bring punishment to us as to Absalom. This is a divine law from which there is no escape.

Lesson VII.

DAVID'S TRUST IN GOD

November 15, 1903

Ps. 23. Commit to memory vs. 1-6.

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art

Revised Version—1 guideth; 2 hast anointed.

GOLDEN TEXT

Ps. 23: 1. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

DAILY READINGS

M. —Psalm 23. David's trust in God.
T. —Isa. 40: 1-11. The Great Shepherd.
W. —John 10: 1-15. The Good Shepherd.
Th. —Ezek. 34: 9-15. The Shepherd's care.
F. —Psalm 3. Not afraid.
S. —Isa. 43: 1-7. "I am with thee."
S. —Psalm 92. Secure.

CATECHISM

Q. 102. What do we pray for in the second petition?
A. In the second petition (which is, *Thy Kingdom come*) we pray, That Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

TIME AND PLACE

We do not know where or at what time in his life David wrote this beautiful little Psalm. It grew out of his own experience as a shepherd. At many a point in his eventful history he had occasion to exercise the confidence in God which it expresses.

LESSON PLAN

I. Divine Guidance, 1, 2.
Which removes every cause of anxiety.

II. Divine Protection, 3, 4.
Which delivers from every fear.

III. Divine Provision, 5, 6.
Which gives satisfying and lasting joy.

LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise, 297; 585; 19 (Ps. Sel.); 273; 19; 251.

EXPOSITION

Connecting Links—The Twenty-third Psalm is a psalm of calm trust in God and joyful rest under His guardian care. "It has," says Dr. Alexander Maclaren, "dried many tears and supplied the mould into which many hearts have poured their peaceful faith. To suppose that the speaker is the personified nation chills the whole. The tone is too intense not to be the outcome of personal experience, however admissible the application to the nation may be as secondary." It has been called the Shepherd Psalm and is generally regarded as written by David. Its language takes color from the events of his life. His own experience as a shepherd seems to be the fount of its imagery, especially in the first part, vs. 1-4. The second part (vs. 5, 6) seems charged with reminiscences of the kindness shown him at Mahanaim by Barzillai and other friends during Absalom's rebellion, 2 Sam. 17: 27, 28. There are two leading thoughts, first, of God the Shepherd, and second, of God the Host. The best commentary on this psalm is Luke 15: 1-7 with John 10: 7-18.

I. Divine Guidance, 1, 2.

V. 1. *The LORD is my shepherd.* Jehovah the self-existent, eternal One of sacred name and glorious attributes is my Shepherd. Thus faith enters into the inner sanctuary.

The figure of the shepherd is one of the most frequent and familiar in the word of God, and one full of meaning for a pastoral people. It runs through the Bible from Gen. 48: 15 to Rev. 7: 17. In the former of these two passages Jacob likens God's provision for him to that of a shepherd for his flock; in the latter the exalted Saviour is represented feeding and leading, like a shepherd, the redeemed in glory. The use of "my" here shows that the relation is a personal one. "He cares for me, watches over me, is interested in me, and does for me what my case requires." (Prof. W. H. Green.) *I shall not want.* "These words are the key-note of the psalm. David speaks them out of the fulness of his own experience. As he had watched over, and provided for and tended his flock, leading them to the greenest pastures and finding for them the water, which in that country was so scarce, and guarding them by night from the beasts of prey, so he felt his God would provide and watch over him." (Perowne.) We are reminded of the experience of Israel as a nation, to whom, as they looked back on the wandering in the wilderness, it was said, "thou hast lacked nothing" (Deut. 2: 7), and, as they looked forward to the land of promise, "thou shalt not lack anything in it," Deut. 8: 9. (See Ps. 34: 10; 74: 11.)

V. 2. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.* "The allusion is to the refreshing rest and coolness of green meadows." He gives needed rest in the midst of abundance, Deut. 2:7. *He leadeth me beside the still waters.* The shepherd does not drive, but leads the sheep, going before or alongside of them to show the way. He conducts them along waters of rest, which invite repose, as well as afford refreshment. The ideas of rest and enjoyment are combined. "The noon-tide is fierce and the land lies baking in the sun-blaze, but deep down in some wady (valley) lies a brook and along its course the herbage is bright with perpetual moisture, and among the lush grass are cool lairs where the footsore, panting flock may couch." (Maclaren.)

II. Divine Protection, 3, 4.

V. 3. *He restoreth my soul.* He not only refreshes my fainting powers, but re-invigorates them, so that with revived spirits I may engage actively in His service. In Ps. 19:7 another part of the same verb is translated "converting." The idea of spiritual quickening and restoration from sin is implied. In the previous verse God is represented as giving comfort; in this as giving power. *He guideth* (Rev. Ver.) *me in the paths of righteousness.* God is the only trustworthy Guide. He guides us step by step in the right way. "Paths of righteousness" are the ways of duty and happiness. *For his name's sake;* "not for my deserving, but out of His own goodness, for the manifestation of His own glory and the furtherance of His kingdom upon earth." (Perowne.)

V. 4. *Yea;* meaning "also," or "even." Something is to be added. *Though.* A better translation is "when," pointing to an actual experience which may happen again. *I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.* Death shadow or deep darkness means an occasion of deep depression, of which a gloomy ravine would be the symbol. *I will fear no evil.* This does not mean that no evil is to be found there, or that he can overcome it, but that he is sure God will protect him from it. Hence he says, *For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* The shepherd's crook is here described by

two names. It is the "rod" or club with which the shepherd defends his sheep or draws them out of peril (compare 2 Sam. 23:21; Ps. 2:9; Mic. 7:14), and the "staff" on which he leans in walking or resting. (So the Cambridge Bible; but see Light from the East.) So God consoles, encourages, and strengthens His people by His protection in every danger.

III. Divine Provision, 5, 6.

V. 5. The figure now changes from that of a shepherd guiding and guarding his flock to that of a royal banquet and a favored guest. *Thou preparest a table before me.* The enemies of the psalmist are overcome completely, and God is entertaining him. They may look on, while he enjoys the royal provision, but they cannot disturb him. *Thou anointest my head with oil.* "The ancient Hebrews, like the Greeks and Romans, and most Oriental peoples, made constant use of unguents." The great perspiration and frequent bathing, drying the skin, made some such application necessary to comfort. Ointment thus became a symbol of joy. Oriental hospitality required the anointing of guests, Ps. 45:7; 133:2; Luke 7:46. The Hebrew word for "anointest" here is different from the one used of anointing in connection with appointment to the kingly office. *My cup runneth over.* The provision is plentiful to profuseness, affording abundant satisfaction. It is a strong figure used to indicate a rare state of happiness. "The overflowing cup is the symbol of festal gladness; it implies fulness of supply even beyond necessity." (Maclaren.)

V. 6. *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.* The psalmist now lays aside figurative for literal statement. The past is an assurance of the future. The Hebrew word for "surely" may be translated "only"; nothing but goodness and mercy, no other experience than the enjoyment of these. They have accompanied him heretofore, and will surely follow him to the close of life as an unbroken series or succession of divine benefactions. *And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.* This means more than visiting His sanctuary frequently. It means dwelling with Him as a

member of His household, living in His fellowship, supported and guarded by Him every moment. The language obviously looks beyond an earthly sanctuary, to heaven with its more perfect blessedness. The

house of Jehovah might refer primarily to the tabernacle, as later to the temple. But there is more than this. There is the anticipation of a more perfect and abiding blessedness in the sanctuary above.

APPLICATION

The LORD is my shepherd, v. 1. The confidence of the believer is rooted in the very nature of his living, covenant-keeping Lord. The soul that stands to such a God in the relation of a helpless sheep to a strong and faithful Shepherd has no want, to fear. His is a confidence which can grow in no earthly soil. There is no fortune or place so sure that it may not be snatched from us, but all the changes that time can bring are not powerful to snatch us from the hand and help of God. In Him there is no change from age to age. His care will never fail.

He maketh me to lie down, v. 2. There is a natural longing in the human heart for some sheltered and pleasant place, "where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow, nor even wind blows loudly." The One who has made us knows this craving and has provided for it. Life is not always a hard and dusty road on which we must travel, however weary and footsore. It has its frequent places of rest and refreshment. In the kindly ministries of the home, in our helpful friendships, in the books of wise writers, in quiet seasons of morning and evening prayer and meditation, and in the weekly recurring Sabbath with its sacred services, we find the blessed influences that strengthen and hearten us for new journeyings.

He restoreth my soul, v. 3. Even one who has known the Shepherd's care and the green pastures may have wandered. And when that has happened, we may fear that we may have lost His love and that hope must be extinguished. But the Shepherd goes out in the storm looking for the lost sheep, "until he find it." God is not only Shepherd, but also Redeemer. And when He has brought us back, there comes this more blessed faith, that even for the wandering one the Shepherd has mercy.

For His name's sake, v. 3. The ground of our confidence is found in the divine character. We have had a friend of whom we hear

as having done some very kindly deed, and when we hear the story we say, "It was just like him, he couldn't have done anything else." So when we think of God as the Restorer of the lost, we find the reason of it in His character. In His whole redeeming work for us as individuals and for the whole world, He is simply revealing His own nature.

Yea, though I walk through the valley, v. 4. It cannot always in this world be the green pastures. God's children, as well as others, are called on at times to enter the deep darkness, and in the gloom every evil shape may lurk, every savage beast crouch to destroy, and the poor sheep has no strength in himself or weapons to defend him, if they make an onslaught. And yet he need not fear, for the Shepherd is still there, and even if he cannot see Him, he feels the touch of His rod to direct his steps, and he knows that His staff will protect if any evil beast assail the flock.

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, v. 4. An old Scotch shepherd found much comfort, when dying, in the words of his pastor, who said, "Don't you know that sometimes, when you were driving the sheep through the valleys, there would be shadows all about you, while there was bright sunshine on the hills above? You are in the shadows now, but there's sunshine on beyond." "Oh! that is good," said the shepherd. "I never saw it that way before, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me.' Over yonder on the heavenly hilltops the sun is shining."

Thou preparest a table, v. 5. What a strange and striking scene! Without and near at hand, are gathered the enemies who would destroy the godly man. Within, he sits at the table furnished by his divine Protector. The provision is abundant and the feast is a joyful one, even though it is in the

very presence of the foes. This scene reflects the experience often enjoyed by the people of God. For they have frequently found, in the fiercest conflicts with their adversaries, intervals in which their spirits were most bountifully refreshed with His goodness.

All the days of my life, v. 6. It is not only in the great emergencies and crises of life that we are to look for proofs of the divine goodness and mercies. In the experiences of the most commonplace days, if we have eyes to see them, we shall find many causes for thankful praise.

In the house of the Lord for ever, v. 6. All marches come to an end sometime. "All

journeys end in welcome to the weary, and heaven the heart's true home shall come at last." Only those who have wandered far in strange lands and among foreign people, can rightly know the intense joy that thrills the whole being when the home land is before their eyes. Life here is a pilgrimage at the best. We have homes, but no home that is a constant abiding place; and yet deep in human nature there is the desire for such a home. And to that longing comes the reply, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." What meetings there will be there! and when we have entered, we shall never wish to depart.

POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

Faith's favorite part of speech is the personal pronoun. v. 1.

Life's still times are its strengthening times. v. 2.

Where Christ leads it is always safe for us to follow. v. 3.

God does not remove all evil from us, but He always gives us strength to endure. v. 4.

The Lord provides, not only for the necessities, but also for the joys of life. v. 5.

The divine goodness does not wait to be sought by us; it pursues us.

"The Twenty-third Psalm will go singing on through all the generations of time; nor will it fold its wings till the last pilgrim is safe, and time is ended; and then it shall fly back to the bosom of God whence it issued, and sound on, mingled with all these sounds of celestial joy which make heaven musical forever."

An Eastern pasture is very different from those with which we are familiar. "It is," says Dr. George Adam Smith, "vast and often practically boundless; it has to be extensive, for the greater part of it is barren—in fact the Hebrew word for desert and for pasture is the same. With us a flock of sheep without a shepherd is a common experience: every day we see them left to themselves in a secure field. But I do not remember ever to have seen in the East a flock of sheep without a shepherd."

In Palestine, at any moment, sheep are

liable to be swept away by some mountain torrent, or carried off by hill-robbers, or torn by wolves. At any moment their protector may have to save them by personal hazard. Every hour of the shepherd's life is a risk. Pitiless showers, driving 'snows, long hours of thirst—all this he must endure, if the flock is to be kept at all.—F. W. Robertson.

God does not only give us comfort; that would weaken character. He gives us power.—Stopford Brooke.

To go with calm soul, because it calmly trusts in God, in the midst of tempests and tumults, and say, "I am at peace and rest"—that is the triumph of the Christian state. These words (of v. 4) come to souls struggling as David had struggled. He stands forth and lifts up his voice, and says, "Struggle on, O my brethren, struggle for the deeper and sweeter peace in God to which you shall attain.—Phillips Brooks.

"A man fleeing from a storm ran under a great tree. There he found shelter. But he found, also, fruits which the storm had brought down from the tree—food for his hunger, and a spring of pure sweet water at which he quenched his thirst. So in the shadow of the cross the friend of Christ finds not only refuge from all enemies, but also provision for all his wants."

Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold; and in them

walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps, to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord." And after that they shut up the gates, which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them.—Bunyan.

Light from the East

ROD AND STAFF—Every Eastern shepherd still carries both these implements. The rod is really an oak club about two and a half feet long with a rounded knob or bulging head on the end, from four to six inches in diameter, which is generally driven full of large nails to make it heavier and harder. Through a hole at the other end of the handle there is passed a stout thong which serves

to suspend the club from the belt when not in use and to fasten it to the wrist in combat, so that if knocked out of the hand it is still within easy reach. When wielded by a long, sinewy and powerful arm it is a formidable weapon against man and beast, and the shepherd still needs it for defence against them both.

The staff is a straight stick about six feet long and slightly larger at the lower end than at the upper, which is held in the hand. By it the shepherd pushes himself up the steep, rough hillsides; he uses it to lean on when he is watching his flock, to guide his sheep, to correct them when wayward, and to beat down leaves from branches beyond their reach. Protection by our Shepherd God against danger and something of His to lean on and be guided and corrected by, are the ideas behind these terms.

TEACHING HINTS AND HELPS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Bible Class Teachers

The psalm which forms the lesson falls into two parts marked by the difference in the figure which represents the relations between God and His people. The task of the teacher is to bring out the meaning of these figures and apply their teaching to the needs of the class.

I. THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP, vs. 1-4. The care of the Oriental shepherd for his flock should be described. Illustrations of this care may of course be found in the life of David the writer of the psalm. The picture of Himself as the Good Shepherd by the Saviour in Luke 15: 1-7 and John 10 should be kept in mind. As to the teaching wrapped up in this first figure, it embraces three aspects of the believer's life.

1. *Rest and refreshment*, vs. 1, 2. These are symbolized by the "green pastures" and "still waters." Lying here, the sheep gain strength for the travel of the road? Rest is the first offer of the gospel, Matt. 11: 28. We must begin the Christian life by simply trusting. Before we can serve God we must receive strength from him.

2. *Toil and effort*, v. 3. The flock cannot

lie all the time in the fresh grass and beside the running brook. After the mid-day or nightly rest, they must take the road again under the guidance of the shepherd. So there are journeys, often long and weary, for the Christian. Tasks await him which will tax his strength to the utmost. But the Lord will guide him in right paths and strengthen him for every labor. And this He will do "for His name's sake."

3. *Darkness and danger*, v. 4. The peril to the sheep from wild beasts and fierce robbers is used as a symbol for the spiritual dangers which are found in the believer's pathway. The development of the idea of this verse in the Pilgrim's Progress should be carefully read.

II. THE HOST AND HIS GUEST, vs. 5, 6. Under this new figure the description of the believer's life is continued. The thoughts vary little from those of the first part, but the note of gladness is intensified. The leading ideas are:

1. *Provision and joy*. Verse 5 displays the man who trusts in God seated at a feast. His table groans with plenty and his gladness is complete. And all this in the very sight of his foes, who cannot reach him with their malice. We are reminded at once of the Saviour's parables in which the blessings of

the gospel are set forth under the same figure of a feast, Matt. 22: 1-13; Luke 14: 1-11. God's entertaining His servant as a guest, according to Eastern ideas of hospitality, meant taking him under His protection. For the host was bound to defend his guest as he would his own life. It is easy to understand how much comfort would be brought to a helpless man by the thought that a powerful friend is pledged to help him with all his resources. The "guest of God" is anointed. Anointing the head in the East was one of the tokens of hospitality. In Luke 7: 46, Jesus points out to Simon that he had failed to pay Him the honor due to a guest. Anointing was also an emblem of spiritual blessing. When we yield ourselves to God we receive an anointing, so that we are fitted for His service, 1 John 2: 22.

2. *Hope*, v. 6. The outlook of the psalmist is not limited to the past or the present. It takes in the future as well. Such is his confidence in Jehovah that he is sure this heavenly Protector will never fail him, He is sure that he will never lose the presence of God. The reference here is to the present life, but Christ has taught us to transfer the words of this verse to the future life, John 14: 1-3.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

It should be possible to teach this lesson with books shut; for every child ought to know the "Shepherd Psalm" by heart. Most of them do know it.

Why not begin by having them recite it, "verse about" or in concert. The poetical version will be even read to most of them than the prose.

Children like tales from far lands. The uncle who has travelled is a favorite uncle. He never lacks auditors, when he recounts what he has seen and heard. This psalmist has been far into God's country. He has been close to God, God has been close to him. He knows God, as a man knows his friend. Here he tells his experience of it all. It is worth listening to.

"The Lord" is the first word (v. 1), and almost the last, v. 6. Note the capital letters used. They stand for Jehovah, Israel's God.

The Jehovah of the Old Testament is as nearly as possible the Jesus of the New, His people's God, their Redeemer, their Friend.

A division that may catch the attention of the boys and girls is into—an outdoor and an indoor song, the song of the shepherd (vs. 1-4), and of the host, vs. 5, 6.

The Song of the Shepherd. One would think that it had been written after and not before John 10. Have the class read John 10: 7, 9, 11, 14, 27, 28; and then the first verse of the lesson. Isn't it a blessed thing to be able to say "my?" It is not "your" or "their," or even "our," but "my."

There are three vivid scenes, (1) In the quiet pasture. Make the sweet, dew-scented pastures at morn, very vivid, and the shade by the water-courses at noon-day. This is the comfort and joy of being the Lord's. Matt. 11: 28-30 is a good passage here. (2) On the roadway. In the East this was usually a mere bridle-path or trail. The sheep needed encouragement and guidance in its crooked roughness. Who can guide as Jehovah—Jesus, our Great Shepherd,—and who, as He can, make strong? Hymn 320, v. 2, Book of Praise, may be read or recited. (3) In the place of terror. Some deep, forbidding gorge—even here, no dread, v. 4. John 10: 28, 29 comes to mind; and who should ever fear? that has such promises?

The Song of the Host. Picture it all—safe in the tent (and an Oriental's tent is his guest's castle) or in the palace—a table plentifully spread, a loving host who forestalls every wish, the cup overflowing. What stronger figures could be used? But it is not more than what our Saviour provides for us. Take just one of His precious words as a sample, John 15: 9. No wonder there is such an ending as v. 6. Compare 1 Cor. 3: 21-23; also 2 Tim. 4: 6-8.

Some Test Questions

- What two figures employed in this psalm? Describe the duties of an Eastern shepherd.
- What is symbolized in v. 2?
- What in v. 3? In v. 4?
- Explain "rod and staff."
- Of what is anointing the symbol?
- What parables suggested by v. 5?
- What was the psalmist's: פֶּן־יִפְּזֶה?

The force of "follow me"?

Explain "the house of the Lord."

Where is heaven described as a home?

What do we learn as to:

- (1) Trust in the Christian life?
- (2) The ground of our redemption?
- (3) How to overcome the fear of death?
- (4) Our hope of future blessedness?

Prove from Scripture

That we need not fear, if God be with us.

For Special Study

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous.)

1. David's shepherd life.
2. The gospel feast.
3. The Good Shepherd.

The Catechism

[For Examination in Doctrine in the General Assembly's Teacher Training Course.]

Ques. 102. *The Lord's Prayer—its second petition.* The phrase "kingdom of God" may mean one of two things. It may refer to God's rule as Creator over everything He has made, Dan. 4: 33, 34. For the coming of this kingdom we do not need to pray. But the expression may also mean, the authority of God as established in human hearts which have been renewed by His Spirit and surrendered to His sway. The latter is the meaning found in the question.

The kingdom of God in this sense is frequently referred to in the New Testament. It is that which Christ bids us "seek first," Matt. 6: 33. The purpose of our Lord in most of His great discourses and parables is to explain and commend it. (See Matt. ch. 13.) Those for whom it is prepared are "the blessed of the Father," Matt. 25: 34. The condition of entering into it is the new birth, John 3: 3, 5.

It is here called "the kingdom of grace," because men are brought into it only through the operation of divine power in their hearts, Eph. 2: 8; Col. 1: 13.

A second name is "the kingdom of glory." This refers to the future state of the kingdom, when all opposition to the rule of its King has been overcome, when Satan, sin and death have been vanquished, and good now in process of development; shall have reached perfection. The kingdom of glory will appear at the second coming of Christ, 2 Tim. 4: 1.

A two-fold description is given of the way in which the kingdom of God grows. First, the kingdom of Satan must be overcome. For the nature of this evil ruler, see John 8: 44; 2 Cor. 2: 11; 1 Pet. 5: 8; and for the authority exercised by him, Matt. 13: 19; John 12: 31; 14: 30; 16: 11; 2 Cor. 4: 4; Eph. 2: 2. Secondly, men are gathered one by one into it and kept in it.

FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

Introduction—Show a picture of sheep (a number of paste-board sheep, one side covered with cotton batting or Turkish towelling may easily be made.) Outline a hill and some

trees (green chalk). Place the sheep on the hillside (a sand tray may be used). Here is Bethlehem nesting amongst the hills. Here David lived when a lad. Describe the life of the young shepherd boy.

Lesson Subject—God showing His love by making known His tender care.

Lesson—Do you all love music? What songs do you like best? David loved music and played on the harp, and sang and wrote the words of



those beautiful songs that we find in the Bible, the Psalms. David loved God, and his songs were full of praise to God. When he became old, he used often to think of the days when he was a shepherd boy on the hills of Bethlehem. He thought of God's tender care of him all his life, and it seemed to him just like the care of a shepherd for his sheep; so he wrote a beautiful song, the Twenty-third Psalm. (Read slowly.) (Ask the children to memorize it.)

Golden Text—A shepherd's first thought is for his sheep. Watch him as he wanders along, staff in hand, beside the still river, his sheep following him! See him leading them to the green, shady spots to rest! See them drinking of the cool, refreshing water!

He GUARDS GUIDES

If a lamb falls by the way, he gently lifts it and helps it to walk, or carries it tenderly in his bosom. (Explain the use of the shepherd's crook. "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.")

The sheep need not fear to walk through even a dark valley. The shepherd keeps close to them. They know he is leading through the dark, dangerous places, only to take them to better pasture fields, to more

beautiful places beyond. The sheep follow the shepherd. They know he loves them.

Our Shepherd—This is just like the way Jesus, our Shepherd, leads us now. If we love Him and follow Him, He will lead us into pleasant places, give us rest and refreshment in this world, will guard us from "sin-wolves" and will take us safely through the "valley of death" and bring us into the beautiful fold of heaven.

What I have learned—Jesus is my Shepherd. (Tell the story of Luke 15: 1-7 to illustrate the love of the Good Shepherd.)

Repeat or Sing—

Gracious Saviour, gentle Shepherd,
All Thy lambs are dear to Thee;
Gathered in Thine arms and carried
In Thy bosom may we be,
Sweetly, fondly, safely tended,
From all wants and danger free.

—Hymn 586, Book of Praise.

Blackboard—On the crown symbol print KING DAVID'S TRUST IN GOD. Outline a shepherd's crook. Print Golden Text.

Prayer—

Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me;
Bless Thy little lamb to-day;
Guide and guard us all our lifetime;
Lead us in the heavenly way.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

The Good Shepherd

SEEKS
SAVES
SATISFIES HIS SHEEP

By some introductory questions about Eastern shepherds and their care of the flock, lead up to the thought of Christ as THE GOOD SHEPHERD. Get the scholars to imagine a sheep wandering away from the care of the shepherd. The shepherd knows the dangers that threaten the sheep from wild beasts and robbers, and gets out to bring it back. So the Good Shepherd SEEKS us who have wandered from the fold into the ways of sin. Recall how David rescued his sheep from the lion and from the bear. In like manner the Good Shepherd SAVES us. Show what it cost Him to save us, His life of toil and sorrow and His death on the Cross. Something more the Good Shepherd does for His sheep. He SATISFIES them. Repeat John 10: 8. Ask for some of the things He gives us, forgiveness, cleansing, strength, joy, etc. Now, what does He expect of us as His SHEEP? Just to trust Him and follow where He leads.

Lesson VIII.

THE CURSE OF STRONG DRINK

November 22, 1903

World's Temperance Lesson

Prov. 20 : 1 ; 23 : 20, 21, 29-35. Commit to memory 23 : 29-32.

1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.
Ch. 23 : 20 Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh :

21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath sabbings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine,

Revised Version—1 a brawler; 2 erreth; 3 complaining; 4 seek out; 5 goeth down smoothly; 6 strange things; 7 forward; 8 hurt.

GOLDEN TEXT

Wine is a mocker.

DAILY READINGS

M.—Prov. 20 : 1; 23 : 20-

21, 29-35.

T.—Isa. 5 : 11-23.

W.—Isa. 28 : 1-7.

Th.—Amos. 6 : 1-7.

F.—1 Kings 20 : 18-21.

S.—Matt. 24 : 42-51.

S.—1 Thess. 5 : 4-11.

The curse of strong drink.

Source of woe.

A danger signal.

Luxury and captivity.

Drunkness and defeat.

An evil portion.

Watch!

CATECHISM

Q. 103. What do we pray for in the third petition?
A. In the third petition (which is, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*) we pray, That God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

EXPOSITION

Connecting Links—The Book of Proverbs is called the Proverbs of Solomon, because most of its sayings were collected and a great many of them written by him. It was styled by the later Jewish commentators, The Book of Wisdom, because it is a treasure-house of wise directions for right living. Moses Stuart said of it, "There is no book on earth of deeper interest in a social, moral, industrial and economic point of view than the Book of Proverbs." On the question of sobriety its directions are clear and unmistakable. The parallelism characteristic of Hebrew poetry will be noted in the verses of the lesson passage.

I. Deceived by Strong Drink, chs. 20 : 1 and 23 : 20, 21.

Ch. 20 : 1. *Wine is a mocker.* "This fact," says Peloubet, "is the essence of the lesson for to-day. Wine (standing for intoxicants) is a deceiver, which mocks at the victims whom it has brought into trouble by its deception." *Strong drink*; was forbidden to priests (Lev. 10 : 9); was not used by the

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright,

32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

34 Yes, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35 They have stricken me, *shall thou say, and I was not smitten*; they have beaten me, *and I felt it not*; when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

TIME AND PLACE

About 1000 B.C.; Jerusalem the capital of King Solomon, who was famed for his wisdom as well as for the splendor of his court. His reign lasted for forty years, ending about 975 B.C. It is not known at what time he wrote his sayings contained in the Book of Proverbs.

LESSON PLAN

I. Deceived by Strong Drink, 1, 20, 21.

With its false promise of happiness.

II. Suffering from Strong Drink, 29-33.

Which brings ruin upon its victims.

III. Enslaved by Strong Drink, 33-35.

So that reason no longer rules.

LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise, 246; 247; 19 (Ps. Sel.); 262; 630; 275.

Nazirites (Num. 6 : 3); nor by the Rechabites, Jer. ch. 35. *Raging* (Rev. Ver., "a brawler"). Its use makes men boisterous and quarrelsome, and destroys them as a wild beast does its prey. *Deceived thereby*; led astray, as by an evil companion. The thought of Isa. 28 : 7, staggering through wine, seems to be included here.

Ch. 23 : 20, 21. *Winebibbers*; those who drink and drink, drink to excess. How could language be framed to prohibit moderate drinking more explicitly? *Riotous eaters of flesh*; gluttons. "Orientals rarely taste flesh; but when they do eat it, they often indulge most intemperately." (Paragraph Bible.) Gluttony and drunkness are often associated together in the Scriptures, and in actual fact. *The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty*; a statement needing no proof, for alas! it is only too abundantly illustrated on all sides. *Drowsiness*; the sleepy-headedness and sloth which result from overeating and drinking, and which lead inevitably, and sometimes very swiftly, to rags and wretchedness.

II. Suffering from Strong Drink, 29-32.

V. 29. *Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow?* Literally, "Who has Oh? Who has Alas?" The Hebrew words are strong expressions of suffering uttered by one in pain; so great is the physical and mental torture following a fit of drunkenness. *Contentions.* Intoxication makes peaceable men quarrelsome, because it depresses the higher faculties and over-stimulates the lower. *Babbling* (Rev. Ver., "complaining"); caused by the difficulties into which the drunkard gets in his quarrels over his cups. *Wounds without cause*; the result of his senseless quarrels or unnecessary accidents. *Redness of eyes*; "blurred eyes." Constant use of intoxicants gives the eyes an inflamed appearance, and weakens the power of vision.

V. 30. *They that tarry long*; indulge themselves to late hours, Isa. 5:11 *Mixed wine*; spiced, drugged, medicated wine, the flavor and intoxicating power of it being thus increased. In olden times (Isa. 5:22), as now, indulgence in drink led to a craving for stronger and more inflaming liquor.

Vs. 31, 32. *Look not thou upon the wine.* The writer now comes to the remedy; which is, to put not oneself in the way of temptation. He who does not look, will be little likely to taste. *When it is red*; because it has a beautiful appearance. Red wines were the most esteemed in the East. *Giveth his colour*; literally "giveth its eye," as if an eye were looking out of the cup. The reference is to the sparkling or bubbling of the wine when poured out or shaken—a sign of

its purity and strength. *Moveth itself aright* (Rev. Ver., "goeth down smoothly"); flows pleasantly from wine-skin or jug to goblet or throat. *At the last.* Wisdom takes account of how a thing will end. *Biteth like a serpent.* The result of indulgence is a venomous wound. *Stingeth like an adder*; said to be the cerastes or horned snake, which is an exceedingly venomous serpent, and lies curled up in the sand ready to dart upon its victim.

III. Enslaved by Strong Drink, 33-35.

Vs. 33, 34. *Thine eyes shall behold strange things* (Rev. Ver.). The reference is to the confusion of the senses, which ultimately issues in delirium tremens, a chamber of horrors. *Perverse things*; incoherent, profane or unclean speech. *Lieth down in the midst of the sea.* The drunkard sinks down to sleep in places as perilous as the trough of the sea, yet wholly unconscious of danger. *Lieth upon the top of a mast*; a striking figure to denote the great recklessness and peril of the drunkard.

V. 35. *They have stricken me . . . and I was not sick* (Rev. Ver., "hurt"). Here is the coherent boasting and ravings of the drunkard recovering from his debauch. *When shall I awake?* Or "when I shall awake." *I will seek it yet again.* The drunkard becomes the slave of his own habit. This is a true picture. His sin has become its own punishment. This bondage to appetite is the most frightful feature of the whole case. In spite of the most solemn and striking warnings, the drunkard returns to his cups.

APPLICATION

Wine is a mocker, ch. 20:1. It is a long time since this verse was written, but it might have been written to-day. It is as true now as ever it was. We have all seen the foolish drunkard reeling on the street and exposed to the derision and mocking of the unthinking. Every police magistrate has had before him many times the man whose face is covered with blood and wounds, and who, when he is accused of making disturbance, pleads that he was drunk and did not know what he was doing. What incredible folly for one to drug himself in such fashion that he loses possession of his senses and is

incited by the stimulant to riotous and disorderly conduct! It is a mild way to put it, to say that he who is thus misled is not wise. It is very great un wisdom, extreme folly.

Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh, ch. 23:26. The marks of excess in intoxicating liquor are more prominent and more frequently reprov'd by public sentiment than those which follow excess in eating, but in this verse they are coupled together, and the admonitions concerning these faults are given simply with a view to the effect that they will have upon a man's temporal prosperity. The statement is plain,

that the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and the testimony of the centuries, the many centuries that have passed since then, only adds weight to this judgment. If gluttons and drunkards were not in demand in the world of long ago, they are certainly not in demand to-day. If a boy wishes to be successful in life, one of the imperative demands made upon him is that he should be in full command of his faculties, ready to draw upon them to their full limit in response to the calls that are made. But if he indulges his bodily appetites to excess, it is impossible for him to have the alertness that is required. Men who drink and boys who smoke cigarettes are not wanted, and whatever their natural abilities, if they persist in such pursuits, the result will be the ruin of worldly prospects, to say nothing of the moral and spiritual ruin that is the consequence of such habits.

Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? v. 29. Very graphically the physical signs of debauch are here enumerated, as well as the mental distress. It is a picture that we all have looked upon. There is a temporary

enjoyment. Under the stimulus of the wine that sparkles so beautifully, everything takes on a pleasing aspect at first. The mental and emotional qualities are quickened. The songs sung and the stories told seem more delightful and wittier than songs and stories heard in sober moments. All sorrow is forgotten.

"'Twill make a man forget his woe,
'Twill heighten all his joy."

But it is only a passing enjoyment, and for every thrill of pleasure there succeeds the sting of pain, and compound interest is paid in both physical and mental distress for every moment of joy. There is no way of safety, and that is to shun even the sparkle of the wine. The man who never need fear these woes, is the man who never indulges, and there is no other safe-guard.

Look not thou, v. 31. The life is likely to follow the look. To gaze upon evil is the first step towards practising it. On the other hand, the constant contemplation of the good leads naturally to well-doing. Those who wish to form right habits will resolutely turn their eyes from the base and fix them on the excellent.

POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

Wine is a fountain of mischief. v. 1.

The ranks of the unfit are recruited from among the intemperate. ch. 23 : 20.

Want is the wages of the wasteful. v. 21.

In the fate of the fallen the wise will see a warning. v. 24.

He who knows not the taste of wine will escape its tribulations. v. 30.

The counsels of reason, rather than the attractions of appetite, should control our lives. v. 31.

A pleasant path may lead to a disastrous end. v. 32.

Strong drink is a poison to the soul as well as to the body. v. 33.

Recklessness is the road to ruin. v. 34.

Every act of indulgence is a link in the chain of habit.

A drunken people are in the end an incapable people.—Horton.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie once said: "The best temperance lecture I have delivered

lately was my offer of ten per cent. premium on their wages to all the employees on my Scottish estates who will abstain from intoxicating liquors."

Britain spent last year on drink more than \$897,000,000. Some calculations have been made which help us to form a faint idea of this vast sum.

In sovereigns, this drink money would weigh 1,481 tons.

It would load 7 trains, 35 cars to each engine and 5½ tons in each car.

If it were spread out flat on the ground, sovereigns laid edge to edge, it would cover 21 acres, or pave a road 30 feet wide for 5½ miles, or would cover a railway four feet wide for 37¼ miles.

If the sovereigns were placed face to face they would form a gold rope of 166½ miles.

To count it at the rate of one sovereign a second, Sundays excepted, would take 6½ years.

Its amount for each letter in the Bible would be more than \$250.00.

The Curse of Strong Drink

Its gold would build a temple, sovereigns face to face, each wall 126 feet square.

That thousands live and die in the dim borderland of destitution; that little children wail, and starve, and perish, and soak and blacken, soul and sense, in our streets; that there are hundreds and thousands of the unemployed, not all of whom, as some would persuade us, are lazy impostors; that the demon of drink still causes among us daily horrors which would disgrace Dahomey or Ashantee, and rakes into his coffers millions of pounds which are wet with tears and red with blood; these are facts patent to every eye.—Archdeacon Farrar.

Light from the East

GLUTTON—Orientals are ordinarily temperate and even abstemious in eating and drinking. When on the march, a Bedouin will walk or run all day on a double handful of coarse barley flour made into a paste at night, baked in a rude oven scooped out of the ground, and heated with a fire of the

roots of weeds or camels' dung. But when a festival comes round, he gorges himself without stint. He does not commonly eat meat, but on these occasions he consumes an almost incredible amount of it, and afterwards he can do nothing but sleep until nature recovers its tone.

DROWSINESS—The indolence of the peasantry of Palestine is phenomenal. They will not do anything unless they are forced to do it, and the consequent dirt and squalor in which they live are indescribable. Their abominable surroundings and meagre diet tend to reduce their vitality. The warm air makes indolence comfortable, and their tyrannical government destroys the hope of any permanent improvement of their condition, even if they did work. Their homes are hovels and the accumulated manure of generations makes entrance into many of them impossible except on all fours. Even the women have usually only one garment which is never clean, and through the rents in it you can see their flesh, absolutely encrusted with dirt.

TEACHING HINTS AND HELPS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Bible Class Teachers

The line of thought suggested in the Lesson Plan may be followed here.

1. *Strong drink deceives.* Discuss the promises which intoxicants hold out. They promise (1) Health and strength. But the testimony of the best physicians is, that alcohol is injurious, not beneficial to the body. Athletes know that drink would prevent their reaching the highest point of fitness for any contest requiring physical strength. The use of drink destroys clearness of brain and steadiness of nerve. They promise (2) Happiness. But while there is a temporary exhilaration produced by wine which is pleasant, its after-effects are painful. They promise (3) Popularity. Indulgence in the social glass will, it is said, make friends for us. But the friendship that rests on such a basis is not genuine and will not last. In holding out the hope of these advantages, drink is a deceiver.

2. *Strong drink brings suffering.* Go over the list of evils traced to drink as their source in 23: 21-30. Poverty, contentions, complainings, causeless wounds, redness of eyes—the teacher will be able to appeal to the experience of his class for proof, that all these are the sad heritage of the drunkard. Bring out the striking contrast of vs. 31 and 32, between the attractiveness of wine at the beginning and terrible results of indulgence at the end. Enforce, too, the clear injunction to total abstinence in the opening words of v. 31.

3. *Strong drink enslaves.* The appetite for drink, through frequent indulgence, at last gains complete mastery over its victim and reason is dethroned. In the closing verses of the lesson, three illustrations are given of the terrible power of the drink habit. In v. 33 the poor drunkard is pictured as beholding horrible visions and giving utterance to foolish and vile speech. The first part of the verse at once suggests the horrors of delirium tremens. V. 34 portrays in vivid and striking language, the utter recklessness

of the drunken man in the presence of danger. His peril is all the greater because he believes that he is in perfect safety. Another sad feature of the poor inebriate's condition is brought out in v. 35. It is his complete inability to free himself from the power of his appetite, or even to realize that he is in bondage to it. He forgets all that has happened to him in his drunken debauch and his first thought, on awakening from his stupor, is to seek his cups again.

In closing, ask the class, what is the best stand to take as regards to the use of drink. No one will defend drunkenness. Then two positions alone remain. One is moderate drinking and the other is total abstinence. It is not difficult to show the dangers of the former position or to find reasons for the latter. Urge the importance of deciding this question, and our need of divine help in the battle for self-control.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

This is called "The World's Temperance Lesson;" for this fourth Sabbath of November is observed very widely throughout the Christian world as "Temperance Sunday." There is need of a World's temperance lesson, for all the world—all Christendom at any rate—suffers from strong drink; and it seems woefully hard either to persuade those whom it is injuring to give it up, or those who are as yet free from its power to be sufficiently afraid of it.

The Golden Text gives the key to the lesson—"Wine is a mocker." It will be necessary to explain in some classes that wine was and is the common intoxicant in Eastern countries. Even at its strongest, it is comparatively mild as compared with our fiery liquors. What is said, therefore, of the peril of it is, accordingly, even more true of the drinks that chiefly make the drunkards now. A mocker! Something that promises wonderful things, and then fails to bring them about. No one likes to be fooled. If drink can be proven as a mocker, the argument ought to end there, and every one leave drink alone. The lesson shows it to be a mocker—and much more.

What are some of the things it promises? The scholars will be sure to give at least

these three: To make you merry; to show you to be manly (for do not men drink?); to make you a jolly good fellow, who will have plenty of friends. Of course, it does all three. But then, what comes after? The latter part of the verse answers, "It is raging;" and the remainder of the lesson is mostly taken up with showing how this raging monster hurts and destroys.

The very name and work of those mentioned in the next verse, ch. 23: 20, should be enough. "Soakers" is what wine-bibbers are often called, men who saturate themselves with drink. Often they are gluttons, too. What boy or girl wants to be like them; or wants to come to their end, destruction, v. 21? Rags are not what it is worth an ambitious boy's while to work for. They are pretty sure to be what he will get if he takes up with drink.

What an awful series of questions, in v. 29—every one of them a photograph! How do people get themselves into such shape? V. 30 is the reply. Explain "mixed wine" (see Exposition on this verse). It is very simple—drink, and more drink, and more still and stronger, and the frightful business is done.

What is the cure? Just as simple as shutting your eyes. You are not apt to take what you do not see. Jolly, to be sure, it looks, but how deadly it is, verse 32 tells; and vs. 33-35 how frightfully silly its victims become.

Even if a trap is covered with flowers, a wise child will not put his foot in it.

Some Test Questions

Describe the contents of the Book of Proverbs.

- Why is it named after Solomon?
- Explain the figure in ch. 20: 1.
- What is the reasoning of ch. 23: 20, 21?
- What results of intemperance in v. 29?
- What is meant by "mixed wine"?
- What makes wine attractive?
- Why is it dangerous?
- What effect of drink in v. 33?
- To whom is the drunkard compared, v. 34?
- What do we learn as to:
 - (1) Material effects of intemperance?
 - (2) The mental effects?

- (3) The moral effects?
 (4) The duty of total abstinence?

Prove from Scripture

That strong drink is dangerous.

For Special Study

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous.)

1. The folly of the drunkard.
2. The cure of drunkenness.
3. Temperance a fruit of the Spirit.

The Catechism

[For Examination in Doctrine in the General Assembly's Teacher Training Course.]

Ques. 103. *The Lord's Prayer—its third petition.* In the first petition we pray that God's name may be glorified. The second refers to the external development and growth of the kingdom of God; the third to its internal growth in the hearts of men, through their becoming more perfectly conformed to the divine will. Thus in the second and third petitions we have two specific ways in which the more general first petition may be fulfilled.

The following thoughts may be suggested in connection with the third petition:

1. The world came into being and its history is being ordered in accordance with a purpose. There is no such thing as chance in the universe. The all-controlling purpose is God's. He is causing all events to march

towards the end which He has appointed, Rev. 4:11.

2. Men may work together with God in the accomplishment of this purpose, 2 Cor. 6:1.

3. This purpose includes the eternal good of those who love God and do His will, Rom. 8:28.

4. The purpose of God has been made known to us.

(a) By the light of nature men have been able to learn something of this purpose, Rom. 2:15.

(b) It has been revealed with greater clearness and fulness in the written Word of God, Ps. 19:7-11.

(c) The supreme and perfect revelation of the divine purpose is found in Jesus Christ, John 14:9; Heb. 1:3.

5. It is in knowing and doing the will of God, that we realize the great end of our being. It was for this that we were created, for this that we are preserved, and for this that we have been redeemed.

6. Christ is the only standard of obedience to the will of God. "Yet the kind of conformity to the will of God to be wrought in the church, and in us, is indicated in the obedience of the holy angels and of the saints in glory," Ps. 103:20-23; Dan. 7:10. The will of God is to be done by us "in earth," as by these "in heaven."

FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

Introduction—By use of picture, verses, or Twenty-third Psalm, recall last lesson.

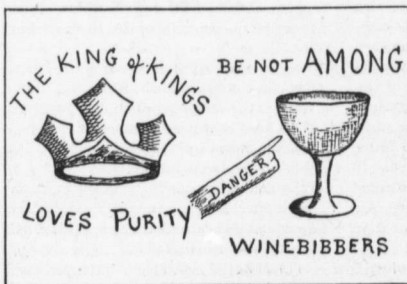
Lesson Subject—God showing His love by pointing out danger. "A good name is

rather to be chosen than great riches," Prov. 22:1.

A Good Name—Repeat—

"Children, choose it,
 Don't refuse it,
 'Tis a precious diadem;
 Highly prize it,
 Don't despise it,
 You will need it when
 you're men."

Bad Names—There are some names in our lesson that are not good names—names we would never wish to be called, names we would grieve to have our friends called. Turn to the



words of God (through Solomon), ch. 23 : 20, 21. What dreadful names !

“Winebibbers”—Those who like wine.
Drunkards—Those who drink strong drink.

Gluttons—Those who eat too greedily.

“Oh,” you say, “we little boys and girls will never be called by those dreadful names.” Some who have been sweet, pure girls and boys have lost their best treasures—their good name and their souls—and are now called by these names, that we do not like even to repeat. (Speak in an awesome way. Make the children feel a dread of them, a desire to shun everything that would lead to these dreadful conditions. The use of wine is one of the first steps, and verse 29 will afford material for still, further increasing the horror of drink. Let all be done very tenderly.)

Our Good Name—Our Soul—Repeat—

“Look out, little woman !

Look out, little man !

Do be as careful as ever you can,

For each of you carries

A treasure too rare

To risk any trifling ;

So ‘Handle with care.’”

Danger Signals—Outline three fingerboards, all pointing to a downward path, on which is the leader SATAN. Here are the danger signals that God holds out to us all.

If we take heed, we will never be called by those dreadful names, nor suffer as those do.

1. Wine is a mocker.

2. Look not upon the wine.

3. Be not among winebibbers.

(Impress the danger of bad companions. Do not go among such.)

Safety Signals—Outline three other fingerboards pointing to an upward path, on which is our leader JESUS.

1. Hearken unto thy father . . . and despise not thy mother, ch. 23 : 22.

2. Buy the truth, ch. 23 : 23.

3. My son give me thine heart, ch. 23 : 26. This last is the surest way to keep in the right way.

Two Leaders—Two Paths—

“Here are two leaders, here two paths,
To different worlds they tend ;

Which will you take, which will you choose
And which shall be your end?”

*What I have learned—*Strong drink is dangerous.

*Blackboard—*On the crown symbol print JESUS THE KING OF KINGS LOVES PURITY. Outline a wine glass, a finger board, DANGER.

Sing—

We are little children,

Weak and apt to stray ;

Saviour, guide and keep us

In the heavenly way.

—Hymn 528, Book of Praise

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

WINE A MOCKER

Get the scholars to imagine a man persuading people to leave their homes and follow him to a strange land by promising them that they shall be rich and comfortable and happy. But when they get there, the land is poor, and they have only wretched little huts to live in. They complain to their leader, but he only laughs at them and will do nothing to help them. How heartless and cruel ! Now that is what wine is represented as doing in our lessons. Go over the fair promises it makes—health, happiness, friends. Then point out what it really gives, poverty, suffering, misery of all kinds. Now, ask if the people would have followed the lying leader, if they had known to what he would bring them. But we know what using wine will bring us to. What is the wise thing for us to do? Surely to have nothing to do with drink which is the source of so many evils.

Lesson IX.

DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON

November 29, 1903

1 Chron. 28 : 1-10. Commit to memory vs. 9, 10. Read 1 Chron., chs. 21-29.

1 And Da'vid assembled all the princes of Is'rael, the companies of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that I ministered to the king by course, and the captains ² over the thousands, and captains ³ over the hundreds, and the ⁴ stewards over all the substance and ⁵ possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, ⁶ and with all the valiant men, unto Jeru'salem.

2 Then Da'vid the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people : *As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the foot-stool of our God, and had made ready for the building :*

3 But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou ⁷ hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.

4 Howbeit the LORD God of Is'rael chose me ⁸ before all the house of my father to be king over Is'rael for ever : for he hath chosen Ju'dah ⁹ to be the ruler ; and in of the house of Ju'dah, the house of my father ; and among the sons of my father he ¹⁰ liked me to make me king over all Is'rael :

5 And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me

many sons,) he hath chosen Sol'omon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Is'rael.

6 And he said unto me, Sol'omon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts ; for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.

7 Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day.

8 Now therefore in the sight of all Is'rael the congregation of the LORD, and in the audience of our God, ¹¹ keep and seek ¹² for all the commandments of the LORD your God ; that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance ¹³ for your children after you forever.

9 And thou, Sol'omon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind ; for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts : if thou seek him, he will be found of thee ; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

10 Take heed now ; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary : be strong, and do it.

Revised Version—I served the king ; ² of ; ³ rulers ; ⁴ possessions ; ⁵ even all the mighty men of valor ; ⁶ it was ; ⁷ art ; ⁸ the God ; ⁹ out of ; ¹⁰ to be prince ; ¹¹ in ; ¹² took pleasure in ; ¹³ And I will ; ¹⁴ observe ; ¹⁵ out ; ¹⁶ to.

GOLDEN TEXT

Prov. 3 : 5. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.

DAILY READINGS

M. —1 Chron. 28 : 1-10. David's charge to Solomon.

T. —1 Chron. 28 : 20-21 ;

29 : 1-4.

Willing gifts.

W. —1 Chron. 29 : 10-19.

David's prayer

Th. —1 Chron. 29 : 23-30.

Solomon king.

F. —1 Chron. 22 : 5-16.

A father's advice.

S. —Psalm 72.

Prayer for Solomon.

S. —Prov. 1 : 7-23.

Wisdom's counsel.

CATECHISM

Q. 104. What do we pray for in the fourth petition ?
 A. In the fourth petition (which is, Give us this day our daily bread) we pray, That of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

TIME AND PLACE

1015 B.C., the last year of David's reign. The old king roused by the news that Adonijah, his eldest surviving son, had asserted his claim to the throne (1 Kgs. ch. 1), caused Solomon to be proclaimed as king, and commended him to a great national assembly as their future sovereign. The place of this notable gathering was Jerusalem.

LESSON PLAN

I. A Great Assembly, 1.

Representing all the tribes of Israel.

II. A Historical Statement, 2, 7.

Of the Lord's covenant with David.

III. A Solemn Appeal, 9-10.

Addressed to the people and to Solomon.

LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise, 305 ; 232 ; 114 (Ps. Sel.) ; 503, 505 ; 233.

EXPOSITION

Connecting Links—After the death of his son Absalom (Lesson VI.) David returned to Jerusalem and reigned in peace till he grew old and feeble, 1 Kings 1 : 1. Adonijah sought to secure the throne as successor, but his purpose was thwarted by the counsel of Nathan the prophet, and David designated Solomon his successor (1 Kings 1 : 34), who was publicly proclaimed king, 1 Kings 1 : 38-48. In this lesson we have David's public charge to the people and to his son.

I. A Great Assembly, 1.

V. 1. *And David assembled.* David called a popular assembly to ratify the appointment of Solomon as his successor. *All the princes of Israel* ; so that the whole nation would be represented. "Princes" is a general term for the six classes mentioned in the following clauses.

The princes of the tribes ; called "the heads of fathers' houses", 1 Chron. 27 : 1, Rev. Ver.. They were rulers of the clans into which the tribes were divided. Their names are given in ch. 27 : 16-22. *The captains of the companies.* For their names see ch. 27 : 1-15. Each had charge in succession for a month, of men engaged in public work for the king, preparing material for the building of the temple. *Captains over thousands . . . and hundreds* ; officers of the army. *The stewards* ; officers in charge of the king's personal property, ch. 27 : 25-31. *The officers* ; courtiers or chamberlains charged with the management of his household, ch. 27 : 32-34. *Mighty men . . . valiant men* ; men of worth and high standing in the realm who were not office-holders. This minute enumeration shows how truly representative of the whole nation

was this royal assembly. The tribes would agree to whatever they did.

II. A Historical Statement, 2-7.

V. 2. *Stood up upon his feet.* Owing to age and infirmity (1 Kings 1: 11) the king would be seated till he began to address the assembly; then he stood up. This showed his sense of the importance of the occasion and his respect for his hearers, as well as his desire that all might hear his message. *My brethren, and my people.* "He had not lost the man and the brother in his official and exalted rank." This parting address of the aged king, by which he took leave of the people he had loved so long and so fervently, is full of warm personal interest. See 2 Sam. 7: 2; 1 Chron. 17: 1-4. *An house of rest*; an abiding structure instead of a moveable tent. *The ark of the covenant of the Lord*; the visible symbol of Jehovah's presence with Israel as His chosen people and the centre of the nation's religious life. *The footstool.* The earth itself (Isa. 66: 1), and the most splendid temples built upon it are but a footstool to the throne of God's glory in heaven.

Vs. 3, 4. *But God said unto me.* See 2 Sam. 7: 5; 1 Kgs. 5: 3; ch. 22: 7, 8. God accepted David's intention, but denied his wish, in order that he might bestow a more gracious gift upon him. (See 2 Sam. 7: 11.) *Because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.* He had to wage long warfare before Israel was free from oppression and his throne was established in peace. It was not fitting that the foundations of a temple for the worship of the God of peace should be laid by a hand dyed in the blood of his fellow-men. *The LORD God of Israel chose me.* He recognizes the wonderful grace of God toward him, 1 Sam. 16: 13. *To be king over Israel for ever.* He had grasped the meaning of the message sent to him through Nathan the prophet (ch. 17: 11-14), that the throne should abide with him and his descendants. This promise was completely fulfilled in Christ.

Vs. 5-7. *He hath chosen Solomon.* "God's choice of Solomon was shown through Nathan (1 Kgs. 11-14), through the character of Solomon and his fitness to be king." *The throne of the kingdom of the LORD.* Com-

pare ch. 29: 23. The king is regarded as the deputy of the Lord. *Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts; the temple and its surrounding courts.* David's intention would thus be carried out, and he would be honored in the work of his son. A true father is delighted with the achievements of his son and with every mark of favor shown him. *I have chosen him to be my son*; to stand in closest relation to Him in reigning as king over Israel. *I will be his father*; the fullest guarantee of special and peculiar favor. *If he be constant to do my commandments.* God's gracious promise was suspended upon a condition. What tragedies Solomon's failure to comply with the prescribed condition introduced into the history of Israel!

III. A Solemn Appeal, 8-10.

V. 8. In this verse David exhorts the whole assembly, and in v. 9 his son Solomon, to be faithful to God. *Now therefore*; in view of all that God had done. *In the sight of all Israel the congregation of the LORD.* We are reminded of the solemn words of Moses, Deut. 30: 19. *In the audience (ears) of our God.* God is the Witness of the thoughts of their hearts, Josh. 24: 18-24. *Keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD*; keep and study to do all, Deut. 4: 23-26. If a nation is to be great, its people must be righteous. Sinful nations must fall. This has been illustrated in the history of Israel and of many nations since.

Vs. 9, 10. *Know thou the God of thy father.* The whole history of divine grace and guidance in the life of David at once rises to view. "Know" here includes the two ideas of knowledge and reverence. *A perfect heart and willing mind*; a heart surrendered to the service of God freely, so as to find the highest delight in doing His will, Ps. 1: 2; 119: 97. *For the LORD searcheth all hearts.* God is omniscient and watches over His own honor with jealous care. *If thou seek . . . if thou forsake.* The way of duty was thus set before the young king very explicitly, and he was fully warned of the consequences of disregard or disobedience. *Take heed now.* Thus his responsibility is emphasized. *The LORD hath chosen thee.* He was invested

with great honor in being selected by God Himself to carry out His will. *Be strong, and do it.* He has the most powerful motives, which should inspire him to faithful service. 1 Chron. 29:26-30 records the death of David. He was buried at Jeru-

salem, in the tombs of the kings cut in the rocks under Mount Zion. No trace of his tomb now remains, though it still existed in the time of Christ, Acts 2:29. His arms, including, doubtless, the famous sword of Goliath, were preserved for ages in the temple.

APPLICATION

And David assembled all the princes of Israel, v. 1. What a splendid spectacle this great assembly must have been! There have been such gatherings in our own time, as when in 1897 from the various British possessions all over the world were gathered representatives to do honor to Queen Victoria. Though we may not have seen it, yet we read with interest day by day of the wonderful display of the empire's wealth and power, and our imagination took fire at the description penned of the great scene of beauty. So in this ancient day David gathered representatives of the whole nation, and addressed them. He had learned that, not even in such an army as he had assembled of loyal and valiant soldiers was confidence to be placed, but in the Lord God alone. Another lesson, too, he had learned, the importance of establishing friendly relations between a ruler and those ruled by him. He calls the assembly his brethren and his people. It is a fine thing when a king can speak thus to his subjects, and we may be glad that when good Queen Victoria died, she was succeeded by one who is wise thus to appeal to the hearts of the nation, as King Edward VII. has done ever since he was crowned. Happy are the people who have such a monarch!

But God said unto me, v. 3. God sometimes denies his children, even though their desire may be a good one. But one thing we may be sure of, that He never denies them arbitrarily, or without a good reason. God showed David why He must disappoint him, but He does not always make plain to His children the reason of His dealings with them. Even so, we must trust Him and believe that there is some good reason for His action. "God never does, nor suffers to be done, but that which we would choose, could we but see the end of all events as well as He."

Howbeit the LORD God of Israel chose me, v. 4.

If we would remember that God has chosen our place for us, we should not be so apt to find fault with our circumstances. When we have done our best to attain some place and have failed, then surely we should recognize that God's will was that we should serve Him where we are. It is thus recognizing our place as the appointment of God, that delivers us from envy and discontent and like evil passions. And if we come to a high place, this keeps us humble as nothing else will. The man who remembers that all he has of wealth or power or place is the gift of God, will not grow vain or proud.

I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant, v. 7. All God's promises are conditional, and where the conditions are observed He never fails those who have trusted Him. There is no case to be found, in which a man truly sought the will of God and testified that God was unfaithful. If the thing desired was not given, something better was given in its place, and those who have been true in their service to God have ever found Him true to them.

Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, v. 8. What a touching word is this from the king to his people! He longs for their welfare, and the passion of love that sweeps through the heart of a true king for his people must be a very deep emotion. But the highest and best thing he can desire for them, is that they should serve God. For there is the conviction deep in his heart, that if they do this they will be blessed. Should we not pray that the same purpose may be characteristic of the Canadian people? We are all looking forward to great development of our natural resources, but, unless we seek to obey the Divine commandments, all worldly prosperity will only lead ultimately to ruin.

And thou, Solomon my son, v. 9. But there is a deeper and more tender touch still when he turns to his son Solomon. He has worn

the crown himself so long that he knows its weight and the greatness of the temptations that will surround the path of the young king who is to succeed him. Both as king and father he greatly desires his welfare. And so desiring, the best he can do is to admonish Solomon to serve God with perfect loyalty. What better thing can we wish for those who are dear to us, than that they should seek to be God's servants. There are many other blessings we might wish for them. This is the one blessing that will never carry with it any disappointment or

defect. But he who would possess it must be honest in his search after it, for the eye of the Lord is in every place, and there is no deceiving Him.

The Lord hath chosen thee, v. 10. Blessed is he who can say with confidence, concerning his daily work, that God has chosen him for this special duty. With this assurance, one need never fear failure. For, however human plans miscarry, the purpose of God always succeeds. And those who are working in line with that divine purpose, must in the end prosper.

POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

A ruler chosen by the people has a special claim upon their obedience. v. 1.

God denies His people lesser privileges that He may bestow higher ones. v. 2.

The Lord is jealous lest any evil associations should be connected with His house. v. 3.

The grateful heart rejoices to recount the goodness of God. v. 4.

Earthly kings are representative of the King of kings. v. 5.

It is a higher honor to be a child of God than to be a king's son. v. 6.

We cannot claim divine promises unless we comply with divine commands. v. 7.

Obedience to God is the condition of national prosperity. v. 8.

Sincere service alone can endure the search of God. v. 9.

If we realized the responsibilities of high office, we should be less inclined to envy its holders. v. 10.

"As ripe fruit is sweeter than green fruit, so is age sweeter than youth, provided the youth were grafted into Christ. As harvest-time is brighter than seed-time, so is age brighter than youth, that is, if youth were a seedtime for good. As the completion of a work is more glorious than the beginning, so is age more glorious than youth, that is, if the foundation of the work of God were laid in youth. As sailing into port is happier than the voyage, so is age happier than youth, that is, when the voyage from youth is made with Christ at the helm."

There is a story of a certain professor, who was once lecturing in New York and whose father, also a professor, was in the audience. A gentleman sitting close behind the father was so interested and aroused that he exclaimed in an audible whisper, "He beats the old gentleman." The father turning around to the unknown man, replied: "He ought to—he stands on my shoulders."

The reason why he (Solomon) should build God's house and God's courts, is full of suggestion, "For I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father." The real builder of the house and courts of God is God's Son. We too, can be true builders for Him only as we are sons.—Dr. R. A. Torrey.

"It is not enough that we observe the commandments of Jehovah when they are forced upon our attention; we should have that eager love for them that leads us to seek them out."

It is ours to carry forward a building on which Paul, and John, and Augustine, and Chrysostom, and Luther, and Calvin, and Knox, and Edwards, and Wesley, and Whitefield spent their strength and showed their skill. Let us not dishonor their workmanship, but let us strive so to do our portion that those who come after us shall be stimulated by our good example, as we have been by that of those who have gone before us.—Dr. W. M. Taylor.

I know the obstacles, but I know as well the power behind. I do not see success as yet, but I know that it is coming. I do not

see yet the perfect kingdom of God upon earth, but I see the already half-chiseled rock out of which it shall be wrought; and I am not going to despond now when so much has already been accomplished.—R. S. Storrs.

Light from the East

BLOOD—Both of man and beast, was regarded with awe by the Hebrews, because they held it to be the seat of the life. The shedding of blood, therefore, even in necessary war, was a very serious thing. It rendered a man for the time being unclean, and disqualified him for association with the worshippers of God. It was not fitting that one who had been compelled to consolidate his kingdom by such an expenditure of human life, and to whose garments it seemed as if the odor of slaughter still clung, should

be the founder of the holy sanctuary, where the God of peace and goodness was to be worshipped. This prohibition indicates the difference between a God who thus expressed his abhorrence of human carnage and those deities that were worshipped with holocausts of human victims.

FOR MY NAME—The name of a person or thing was to the Hebrews a revelation of the nature of whatever bore it. The name of God, which they would not even pronounce, was supposed to carry with it much of the divine power, and wonderful things were said to have been done by the use of it. The apostles preached in the name of Jesus, and attributed the miracles they performed to the power of that name. The Arab still begins his tasks and meals with the words, "In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate."

TEACHING HINTS AND HELPS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Bible Class Teachers

AN ANALYSIS

The lesson fairly bristles with points of interest to a class of intelligent young people who are beginning to read and think about public affairs.

In the first place, the great representative gathering called at Jerusalem to ratify the appointment of Solomon as king (v. 1) suggests a discussion of—

The Rights and Duties of Citizenship. In every free country the people have the right to be consulted as to who shall be their rulers. Show how this right is recognized in the system of electing members of Parliament who make our laws. But along with rights go duties. This is a good opportunity to impress the sacredness of human as well as divine law, and the special obligation of obedience to laws made by those who represent us. Then—

The Divine Authority of Civil Government—is plainly taught. David said (v. 4), "the Lord God of Israel chose me . . . to be king"; and (v. 5) "He hath chosen Solomon . . . to sit upon the throne." The same teaching is found in the New Testament, where Paul

(Rom. 13:1), writes, "The powers that be are ordained of God," and Peter (1 Pet. 2:17) enjoins his readers to "honor the king." Nay, One greater than Paul and Peter, said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's," Matt. 22:21. In reverence and obeying earthly rulers we are doing the will of heaven's King. Again—

The Conditions of National Prosperity—are distinctly laid down in v. 8. These will bear frequent repetition before young Canadians at the present time. There is a lawful pride in the glorious heritage which we possess in Canada. But there are two things of which we need constantly to remind ourselves. One is, that for all our temporal prosperity we are absolutely dependent upon God: a few hours' cold in harvest time may blight many hopes. And the other is, that material advancement alone will not make a nation permanently great. True and lasting greatness—this is the thought to be emphasized here—can result only from walking in the fear of God.

Once more, we have in vs. 7, 9, 10, a clear and strong declaration regarding—

The Responsibility of Rulers. God holds every one in authority accountable for the use of his power. In a country like ours, the private citizen of to-day may be the public official of to-morrow. In view of this, it is

well that young people should be trained to look upon official positions as opportunities of serving God and promoting righteousness.

If the teacher can succeed in impressing every scholar with the thought, that religion has to do with every part of the life, that citizenship in a free country is a high privilege and a sacred responsibility, he will render valuable service to his country. For he will be doing his part—and no small part—in producing a type of citizens worthy of the country God has given us.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

The picture in the Home Study Quarterly will hold young eyes. It is but a simple outline; but it speaks as much as many words—the gathering of the princes of Israel, representing the tribes, all of them eager to hear what the old king has to tell. The king in the feebleness, yet majesty, of old age, standing with uplifted hand to address them; his son Solomon by his side, in the act of being presented to the princes of the people as their king. Let the scholars have a good look at the picture, answer their questions about it, and then have them listen to the words that fall from the old king's lips.

It will not be hard to get the attention of the class—it is a king that speaks, and it is King David. Every old man has the story of his life written on his face and figure, if we had but eyes to see it. What the scholars have learned about this old man will help them to see. They will want to tell about him as the shepherd boy, of his anointing by Samuel to be king, of his slaying of Goliath, of his goodness to King Saul, of his many battles and hairbreadth escapes, perhaps, too, of his sins and sorrows. God had chosen David. David had often forgotten God. But he had learned by many a hard lesson to centre all his love and all his hopes and all his trust on Jehovah, his God and the God of his people. Have the scholars note how often the word *LORD* occurs in his charge to the people and to Solomon his son.

Pick out these six things that King David says. See that the scholars get firm hold of each saying, so that at the close they may be

able to repeat them all.

1. *How he addresses the assemblage*—"My brethren, my people," v. 2. A king who so loves his people, will be a much-loved king.

2. *Why he could not build the temple*—Because he had been a blood-shedder, v. 3. God loves peace, not war. His blessing for the peacemakers is a very rich one. What is it? Matt. 5 : 9 tells.

3. *God's goodness to his son Solomon*—He had chosen him to be king. And this made the father's heart glad. If children only knew how the hearts of their parents are bound up in them!

4. *How Solomon was to live*—"Know . . . God . . . and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind," v. 9. The same word that Jesus gave, Matt. 19 : 17.

5. *What would follow from forsaking God*: "He will cast thee off forever," v. 9. Have the scholars read what Paul says, Rom. 2 : 8, 9.

6. *What would follow from serving God*: "He will be found of thee," v. 9. To "find" God is to find the greatest treasure earth or heaven can give.

Some Test Questions

The purpose of the assembly?

Of what classes was it composed?

Where was it held?

At what time in David's life?

Who had claimed the throne?

By whom was he opposed?

What past events recounted by David?

Whom did he announce as his successor?

By whose authority?

The divine promise made to Solomon?

The condition of the promise?

The duty enjoined upon the people?

The reward of faithfulness?

What was required of Solomon?

Explain "perfect heart," v. 9.

The penalty of forsaking God?

What do we learn as to:

(1) The right to choose our rulers?

(2) The recognition of God in public affairs?

(3) God's care for his own worship?

(4) Connection between privilege and duty.

Prove from Scripture

That to seek the Lord is to find Him.

For Special Study

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous.)

1. David's desire to build a temple.
2. God's choice of Solomon.
3. The faithfulness of God.

The Catechism

[For Examination in Doctrine in the General Assembly's Teacher Training Course.]

Ques. 104. *The Lord's Prayer*—its fourth petition. The following points may be noted in connection with this petition and the explanation of it given in the question :

1. *We are absolutely dependent upon God.* All we have of good is His free gift. This is the teaching of such scriptures as Ps. 104 : 27, 28 and Acts 17 : 25.

2. *There is a real connection between prayer and temporal good.* We may not be able to understand how our prayers bring us the gifts we need. It is enough for us, that our Lord, who knows perfectly how the universe is governed, has bidden us pray for the supply of our daily wants.

3. *We are warranted in asking a sufficient supply for our actual requirements.* We need not limit the meaning of "bread" to the necessities of our bodily life. It includes all temporal blessings, for which we have

the right to ask in submission to God's will, 1 Tim. 4 : 4, 5 ; James 4 : 15. All spiritual gifts, also, lie within the scope of this petition, Rom. 15 : 13. "The word 'competent' answers to the word 'daily' in the petition itself, and the latter is one (in the Greek) which occurs nowhere else. Its meaning consequently has been variously given. The Revised Version, for example, renders it in the margin, 'Our bread for the coming day.' But the word translated 'daily' represents what is taken by most to be the idea, namely, that of bread for our subsistence, so much as is necessary and sufficient, but not more." (Salmond.)

4. *We should cultivate a spirit of trust in God.* It is only our daily bread for which we are told to ask. This means that we are to be free from all anxiety about the future, leaving it and all its wants in the hands of our wise and loving Father in heaven. In that beautiful passage, Matt. 6 : 25-34, our Lord taught His disciples the lesson of trustfulness amid all the cares and troubles of the earthly life.

5. *We should value more than all temporal gifts the blessing of God.* Without His blessing even those things which are good in themselves, will cease to be good to us, while the things most hostile to us are made to further our welfare if we possess the divine favor. (See Rom. 8 : 28.)

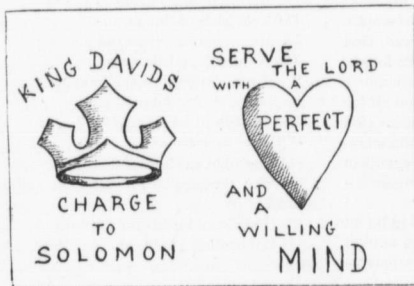
FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

Introduction—We have watched David from a boy to a king. Now, in his old age, we see him still full of trust, after seventy years of varied experience. (Recall last lesson.)

Lesson Subject—God showing His love in a father's solemn charge.

Some Promises—Recall the story of the son who caused David so much grief. In ch. 22 we hear some promises about another son. Listen ! (vs. 9, 10.)

1. A son shall be born to thee.
2. I will give him rest from all his enemies.
3. His name shall be Solomon ("peaceable").
4. I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his day.



5. He shall build a house for My name.
6. He shall be My son.
7. I will be his Father.
8. I will establish the throne of his kingdom.

David's Charge to Solomon—All God's promises came true. The baby boy Solomon was born. On the crown symbol we shall print KING DAVID for the last time. He is now an old man, and has made SOLOMON king in his stead. Soon he will slip away to live in heaven with the God whom he loved and trusted and served. Around the crown place a great many strokes (v. 1). Describe the old king as he stands up before the assembly. He tells the people of his wish to build a house for the Lord. He tells them of God's promise that Solomon should build the temple. (God is particular about the character of the people who do work for Him, vs. 3, 6.) Describe young Solomon (about eighteen years of age) standing beside David who turns to him, saying vs. 9, 10. (Your own dear fathers and mothers have often given you such advice, have they not?)

The Lord Searcheth all Hearts—Within a heart print PERFECT. Above it print SERVE. Also print A WILLING MIND, meaning perfect, true, pure, trustful, all for God. God searches for these qualities in our hearts. If

God looked into your heart this minute, what would He find? What kind of feelings?

God is to be Sought—Although God has promised to be with us, we must seek Him. He will always be found. If we forsake Him, He will cast us off forever.

For the Young—"Those that seek me early shall find me," Prov. 8 : 17.

Golden Text—Explain the rest of the verse and the verse following. God knew just what Solomon could do, and just what help he needed to do God's work. (God knows your strength.)

My Father Knows—"Johnnie, don't you think you have got as much as you can carry?" said Frank to his brother, who was standing with open arms receiving the bundles his father was placing upon them. "You've got more than you can carry now." "Never mind," said Johnnie, in a happy voice, "father knows how much I can carry." Our Father in heaven knows just how much each of his children can carry, what each little one can do,—and He will not overload them.

What I Have Learned—I should trust my father's God.

Blackboard—On the crown print KING DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON. Outline a heart.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

GOD'S PROMISES OUR DUTY

In the lesson we have a great promise, which God made to Solomon. Bring out by questions the different parts of the promise, the throne of his father, the privilege of building God's house, being called God's Son, having an enduring kingdom. Then ask what was expected of Solomon—to know God and serve Him. Point out the great "if" in v. 9. Impress the thought that Solomon's prosperity depended upon his obedience. Get the scholars to mention some of God's PROMISES to us, for example, the promise of forgiveness in 1 John 1 : 9. What is required of us, in order to get forgiveness? To "confess our sins." This is OUR DUTY. Now, alongside of every divine promise there lies a duty for us. Unless we are faithful to our duty, we cannot expect God's promises to be fulfilled. But no one ever did the duty God required of him and then found God to fail in keeping His promise. He always does His part, when we do ours.

Rev. Prof. Falconer
Halifax N.S.

Rev. Prof. Scrimger
Montreal

Teacher Training Course

Presbyterian Church in Canada

Under the Direction of the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee

DEPARTMENT OF SCRIPTURE—I. The Books of the Old Testament; II. Old Testament Geography and Institutions.

N.B.—It is recommended that the Revised Version be consulted in these studies.

LESSON V.

THE PENTATEUCH—ITS ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

ITS ORIGIN—All the books of this collection have usually been attributed to Moses by both Jews and Christians. The books themselves nowhere distinctly claim to have been written by him, though there are passages which undoubtedly suggest his authorship of certain parts at least. (See Ex. 17 : 14 ; 34 : 27, 28 ; Num. 33 : 2 ; Deut. 1 : 1, etc.)

There are some things, however, which make it quite certain that Moses cannot very well have left the Pentateuch exactly in the form in which we have it. We find, for example, (a) An account of Moses' own death, Deut. ch. 34 ; (b) Allusions to events in the history of Israel subsequent to his death, such as the expulsion of the Canaanites (Lev. 18 : 28), and the reign of kings in Israel (Gen. 36 : 31) ; (c) Geographical descriptions such as would be natural only to one living in Palestine, where Moses never was—thus, "beyond Jordan," for the country east of the Jordan (Gen. 50 : 10, Num. 22 : 1) ; (d) Names given to places which came into use only after Moses' time, such as Hebron, (Gen. 23 : 2), and Dan, Gen. 14 : 14 (compare Judges 18 : 29).

There has been some editing, and the question is how much? Very many claim that the amount of editing is only trivial, a few notes to make the narrative more intelligible to readers of a later time.

Others claim that over and above these small matters, there are signs which show that the Pentateuch is a highly composite work by many writers, of whom Moses may possibly have been the earliest, and that it cannot have come into its present form before the time of Ezra. This revolutionary view is based on two general contentions :

(a) That the history all through is a combination of at least two documents or classes of documents dove-tailed into each other and still distinguishable by various marks, such as the style, theological attitude, and the different names given to God. In many cases the narrative is double.

(b) That the legislation is not a unit or the product of one age, but that at least five different codes can be distinguished, the earliest possibly Mosaic, the others belonging to later dates, each more complex than those before and not always agreeing in details.

The question of the historical value of the Pentateuch is largely independent of that of authorship. It must be remembered that even Moses was as far removed in time from Adam and some of the antediluvian patriarchs as we are from Abraham.

THE PURPOSE—On any view of its origin, the purpose of the collection was fourfold :

(1) To furnish a book of reference for the law in the administration of justice.

(2) To regulate religious services and festivals.

(3) To supply a basis in the story of Creation for monotheism as the religion of the nation.

(4) To furnish a motive for a strict adherence to that faith, in the history of God's gracious dealings with men, and especially with Israel in delivering them from Egyptian bondage.

THE FIVE-FOLD DIVISION—"The division into five distinct books is mentioned by Josephus. It may have originated with the Greek translators or been ancient. But whether the Septuagint translators adopted or originated this five-fold division, from them at least emanated the modern names—Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy."

LESSON VI.**JOSHUA**

CONTENTS—It gives an account of the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites and of the leading events down to the time of Joshua's death. It gives also in full detail the geographical boundaries of the districts allotted to the various tribes.

OBJECT—The purpose of the book was to stimulate the national spirit by the story of past victories, and to strengthen the people's devotion to Jehovah by showing how they had been enabled to overcome their enemies through divine help, rather than through their own prowess. (See Psalm 44 : 1-3.)

AUTHORSHIP—The author is wholly unknown. For though Jewish tradition ascribes it to Joshua, this is altogether improbable, as events are referred to which occurred after his death. Even as to the time of its composition there is the same difference of opinion as there is regarding the Pentateuch, and the discussion turns upon much the same points. Those who accept the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch usually take Joshua as being contemporary or nearly so with Joshua's time. Those who make the Pentateuch a comparatively late compilation would bring Joshua down to a correspondingly late date.

II. JUDGES

CONTENTS—This book gives the only history which has survived of the period between Joshua and Samuel, covering about 400 years. It is by no means a complete or even continuous history, but is made up of a series of episodes of the most striking character, such as are most likely to have been handed down in song or story from one generation to another; for example, Deborah's victory over Sisera, Gideon's victory over the Midianites, Samson's prodigies of strength, etc. For the most part these episodes seem to be given in chronological order. At the beginning of the book, however, there is a section treating of the history of the whole period and characterizing it in a general way, chs. 1 and 2.

PURPOSE—The history is given not for its own sake but with a manifest purpose, to show the connection between the religion of the nation and its prosperity. (See chs.

2 : 11-14 ; 3 : 7, 8 ; 4 : 1-3, etc.) This principle was one of the fundamental axioms of the prophetic order, and is the key to much of their teaching.

AUTHORSHIP—The book tells us nothing about its authorship. Jewish tradition ascribes it to Samuel. It was almost certainly compiled by some member of the prophetic order.

III. RUTH

CONTENTS—This gives another episode of the period of the Judges, but of a different character from those in the preceding book. It tells how a family of Judah in a time of famine had migrated to Moab, and how Ruth, the widow of one of the sons, returned with her widowed mother-in-law, Naomi, and married Boaz, a wealthy farmer of Bethlehem. From them King David was descended.

OBJECT—On this there are two quite distinct views : one, that it was written to reconcile the Moabites to the rule of David by showing that he had Moabite blood in his veins ; the other, that it was written after the exile, as a protest against Ezra's effort to prevent all foreign intermarriages, showing that even the royal family was sprung from such a union. The difficulty with this latter view is to explain how the book ever got into the Canon. Ezra's influence and ideas dominated all subsequent Judaism. On either view the authorship is unknown.

LESSON VII.**I. AND II. SAMUEL**

These two books were originally one, The division was probably made first in the Greek Septuagint translation. The narrative is continuous.

CONTENTS—This double book gives the history of about 100 years, beginning with the birth of Samuel in the time of Eli and coming down to the end of David's reign, covering thus the period of the consolidation of the nation as a kingdom. The chief agent in bringing about that consolidation is Samuel, who revives the national religion as the best means of reviving the national life, and who guides the nation in the choice of its first two kings, while he himself retires from the foremost place and occupies himself during his later years in organizing the prophets as

a teaching or preaching order. By far the greater portion of the narrative, however, is taken up with the story of David's life, which is given with great detail, especially before his coming to the throne. It was evidently written by some one who was most friendly to David and who was anxious to represent him as the chosen of God to rule over His people. David is not, indeed, represented as perfect, but his character is at great length contrasted with that of Saul, and his generous heroism is held up for admiration. Prominence is also given to the fact that he was formally anointed by Samuel as king in Saul's place.

OBJECT—The main object of the books seems to be to strengthen the hold of the house of David on the nation. Not only is David the hero, but in 2 Sam. 7: 12-16 we have Nathan's famous prediction as to the perpetuity of his family in the sovereignty of the nation.

AUTHORSHIP—The books make no statement as to their author. But 1 Chron. 29: 29 quotes a history of David written by Samuel, Nathan and Gad, the three heads of the prophetic order in David's time. If this be not the book referred to, it is probably the source from which the materials of our book were drawn.

LESSON VIII.

THE SABBATH

This was the Hebrew name for the seventh day of the week. The root meaning of the word was "cessation," and the Sabbath was therefore the day of rest. It became the centre of the most distinctive features of Hebrew religious life.

ORIGIN OF THE SABBATH—The first scriptural notice of the Sabbath is in the account of the creation, Gen. 2: 3, and so it has been argued that the institution is as old as mankind, that it is not of Mosaic origin and is universal in its obligation. On the other hand, while the weekly division of time is clearly indicated in the story of the flood and the life of Jacob, nothing is said of the law of the Sabbath in the lives of the patriarchs, and it is only with the giving of the manna that we have clear evidence of its observance, Ex. 16: 23-29. Shortly

afterwards the Fourth Commandment was published, but it is probable from the above incident that it was merely a renewal of a law that already existed.

MANNER OF ITS OBSERVANCE—The Fourth Commandment forbids all work. But obviously action of some sort is inseparable from waking life. The Mosaic legislation by which the Sabbath law was emphasized and developed specified certain forbidden acts, such as the lighting of a fire, Ex. 35: 1-3. To others the day gave added prominence. The daily sacrifices were increased and the priests renewed the shewbread. Throughout the land, too, a similar aspect was given to the day. It does not appear that at first there was didactic instruction, but in the course of time people assembled to hear the prophets, and in later times they gathered in the synagogues for worship.

The Hebrews did not always keep the laws of the Sabbath. Jeremiah complains of their habitual violation (Jer. 17: 21-27), and Isaiah warns against their transgression. But the Exile cured all such tendencies and henceforth there could be no charge of neglect. Indeed so faithful were the Jews, that they refused to defend themselves from attack on the Sabbath and both Pompey and Titus took advantage of their scruples to seize Jerusalem.

PURPOSE OF THE SABBATH—"The Sabbath was made for man," Mark 2: 27. Its aim was beneficent. Even to stranger within the gate upon whom the burden might naturally be laid rest was secured. This day, as the other sabbatic periods, also enforced the truth that neither a man's time nor his land was his own.

MOTIVES FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH—The Fourth Commandment throws the reason back upon Jehovah's rest from the work of creation, the motive being humanitarian. Deut. 5: 15 assigns another reason, the deliverance from Egypt, the motive being distinctively religious.

NOTE.—Lesson IX., being the fifth lesson for November, will be given in THE TEACHER'S MONTHLY, December, which is mailed in time for the last Sabbath in November.

***AN ORDER OF SERVICE: Fourth Quarter**

OPENING EXERCISES

I. SILENCE.

II. *Superintendent.* O come, let us sing unto the Lord : let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.

School. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.

III. SINGING.

Pleasant are Thy courts above,
In the land of light and love,
Pleasant are Thy courts below,
In this land of sin and woe.
O, my spirit longs and fains
For the converse of Thy saints,
For the brightness of Thy face,
For Thy fulness, God of grace!

Hymn 389, Book of Praise

IV. PRAYER, closing with the Lord's Prayer.

V. SINGING. Psalm or Hymn selected.

VI. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. Ps. 24 : 3-5 and 7-10.

Superintendent. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place.

School. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

Superintendent. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

School. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Superintendent. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

School. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in?

Superintendent. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.

VII. SINGING.

All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
To crown Him Lord of all.

Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Hymn 90, Book of Praise

VIII. READING OF LESSON PASSAGE.

IX. SINGING. Psalm or Hymn selected.

CLASS WORK

[Let this be entirely undisturbed by Secretary's or Librarian's distributions, or otherwise.]

I. ROLL CALL.

II. OFFERING, which may be taken in a class envelope, or class and report envelope.

III. MEMORY VERSES AND CATECHISM.

IV. LESSON STUDY.

CLOSING EXERCISES

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS.

II. SINGING. Hymn selected.

III. REVIEW FROM SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK; which may include recitation in concert of Catechism, Lesson Title, Golden Text, Memory Verses and Heads of Lesson Plan.

IV. SINGING.

Joy to the world! the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.

Hymn 26, Book of Praise

V. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. Luke 2 : 30-32.

Superintendent. Mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

School. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

Superintendent. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

VI. BENEDICTION OR CLOSING PRAYER.

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THE BOOK PAGE

Primer on Teaching; with Special Reference to Sunday School Work. By John Adams, M.A., B.Sc., Professor of Education in the University of London. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh. (Upper Canada Tract Society, Toronto.) 129 pages; 20c.

This little book might well be entitled, "How To Do It and Why: by One Who Has Done It, and Therefore Knows"; for a more thoroughly discerning and practical treatment of the subject could scarcely be imagined. We wish that some generous friend would make a present of a copy of it to every Sabbath school teacher, actual and prospective, within our bounds. Failing this, these should hasten to purchase it for themselves. Beginning with a chapter on Child Nature, Professor Adams goes on to the discussion of Ideas and their Relation, Attention and Interest, Class Management, Method in Teaching, and other equally pertinent topics. Difficulties seem to take flight at his touch, and enthusiasm to burn. A genial humor, bubbling up every now and then in unexpected ways, makes pleasant reading of even the most technical parts of the book.

The Crises of the Christ. By G. Campbell Morgan, D.D. Fleming H. Revell Company, Toronto. 477 pages; \$2.00 net.

The writer of this volume is recognized, both in Britain, the land of his birth, and in the United States, the land of his adoption, as a leader in the field of Bible study and evangelistic activity. We

have had many smaller books from Dr. Campbell Morgan's pen. The Crises of the Christ is his first elaborate treatise. Its title is explained by the author's belief, that in the work of Christ, as in all the works of God, there is found a "method of process and crisis." In the career of the divine Man, there are seven events, His birth, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, each of which is the summing up of the past and the beginning of a new movement. The inner meaning of these epochal occasions is unfolded in an original and suggestive fashion. The opening chapters on "the ruin of the race" which made the work of Christ necessary, and the concluding ones on "the redemption of the race" in which that work issued, contain a clear and satisfactory exposition of Bible truth regarding these great topics.

Dawn in the Dark Continent, or Africa and Its Missions. The Duff Missionary Lectures for 1902. By James Stewart, D.D., M.D., African Missionary; with maps by J. G. Bartholomew. Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, Edin. and Lond. 400 pages; \$2.00

No one is better entitled to speak of Africa and its missions than Dr. Stewart, for in the Lovedale Institution, after which Booker Washington's Tuskegee work is in many points modeled, he has given a lifetime of singularly well-directed labor, which his church in Scotland recognized a year or so since by making him the Moderator of its General Assembly. It is out of ripe experience and a very wide study of the

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Further information regarding scholarships, medals, etc., may be obtained from the Calendar, or on application to the Secretary.

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conditions in every part of the Dark Continent that he writes. He begins by shrewdly remarking, "Missionary opinion is now less wanted, and is probably less valued than reliable missionary information"; and the lectures go, accordingly, into large and most instructive detail of the century and more of effort by various Protestant missions of very various languages, creeds and churches. "Two or three things are conspicuous—the unvarnished style, frankness to acknowledge mistakes and failures, unwavering confidence in the sure, if seemingly slow, progress made, and an admirable catholicity, which recognizes the best even in those whose creed and methods are most at variance with his own. We have never, for example, seen the case for Mohammedanism more strongly put—and seldom, it should be added, the case against it. To the mere student of the times, the book will appeal as full of information and broad and statesmanlike in its view of the outlook for that magnificent continent. Mr. Bartholomew's nine beautiful maps are a history, in as many sheets, of African development.

The Call of the Wild. By Jack London. Illustrated by Philip R. Goodwin and Charles Livingstone Bull. George N. Morang & Co., Toronto. 231 pages; price, \$1.50.

The discovery of gold in the Yukon was of great importance to men, but it was also of importance to dogs, for in the grim north, dogs are more to men than mere pets or companions. They are a necessity to those who would journey. The story of Buck, the dog-hero of "The Call of the Wild," is the story of a

sleigh-dog of the Yukon, told by one who has learned through long experience to know not only the hearts and ways of the men of the north, but also the hearts of the dogs. Buck, born in California of a St. Bernard father and a shepherd dog mother, was taken north in the early days of the Klondike rush, and the story of his life on the trail; of his prowess in strength and savage cunning; of his passionate devotion to the "old timer" who had saved his life; and of how finally he could no longer resist the old instincts tugging at his heart, and calling him to return to wild life—all these form a story whose strength and fascination hold one to the end. The best dog story since "Bob, son of Battle" was the verdict of one lover of dogs; and it is very high praise. The illustrations, by well-known animal artists, enter thoroughly into the spirit of the book.

The Temptation of Jesus. By A. Morris Stewart, M. A. Fleming H. Revell Company, Toronto. 230 pages; \$1.25 net.

A double interest attaches to the wilderness temptation of Jesus. We may regard it as one of the most thrilling chapters in His own spiritual experience. Unless we understand it, we cannot know Him. Or it may be looked upon as a conflict essentially the same as that which we ourselves are called to wage. In either aspects its importance is obvious. What Mr. Stewart has done, is to give a plain straightforward exposition of our Lord's three-fold temptation, both as an event in the history of His own inner life and as related to us. There is much solid instruction in this book, and it is clear and readable.

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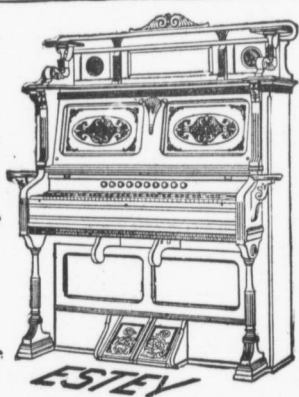
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