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THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES.

Various attempts have been made to adjust the chronology of the time of the judges, founded upon statements in different parts of Scripture. In 1 Kings 6: 1 the period from the Exodus to the foundation of the Temple is said to be 480 years; and many have adjusted all the intervening chronology to this date. But others disregard that passage, which they deem an interpolation, for the following reasons: 1. There is a variation in the numbers between the Hebrew and the Septuagint, and no date is assigned in the parallel passage in 2 Chr. 3: 2. 2. Josephus, Theophilus and Origen, in treating of the subject, appear to have been in ignorance of this computation, which is first mentioned in the fourth century by Eusebius, though in his latest works he does not adopt it. 3. It is directly opposed to the language of Paul, who assigns 450 years to the time between the division of Canaan and Samuel the prophet (Acts 13: 20). 4. It would require that many of the times of servitude should be included in the government of the judges (apparently in opposition to the repeated statements that "the land had rest"), and that several of these should be regarded as contemporaneous. Still there is not a perfect agreement among these chronologers. A table of the whole era is subjoined, exhibiting the dates of Usher, and Hales, two eminent chronologists in Scripture history, as representing the extremes of opinion on the question. The most probable theory fixes the length of the period at about 30 years below that assigned by Hales.

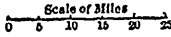
	Usher.	Hales.
Departure from Egypt.....	B. C. 1491	1648
Death of Moses.....	1451	1608
Death of Joshua.....	1426	1582
Interval.....	10 yrs.	1572
Servitude—Mesopotamia.....	8 "	1394
First Judge—Othniel.....	40 "	1354
Servitude—Moab.....	18 "	1336
Second and third Judges, Ehud and Shamgar.....	80 "	1316
Servitude—Canaan.....	20 "	1296
Fourth Judge—Barak (Deborah).....	40 "	1256
Servitude—Midian.....	7 "	1249
Fifth Judge—Gideon.....	40 "	1209
Sixth and seventh Judges—Tola and Jair.....	48 "	1161
Servitude—Ammon.....	18 "	1143
Eighth Judge—Jephtha (in Gilead).....	6 "	1137
Ninth, tenth and eleventh Judges—Ibzan, Elon and Abdon.....	25 "	1120
Servitude—Philistines.....	20 "	1140
Twelfth Judge—Samson.....	1120	1182
Thirteenth Judge—Eli.....	1141	1142
Servitude—Philistines.....	1120	1122
Fourteenth Judge—Samuel.....	1095	1110
First King—Saul.....	40 yrs.	1056
Second King—David.....	40 "	1015
Temple Founded.....	1012	1027
Time between the Exodus and the founding of the temple....	480	621

(Green's Introduction).

MAP OF THE HOLY LAND

Corrected by
F. B. DE HAAS, D. D.

1880.



TRIBAL REFERENCES.

I. JUDAH.

1. Nacon
2. Carmel
3. Juttah
4. Dunah
6. Tekoa
6. Libnah
7. Lechish
8. Haror
9. Makkadah
10. Adullam Cave

II. SIMEON.

III. BENJAMIN.

1. Rimmon
2. Gibeon
3. Michmah
4. Gaba
4. Anathoth
5. Nob
7. Gibeah
8. Mirph

IV. DAN.

V. EPHRAIM.

VI. MANASSEH.

VII. ZEBULON.

VIII. ISSACHAR.

IX. ASHER.

X. NAPHTALI.

XI. MANASSEH.

XII. GAD.

XIII. REUBEN.

LESSON I—October 6th, 1896.

The Time of the Judges. JUDGES 2: 1-12, 16.

(Commit to memory verses 11, 12 and 16).

GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord raised up judges, which delivered them." Judges 2: 16.

PROVE THAT: God is merciful to the penitent. Mal. 3: 7.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Review Quests. 1-3.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 8, 89, 14, 88.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The Time of the Judges. Judges 2: 1-10. *Tuesday.* The Time of the Judges. Judges 2: 11-17. *Wednesday.* A sad history. Judges 2: 18-23. *Thursday.* Command and warning. Num. 33: 50-56. *Friday.* Forsaking God. Jer. 2: 4-13. *Saturday.* Folly of disobedience. Ps. 81: 8-16. *Sabbath.* Unfaithfulness. Ps. 106: 34-45. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. The book of Judges contains the history of the Israelites from the death of Joshua to the birth of Samuel. It illustrates the sad consequences of not "wholly following the Lord." The Canaanites were not all driven out, and those who remained corrupted the people so that they frequently lapsed into idolatry of the grossest kind. When they repented, after suffering divine chastisement, God raised up "Judges," leaders of ability and courage, who delivered them from their oppressors and restored his worship. The book of Judges gives an account of this transition time in the history of England. It stretches from the death of Joshua to that of Samson, and covers a period variously estimated at from 300 to 400 years.

LESSON PLAN. I. A Penitent People. vs. 1-5. II. Forgetful Descendants. vs. 6-10. III. A Merciful God. vs. 11, 12, 16.

I. A PENITENT PEOPLE. 1. **The Angel of the Lord** (R. V.)—This is not a prophet or some other earthly messenger of Jehovah but the Angel of the Lord who is of one essence with God. (Keil). This is inferred from the authoritative manner in which he speaks (Gen. 16: 7, 9, 11; 22: 11; Ex. 3: 1-6). Compare ch. 6: 8 with 6: 11. Those who understand the angel, or "messenger," to have been a prophet, suggest that it may have been Phinehas. **From Gilgal**—It was there that he had last appeared (Josh. 5: 13-15); there they had renewed the covenant and "rolled away" the reproach of Egypt; there they had celebrated their first Passover, and exchanged the manna for the new corn of the land; there the memorial stones were erected and there they had solemnly recorded their renewed consecration to Jehovah before the aged Joshua. How the Angel manifested his course we cannot tell. It may have been by a cloud as of old, or a trail of light like the star which guided the wise men to Bethlehem. He made himself visible at a distance in 1 Chr. 21: 15, 16 (2 Chr. 3: 1). **Bochim**—This name does not occur again. Since the people were assembled for a religious purpose (verse 5) it is probable that it is merely a special title for Shiloh where the tabernacle was. **I will never break my covenant with you**—Provided you are true and faithful to yours. The first breach of covenant shall never be laid to my charge. (Bush). (Gen. 17: 7, Ex. 6: 4; Mic. 7: 20; Luke 1: 55, 72-75).

2. **League**—R. V. "covenant" (Ex. 23: 32; Deut. 7: 2, 3; Josh. 9: 7, 12; 23:

12). Because they were in covenant with Jehovah. "The command to every follower of Christ is to make no league with our spiritual enemies. Our corrupt affections and lusts are not to be spared. It is not sufficient to make them pay tribute, we must crucify and slay them; we must shew them no mercy; our hatred of them must be irreconcilable and incessant." (Bush). **Break down their altars** (R. V.)—Ex. 34: 23; Deut. 7: 5; 12: 3. Nothing must remain to tempt them to idolatry. **Why have ye done this?**—Better, "what is this that ye have done." An exclamation of sorrowful surprise. They had ceased from their efforts to drive out the Canaanites and had made treaties with them.

3. **I also said**—Num. 33: 55; Josh. 23: 13. The expulsion of these nations was to be a gradual process (Ex. 23: 29, 30; Deut. 7: 22) but it was not to cease until all were driven out. "It is not an innocent thing to suffer the presence of sin and give it equal rights." (Cassel). **As thorns in your sides**—R. V. marg. "shall be adversaries unto you." The words "as thorns" are inserted by our translators from Num. 33: 55; Josh. 23: 13, and the word for "sides" should be, some think, "adversaries." **A snare unto you**—The attractions of idolatry would overcome their steadfastness. "Familiarity blunts aversion, smooths away contrarities, removes differences, impairs obedience." (Cassel). The only safe course is to put temptation out of the way (Ex. 23: 33; 34: 12; Deut. 7: 16; Ps. 106: 36).

4. **Lifted up their voice and wept**—We have probably but a mere outline of the

angel's address. There was very deep and real penitence. They had been led astray by weak faith and neglect of duty. They had not realized their folly and danger. Words so full of sorrowing love as well as sharp reproof went to their hearts. But still they did not "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," they allowed the heathen altars to remain. "Though they now shewed signs of deep abasement and sorrow of spirit, yet we do not find, from the ensuing history, that any general or permanent reformation took place; though they now relented, they soon relapsed, and involved themselves afresh and still more deeply in the guilt of defection and idolatry." (Bush). "Many are melted under the word that harden again before they are cast in a new mould." (Henry).

5. Bochim—*The weepers*. It may have been some spot in or near Shiloh like "the Jews wailing place" in Jerusalem, where every Friday the Jews pray and lament. **They sacrificed there**—"They had recourse to the blood of sprinkling for the remission of their sin. They did not hope to pacify their offended God with tears only. Tears, even if they were to flow in rivers, could never wash away sin. The blood of atonement is indispensable, without which there is no remission." (Bush).

II. FORGETFUL DESCENDENTS. 6. **When Joshua had let the people go**—After the solemn renewal of the covenant (Josh. 24: 28-31). These words are repeated here for the sake of connection and to introduce the history of the successive declensions of Israel. "After being so happily fixed in their several inheritances and having commenced their settlement in Canaan under such favorable auspices, it greatly aggravated their sin, that they should afterwards have fallen away from God, and so grievously disappointed the promise which their fair beginnings held out." (Bush).

7. This verse contains the record of some 40 or 50 years. One cannot be struck with the remarkable influence which Joshua and the pious men who surrounded him exercised upon their generation. For half a century he was able to keep the fickle people steadfast in their allegiance to the God of their fathers. By his own influence while he lived, and after his death by the influence of those whom he had trained during his lifetime, the contagion of idolatry was checked, and the service of God maintained. The light of a genuine Christian life is a light which will make itself seen wherever it shines. In the home, be it palace or cottage, in the village street, in the town court, in the shop, in the factory, in the camp, in the ship, in the social circle, be it humble or be it exalted, be it rude or be it refined, be it unlettered or be it literary and scientific, the influence of a pure, humble, vigorous, devout Christian life must be felt. It must be a power wherever it is. How careful we should be to check any action, or course of action, which

may weaken or impede such influence. An outbreak of temper, a single grasping or unscrupulous action, a single step in the path of selfishness, or uncharitable disregard of another's feelings or interests, may undo the effect of many good words and good works. (Hervey).

8. The servant of the Lord—A title of nobility in God's kingdom. Bestowed also upon Moses (Rev. 15: 3), Daniel (Dan. 6: 20), Paul (Titus 1: 1) and James (James 1: 1). **A hundred and ten years old**—The age of Joseph when he died (Gen. 50: 26).

9. Timnath-heres—(*Portion of the sun*). Called in Josh. 24: 30, Timnath-serah—(*Portion of abundance*). The name may have been given to it from some memorial there of the sun standing still at the command of Joshua (Josh. 10: 12, 13). *Kefi-Haris*, nine miles south of Shechem, is the site pointed out by Jewish tradition. Of the location of Gaash nothing is known.

10. Another generation—"The slackness in exterminating the Canaanites, of which the first chapter has given an account, was accompanied by a slackness in the godly training of their own children." (Douglas). They had not fought for their liberties and homes and so did not know their worth. Let us beware of lightly esteeming the faith and freedom which we possess. **Knew not the Lord**—"Had no practical or experimental knowledge of him; no deep or lively impression of his goodness; no affectionate, grateful, or devout sense of the wondrous manifestations of his power in their behalf." (Bush). The memory of God's great works gradually faded away, and, with this memory, their influence upon the hearts of the people. They had no independent strength, no power to stand firm by themselves. Their religion, their good conduct depended upon another. He was the buttress that supported them; when the buttress was taken away they fell. Hence the caution not to trust in mere influence, but to look well to the foundations of our own faith. The influence of another man is no substitute for a converted heart, and for soundness in faith and love. St. Paul well knew the difference in some of his followers when he was present and when he was absent, and so would have their faith stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. It behoves us all to take care of our real principles of action, to examine ourselves, to prove our own selves, whether we be in the faith, whether Christ be really formed in us, whether we are seeking only to please those who have influence over us, or to please God. Else that may happen to us which happened to the Israelites, our upright Christian walk will last as long as we have the support of the good and strong, and no longer. We shall serve the Lord for a while only, and end by serving Baalim and Ashtaroth. The sober Christian life will be exchanged for folly and dissipation, and the pure creed degenerate into superstition or unbelief. (Hervey).

III. A MERCIFUL GOD. 11. Did evil in the sight of the Lord—R. V. "that which was evil," lit. "the evil," the usual phrase for "fell into idolatry." "Neglect of parental instruction and evil companionship were the two principal causes of the lamentable state of things here described." (Gr. n). Served Baalim—Plural of Baal, (*lords*) "god's many and lord's many" had dominion over them. Baal was the god of the sun and his impure worship was the type of all forms of heathenism. Baal worship was abandoned in the days of Samuel (1 Sam. 7: 4) but reappeared in Israel under Ahab.

12. God's anger is his just indignation against wickedness and ingratitude. If God is infinitely good and holy, and if he knows the full misery that sin has brought into his creation, with what other sentiment can he regard sin but with that of hatred and indignation? Sin excites a holy anger in his mind, and his hand must be stretched out to punish and to check. If we reflect calmly we must see that both of these are inevitable. God must look upon sin with displeasure, and he must act upon that displeasure. Evil must excite displeasure in one that is perfectly good, and in the moral Governor of the universe such displeasure cannot be quiescent and impotent, it must be active and effective. Reason

teaches us so, and revelation sanctions, enlarges, and enforces the lesson. (Hervey).

16. Nevertheless—Here a most gracious word. For all their sin God was ready to forgive them every time. It is said in praise of English soldiers that they did not know when they were beaten. How much truer is this of God and his people! The most appalling apostasy has not daunted our heavenly Father, or driven him utterly away from his world. "When sin abounded there did grace much more abound." Some of the best of men and most comforting of doctrines were born in the ages of spiritual darkness. He has never left himself without a witness. The course of revelation is never stopped. The succession of prophets, apostles, and martyrs is never interrupted. The servants of God in Old Testament times might be driven away or destroyed, but they, being dead, yet speak, and in the fulness of time he sends his Son; he, too, may be crucified, but nevertheless the Father will send the Comforter in his name. (Muir). The Lord raised up—By endowing them with the necessary qualities, and inwardly prompting them by his Spirit to undertake the work. Judges—They were raised up to meet a special emergency. They had no royal or military authority. Their duty was simply to re-establish the law of God.

LESSONS. 1. We should make no compromise with evil. 2. True repentance shews itself in forsaking sin. 3. Remember the blessings we have through the faith of our ancestors. 4. Sin carries with it its own punishment. 5. God is ever ready to pardon and deliver.

THE BLACKBOARD.

Speak first of the sorrow which God feels when we sin against him. He pleads with us by his Holy Spirit and the lips of our friends. Happy are we if we then repent.

Then shew that God cannot but be angry with sin. He would not be a God of love if he did not hate evil. Yet he does not hate the sinner. "Herein is love," &c. (1 John 4: 10; Rom. 5: 8).

Finally point out how ready God is to hear and pardon the penitent. When his chastisement has brought us to a sense of our sin he sends deliverance.

MAN'S

GOD'S

SIN.

SORROW.

EVIL.

ANGER.

MISERY.

MERCY.

"God so loved the world."

LESSON II—October 13th, 1895.

The Triumph of Gideon. JUDGES 7: 13-23.

(Commit to memory verses 19, 20).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." Isa. 27: 3.

PROVE THAT—We should war a good warfare. Eph. 6: 13.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Review Quests. 4-6.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 130, 110, 120, 117.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Triumph of Gideon. Judges 7: 13-23. *Tuesday.* Prayer in danger. Judges 6: 1-10. *Wednesday.* Gideon's commission. Judges 6: 11-21. *Thursday.* Gideon assured. Judges 6: 33-40. *Friday.* Testing for service. Judges 7: 1-12. *Saturday.* Strength in weakness. 1 Cor. 1: 20-31. *Sabbath.* God the Helper. Ps. 27. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. About 200 years have passed since the death of Joshua. Three times the Israelites had lapsed into idolatry and three times they had been punished by subjection to their enemies. On their repentance God raised up deliverers for them. *Othniel* broke the yoke of Mesopotamia; *Ehud* and *Shamgar* that of Moab; *Deborah* and *Barak* that of Jabin and Sisera, and our lesson tells of the triumph of *Gideon* over the Midianites.

For seven years the Midianites had oppressed the land. The people were driven off the fertile plains to the hill country where they lived in abject poverty and fear. When they "cried unto the Lord" he sent an angel to Gideon commanding him to "save Israel from the hand of the Midianites." Assuring himself of the divine character of the call, Gideon gathered an army, which was reduced, by instructions from God himself, to 300, and prepared to attack the host of Midian which was "as the sand beside the seaside for multitude."

LESSON PLAN. I. God's Message. vs. 13-15. II. God's Army. vs. 16-20. III. God's Victory. vs. 21-23.

I. GOD'S MESSAGE. 13. When Gideon was come—The command was given to Gideon to attack the camp of the Midianites with his 300 picked men, (verse 9), but his timid and distrustful disposition required encouragement. A "sign" was given him before he asked for it. He was told to go and reconnoitre the camp of the enemy, accompanied only by his armor-bearer, Phurah, and he would discover something that would convince him that God would indeed fight for Israel. **A dream**—Those are very foolish who pretend to find a meaning for the future in ordinary dreams, yet God has often used dreams as a means of communicating with men, not only with his true worshippers, but even with heathen (Gen. 20: 3; 28: 12; 31: 11, 24; 37: 6-11; 40: 8; 41: 1; Num. 12: 6; 1 Kings 3: 5; Dan. 2: 1; 4: 5). **A cake of barley bread**—A circular cake, baked upon coals, or in an oven consisting of a hole in the ground filled with hot ashes. It was the usual food of the poor, and therefore an apt symbol of the impoverished Israelites. **Tumbled**—rather "rolled itself" like a wheel. Gideon was encamped upon the hill Moreh, and the Midianites were spread out in the valley below. **The tent (R. V.)**—i. e. the tent of the commander. Others understand this as the collective singular used for the plural. "The rolling loaf strikes one tent after another "like a ball among ninepins," and knocks them all flat. **The tent lay along**—"By this the narrator recapitulates, as it were the falling of the several tents, which in the vivid dream vision, in which all notions of time and space are forgotten, appeared like the downfall of a single tent" (Cassel).

14. His fellow—Lit. "His neighbor,"—his comrade. This is nothing else—Both the dream and the interpretation were from God, yet dreams are but the reflections of our waking thoughts, and these Midianites disclose the alarm which filled the minds of their host. "The presentiment that God had delivered

Midian into Gideon's hand is exactly like the terror in the minds of the Canaanites which preceded the arrival of Joshua. (Ex. 15: 14, 15; 23: 27; Deut. 2: 25; 11: 25; Josh. 2: 9-11; 5: 1)" (Hervey). "The frame of mind in which the interpretation originates is significant. For there exists no visible ground for thinking it possible that, notwithstanding their great power, Midian may be delivered into the hands of a man like Gideon. But what does exist is an evil conscience. Through seven years Midian had plundered and trodden Israel. This is the first time, in all these years, that resistance is attempted, that, in spite of distress and commercial weakness, Israel ventures now to begin a war, must of itself excite attention and make an impression. How long had it been since Israel had unfurled the banners of its God? Proud tyranny is already startled at the prospect of resistance from a few faithful ones." (Cassel). **A man of Israel**—Emphatic, "a mighty man of Israel." Gideon had already distinguished himself in the conflicts in which his king-like brothers had fallen (Judges 8: 18, 19). Compare also the angel's greeting (6: 12). **Hath God**—lit. "the God," i. e. "his God," the God of Gideon, not the god of the Midianite.

15. The interpretation—lit. "its breaking," because the solution, or explication of anything obscure and difficult is like breaking the shell of a nut and getting at the kernel within. (Bush). **He worshipped**—"The effect upon Gideon was like magic. He not only learnt the state of panic in which the Midianites were, but he had a further certainty that God was with him. His simple piety and adoring gratitude threw him at once upon his knees to thank God, and to cast himself anew upon his strength with undoubting trust." (Hervey). "To hear himself called a barley-cake troubled him not, when he heard withal that his rolling down the hill should break the tents of Midian. It matters not how

base we be thought so we be victorious, the soul that hath received full confirmation of God in the assurance of his salvation, cannot but bow the knee, and by gestures of body tell how it is ravished." (Bp. Hall). **Hath delivered**—In his holy confidence he speaks of the enemy as already defeated. (Terry). Gideon did well to be sure that God commanded before he would obey. There is not one word of censure for him in the narrative. To accept as the word of God without sufficient evidence any impression, or impulse, or vision, or dream, or interpretation of Scripture, is not a proof of a strong faith, but an evidence of a weak and rash, and credulous mind. But, when the command is plain, true faith hesitates no longer, obedience is prompt, cheerful, fearless. So it must be with us. The sacrifices which we may be called upon to make because of a conscientious obedience to the word of God are not to be compared with the risk run by Gideon—perhaps only the sacrifice of some gratification to our vanity, or some addition to our self-esteem, the risk of some loss to our gains, or some check to our haste to get rich—but every such sacrifice made in the spirit of a true faith, and every such risk run in simple trust to the promises of the word of God, will be accepted of God in his Fatherly love, and will help to make us rich in faith, and to secure our place among the heirs of that kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him. (Hervey).

II. GOD'S ARMY. 16. Three hundred men—For the method of selecting these see ch. 7. This diversion was for the purpose of giving them the appearance of a larger number attacking the Midianites on all sides. **Trumpets**—Collected from the whole army (verse 8). Joshua seems to have planned this ruse from the first. **Empty pitchers**—wide mouthed earthenware jars. **Lamps**—R. V. "torches." These were concealed in the jars. "It is curious to find 'lamps and pitchers' in use for a similar purpose at this very day in the streets of Cairo. The *Zabit* or *Agha* of the police carries with him at night a torch which burns, soon after it is lighted, without a flame, excepting when it is waved through the air, when it suddenly blazes forth; it therefore serves the same purpose as our dark lantern. The burning end is sometimes concealed in a small pot or jar, or covered with something else, when not required to give light." (Late). Dr. Thomson remarks in *The Land and the Book* (II. 166) "I have often seen the small oil lamps of the natives carried in a 'pitcher,' or earthen vessel at night."

17. Look on me—Lit. "See from me." Gideon probably explained now fully what they were to do, so that there would be prompt simultaneous action and no confusion. No word of command would be given when the moment came for action, for that might rouse some wakeful Midianite who would alarm the camp.

18. For the Lord and for Gideon (R.

V.)—The words "The sword" are supplied from verse 20 which probably gives the full form of the war cry. It was suggested by the Midianite soldier, but Gideon piously adds the name of Jehovah and puts it first (1 Sam. 17: 47; 2 Chr. 20: 15, 17).

19. The middle watch—From 10 p. m. to 2 a. m. The ancient Israelites divided the night into three watches of four hours each, from sunset to sunrise, i. e. from 6 p. m. to 6 a. m. The first watch, from 6 to 10, is not mentioned in the Old Testament; but we have the middle watch mentioned here (from 10 to 2) and the morning watch (from 2 to 6) in Ex. 14: 24; 1 Sam. 11: 11. According to this (Gideon's attack would have taken place soon after 10 p. m., or towards eleven, the time when the sleep would be the deepest, the watchmen of the first watch having lately fallen into their first sleep. The later Israelites adopted the Roman division of the night into four watches (Matt. 14: 25; Mark 6: 48; cf. Luke 12: 38; Mark 13: 35). (Hervey). **Brake the pitchers**—"Every man probably dashing his pitcher against that of his comrade who stood next him. The effect of this, with the intermingled sound of the trumpets and the shouts of the assailants reverberating on every side of the camp, together with the sudden glare of three hundred torches blazing on the scarcely opened eyes of the Midianites, must indeed have been astounding. As the enemy could not imagine that every Israelite had a trumpet and a light, the noise of so many trumpets, the blaze of so many lights, with the crash of the broken pitchers from different quarters, must have conveyed to their minds the most exaggerated ideas of the numbers by which they were beset. Gideon's army would have been great indeed, if, as the Midianites must have supposed, the numbers of the fighting men had been in proportion to that of the trumpeters. It was mainly in consequence of this erroneous impression that the stratagem succeeded as it did." (Bush). This stratagem, or something similar to it has been frequently employed in warfare.

III. GOD'S VICTORY. 21. They stood—The glare of the torches would prevent the Midianites from seeing whether there were enemies behind them or not. All the Israelites had to do was to stand and shout while God destroyed their enemies for them (Ex. 14: 13, 14; 2 Chr. 20: 17). **All the host ran**—"That is, ran about the camp, hither and thither, in wild confusion, pursuing and pursued by their own men. The 'running' was 'hush distinguished from the 'fleeing,' which was nothing else than the attempt to escape from the place of their encampment. The panic was no doubt greatly increased by the alarm and fright of their numerous camels." (Bush). "These sudden panics were usual among undisciplined hosts (1 Sam. 14: 16, 20; 2 Kings 7: 6, 7; 2 Chr. 20: 23)." (Lias). **Cried**—Shouts of alarm and fear. (Josh. 6: 4; Ex. 14, 13; Isa. 30: 15; 2 Cor. 4: 7).

22. Blew the trumpets—"Hearing the

confusion, the three companies blew their trumpets, probably more loudly than before, to give the impression of a hot pursuit being at hand." (Hervey). The Lord set—In the confusion it was not possible to distinguish friend from foe, and the Midianites, supposing the enemy to be in their midst, turned their swords against one another. The Lord was amongst them fighting for his people. Beth-Shet'tah—(*House of Acacias*). Its site is not known. Zere'rath—Same as Zarthan (*Cooling*) near Succoth, mentioned in Josh. 3: 16; 1 Kings 4: 12; 7: 46. A'bel-meho'lah—(*The meadow of the dance*). Birthplace of Elisha (1 Kings 19: 16), about 10 miles below Bethshan. Tabbath—Its site is not known.

23. The men of Israel—These were the men who had been sent home in the reduction of the army. They were ready for battle and could be quickly summoned. The tribes men-

tioned bordered on the plains of Jezreel. It is noticed that Issachar is not referred to in the whole narrative. Pursued after the Midianites—No pause or rest is observed until the task is completed. So the conflict with sin and the world is to be conducted. Evil habits, unholy practices, false principles have to be tracked out to their last refuges and finally disposed of. It is harder work to live out christianity, than to be converted to it; harder work to follow out in detail, and into practice and life of every day, the great doctrines of righteousness than to understand and explain them intellectually. There is a loud call for vigor, thoroughness, patient continuance in well-doing. (Muir). The overthrow was complete. The leaders were captured and slain, and grateful Israel would have made Gideon king.

LESSONS. 1. God is ready to deliver us from all our enemies. 2. However wisely and prudently, and bravely we may act, we must rely upon God's blessing for success. 3. We need fear nothing if we are on God's side. 4. The enemies of God will be overthrown.

THE BLACKBOARD.

FAITH ENCOURAGED.

FAITH OBEDIENT.

FAITH REWARDED.

BY PAST MERCIES.

ITS WISE PRUDENCE.

WITH SAFETY.

BY DIVINE INSTRUCTIONS.

ITS DEVOUT GRATITUDE.

WITH VICTORY.

BY SPECIAL SIGNS.

ITS CONFIDENT ASSURANCE.

WITH SPOILS.

"This is your victory—even faith."

LESSON III—October 20th, 1895.

Ruth's Choice. RUTH 1: 14-22.

(Commit to memory verses 16, 17).

GOLDEN TEXT: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" Ruth 1: 16.

PROVE THAT—We should make a good choice. Luke 10: 22.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Review Quests. 7-10.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 39, 84, 92, 138.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Ruth's choice. Ruth 1: 14-22. *Tuesday.* Preceding events. Ruth 1: 1-10. *Wednesday.* Finding favor. Ruth 2: 1-12. *Thursday.* Kindness of Boaz. Ruth 2: 13-23. *Friday.* Christ's Friends. John 15: 12-19. *Saturday.* The greatest Love. Eph. 3: 14-21. *Sabbath.* Inseparable Love. Rom. 8: 33-39. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. During the time of the Judges, probably in that of Gideon, there was a famine in Canaan. On account of this Elimelech and his wife Naomi, with their two sons, emigrated from Bethlehem to the land of Moab. There Elimelech died, and his sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. After ten years the sons also died, and Naomi resolved to return to her old home. Her daughters-in-law accompanied her a part of the way, but when the time came to say a final farewell, Ruth refused to leave her.

LESSON PLAN. I. Naomi and Ruth. vs. 1-18. II. Naomi and Bethlehem. vs. 19-22.

I. NAOMI AND RUTH. 14. They lifted up their voice—The two daughters-in-law wept as if instead of two voices there had been but one. (Hervey). Wept again—See verse 9. Ruth, at first proposed to return with Naomi. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law. She did not wait to hear Ruth's decision, or perhaps she knew what it would be. She may have felt that, after all, two of them would be a burden upon Naomi. She loved her country and her gods better than the land of Israel and Jehovah. "Orpah's kiss shewed that she had an affection for Naomi, and was loth to part from her, yet she did not love her well enough to leave her country for her sake. Thus many have value and affection for Christ, and yet fall short of salvation by him, because they cannot find it in their hearts to forsake other things for him. They love him and yet leave him, because they do not love him enough, but love other things better. Thus the young man that went away from Christ went away sorrowful (Matt. 19: 22)." (Henry). Ruth clave unto her—No arguments or entreaties could move her. Her decision was irrevocably made and it was not the creature of the moment. To go back was to renounce the God of her husband and plunge again into the abyss of heathenism out of which Naomi's piety had raised her. Every pure and holy affection of her nature conspired to strengthen her resolve. She lost nothing that she wished to keep. Her people, her country and her God were to be found where Naomi dwelt (Prov. 17: 17; 18: 24).

15. Her people and her gods—No reproach is intended in these words. "Her daughters-in-law had said to her 'we will go with thee to thy people.' It grieves Naomi to be obliged to tell them, with all possible tenderness, that in the sense in which they mean it, this is altogether impossible. It was necessary to intimate to them that a deeper than merely national distinction compels their present parting: that what her sons had done in Moab, was not customary in Israel, that her personal love for them was indeed so great, that she would gladly give them other sons, if she had them, but that the people of Israel was separated from all other nations by the God of Israel. Orpah understood this. Strong as her affection for Naomi was, her natural desire for another resting-place in a husband's house was yet stronger; and as she could not hope for this in Israel, she took leave and went back. For the same reason Naomi speaks more plainly to Ruth: thy sister-in-law returned home to her people and to her god. It is not that we belong to different nations, but that we worship different God's, that separates us here at the gates of Israel." (Cassel). "God wrestled with Jacob with desire to be conquered; so Naomi, no doubt, opposed Ruth, hoping and wishing that she herself might be foiled." (Fuller). Naomi wastesting Ruth. Com. Luke 14: 26-33. (Job 24: 15, 19; 2 Kings 2: 2; Luke 24: 28).

16. Entreat me not to leave thee—A

beautiful and touching appeal of a brave and loving daughter. She had counted the cost and her heart's desire was to live and die a worshipper of the true God. The piety of Naomi had won her affections and commended to her the God whom she worshipped. "Like David's lament over Jonathan Ruth's words have sunk deep into the human heart. As an expression of the tenderest and most faithful friendship they are univalued. The simple dignity of the iteration in varying phrase till the climax is reached beyond which no promise could go, the quiet fervor of the feeling, the thought which seems to have almost a Christian depth—all are beautiful pathetic, noble. From this moment a charm lingers about Ruth and she becomes dearer to us than any woman of whom the Hebrew records tell." (Watson). "Ruth's passionate burst of tenderness is immortal. It has put into fitting words for all generations the deepest thoughts of loving hearts, and comes to us over all the centuries between as warm and living as when it welled up from that gentle heroic soul." (Maclaren). Thy God my God—"Since the God of Israel is the true ground of all the love which she felt for her Israelitish friends, it follows that her confession of him is the keystone of her vow." (Cassel). (Matt. 5: 16; 2 Cor. 3: 2, 3; 1 Cor. 11: 1; Phil. 3: 17; 4: 9; 1 Pet. 2: 12).

17. There will I be buried—She abandoned even the tombs of her ancestors. No oriental is indifferent regarding his place of burial. All desire to lie beside their kindred. Compare Jacob's wish (Gen. 49: 29-32) and Joseph's (Gen. 50: 25, 26). See also 1 Kings 13: 22. She gives herself up wholly and forever to the people of God. The Lord do so to me—This is the first occurrence of the Hebrew form of a solemn oath (1 Sam. 3: 17; 14: 44; 2 Sam. 3: 9, 35). It is equivalent to "I swear that death, and nothing but death, shall part us." "She puts herself on oath, and invokes his severest penal displeasure if she should suffer anything less uncontrollable than death to part her from her mother-in-law. "So" stands in misty indefiniteness, as a cloudy veil, two-thirds concealing, and one-third revealing, whatever horrid infliction could by dramatic sign be represented or hinted." (Hervey). And more also—Lit. "and so may he add to do." There was first of all a full imprecation and then an additional 'bittock' to lend intensity to the asseveration." (Hervey). By using these words Ruth shews that she was already a worshipper of Jehovah.

18. Steadfastly minded—Ruth was "a fixed star." She had made a deep and calm resolve that would not be repented of (Rom. 14: 7, 8; Isa. 44: 5). Naomi gladly "gave in" and urged her no more. In religion there is no escape from personal decision; no one can drift to salvation with companions or with a church. In art, in literature, in ordinary morality it is possible to possess something without any special effort. We gain it unconsciously by association with the cultured

and refined. But religion demands high and sustained personal effort, the constant action of the will. Those who live by habit and dependance in other matters are not prepared for the strenuous calling of faith, and many a one is kept from the freedom and joy of Christianity not because they are undesired, not because the call of Christ is unheeded, but for want of the power of decision, strength to go forward on a personal quest. Thousands are in the way of saying: Will you go to an evangelistic meeting? Then I will go. Will you take the Sacrament? Then I will. Will you teach in the Sunday School? Then I will. So far something is gained; there is a half decision. But the spiritual life is seen at some point to demand more than this. Even Naomi's advice must not deter Ruth from taking the way to Bethlehem. (Watson).

II. NAOMI AND BETHLEHEM. 19. They two went—They trudged along the two of them. (Hervey). Bethlehem—(*The house of bread*). They had journeyed over fifty miles. This was the early home of Naomi and here she had a small estate (4: 3). All the city was moved about them—"Got into commotion." The same word is translated "rang again" in 1 Sam. 4: 5, and 1 Kings 1: 45. Compare Matt. 21: 10. They said—Naomi though greatly altered in appearance, besides being travel-worn and weary, was recognized. But who was that pensive and beautiful companion by her side? Where was Elimelech? Where was Mahlon and Chilion? Why were they not with their mother? Such would be the sense of the questions started, and keenly talked about and discussed. Then on both the way-farers the finger-marks of poverty, involuntary marks of distress, would be inconcealable. Interest, sympathy, gossip would be alive throughout the little town, especially among the female portion of the population, and loud would be their exclamations of surprise. The verb "they said" is feminine in Hebrew (Hervey). It is probable that they had heard nothing about the family during its more than ten years absence.

20. Naomi—The name means "pleasant" or "gracious." Mara—"bitter," (Ex. 15: 23). Salutations were respectfully addressed to her as she walked along in quest of some humble abode, and when thus spoken

en to by the sympathetic townspeople, she was called, of course, by her old, sweet name. But as it fell in its own rich music on her ears, its original import flashed vividly upon her mind and her heart filled at the contrast which her circumstances presented (Hervey). "Sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier days." For similar plays on names see Gen. 27: 36; Jer. 20: 3; 1 Sam. 25: 25. The Almighty—if she had thought of God as her wise and loving Father it would have mitigated her grief. (Job 27: 2). Hath dealt very bitterly with me—Naomi's theology as indicated here, need not be to its minutest jot endorsed. God was not the only agent with whom she had to do. Much of the bitterness of her lot may have been attributable to her husband, or to herself, and perhaps to forefathers and foremothers. It is not fair to ascribe all the embittering element of things to God. Much rather might the sweetness, which had so often relieved the bitterness, be traced to the hand of Him who is "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, abundant in goodness." (Hewer).

21. Full—Rich in husband, sons and property. Full of the hope of a serene old age, surrounded with her children's children. Love makes life full. They went out poor, from a famine stricken country, seeking bread. Yet Naomi's words are true and beautiful. We are "full" when we have that which makes home, home indeed, and we are poor if, having all wealth of means, we have not love. Well, indeed has it been said that "the golden moments in the stream of life rush past us, and we see nothing but sand; the angels come to visit us, and we only know them when they are gone." We never know how empty life is till the loved ones are lost to us. (Statham). Empty—lit. "Emptily." Bereft of all. Her loneliness none can understand but those who have similarly laid the objects of their affection in the grave. (Job 1: 21). Testified against me—Naomi regarded all her afflictions as marks of God's displeasure against her for going away to Moab. In this she committed the error of Job's friends in regarding all her sufferings as punishment for sin. (Compare 1 Kings 17: 18-20). 22. Barley harvest—About the middle of April.

LESSONS. 1. Ruth's choice. 2. We should so exhibit our religion as to commend it to others. 3. True heroism is shewn by Ruth. 4. God will make all things work together for good to those that love him. 5. Poverty in God's service is better than riches in the service of the world.

THE BLACKBOARD.

FOR NAOMI'S SAKE

RUTH LOST
HOME,
PROSPECTS.
IDOLS.

AND GAINED
LOVE.
POSSESSIONS.
HONOR.

"He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

LESSON IV.—October 27th, 1895.

The Child Samuel. I SAM. 3: 1-13.

(Commit to memory verses 1-4).

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

PROVE THAT—We should listen to what God says. Ps. 119: 130.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Review Quests. 11-13.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 136, 135, 212, 141.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The Child Samuel. I Sam. 3: 1-13. *Tuesday.* Growing in favor. I Sam. 3: 15-21. *Wednesday.* Lent to the Lord. I Sam. 1: 21-28. *Thursday.* His mother's joy. I Sam. 2: 1-11. *Friday.* Judgment on Eli. I Sam. 2: 30-36. *Saturday.* Judgment completed. I Sam. 4: 10-18. *Sabbath.* Youthful knowledge of Scripture. 2 Tim. 2: 1-8. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. Samuel was born probably during the time of Sampson. Dedicated to the service of God by his pious mother, Hannah, he attended upon the aged high priest and judge, Eli, at Shiloh, where the tabernacle stood. At the time of our lesson he was about 12 years of age.

Samuel was born about 1146 B. C. The capture of Troy, of which Homer sings, is said to have taken place B. C. 1184. Thus while the house of Priam was approaching its downfall, that of Eli was hastening to its end. The aged king of Troy must have breathed his last amid the blazing ruins of his capital at the time when Eli was prostrated by the loss of the ark, and when the great judge Samson was performing his last achievement against the Philistines. (Blaikie).

LESSON PLAN. I. Samuel Ministering. vs. 1-6. II. Samuel Called. vs. 7-13.

I. SAMUEL MINISTERING. 1. The child Samuel—(*Heard of God*, ch. 1: 20). Josephus tells us that he was now 12 years of age. This was the age of Jesus when he first went up to the temple (Luke 2: 42). Compare Luke 2: 52 with I Sam. 2: 26). Ministered unto the Lord—His father although called a Ephraimite from his residence in that tribe, really belonged to the tribe of Levi (I Chr. 6: 22, 23, 28), so that he had a right to serve the tabernacle. He performed such services as his age permitted, such as opening the curtained entrances and trimming and lighting the lamps on the seven-branched candlestick in the Holy Place. Children were given a prominent place in the Lord's service three thousand years ago, and this was with the Lord's approval. If they are not given as prominent a place nowadays, it has not been because the Lord has declared against them; for He is the same yesterday and to-day and forever. (S. S. Times). Before Eli—He was Eli's personal attendant, and ready to answer his call by day or night. Eli was both high priest and judge (4: 18). The word of the Lord was precious—R. V. marg. "rare." In the general decay of religion, prophetic communications from God had almost entirely ceased (Amos 8: 11; Ps. 74: 9; Matt. 13: 58). Besides Deborah (Judges 4: 4) we read of but two prophets during the whole period of the judges (Judges 6: 8; I Sam. 2: 27). No open vision—There was no vision published abroad. There was no publicly acknowledged prophet whose "word came to all Israel." (Kirkpatrick). The gift had not been

absolutely withheld, but neither had it been permanently granted as a settled ordinance. It was this which made the revelation of Jehovah's will to Samuel an event so memorable both for the Jewish nation and for the church; for he was called by the providence of God to be the founder of prophecy as an established institution, and henceforward, side by side with the king and priest, the prophet took his place as one of the three factors in the preparation for the coming of him who is a King to rule, a Priest to make atonement, and also a Prophet to teach his people, and also to guide them into all truth. (Payne Smith).

2. To wax dim—His eyesight began to fail through age. This is mentioned to suggest the need he sometimes had of Samuel's attendance during the night. Spectacles were not invented until about 600 years ago. Other cases in which failing eyesight is noticed are Gen. 27: 1; 48: 10; I Sam. 4: 15.

3. And the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down to sleep in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. (R. V.)—The lamp of God—The seven-branched golden candlestick (Ex. 25: 31-37; 2 Chr. 13: 11). It was lighted every evening and would burn till near morning (Lev. 24: 2-4). In Solomon's temple it was superseded by ten separate candlesticks, but in the second temple the single candlestick was restored, It was carried to Rome by Titus after the capture of Jerusalem, and figures conspicuously among the trophies sculptured on his triumphal arch, from which the familiar representation of it is derived. (Kirk-

patrick). In the temple—Not a solid structure of stone, but the sacred tent set up by Moses at Sinai (Ex. 40: 2). David calls it a temple in Ps. 27: 4, 5. Both Samuel and Eli were sleeping in apartments within the precincts of the tabernacle, but not in the holy place itself. Where the ark of God was—This was the box of acacia wood overlaid with gold which contained the tables of stone given to Moses. Its lid was called the Mercy Seat, and over it bowed the cherubim. Here God manifested his presence. (Ex. 25: 10, 21, 22). It is mentioned here as if the voice that called Samuel proceeded from the Holy of Holies where the ark stood.

4. The Lord called—pronouncing his name in an audible voice. Eli, however, does not hear it. It was not meant for him. The Septuagint version, made before the time of Christ, reads, "The Lord called: Samuel! Samuel!" Here am I—Lit. "Behold me." The usual formula of response corresponding to our, "Yes, sir" (Gen. 22: 1; Isa. 6: 8).

5. And he ran—In Samuel we observe a quick attention and unwearied diligence; he hears and runs at every call; stays not to be twice called before he goes. He murmurs not, he argues not, he complains not, he delays not. It is to such a child as this our Lord requires us to be like, for of such is the kingdom of God. (Wogan). He went and lay down—Probably both thought that Samuel had been dreaming,

6. To the second call Samuel responds with exactly the same words as at first—"didst call" should be "calledst." Eli's answer is gentle and affectionate.

Men are inclined to think that children are not so well suited as older persons to hear and to understand God's call; but God chooses the little ones for a foremost place in his service, and they respond to his call on them. Dr. Bushnell says on this point: "The boy-child Samuel could hear the call when old Eli could not. Children may not think the gospel experiences as well as adults, but they can have them a great deal more easily. The very highest and most spiritual things are a great deal closer to them than to us. Let us not wonder and be offended if they break out on just looking in the face of Jesus, when the great multitude of priests and apostles are dumb along the road, as the ass on which he rides." (S. S. Times).

II. SAMUEL CALLED. 7. Did not yet know the Lord—To know the Lord in Scripture frequently denotes that practical acquaintance with the Most High which is identical with true piety, that impression of his being and perfections which leads to devout intercourse with him, true reverence before him, and obedience to his will. (Green). Here it means that he had never received a personal communication from God. No doubt he knew God in his heart and loved and revered him. Contrast the sons of Eli (ch. 2: 12). This verse explains why Samuel was so slow to suspect that God was calling him.

8. Samuel responded again in exactly the same words as at first. It is very clear that Samuel had learned to subdue two things, his body and his temper. Few parts of early education are so important as to learn to keep the body in subjection. To resist bodily cravings, whether greater or smaller, which unfit one for duty; temptations to drink, or smoke, or dawdle, or lie in bed, or waste time when we ought to be up and doing; to be always ready for one's work, punctual, methodical, purpose-like, save only when sickness intervenes,—denotes a very admirable discipline for a young person, and is a sure token of success in life. Not less admirable is that control over temper which Samuel had evidently acquired. To be treated by Eli as he supposed he had been, was highly provoking. Why drag him out of bed at that time of night at all? Why drag him over the cold stones in the chill darkness, and why tantalize him first by denying that he called him and then by calling him again? As far as appears, Samuel's temper was in no degree ruffled by the treatment he appeared to be receiving from Eli. (Watson). Eli was neither so inexperienced, nor so lost to all sense of Jehovah being the immediate ruler of Israel, as not to perceive, when Samuel came to him the third time, that the matter was Divine. Possibly he recalled to mind the visit of the man of God (ch. 2: 27) and had some presage of what the message might be. (Payne Smith).

9. Go lie down—He bade Samuel lie calmly down again, because the best preparation for hearing God's voice is obedience and trustful submission. (Payne Smith). Speak Lord—Eli suggests this reverential response to the Divine Speaker, expressing readiness to hear whatever the Lord would say—and this is the only proper attitude to take when God is speaking to us, whether by his spirit, his word, his providence, or the monitions of conscience, God cannot be expected to speak, except to listening ears and willing minds. (Green). From obedience and submission spring all other virtues, as all sin does from self-opinion. (Montaigne).

10. Stood—Lit. "presented himself." There was a visible manifestation of God, perhaps in a human form (Gen. 18: 2, 33; Josh. 5: 13-15).

11. I will do—Lit. "I am doing." The causes were already at work, that would in a few years bring about the downfall of Eli's house. Shall tingle—Something so dreadful that the news of it will be like a blow upon the ears (2 Kings 21: 12; Jer. 19: 3). The reference is to the capture of the ark, the death of Eli's two sons, and the destruction of the priests and the sanctuary at Shiloh.

12. In the day—This expression is used in a general sense to cover the whole period during which the prophecy is being fulfilled. All things which I have spoken—ch. 2: 27-36. This was accomplished by the agency of wicked men,—the Philistines. Yet they were bent on carrying out their own cruel plans and

the fact that God used them for his own purposes in no way palliates or excuses their guilt (Acts 2: 23; 4: 27, 28; Isa. 10: 5-7). When I begin—Lit. “beginning and ending,” i. e. fully and completely.

13. I will judge his house for ever—Judging here means punishing (Gen. 15: 14; Ezek. 7: 3; 18: 30). “For ever” signifies that the penalty of utter extinction as a family would never be removed. The sentence is final and irreversible. This does not mean that members of that family who should repent and turn to God would not be saved, but that the family would never regain prominence in Israel. The high priesthood finally passed from it in the deposition of Abiathar (1 Kings 2: 27). For the iniquity which he knew—(ch. 2: 23-25). He should have done more than feebly chide them. They should have been publicly stripped of their office and disgraced. Made themselves vile—R. V. “did bring a curse upon themselves.” Their gross sin could not be overlooked. Sin and the curse are inseparably linked together. The Septuagint reads “because his sons were

blaspheming God.” Eli’s sons had blasphemed God, and made light of him by their infamous conduct in his very presence. (Kirkpatrick). He restrained them not—Both as a father (Deut. 21: 18), and as a priest (Deut. 17: 12) the law clothed him with power to punish them.

There is an age when children may be restrained, and if that age is allowed to pass the power of restraining them goes along with it. Many err by not restraining at all. Mothers begin while their children are yet infants to humor their every whim, and cannot bear to hold back from them any thing they may wish. It is this habit that is liable to have such a terrible reaction. There are other parents that while they restrain do not restrain wisely. They punish, but they do not punish in love. They are angry because their children have broken their rules; they punish in anger, and the punishment falls merely as the blow of a stronger person on the weaker. It does not humble, it does not soften. What awful consequences it often brings! (Watson).

LESSONS. 1. The youngest may minister unto the Lord. 2. How beautiful is cheerful obedience. 3. We should listen to God’s call. 4. Disobedient and wicked children “make themselves vile.”

THE BLACKBOARD.

SAMUEL WAS AM I

GOD’S CHILD.
SERVANT.
MESSENGER.

“Remember How thy Creator in the days of thy youth.”

A PARTING PRAYER.

“As we raise our hands to the sky above.
We remember God’s banner over us is love,
And we bow our heads again in prayer,
Giving ourselves to his loving care.
May the lessons learned in our hearts sink deep.
May the Lord between us a loving watch keep.
May we show this week in our work and play
That we’ve learned of Jesus on this holy day.
We pray Thee take each little hand.
And lead us all to the better land.”

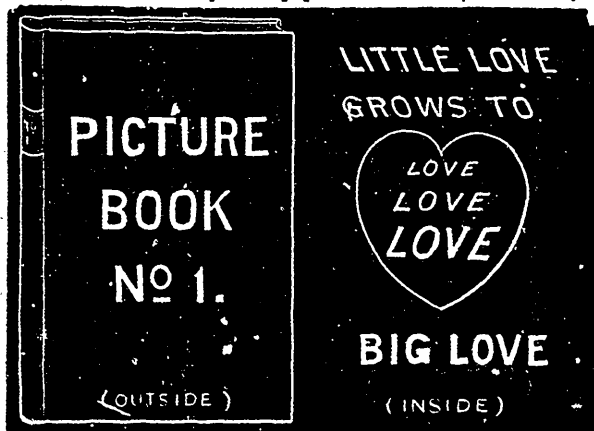
Better than any verse is the prayer prompted by the child’s own conscious need, or outgoing love. “How many have something they would like to say to God this morning?” As you note the uplifted hands and call for the confessions, the expressions of thankfulness, and the requests, your own heart will be touched as with a joy from heaven and the hearts of the children will be uplifted in their own petitions framed by you.

PRIMARY PREVIEW FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER.

Conducted by GEORGE H. ARCHIBALD, Superintendent St. Matthew's S. S., Montreal, Que.

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER: "Thy Kingdom Come." Matt. 6: 10.

If we study the principles of teaching we will find that the law requires us to be definite in our teaching work. This is absolutely essential in the Primary Department, therefore, begin the preparation of the lesson, by choosing one definite lesson, which you want to teach to your class or department. Another law of teaching shows us that the truth chosen must be adapted to our class. A teacher once teaching a class of young men spent all the time in exhorting them to become christians, this would have been a good way to have taught another class possibly, but this particular class of young men were all christians, and church members, therefore this kind of teaching was quite unsuitable to their needs. In other words the law of adaptation was broken, and the result obvious. It will be the same in all our classes if we break the law. Choose, therefore, one spiritual truth to be taught in each lesson. Be satisfied if you can really teach that one truth. The idea is to teach well one truth, and press it home, ten different ways, rather than to teach ten truths one way each. Begin the preparation of the lesson with this thought in mind,—I have this one truth to teach: how can I best do it? Be sure that this truth is adapted to the needs of your scholars. Do not take the thoughts suggested in these, or any other columns if not adapted to your class. Around this one suitably chosen truth cluster the exercises of the day. To carry out this idea in the best manner, it will be necessary to have one thought for the quarter's lessons as well as one for each lesson. Children like continued stories, therefore, let them understand that the quarter's lessons is one grand story; and it might here be suggested, that at the close of each lesson some little hint of next week's chapter might be given, so as to awaken the curiosity of the children. Begin at the whole, and teach the parts, therefore, the first step in the Preview, is to decide what the whole is to be. Last quarter we studied about "God's chosen people journeying to the promised land," next quarter we are to study about "God's chosen people living in the promised land." Children are fond of pictures. We can teach many times as much through the eye, as through the ear. Suppose, therefore, we make twelve picture books, each one having a picture that will remind us of something we learned about in each lesson. These picture books are easily made. Take twelve pieces of cardboard about the size of "The Home Study Teacher's Monthly" when open, and paste inside, "tailor's black pattern paper." Fold them, so that they will look like a book that



will open and shut. On the outside (in blue or red pencil, or both, according to fancy) print the words "picture book No. 1," for lesson No. 1. "No. 2," for lesson No. 2, and so on. Now take "picture book No. 1, decorate the outside according to fancy, and on the inside, with chalk, or paint, or paper and scissors, make something that will recall the blackboard lesson which you have used in teaching lesson "No. 1" making prominent the central truth you have taught. Do the same each week, (see illustration above) with each picture book, and use them, working towards the review and make this the plan for Review.

	SUBJECT.	CENTRAL THOUGHT.
Lesson I.	The time of the Judges.	The danger of little sins.
" II.	The triumph of Gideon.	God our helper.
" III.	Ruth's choice.	My choice.
" IV.	The child Samuel.	Listening to God's voice.
" V.	Samuel the Judge.	Thanks-giving.
" VI.	Saul chosen king.	God knows what is best for us.
" VII.	Saul rejected.	Obedience.
" VIII.	The woes of intemperance.	The woes of intemperance.
" IX.	David anointed king.	God knows all things.
" X.	David and Goliath.	Killing giants with God's help.
" XI.	David and Jonathan.	Jesus the best friend.
" XII.	The birth of Christ.	Making others happy.

Primary Department.

LESSON I—October 6th, 1895.

The Time of the Judges. JUDGES 2: 1-12, 16.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord raised up Judges which delivered them." Judg. 2: 16.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: The danger of little sins. (See Preview in this number).

III. REVIEW: What people were last quarter's lessons about? To what place were they journeying? To what place are we journeying?

IV. INTERVENING EVENTS: Joshua's death and burial took place between last lesson and the beginning of this but from the verses 6-9 the story goes back to the book of Joshua, and gives the account of these events: The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites brought out of the land of Egypt were buried in Shechem. Eleazar, the son of Aaron, died and was buried. The 1st chapter of Judges gives an account of the actions of some of the tribes.

V. LESSON STORY: In our last lesson (before the Review) we learned that the Israelites told Joshua that they were going to choose the true God and love and obey him. Although, they perhaps meant it at the time, it would seem, as if they did not wholly do so, for they allowed some of the people who served idols to stay in the land. In to-day's lesson we learn that God sent an angel from Gilgal, to a place called Bochim. (Draw a map of Palestine on the board and point out these places). There, where a lot of people were gathered together, the angel told them that, if they did not drive out all the idolaters, and throw down their idols, he would punish them by letting these people harm them in many ways. When the people heard these words they wept and offered sacrifices to God, but, although they seemed sorry at that time, it does not seem as if they yet wholly obeyed God in driving out all the idolaters, for, further on in our lesson we learn, after many years that the idols were still there, and the Israelites not only allowed them to stay, but bowed themselves down to Baalim and other gods and provoked the Lord to anger. Then God had to punish them. This he did, by allowing these very people whom they had not driven out, to make slaves of them and oppress them in many ways. Although they had been so unfaithful and disobedient the Israelites were God's children and he loved them and was sorry when they brought these punishments upon themselves, and when they repented and cried to him he raised up men called judges (as we learn about in the Golden Text) to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, and bring them back to love and obey Him and be happy.

VI. APPLICATION: If the Israelites had done as God had told them, when first they went into the land of Canaan; had driven out all the people who served idols, we should not find them where we do in to-day's lesson. Allowing some of them to stay was the first sin, and though it did not seem very big at first, it led on to the greater ones that we have learned about in our lesson story. This shows us how careful we ought to be, to drive all the little sins out of our hearts, not allowing even little ones to stay. There is danger of a very little

LITTLE LOVE

GROWS TO



BIG LOVE

LITTLE SINS

GROW TO



BIG SINS

one growing bigger and bigger, until it gets to be a very large one. Let us take the sin of "dislike," (make a heart on the board and write "dislike" in it), that does not seem to be a very big one, but let it stay in the heart, and it will grow into something bigger. What is that? "Hatred" (write in heart). Yes, and let "hatred" stay in the heart, and it will grow bigger and bigger, till often it has grown into "murder" (write in heart). That is a dreadful heart to have, and none of us want to have a heart like that. Let us be careful if even a little bit of dislike is in our heart, let us drive it out at once, (rub out "dislike") and let "love" come in its place (write in "love,") for these other dreadful things cannot grow from love (rub out "hatred" and "murder,") but "love" will grow bigger and bigger, till all the heart is filled up with it. (Write "love" in larger letters each time, in place of "hatred" and "murder.")

LESSON II—October 13th, 1895.

The Triumph of Gideon. JUDGES 7: 13-23.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." Ps. 27: 3.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: God our helper.

III. REVIEW: How did the Israelites sin in last lesson? What did God tell them to do? What punishment came upon them for their sins? Whom did God raise up to deliver them? What kind of sins should we be careful about? Why?

IV. INTERVENING EVENTS: Othniel, son-in-law of Caleb the 1st judge, delivered the Israelites from the oppression of Chushan-Rishathaim. Then there was rest for forty years. Then came the oppression by the Moabites, and Ehud, the 2nd judge, killed Eglon, the king, and subdued the Moabites. Then there was rest for eighty years. The 3rd judge, Shamgar, who delivered the people from the Philistines. Barak, the 4th judge, with Deborah, the prophetess, delivered the people from the oppression of the Midianites.

V. LESSON STORY: Although God had many times raised up judges, to deliver the Israelites from the oppression of their enemies, yet time and time again, when they had been delivered from them, and had rest in their land, they forgot Him, and went back into sin and served idols. In this lesson we see they again had left God, and had worshipped other gods, and God had punished them, by allowing their enemies, the Midianites, to come into their beautiful land, and drive them away to the mountains where they had to hide in caves. For seven whole years this had lasted, and when the people cried to God to help them, and were sorry for their sins, God sent another judge, Gideon, to free them from their enemies. Their enemies, lay encamped in the beautiful plain of Esdraelon, or Jezreel, and on the hillsides of Moreh, and there were so many of them, that we read they were like grasshoppers for multitude. (Draw a rough sketch of the above places, and make some tents, and many dots for people). Gideon, with his little army of three hundred men, were beside the well of Harod, in the foothills of Mount Gilboa, and overlooked the great multitude in the valley below. (Draw a hill overlooking the plain, and make a mark for Gideon, and some few dots for his men). Gideon was a good man, he obeyed and trusted God, and showed that he did so, by casting down this idol,—Baal, that the people had worshipped so long. As he looked down upon the great multitude of people, and then looked at his little band, he knew that they could not in their own strength defeat them, but he trusted in God, and knew that He would help them. To encourage his trust in Him, God gave Gideon a sign. One night as he stood looking down into the camps of the Midianites, he heard one of them telling another, a dream that he had dreamed. This was the dream: A cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, went into the tent where the king was, and overturned it. The Midianites then said to one another, this is the sword of Gideon, and God hath delivered us into his hand. Gideon was glad when he heard that, and felt as the Golden Text says: "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear," for God was going to help him, and after worshipping Him, he went and told his men to get ready, for God was going to give them the victory. Then, he divided them into three companies, and gave each man a trumpet, a lamp, or torch, and an empty pitcher, and told them to look at him, and do as he did. The torches were hidden in the large empty pitchers, as they surrounded the camp of the enemy, and when they were all ready, Gideon blew his trumpet, and as he had told them, his three hundred men blew their trumpets, and shouted "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon," broke their pitchers, and held up their lighted torches. Their enemies waking up from their sleep and hearing all this noise, and seeing the glare of the torches, were very frightened, and thinking that there were a great many more men with Gideon than there really were, ran, and cried, and fled from before them,

and in their confusion killed one another. So the Israelites had a great victory over them.

VI. APPLICATION: As Gideon and his three hundred men could not have gained this great victory, unless God had helped them, neither can we gain any victories unless God



helps us. We all have our battles to fight, and victories to gain, victories over enemies that come into our hearts. Selfishness, pride, anger and many others. Unless like Gideon we give these enemies over to God and trust that He will conquer them, we cannot expect to gain the victory. As He loved His children then, and was always ready to win victories for them, so He still loves us His children, and is ever ready and waiting to win victories for us. Let us say as Gid-

con trusted in God to help him, so I will trust in God my helper. (Make a shield on the board, and in it write "God my helper.")

LESSON III—October 20th, 1895.

Ruth's Choice. RUTH I: 14-22.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Ruth I: 16.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: My choice.

III. REVIEW: What enemies drove the Israelites from their beautiful homes in last lesson? Why did God allow them to do this? When they were sorry for their sins, what did God do? What was the name of the Judge? Who helped him and his little army to gain the victory? Have we any victories to gain? Tell some of them? Can we gain them ourselves? Who will gain them for us? What must we do?

IV. INTERVENING EVENTS: After Gideon's death, the Israelites again went into idolatry, and again had to be punished by God. When they put away the strange gods, and served the Lord, He raised up another judge to deliver them out of the hand of their enemies. Many times and for many years this falling away from God, and again being restored by Him, lasted. After Gideon the 5th judge we have in the book of Judges an account of 8 more. The 13th, and last one mentioned in Judges, being Samson, whose history here is given.

V. LESSON STORY: During the time of the Judges, perhaps in the time of Gideon, (whom we learned about in last lesson), there lived a man called Elimelech, his wife, Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. There came a great famine and drought in the land, and Elimelech, his wife, and sons could not get enough to eat and drink, and so had to leave their home. They crossed the river Jordan, turned to the south till they came to the land of the Moabites, and lived there. (It would be well to point out these places and trace this journey from a map). During the next ten years Elimelech died, his two sons got married, they both died, and the three widows, Naomi, the mother-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, the daughters-in-law were left. Naomi heard that the famine was over, and she thought that she would like to go home again, for she did not feel happy in the land of the Moabites, where they served idols, and wanted to get back so that among her own people she could better serve the true God. As she got ready to go, Ruth and Orpah said that they would go with her part of the way to see her off. So they did, and when Naomi thought they had gone far enough, she told them they had better return home, and kissed them, and said good bye. Then they began to cry and said they did not want to leave her. Naomi told them that they might feel that way then, but when they got to Bethlehem they might want to go to their own land again, for she was poor and sorrowful, and she thought they had better return then. Orpah began to cry again and kissed her mother-in-law, and turned back, but Ruth would not go. When Naomi told her she had better return with Orpah, she said: "Intreat me not to

leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whithersoever thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part me and thee." When Naomi saw that she had fully made up her mind to go with her, she did not say any more about it, but let Ruth go along with her, and they got to Bethlehem in the beginning of the barley harvest. (Make a road on the board between Bethlehem and the land of Moab; cut out three small pieces of paper (perhaps red) for Naomi, Ruth and Orpah. As you describe them leaving Moab, pin them on the road, and then when you come to the parting scene, move them to the place you think suitable for that (perhaps not very far along the road). As you speak of Orpah going back, move one piece of paper back, and let the others stay where they were, until you speak of Naomi and Ruth going on together, then bring them along the road to Bethlehem).

VI. APPLICATION. In this beautiful story we see the two ways that lay before Ruth, the one back to the land of the Moabites, and where idols were worshipped, and the other to Bethlehem, where the true God was worshipped. What made her choose the way to Bethlehem? Because she loved Naomi, and it was the way she was going and she thought it was the right way. Living with her all these years she had seen that the way that Naomi had lived was different from the way the Moabites lived, so knew that Naomi's God was better than their gods. It did not seem the easiest way to choose, for Naomi

told her she was poor and sorrowful, but love made it easy. When we hear about the rest of the story, we find that God rewarded Ruth for choosing this way, by giving her kind friends, and making every thing right for her, and her mother-in-law to live very happily afterwards. We too have to choose between two ways. One is God's way, and the other is Satan's. (Draw two paths on the board, and write "God's way" in one, and "Satan's way" in another). Which



should we choose? Satan's way? Oh! no, we don't love Satan, and his way leads to unhappiness. God's way is the one for us to choose. Why should we choose it? Because we love God, and it is His way, and if it is His way it must be the right way. Is it always the easiest way? Not always, but love makes it easy. What does it mean to choose God's way? It means to love God with all your heart, and because you love Him, to do joyfully what he wants you to do. This way leads to heaven. If we choose it, it will bring us by and by, always to live happily with Jesus. Which way will you choose?

LESSON IV—October 27th, 1895.

The Child Samuel. I SAM. 3: 1-13.

- I. GOLDEN TEXT: "Speak Lord; for thy servant heareth." 1 Sam. 3: 9.
- II. PREVIEW THOUGHT: Listening to God's voice.
- III. REVIEW: Tell the names of some of the people in last day's lesson. Who was Naomi? Who was Ruth? Why did Ruth choose to go with Naomi? What two ways are there for us to choose? Which one should we choose? Why? Which one have you been walking in last week?
- IV. INTERVENING EVENTS: Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, desiring a son, prayed unto God for one, and made a vow that if He would grant her request, she would consecrate him to His service. God did grant her request, and when her son was born she called him Samuel, which means "asked of God." When he was two or three years old, his mother took him as an offering to the tabernacle at Shiloh. There she presented him to

God, and praised God in a song of thanksgiving. She left him under the care of Eli the high priest, and every year made him a little coat, and brought it to him, when she and her husband went to Shiloh to attend the religious feasts. Samuel with a linen ephod ministered before the Lord, and grew, and was in favor with the Lord and with men. Eli the high priest had two sons, who were priests, and ministered with their father, in the tabernacle; but they did not do what was right, and God was much displeased with them, and just before our lesson begins we have an account of a man who came to Eli and told him that if his sons did not repent, and if he allowed them to go on in their wickedness, that he would destroy all his house.

V. LESSON STORY. (Tell the beginning of the story of Samuel). We now find Samuel about 12 years old, helping Eli in many ways about the tabernacle, such as lighting the lamps, opening the doors, and attending on Eli himself, who was now getting old and feeble. (Draw or pin a picture of the tabernacle on the board). In the tabernacle there was a golden candlestick, with seven lamps which burned all night (show a picture of it). One night, or towards morning, before the lamps had gone out, when Eli and Samuel were asleep, a voice called Samuel: Samuel got up and went to Eli who was not far away from him, but Eli said I did not call you, lie down again. In those days God spoke to his people through a prophet, and Samuel was a little prophet, and it was God who was speaking to him, but as this was the first time that God had spoken to him, he did not know that it was God, but thought that it was Eli. Not long after Samuel lay down, he heard the voice calling him again, and again he got up and went to Eli, and said, here I am; for thou didst call me, but Eli said I called not, my son; lie down again. Then God called Samuel the third time, and he again got up and went to Eli, and said, here am I; for thou didst call me. Eli now knew that it was God who was calling the child, and told him to go and lay down, and if he heard the voice again, to say, speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down, and God came (perhaps as an angel) and stood, and called as at the other times, Samuel, Samuel, and Samuel answered, speak for thy servant heareth. God then told his little prophet, to tell Eli, that because he had not listened to His warning, had not kept his sons from acting so wickedly in his tabernacle, that He was going to destroy his house.

VI. APPLICATION: As God's voice spoke to the child, Samuel, so long ago, so it speaks to children now. How does it speak? and what does it say? It speaks by His Word, that is, the Bible. (Draw or pin a picture of one on the board, and write "God's voice in it). What does it say? "Give me thy heart" How can I listen and obey that

SAMUEL LISTENED TO GOD'S VOICE

I WILL LISTEN TO CONSCIENCE

GOD'S VOICE GOD'S VOICE

more than anybody, or anything else. Then God speaks to little boys and girls by conscience. That little voice inside our heart which says do right, "do right," "do right." (Make a heart and write God's voice in it, and over it write "conscience.") Little boys and girls don't always want to listen and do what this voice of God tells them. Willie was a little boy who heard this voice, but did not do what it told him. One morning mamma made some nice little cakes and gave Willie two. As she put the rest away in the pantry, she said: "now Willie, dear, don't touch any more of these cakes." As Willie was playing in the afternoon, he ran into the kitchen for something, and as he passed the pantry, he remembered about the cakes. Oh! if mamma had not said not to touch them, he thought; well, I'll just run in and look at them, that can't be wrong; "do right," "do right," said the little voice; but Willie did not listen, but went in and saw them there. How nice they look! he thought, if I just took one up and feel it, that would not be wrong; "do right," "do right," again said the little voice. Willie heard it, but did not obey, and took one up. "just a little nibble would not be very wrong." "do right," "do right," again whispered the little voice, but it was not so loud now, (for if we don't listen to it, it gets fainter, and we do not hear it so plainly).

Willie heard it though, but again did not obey, and bit it. That tastes so nice, thought Willie, and then he took a big bite, and then a bigger one still; then he looked at what was left and thought if I put it back now mamma will see that somebody has been eating it, and will ask about it, so I had better eat it all, and he ate it all up. He went out to play again, but things did not seem to go right, and Willie was not happy. When tea-time came, he did not want to look at mamma, and when the cakes were passed to him, he turned very red. All the evening he was a very unhappy boy, and when he knelt down at mamma's knee, to pray to God, before he went to bed, he burst into tears, and had to tell her all about it. If Willie had only listened to that little voice at first, how much unhappiness it would have saved him. God speaks to us in many other ways. Let us like Samuel, be always ready to listen, like him, to obey, at once, when we hear God's voice speaking to us.

Normal Department.

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT-BOOK.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER'S HAND-BOOK; or, The principles and Practice of Teaching, with special reference to the Sabbath School, by Thomas Morrison, M. A., L.L.D., Principal Free Church Training College, Glasgow.

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PRINCIPLES OF MEMORIZING.

Amongst the Principles of Teaching Dr. Morrison includes the principle of Association. This is a principle of memorizing, rather than a principle of teaching, and it is one of the most important principles, for no piece of mental or spiritual experience is isolated. Every thought and action in our life is associated with some other thought or action.

Different kinds of Association.

(1) *Contiguity of place*, by which the locality is associated with the events that happened there. Ex.—Patmos with John; Jacob's Well with Jesus, &c. Give other examples.

(2) *Association by Similarity*.—When two objects that resemble each other have been contemplated together, the one cannot be recalled without recalling the other. Give examples.

(3) *Association by Contrast*.—By this is meant that one impression, object or event tends to call up the image of its opposite or contrast. Ex.—The house on the rock suggests the house on the sand; Peter boasting suggests Peter denying.

(4) *Cause and Effect*.—This is the most important principle of association. The cause should suggest the effect, and the effect should lead us to look for the cause. See Judges 3:28. What is the Association here? Give other instances.

The following is a brief summary of the principles of memorizing:—

I. A complete and accurate knowledge of the thing to be memorized.

(1) Close association with something else that is well known and frequently recalled. Always point out the relation between the different parts and the whole, and in this way bring the association into play. See the previous LESSON.

(2) Undivided attention. The art of memory is the art of attention, says Dr. Johnson; and this eminent thinker has declared that genius itself is nothing but the power of continuous attention.

(3) Close and accurate observation.

(4) Make the subject to be committed as attractive as possible. Excite pleasurable feelings at the time in connection with the object of acquisition.

(5) Point out the need, present or prospective, to the learner.

(6) Keep the thought before the mind as long as possible. Put the subject before the mind again and again, so that a deepening impression may be made.

II. Ability to Retain. This requires all of the foregoing in learning, and besides—

(1) Frequent repetition. Every impression seems to lose its effect after a time, and in order that the second impression may produce an effect, it must occur before the first impression has vanished.

(2) Present the same view of the subject in early repetitions, and vary the view in later repetitions. Ex.—Matt. 9:25-31; Acts 10:11-19. Give other examples.

(3) Recall purposely after intervals of several weeks.

III. Ability to recall.—Depends upon—

(1) Frequent practice in recalling what we have learned.

(2) Great accuracy in what we do recall.

(3) Persistency in recalling whatever we attempt to recall.

(4) Great concentration of mind and great will-power in the matter.