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THE SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER'S PREPARATION OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL-ROOM.

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That we may make proper preparation for any work, we must know the nature and design of the work to be performed. A thorough acquaintance with the nature and design of Sabbath School teaching is an element of first importance in the S. S. teacher's preparation.

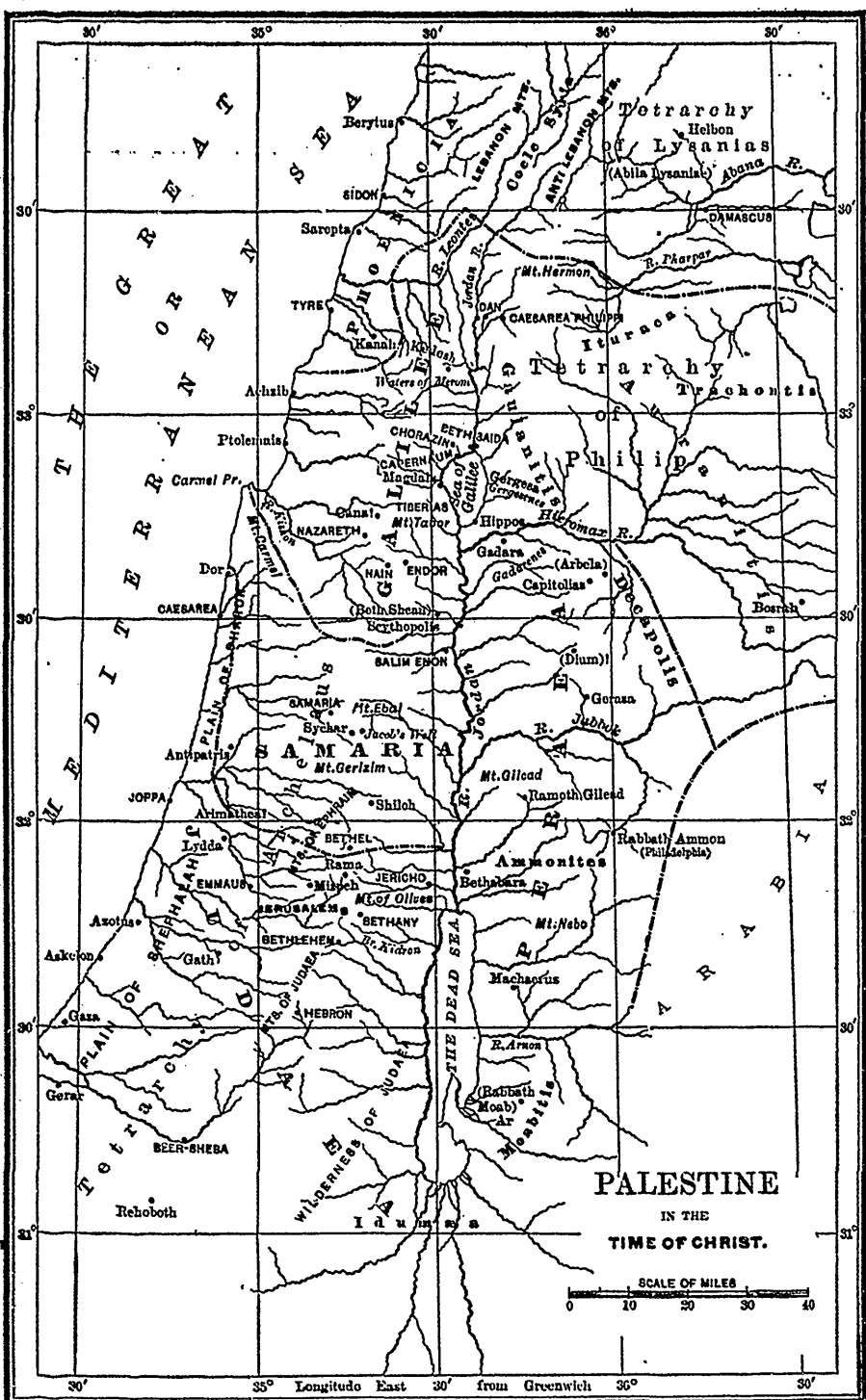
As to the *nature* of the work, it is the presenting to the minds of the young the grandest truths ever presented to the intellects of rational beings. It is an endeavour to unfold to the minds of others those things into which the angels desire to look. It is to teach men of God, His purposes and plans; of sin, its nature, effects and deserts; of Christ and His salvation; of mercy the richest, of grace the freest, of love the most intense. It is to reveal to the sinner how Christ and His salvation can be appropriated and exemplified in the life.

As to the *design*, it is two-fold, the salvation and edification of souls. Whatever may have been the idea of the first workers in this field, we cannot feel to-day that the existence of Sabbath Schools is justified if they aim simply at secular instruction, or the mere entertainment of the scholars. If Sabbath School teachers direct their efforts wholly or principally to these ends they should not complain if they find as the result a lack of tenderness of heart and conscience, and the absence of earnest inquiry after the Saviour. We are called upon to deal with the spiritual natures of the scholars, and with their intellects or their æsthetic faculties, only as far as these can be moved upon to influence the spiritual being. The design of Sabbath School teaching is so to present Christ that the souls of the young may be won to the Lord, and that everywhere we may hear the children crying, as they did in the temple of old, "Hosannah to the Son of David."

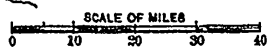
With this idea of the nature and design of the work, we are ready to begin the preparation which is needed before entering the class-room. The first element of this preparation is the *Spiritual*. Under this we mention prayer. If the old adage, "To pray well is to study well," be true, then to teach well the truth of God it will be necessary for the teacher to be often and long alone with God in earnest prayer. "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," should be the burden of the teacher's prayer. It will be found that the teacher who relies most upon the Holy Spirit's help to discover the hidden beauties of the Word, has discovered not the beauties only, but also the power to unfold the truth. Prayer is not to be for self alone, it must reach out on behalf of every member of the class. The heart of the scholar must be softened by the gentle influence of the Holy Spirit, so that the seed sown may take root and grow. If asked to mention the one great cause of failure in Sabbath School teaching, we would say, the lack of believing, wrestling prayer for the souls of those committed to our care.

The second element of this preparation is the *Intellectual*. Under this we would group everything in the way of getting the mind ready for the most perfect presentation of the lesson of each Sabbath. By this we mean the careful study of the particular portion of the Word selected—the context—the meaning of different words and phrases. Selecting the leading thought and grouping around it the various truths taught by the lesson. Seeking a wider illustration of the truths by reference to the Bible as a whole. Also the selecting of appropriate illustrations from the Word of God and daily life with which to fix the truth in the minds and hearts of the pupils.

A third element is the *Social*. Under this we would gather all that tends to bring the teacher into touch with scholar, revealing the tastes and inclinations of the young mind. It would include the social visit to the home, the friendly chat by the way, the little act of courtesy and kindness, and many other things that touch the social life; all of which tell so much in getting a ready ear for the truth. It is the teacher that reveals to the scholar that his interest in him is not limited to one hour in the week, but that it extends through every day of the week, and leads him to seek the welfare of the boy in many ways; this is the teacher who wins the confidence and esteem, and exerts a powerful influence over the hearts and minds, of those he seeks to win to the Lord.



PALESTINE
IN THE
TIME OF CHRIST.



30' 35° Longitudo East 30' from Greenwich 36° 30'

Notes on the Lessons.

LESSON I--January 6th.

John the Baptist Beheaded. MARK 6: 17-29.

(Commit to memory verses 26-28.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Matt. 10: 28.

PROVE THAT

Integrity sometimes brings trouble, Dan. 3: 19.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Quest. 1. *What is the chief end of man?* A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

LESSON HYMNS.

CHILDREN'S HYMNAL, Nos. 248, 117, 205, 40.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* John the Baptist Beheaded; Mark 6: 14-29. *Tuesday.* The Witness of John; John 1: 19-27. *Wednesday.* John's Teaching; Luke 3: 7-14. *Thursday.* Christ's Testimony; Matt. 11: 7-15. *Friday.* Fear and Fearlessness; Luke 12: 1-12. *Saturday.* Martyrs for God; Heb. 11: 32-40. *Sabbath.* The Crown of Life; Rev. 2: 8-11.

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. The mission of the Twelve had greatly extended the fame of Jesus, and the preaching of a "kingdom" had led some to inform Herod regarding him, lest the new movement should have political importance. Herod, however, quite understood its purely religious character, but his conscience and his superstitious fears led him to declare that Christ was John the Baptist, whom he had beheaded, risen again from the dead. This remark of Herod's is explained in our lesson, which gives an account of the martyrdom of the great Forerunner. Parallel passages, Matt. 14: 1-12; Luke 3: 19-20; 9: 7-9.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Fearless Preacher. vs. 17-19. II. The Birthday Banquet. vs. 20-25. III. The Martyred Prophet. vs. 26-29.

I. THE FEARLESS PREACHER. 17. Herod—Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. He was tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis. **Laid hold upon John**—The arrest took place some time before (Matt. 4: 12; Mark 1: 14). **Bound him in prison**—His place of confinement, according to Josephus, was the castle of Machaerus, about nine miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. Herod was probably at this time engaged in war with his father-in-law, Aretas, whose daughter he had driven away when he took Herodias. In this war he was defeated, and the Jews rejoiced at his discomfiture as a judgment upon him for murdering John. **Herodias**—She was a grand-daughter of Herod the Great, and wife of her uncle Herod Philip I. **Philip**—a half-brother of Herod Antipas. He had fallen under the displeasure of his father and was excluded from the succession. He lived in retirement at Jerusalem. He must not be mistaken for the tetrarch, Philip, who was another half-brother of the same name, and who married his daughter Salome, the dancer of our lesson.

18. John had said—"The tense implies that he said it more than once. It was the burden of John's exhortations to him." (Alford.) He reproved Herod for his general profligacy. (Luke 3: 19). Compare Nathan and David (2 Sara. 12: 7), and note the different spirit in which a true child of God takes a

faithful rebuke. John was a true prophet. (Ezek. 2: 5-7). He risked his life when he rebuked Herod, but he feared God rather than man. We become responsible for sin that we do not denounce when a fitting opportunity occurs. **It is not lawful**—for three reasons: (1) Philip was still living. (2) Herod's wife was still alive. (3) She was within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, being his niece (Lev. 18: 14; 20: 19), and of affinity, being his brother's wife (Lev. 18: 16; 20: 21). The emphasis seems to be laid on the last reason. It was an aggravation of the crime of adultery. Josephus says that John's bold rebuke was only a pretext, so far as Herod was concerned. He was shameless enough not to feel hurt by it. His real reason was lest John should stir up an insurrection.

19. Had a quarrel against him—R. V. "set herself against him;" lit. "cherished inward wrath against him." Watching for her opportunity of revenge. **Desired to kill him** (R. V.)—She had a settled and persistent determination on the subject. Matthew says that Herod would have let her have her way but that he feared the multitude (Matt. 14: 5; 21: 26; Luke 20: 6). The next verse gives another reason. Probably both were true.

20. Herod feared John—"As Queen Mary feared Knox, or Ahab, Elijah." His conscience made him a coward. (Illustrate by

Lady Macbeth and her husband at the murder of Duncan. He felt that there were unseen spiritual powers behind John who would reckon with his slayer. **Observed him**—A wrong translation. R. V. "kept him safe" from the malice of Herodias. He feared lest any violence to John should arouse the fanatical portion of the people who all counted him a prophet. **Did many things**—tried to quiet his conscience by many good deeds, but he would not give up his sinful course of life. The R. V. reads, "was much perplexed," his sense of duty was at war with his inclinations. **Heard him gladly**—as Felix heard Paul (Acts. 24: 24-26). "This guilty man, disquieted by the reproaches of memory and the demands of conscience, found it a relief to hear stern truth or to see from far the beautiful light of righteousness." (Chadwick.)

II. THE BIRTHDAY BANQUET. 21. **A convenient day**—*i. e.* for the schemes of Herodias. She seized upon the birthday festival as a good opportunity to extort compliance with her wishes. Her implacable enmity to John arose from two causes. He had stung her to the quick, and her woman nature felt this more keenly than the coarser soul of Herod did. Besides, there was danger that hearing John gladly, and "doing many things," might end in his doing the one thing that would be ruin to her. **Birthday**—This was a pagan custom, abhorrent to the Jews, because connected with idolatrous worship. It was common amongst Egyptians (Gen. 40: 20), Persians, Greeks and Romans. The Herods celebrated their birthdays with such magnificence that they passed into a proverb—"A Herod's day" (*Herodis dies*). **Lords**—magnates, high state officers. **High captains**—Gr. "chiliarchs," commanders of a thousand (Acts 21: 31; 25: 23), chief military officers. **Chief estates of Galilee**—The most influential personages in the province, who were not directly in the service of the tetrarch.

22. **The daughter of Herodias herself**—*i. e.* Herodias' own daughter. The emphasis expresses the scorn of the writer. She degraded her own daughter into a common dancing girl, in order to play upon the worst passions of Herod, and by them gain her purpose. Her name was Salome. **Danced**—Matthew says (R. V.) "in the midst." "Her dancing was doubtless of a mimetic and wanton character" (Meyer), a statement which is amply warranted by what we know of the customs of that day and the morals of the court of Herod. Contrast the modesty of the heathen queen in Esther 1: 10-12.

23. **He swore unto her**—Perhaps she had been "before instructed" on this point by her mother, so as to secure Herod against withdrawing his promise under any pretext. **Unto the half of my kingdom** (Compare Esther 5: 3, 6; 7: 2.) A weak imitation of

Ahashuerus. He was no king, and held what he had by grace of Cæsar.

24.—"The girl flew to her mother, and said, 'What shall I ask?' It was exactly what Herodias expected, and she might have asked for robes, or jewels, or palaces, or whatever such a woman loves; but to a mind like hers revenge was sweeter than wealth or pride, and we can imagine with what fierce malice she hissed out the unhesitating answer, 'The head of John the Baptist.'" (Farrar.)

25. **Straightway with haste**—Excited by her mother's manner, and with the cruel blood of the Herods in her veins, "the scent of blood" arouses her fierce nature. **I will**—This word is emphatic. "Observe the pertness of the wanton damsel." (Meyer.) **Bye-and-bye**—R. V. "forthwith," "this very instant." **A charger**—A large platter from which other dishes are "charged," or loaded. The Greek word means "a wooden trencher," such dishes having been made of wood in primitive times.

III. THE MARTYRED PROPHET. 26. **The king was exceeding sorry**—For several reasons: (1) He shrank from the deed, especially in the midst of jovial feasting. It was an ill-omened ending to a birthday banquet. (2) He had a superstitious, if not conscientious, fear of the consequences. (3) It was a dangerous thing to do, for all the people held John to be a prophet, and they might rise in rebellion to avenge him. (4) He rather liked John's outspoken, but respectful, boldness, and did not resent his rebukes so much as Herodias did (see verse 20). (5) He would also feel annoyed at being thus at last outwitted by Herodias. **For the oath's sake**—Compelled by a false code of honor. R. V. "for the sake of his oaths." He had reiterated his promise again and again. Such an oath ought not to have been kept. Oaths to commit crime are blasphemous and invalid, themselves heinous sins. (Lev. 5: 4-6, 10.) "Promises which should not be made, should not be kept." Such a thing was manifestly not in the intention of the king. It was more than half his kingdom. It might mean the whole of it. A true sense of honor would have cast the shame on the damsel for taking a mean advantage. "When one has begun wrong, repentance is more honorable than pertinacity." **For their sakes that sat with him**—"reclined with him" around the table in oriental fashion. He was afraid of covert sneers from the sycophants around him.

27. **An executioner**—lit. "a watcher," one of the body-guard. The word is a Latin one peculiar to Mark. He alone of the evangelists uses the word "centurion." This gospel was written for Roman readers. **In the prison**—A case of judicial assassination. The narrative conveys the impression that the banquet was held at Machærus, where John was imprisoned, and that all was over in a few moments. Had the feast been held at Tiberias two days must have elapsed before the head

could have been brought. Even Julius is too far away to satisfy the requirements, of the story.

28. The damsel gave it to her mother.—Horrible as this appears to us, it conforms to a custom of these times. Jerome refers to this incident, and says that Herodias treated it with savage indignity.

29. Took up his corpse "Tradition tells us that Herodias ordered the headless trunk to be flung out over the battlements for dogs and vultures to devour." (Larrar.) Matthew tells us that when the disciples had sorrowfully laid away their dead master, they came and told Jesus, and that he, when he heard of it, sought the solitude of the desert.

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

I. John was only about thirty years of age when he was beheaded. His career had been a notable one. Within a short ministry he had won for himself the highest honor ever pronounced upon a prophet. Jesus said of him, "Among those that are born of woman there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist." As if to set forth his greatness, his death is in the midst, and at the hands of those who, morally, were his greatest contrast. **The humble herald** of the Messiah proves himself a **faithful witness for righteousness**, not only in the desert and at the Jordan, but even in the corrupt court of the profligate Herod. He had not feared to tell the wicked tetrarch of his evil life, and especially denounced his **unlawful marriage** with his brother's wife. Herod's coarser nature did not feel the sting of these rebukes so much as did Herodias, who was insulted in a manner never to be forgiven. Hers was a heart that knew no shame or remorse. While respecting the sacred character of John, and making some feeble attempts at reformation, Herod was, nevertheless, driven by Herodias to the **unjust imprisonment** of his faithful admonisher, but his own inclination and the fear of consequences restrained him from acting as her tool in the accomplishment of her murderous designs. The prison was perhaps the safest place for John, if the assassins of Herodias were abroad. Still Herod **stifled conscience**, while the **patient prisoner** meekly awaited God's will, and sought comfort from Jesus.

II. Now came the opportune moment for Herodias. She knew the customs of the feast and the road to the heart of the licentious king. Carefully schooling her daughter to play her part, she won, through her dancing, the **rash promise** which gave her all her revengeful heart was thirsting for. Herod might writhen but in vain. A false sense of honor was guarantee enough for Herodias. She had asked more than he promised to give, but not in the estimation of values held by the revellers. John's head counted for little to them. They, too, would gladly hear no more of his unpleasant speeches. So Herod must not reject the damsel's boon.

III. In the dark, damp dungeon of Machaerus a **cruel murder** is committed—beyond the midnight stars a **triumphant martyr** is crowned. Fiends laugh with Herodias when she mocks at that noble head and tosses the corpse over the battlements to the hyenas and the buzzards; but angels weep with the sorrowing band who reverently bury the loved form and go and tell Jesus.

After drawing out facts and noting obvious lessons along the line of this summary, briefly sketch the contrast suggested:

THE CONTRAST.

H—An Unlawful Marriage.

E—An Unjust Imprisonment.

R—A Stifled Conscience.

O—A Rash Promise.

D—A Cruel Murder.

J—Humble Herald of Jesus.

O—Faithful Witness for righteousness.

H—Patient Prisoner.

N—Triumphant Martyr.

ROYALTY ON EARTH

ROYALTY IN HEAVEN

LESSON II.—January 13th.

Feeding the Five Thousand. MARK 6: 30-44.

(Commit to memory verses 41-42.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

"He hath filled the hungry with good things." Luke 1: 53.

PROVE THAT

God helps us in extremity. 1 Kings 17: 14.

LESSON HYMNS.

CHILDREN'S HYMNAL, Nos. 13, 33, 233, 132.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Quest 2. *What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?* A. The word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. Quest. 3. *What do the Scriptures principally teach?* The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Feeding the Five Thousand; Mark 6: 30-44. *Tuesday.* Four Thousand Fed; Mark 8: 1-9. *Wednesday.* A Lad's Store Consecrated; John 6: 5-14. *Thursday.* The Widow's Morsel; 1 Kings 17: 8-16. *Friday.* Enough and to Spare; 2 Kings 4: 38-44. *Saturday.* God's Usual Providings; Psalm 104: 14-28. *Sabbath.* Satisfied; Psalm 107: 1-9. (*The I. B. R. A. Readings.*)

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. Along with the arrival of John's disciples bearing the sorrowful tidings of their master's death, the disciples of Jesus returned from their mission and reported what they had said and done. For the sake of retirement and rest our Lord and his disciples crossed the lake. By doing so they also made a prudent move, for now that Herod had tasted blood they were safer in the dominions of his brother. The Herodians, too, would use their influence with him to put him to death. But the multitude, noting the direction in which he had sailed, walked around the head of the lake and met him at the other side. Parallel passages, Matt. 14: 13-21; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 1-14. This is the only miracle recorded by all the evangelists.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Needy Multitude. vs. 30-34. II. The Scant Supply. vs. 35-38. III. The Abundant Meal. vs. 39-44.

I. THE NEEDEY MULTITUDE. 30. — Matthew's account implies that the departure of Jesus and his disciples across the lake was owing to the news of John's martyrdom. There is no contradiction in this. Both reasons were, no doubt, present to their minds. **The apostles** — The only instance in which Mark uses this word, and it is peculiarly appropriate here, when they return from being "sent forth." **Unto Jesus** — probably at Capernaum. **Told him all things** — "How delightful this confidence! We seem to see Christ listening with affectionate earnestness to the recital of their adventures; and interposing from time to time a word of encouragement or caution, as the character of the narrative of each might demand." (Angus).

31. Ye yourselves — *i. e.* you alone, away from the people. **A desert place** — Not a barren, sandy region, but some retired spot away from the crowds that thronged them. **Rest awhile** — They were excited with the experiences of their missionary tour, and the spiritual tumult within them needed the soothing of prayer and quiet instruction. The enthusiasm of the multitude was reaching a dangerous point, and their absence would give it time to cool. Jesus spent nearly the whole of the next night in prayer, so that probably he himself felt the need of communion with his Father in solitude now that it was "the turn of the tide" with him, and henceforth he must resolutely pursue his accelerating course towards Cavalry. Note how tenderly considerate Jesus is for the comfort of his disciples. **There were many coming and going** — The Passover was near at hand (John 6: 4), and consequently there were many visitors and travellers who came that way specially to see and hear Jesus. (Compare Mark 3: 20).

32. They departed — John says (6: 1) "Went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias." This explanation was necessary when John wrote his Gospel. The other evangelists wrote before anybody ever thought of giving it this name. According to Luke, 9: 10, they went to the neighborhood of Bethsaida Julias, across the lake from Capernaum. Bethsaida means "House of fish." **By ship** — R. V. "in the boat." **Privately** — R. V. "apart." Same word as in verse 31. They did not go away secretly, but "by themselves."

33. And many knew — What they knew was not "him" or "them," but their destination. Many saw their departure, perceived their intention, "ran there together by land"

(R. V.), and arrived before them. **Ran afoot**—It was those who "knew" that did so. They went by land. If the boat required "to tack" against a head wind they could easily "out go" it. **Out of all the cities** (R. V.)—the towns and villages around the north end of the lake. John accounts for the large number by saying "a great multitude were following him because they saw his miracles." Yet they did not perceive that these were "signs" of his Messiahship, or of spiritual truths (John 6: 26 R. V.) It was the curiosity of an idle crowd. A large number of them, doubtless, were on their way to the passover (John 6: 4). Jesus did not go up to the festival at this time (John 7: 1), because the ruling Jews sought to kill him, and his hour was not yet come. **Out-went them**—arrived there before them.

34. When he came out—"having disembarked." Referring to John 6: 3, we find that Jesus had ascended the hillside with his disciples, and was seated when the multitude gathered to him again, and moved his compassion. They were doubtless some time in assembling by successive bands. At this point John inserts the remark that it was Passover time, either to account for the multitude or as implying that such a miracle and the discourse following were appropriate to the season. **Was moved with compassion**—Compare Matt. 9: 36. "Mark alone records the thoughts of Jesus on the occasion, imparted perhaps to Peter, and communicated by him to the evangelist." (Lindsay.) He gave up all idea of taking a rest. **As sheep not having a shepherd**—The figure may have been suggested by the rugged, dangerous, pastureless aspect of the country around them. It refers, of course, to their spiritual condition. "They had no guides but the blind scribes and Pharisees. They had no spiritual food but the man-made traditions." (Ryle.) The same feeling made Jesus utter Matt. 11: 28-30. **He began to teach**—A solemn and dignified manner of speaking is implied. Jesus knew what their greatest need was and discoursed to them of the kingdom of God, but he also healed the sick. (Luke 9: 11.)

35. When the day was far spent—It was probably late in the afternoon—the "first evening" (Matt. 14: 15), or past three o'clock. In verse 47 the "second evening," after sunset, is mentioned. **His disciples**—"Comparing the various passages, the course of events seems to have been:—(1) Jesus taught and healed; then (2) he asked Philip, *Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?* Philip had not the faith to accept the partnership in a miracle which the word "we" invited him to, and answered (3) that two hundred pence would not buy bread enough (John 6: 5-7); (4) our Lord went on teaching and healing; (5) at even the apostles asked him to send the multitudes away; (6) he asked them to feed them; (7) they answered as Philip had done; (8) he told them to go and see what bread could be had; a boy offered what he had; and (9) Andrew brought it to Jesus." (Lindsay.) Jesus

did not need Philip's advice, for he had already determined on working the miracle, but he asked the question to prove him (John 6: 6), whether he had learned the lesson of the miracle at Cana or not, for he was there (John 1: 43; 2: 2). It is a test both of his intellectual capacity, his resourcefulness, and his faith in the ability of Christ to meet the emergency. It was Judas who usually made purchases (John 13: 29.)

II. THE SCANT SUPPLY. 36. Send them away—So far as the disciples could see this was the kindest thing they could do. Many of them were passover pilgrims, and would have no homes to go to, but must purchase food and lodgings.

37. Give ye them to eat—This was also said "to prove" them. The "ye" is emphatic. "God sometimes asks us to do for him more than we can, as when he commands us to keep his whole law, but always to shew us how easy it is to rest on himself." (Lindsay.) **Two hundred pennyworth**—A penny, or *denarius*, was a small silver coin worth about fifteen cents. It was considered a fair day's wages for a laboring man (Matt. 20: 2), and therefore was equivalent to at least a dollar with us. It was a famine price for a measure (*choenix*—1½ pint) of wheat (Rev. 6: 6). With this reply compare Num. 11: 21-23; 2 Kings 4: 43. It was a hurried estimate, not of what would suffice, but of what would give each one a little (John 6: 7). Two hundred dollars worth of bread divided amongst, possibly, 10,000 persons, would give *two cents* worth to each. Some suppose that the sum named by Philip was the whole amount in their common purse. But it is not likely that they would have so much.

38. When they knew—They found some provisions in possession of a lad ("one lad"), but whether his own, or carried for the disciples, does not appear. At any rate they are cheerfully given up to Christ. **Loaves**—These were barley cakes (John 6: 9; see Judges 7: 13). They were as large as a plate, quite thin, and firm, but not brittle. **Fishes**—John calls them by a name (*opsaria*) which means, generally, dainties used as "a relish." They were small fish, like sardines, dried or pickled, and eaten with bread. John tells us that the disciples added "but what are these among so many?" Compare 2 Cor. 2: 16; 3: 15. The means often seem dishearteningly inadequate when we do not remember the divine power which makes them efficient.

III. THE ABUNDANT MEAL. 39. Sit down—Greek "recline," the customary position at meals. **By companies**—"After the manner of table parties," (*symposia*) i. e. around the sides of a square or oblong. **Green grass**—This shews that it was the springtime. John says "there was much grass in the place" (6: 10). The arid country east of the Sea of Galilee is green only in the rainy season.

40. In ranks—literally "in garden beds."

"As they sat in these orderly groups upon the grass, the gay red, and blue, and yellow colors of the clothing which the poorest Orientals wear, called up in the imagination of St. Peter a multitude of flower beds in some well ordered garden." (Farmr.) **By hundreds and fifties**—"The individual divisions consisted partly of a hundred and partly of fifty." (Meyer.) There were in each two rows of 100 and a shorter one across the end of 50—twenty groups of 250 each. Luke says "by fifties in a company." There were three fifties at each "symposium" or "table." The women and children ate by themselves, and were not counted. (Matt. 14: 21.)

41. He looked up to Heaven—"In prayer we should use such outward gestures as most fitly serve to express the inward disposition and holy affections of our heart and soul" (Potter.) A devout attitude is an aid to worship. **Blessed**—i. e. praised God—the usual expression for prayer at a meal. Luke says "he blessed them," i. e. the loaves and fishes—"an intimation of the benediction uttered in prayer, which was effective in causing the increase." (Meyer.) John says, "he gave thanks." Jesus acted as the head of a family. He praised God for his goodness and gave thanks, at the same time he "consecrated" the food, and imparted to it its miraculous power of increasing itself. "Twas seedtime when he blessed the bread, 'Twas harvest when he brake." Asking a blessing upon food before meals was a universal custom among the Jews, and was practised both by Christ and by the apostles. (Luke 22: 17, 19; 24: 30; Acts 27: 35.) (Abbott.) "But why ask a blessing specially on food? Because food is the basis

of life, the source of supply for all other things, so that all are included under it." (Ellicott.) *Blessed and brake* are in a tense which signifies that the action was performed once for all, *gave* is in another tense and denotes that he kept giving the bread continuously "bit by bit, to" his disciples to distribute; with the fish there was no need of this bit-by-bit giving—one assignment suffice. [Hence "divided" is in the same tense as "brake."] The dividing of the fishes, and the taking up of the fragments of the fishes, are both peculiar to and characteristic of Mark." (Alford.)

42. And were filled—We cannot tell the exact point at which the miracle took place. It would seem most reverent and natural to place it in the distribution by Jesus to the apostles. We are told by all four of the evangelists that the meal was a plentiful one.

43. Baskets—Each of the Twelve fills his basket. The word denotes the small wicker basket in which each Jew carried his day's food to avoid pollution. The Jew was called "basket-carrier" by the Romans. At the feeding of the four thousand, the basket was the large rope basket. **The fragments**—pieces broken by Christ and not distributed. Why were they required to gather up the fragments? (1) to bring out the preciousness of the food which had been given; (2) to teach economy—wastefulness is sinful; (3) our food, especially, should be used with care—life depends upon it; (4) it was the bountiful provision of the miracle at Cana repeated. An overflowing supply for future wants.

44. Five thousand men—There were women and children besides. (Matt. 14: 21.)

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

The lesson sets forth the compassion of Jesus and his power to relieve. Whatever other reasons he had for removing to the eastern side of the lake, the one given in the lesson was no doubt the principal one. He did not think of himself (surely he was more tired than they), but of the weary apostles, so crowded by the thronging multitudes, and busy with waiting on their Master, that they had no time to take their meals, so he said to them—— (let scholars supply the ellipses.) Write **Jesus pities the Weary**. They set sail for the quiet retirement of the mountains across the lake, but what did the crowd do? (Illustrate by map). So when Christ and his disciples reached the other side they found some of them there before them, and the rest kept coming until there was such a multitude clustered near where Jesus was, and scattered all over the plain looking for him, that when Jesus saw them he was——, because they were as—— (Write **The Wandering**).

Some had carried their sick friends all the way along with them; and we never read that Jesus passed by a sick person without healing him. St. Luke tells us that besides preaching to the people, he "healed them that had need of healing." (**Relieves the Sick**.) John tells us that Jesus was the first to think of how this great multitude, miles away from any town, were going to get their suppers, and made up his mind that they should all be his guests for that evening. (Refer to the Lord's Supper, where we are again his guests. Also how each may have him as his guest. Rev. 3: 20.) But he wanted to see whether the disciples would remember what he did at Cana. So he asked Phillip—— (John 6: 5). How much did he say it would cost to give them all their suppers? What did the disciples ask Jesus to do? What did he tell them to do? How much food could they find? How was the multitude arranged? They were guests at Jesus' table.

Now, before distributing to the people, Jesus does something that we should notice very carefully. Read verse 41 (to "blessed"). Jesus teaches us to thank God every time we sit down to eat. (Impress upon the scholars the duty and propriety of "asking a blessing" at meals.) Through the blessing of Jesus **Scant Supply** becomes amply sufficient to relieve **The Supperless**. By trying to do what Jesus told them, the **Obedient Service** of the disciples resulted in accomplishing what seemed at first impossible. Only **trust Jesus and try**, and you can do anything he asks you to do.

JESUS

PITIES the **W**earry
RELIEVES the **S**ick
BLESSES the **Scant** **S**upply
Obedient **S**ervice

JURIST JESUS AND JURIS

LESSON III — January 20th.

Christ, the Bread of Life. JOHN 6: 25-35.

(Commit to memory verses 33-35.)

GOLDEN TEXT.

"He gave them bread from heaven to eat." John 6: 31.

LESSON HYMNS.

CHILDREN'S HYMNAL, Nos. 41, 44, 80, 170.

PROVE THAT

We need more than loaves. Matt. 4:4.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Quest. 4. *What is God?* God is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Christ, the Bread of Life; John 6: 25-35. *Tuesday.* Misunderstood; John 6: 36-46. *Wednesday.* Bread from Heaven; John 6: 47-55. *Thursday.* Spiritual Teaching; John 6: 56-63. *Friday.* Christ, the Water of Life; John 4: 7-14. *Saturday.* The Manna; Exodus 16: 11-18. *Sabbath.* Confessing and Enduring; 2 Tim. 1: 1-12. (*The I. B. R. A. Readings.*)

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. The impression created by the miracle narrated in last lesson was very deep. The people said to one another "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." He had repeated the miracle of the manna in an even more wonderful form, and therefore they thought the resemblance to Moses complete. Jesus perceived that they would try to compel him to accept the crown, and lead them against the Romans. He therefore sent the disciples away, and retired himself to a mountain for prayer. Read the whole narrative in Matt. 14: 22-33; Mark 6: 45-52; John 6: 14-21.

LESSON PLAN. I. Bread that Perishes. vs. 26-29. II. Bread from Heaven. vs. 30-33. III. Bread of Life. vs. 34, 35.

I. BREAD THAT PERISHES. 25 — The people noticed that Jesus did not leave with his disciples and that there was no other boat there that he could have gone away by, except some from Tiberias, so when they found him next morning at Capernaum before them they were surprised, and asked, *Rabbi, when camest thou hither?* — the "when" implies also "how?" He does not satisfy their curiosity, but replies, as is his custom, to the state of mind out of which the question arises. From

miracles, and desired healing from sin and nourishment with the Bread of Life, but because he could feed them and give them free meals, and minister to their temporal need, ease and ambition. How many seek Christ from similar motives still. They value religion simply as ministering to their temporal comfort their social standing, or worldly plans.

27. Labor — R. V. "work," the word is used properly for agricultural labor, then for work in general. "There is here a double paradox, (1) that they should not work: for the perishable food, which is the very thing they must get by working; (2) that they should work for the heavenly food which is not to be earned by work." (Lange.) **The meat which perisheth**—It perishes in the using, and the body it goes to support decays. **The meat which abideth unto eternal life**, R. V.—(See vs. 54-58; Jer. 15: 16. Compare John 4: 14; 12: 25.) The doctrines of the gospel by which the Holy Spirit quickens, renews, sanctifies, strengthens, comforts the soul (Isa. 40: 31). The food thus imparted fits the soul for heaven. The life that Christ gives is not extinguished by death. **Which the Son of man shall give you**—Salvation, and all that it includes, is the free gift of Jesus, purchased by his death for all who come to him. (John 6: 54; 4: 14; 3: 16; 10: 28.) "This notion of giving seems at first glance in contradiction to the order to work. But the work by which man procures for himself this truly life-giving food does not consist in creating it, but in making himself fit to receive it, by believing on the divine messenger who brings it to him. The human *work* would remain useless without the divine *gift*, as also the divine gift remains inefficacious without the internal work by means of which the man appropriates it to himself." (Godet.) **For him hath the Father sealed even God**—This is the order of the words in the original. Emphasis is laid upon the divine commission to dispense the Living Bread. A seal authenticates a signature as genuine. So God has solemnly certified to the divine nature and Messiahship of Jesus, both by the voice at his baptism (Matt. 3: 17; 17: 5; 2 Pet. 1: 17), and by the miracles which he wrought (Acts 2: 22). Seals were used instead of signatures before the art of writing came into general use, and custom still retains some representative of the seal, a red wafer for example, in addition to the signature in legal documents.

28. What shall we do—"If we are to work, what must we do?" They understand quite well that this eternally-enduring food is spiritual, but their legal way of regarding spiritual things leads them to imagine that it is to be obtained by obedience to some precept of the law. The question came naturally from them. Compare similar ones, Matt. 19: 16; Luke 10: 25. **Works of God**—fulfil the conditions necessary for obtaining this bread—the works which God requires us to do (Jer. 48: 10; 1 Cor. 15: 58). See Mark 10: 17. "This was the spirit of their time and country. To them, as well as the Pharisees, their models, morality

was composed of a greater or smaller number of practices and observances; and the difficulty was to know them all, in order not to neglect any, even in their slightest details. Work after work, nothing but works, namely, those external acts which the hand does and the eye sees. Such to them was the spirit of morality; such to the best of them was virtue." (Vinet.) "The idea of *doing* something to *merit* salvation is one of the last that the anxious sinner ever surrenders." (Barnes.) Read Micah 6: 6-8; Luke 3: 12-14.

II. BREAD FROM HEAVEN. **29. This is the work of God**—the one moral act which will render you well-pleasing to him. "Because (1) faith is the principle which produces good works, is the tree on which they naturally grow, the fountain from which they naturally flow. And (2) because no works are really good which do not spring from faith. What are acts of love if there is no love in them. What are outward acts of morality if there is no virtuous heart behind them?" (Peloubet.) "He uses the singular, 'work,' because there is but this one, properly speaking, and all the rest are wrapped up in it." (Jas. 1: 25.) (Alford.) **Believe**—This fundamental requirement is repeated in verses 35, 36, 40, 47. See also John 3: 15; 18: 36; 5: 24, 40; 1 John 3: 23; Acts 16: 31.

30. What sign shewest thou? — R. V. "What then doest thou for a sign?" They wanted some proof direct from heaven that God had sent him. The manna was "bread from heaven, but what Jesus gave them was earthly bread. They did not think it proof enough that he was "come down from *heaven*," especially since he refused to be made such a king as they expected the Messiah to be. In their estimation the miracle of the loaves and fishes did not raise him to the height of Moses. Christ always refused to respond to such a demand (Matt. 12: 38; 16: 1). If the heart and conscience were not touched he would not compel belief by such wonders as they craved for.

31. Manna—(Ex. 16; Num. 11: 7, 8; Neh. 9: 15; 1 Cor. 10: 3; Ps. 78: 24, 25). In their estimation Christ's miracle did not come up to that of Moses. (1) The manna came morning and evening for forty years, Christ gave but one meal. (2) The manna was "angels' food" from heaven, Christ used earthly loaves and fishes. (3) The manna fed 2,000,000 people, Christ fed but 5,000. (4) Manna was something far superior to coarse barley bread and salt fish. The manna was a substance wholly miraculous in its nature and origin.

32. It was not Moses (R. V.)—Every word in this verse is emphatic. Jesus denies (1) that the manna was the gift of Moses, and (2) that it was Bread from heaven. He affirms (1) that His Father was the real giver, and (2) that from him comes also the genuine Bread from heaven. He declines to be put on a level with Moses. Moses was only God's instru-

ment, Jesus acts by his power as Son of Man. He points out that the manna was only a type, a "shadow of good things to come," the Father's Gift, himself, was the antitype, the reality, which it set forth. **Giveth**—"is now giving" (Gal. 4: 4). **The true bread**—the genuine bread from heaven. It is not contrasted with false bread, but with typical.

33. **Is that which cometh** (R. V.)—Christ does not bring forward himself as the Bread of Life until the 35th verse. He gives, in this verse, the distinguishing marks of the true Bread—(1) It is God's Gift; (2) it comes down from heaven; (3) it gives life to the world—is suited for all mankind.

III. BREAD OF LIFE. 34. **Evermore give us this bread**—"The Jews understand this bread as the Samaritan woman understood the water (John 4: 15), to be some miraculous kind of sustenance which would bestow life everlasting:—perhaps they thought of the heavenly manna, which the rabbis speak of as prepared for the just in the future world. (Rev. 2: 17.)" (Alford.)

35. **I am the bread of life**—with strong emphasis on "I." He imparts and sustains all spiritual life. In various points draw the comparison between bread and Christ. **He that cometh . . . he that believeth**—Coming and believing are the conditions of receiving. "It is opening the heart to receive him; it is trusting him with all the heart; it is going to him in faith and prayer for comfort, and help, and teaching, and all that the soul needs." (Peloubet.) How does Jesus satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul? "Not by eating his actual flesh, even if, as some suppose, the bread of the communion were changed into that, we in no way become what we eat. 'What lion eats becomes lion.' 'Sheep eat grass, but it is wool that grows on their backs.' We should be no better if we could actually eat the body of Christ. But whatever feeds our souls does make us better, and Jesus does this." (Peloubet.) He has made atonement for our sins, and so opened the way to acceptance with God; he has sent his Holy Spirit to regenerate and sanctify; he bestows all needed grace for the discharge of duty and confirmation of Christian character.

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

Review intermediate events. When the meal was over where did the disciples go? When did Jesus go? What befel the disciples? How did Jesus come to them? What did Peter try to do? Next morning, when the people could not find Jesus, they returned to Capernaum and were surprised to see him there—Why? What was their real motive in following Christ? They desired **Earthly bread for the earthly life**. We, too, get this from Jesus. He blesses our labors and feeds us day by day. Every good that we receive comes to us for his sake. But few profess to follow him only because of the earthly blessings. We love him just as little as these people did. For what kind of bread should we work most earnestly? **Heavenly bread for heavenly life**. What must we do to get this bread? Love, trust, obey Christ. What is faith in Jesus Christ? **Jesus gives himself to us**. When we come to him and receive him as our Saviour, he fills our hearts with peace and joy, and makes us strong to serve him.

Jesus the True Bread.

JESUS GIVES

EARTHLY BREAD

for

EARTHLY LIFE

Himself

HEAVENLY BREAD

for

HEAVENLY LIFE

TO US

Believe and Live.

—S. S. Times.

LESSON IV.—January 27th.

The Great Confession. MATT. 16: 13-23.

(Commit to memory verses 13-16)

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Matt. 16: 16.

PROVE THAT

Confessing Christ leads to salvation. Rom. 10: 9.

LESSON HYMNS.

CHILDREN'S HYMNAL, Nos. 30, 60, 146, 98.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Quest. 5. *Are there more Gods than one?* A. There is but one only, the living and true God. Quest. 6. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?* A. There are three Persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* The Great Confession; Matt. 16: 13-23. *Tuesday.* Another Confession; John 6: 66-71. *Wednesday.* The Chief Corner-Stone; 1 Peter 2: 1-8. *Thursday.* Peter's Witness for Christ; Acts 4: 5-12. *Friday.* Cost of Confessing. Matt. 10: 32-42. *Saturday.* Believing and Confessing; Rom. 10: 1-11. *Sabbath.* Confessing and Enduring; 2 Tim. 1: 1-12. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections.*)

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. After his discourse at Capernaum on "The Bread of Life," many of his followers forsook Jesus. They were disappointed in him. He would not come up to their expectations of an earthly prince, and his doctrine was above their spiritual comprehension. It was the turn of the tide of his popularity. Henceforth he meets with increasingly bitter opposition. For a time he leaves Galilee and takes a tour to the north, passing through Caesarea Philippi, where the conversation recorded in our lesson took place. Parallel passages, Mark 8: 27-33; Luke 9: 18-22.

LESSON PLAN. The Christ Confessed. vs. 13-17. II. The Church Founded. vs. 8-20. III. The Cross Foretold. vs. 21-23.

I. **THE CHRIST CONFESSED. 13**—"We here begin the second great division of our Saviour's ministry on earth, introductory to his sufferings and death. Up to this time we have had no distinct intimation, like that in verse 21, of these events. This intimation is brought in by the solemn question and confession now before us. As the former period of his ministry was begun by a declaration from the Father of his Sonship, so this also, on the mount of Transfiguration." (Alford.) **Coast**—R. V. "parts." Mark says, "the villages of Caesarea Philippi." He asked his disciples—He did not ask them because he did not know, but in order to draw out an expression of their faith in him. Luke tells us that he had just been alone praying (Luke 9: 18). **The Son of man**—R. V. "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" Jesus wished to bring out whether they admitted that title to be his in the sense of "Messiah." The answer shews that they did not, but that they considered him to be another forerunner, like John the Baptist.

14. **John the Baptist**—This was Herod's opinion (Matt. 14: 1, 2). **Elijah**—the Greek form of Elijah (Mal. 4: 5; Matt 11: 14; Luke 1: 17.) **Jeremias**—the Greek form of Jeremiah. From the books of the Maccabees we learn that the prophet Jeremiah was associated in the minds of the Jews with the restoration

of that national glory whose extinction he had wept over. He stood first in the prophetic canon as the greatest of the prophets. **One of the prophets**—Luke says, "that one of the old prophets is risen again." All agreed that he was but a man.

15. **But who say ye that I am**—"This was the decisive moment in which the separation of the New Testament "church" from the Old Testament theocracy was to be made. The hour had come for the utterance of a distinct Christian confession." (Lange.)

16. **Simon Peter answered**—He spoke for himself and the rest of the apostles. Chrysostom calls him "the mouth of the apostles." The faith expressed was not exclusively his, nor was personal pre-eminence assigned to him for uttering what the others believed as truly as he. That Peter should speak first is in keeping with his impetuous character. "Simon Peter was one of the quickest to perceive truth, and the readiest to utter it. Jesus' question was like a match to powder, and the convictions within him, condensed in a compact form, burst out from the fulness of his heart." (Peloubet.) **Thou art the Christ**—the Messiah of whom the prophets spake. **The Son of the living God**—"The confession is not made in terms of the other answer; it is not 'we say' or 'I say,' but 'thou art.' It is the expression of an inward conviction wrought by

God's Spirit. The excellence of this confession is, that it brings out both the human and the divine nature of the Lord." (Alford.) The Jews expected the Messiah to be a man selected for the office on account of his preeminent virtues. It was indeed a noble confession—an epitome of the Christian faith. It soared far above the narrow, carnal views of the rabbis. Spoken in a gentile district, with idol temples all around them, it was a ringing defiance of the powers of heathenism (John 6: 69; Acts 8: 37; Heb. 1: 2-5). "As his inner life manifested itself to the disciples, they saw in him an exalted nature above their own, and felt that he came to them, not as a mere messenger, but as a son, of God,—not a son, in the sense that others might be sons of God, but the Son of the living God, the one who came forth from God himself, and was in the inmost union with God." (Dwight.)

17. **Blessed art thou**—Since Peter spoke for the others he receives the blessing for the others. It is pronounced on him no more than on the others who were at one with him in his adoring faith. **Simon Bar-Jona**—*Bar* is the Syrian word for "son." His father's name was Jonah, or, according to John 1: 42; 21: 15, 16, 17 (R. V.), John Meyer calls this "a solemnly circumstantial style of address." Others find an allegorical meaning in Jonah (a dove) "Son of the Holy Spirit," whose emblem is a dove. Dr. Schaff finds in "Son of Jonah" an antithesis to "Son of Man." "That I, the Son of man, am at the same time the Messiah and the eternal Son of God, is as true as that thou, Simon, art the son of Jona; and as thou hast thus confessed me as the Messiah, I will now confess thee as Peter, etc." Alford and others say that "son of Jonah" is used as indicating his fleshly state and extraction, and forming the greater contrast to his spiritual state, name and blessing which follow. We would prefer Meyer's view as being the most natural. Jesus spoke impressively, and so called him by his full name. **Flesh and blood**—"The natural, carnal descent, as contrasted with spiritual generation." (Lange.) (John 1: 13.) The concise and comprehensive terms of this confession, as well as the truth they contained, were due to no mere flash of genius, nor were they derived from any human source, but they were directly revealed to Peter and the rest of the apostles by God himself. (1 Cor. 2: 9, 10.)

18. **I say also**—that is, in response to his confession. Peter confessed Christ, now Christ confesses Peter, and through him all equally believing disciples. **Thou art Peter**—Gr. *Petros*, "a stone," a fragment of a rock. **Upon this rock**—Gr. *petra*, "a rock," a mass of rock. Upon this famous passage we must dwell but briefly. **First**—The Romish interpretation, that herein a personal primacy is conferred upon Peter, and that this was transmitted to his successors, and that these successors are the popes, is manifestly incorrect. (1) It ignores the distinction between *petros* and *petra*. (2) It bases the church upon a

changing foundation, thus destroying the architectural figure. (3) It makes the apostolate a permanent not a temporary office. (4) It makes Christ bestow an invidious honor on Peter, who had no more faith than the others, but merely forwardness. (5) Peter himself never claimed any preeminence (1 Peter 5: 1). (6) The assumption that the bishop of Rome is the successor of Peter and holds this primacy, is disproved by history. We remark, **Secondly**, that Peter is addressed as the representative of the Twelve, and no personal honor is intended to be conferred on him. (1) In Matt. 18: 18, the power of "binding and loosing," which is part of the blessing here, is conferred equally upon the others, and in John 20: 23 the power of remitting and retaining sins is bestowed upon "the disciples," which in all probability included more than the Twelve. (2) The mere fact that Peter spoke first would afford no just ground for singling him out for such a distinguished position as "primate." The only prominence given to Peter in the Acts of the Apostles is such as was due to the strength and energy of his character. (3) The foundation of the church is distinctly stated to be "the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. 2: 20.) Compare 1 Cor. 3: 9, 10; Rev. 21: 14; Isa. 28: 16; Ps. 118: 22; Matt. 21: 42; Acts 4: 11; Rom. 9: 33. Our Lord's meaning is, "Upon that in you which entitles you to be called *Peter*—the fearless confession of me as the One Saviour of Sinners—I will build my church." "Three times after this the dispute arises among them which shall be the greatest—a dispute which never could have arisen had Jesus already openly and distinctly assigned the primacy to Peter—and a dispute, we may add, which never would have been settled, as Jesus in each case settled it, had any such primacy been ever intended to be conveyed by him." (Hanna.) **Gates of hell**—R. V. "hades." Eastern rulers held their courts at the gates of their cities. Here was the place of public concourse. (Gen. 22: 17; Ruth 4: 1; Lam. 5: 4.) So we speak of the Turkish power as "The Sublime Porte" (or gate). "Hades" means the unseen world, the realm of death. Here it stands for "the powers of darkness," all the forces of evil.

19. **The keys**—the power of admitting and excluding. Authority to govern and exercise discipline in the church ("the kingdom of heaven"). This they did under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who inspired them. Christ here speaks to Peter as the representative of the Twelve. (See Matt. 18: 18, 19; John 20: 19-23.) **Shalt bind**—declare to be forbidden. **Shalt loose**—declare to be permitted. In so far as special powers were conferred upon the apostles they were dependent upon the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the establishment of the church they were inspired to define doctrine and exercise discipline. Their authority is still wielded by the appointed officers of the church, but only in accordance with the New Testament, as given to us by them.

We teach apostolic doctrine and administer apostolic discipline. The "voice of the church" is the "voice of God" only when it accords with the Bible and conscience.

20. **Tell no man**—Because they did not yet fully understand the nature of this kingdom; it might excite tumults among the people; exasperate his enemies, and thus raise unnecessary obstacles to their work in the future.

III. THE CROSS FORETOLD. 21. **From that time**—This was his first plain announcement (Mark 8: 32) of his approaching death. See also Mark 8: 31; 10: 33; Luke 18: 31; 24: 6. **That he must go**—He explained the necessity for his sufferings in order to fulfil prophecy (Luke 24: 27), and make atonement for sin. They were not prepared to receive this truth yet. **Be raised again the third day**—They do not seem to have "taken in"

the literal sense of this announcement (Luke 24: 6-8), even after it had been repeated the second time (Mark 9: 10). The chief priests were sharper than they (Matt. 27: 63).

22. **Began to rebuke him**—Peter took him aside to remonstrate against his speaking of such an ending to his ministry. This was not the kind of coronation that he had fancied for Jesus.

23. **He turned**—towards the disciples (Matt. 8: 33). **Get thee behind me Satan**—The very words used to the devil at the Temptation (Matt. 4: 10). Jesus hears, not Peter's voice but, Satan's again urging him to snatch a crown without the cross. **An offence unto me**—R. V. "a stumbling-block unto me." **Savorest**—R. V. "mindest," "carest for." "You desire a worldly kingdom gained after man's fashion instead of a spiritual one founded in accordance with God's plan."

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

The central thought in this lesson is contained in Peter's confession "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Our summary must serve to set this out prominently.

Why did Jesus retire from Galilee for a time? Where were Jesus and his disciples when the conversation in our lesson took place? What question did Jesus ask? (Write, Who is Jesus?) What answers were given to this question? What answer did Peter give? From whom had Peter learnt this? Speak of the influence of Jesus' holy life, gracious words, and loving, merciful deeds, all proving him to be the Son of our Father in heaven. Yet the need of the Holy Spirit, to make us see and feel this so as to believe on Him and confess him.

Show that Peter only voiced the faith of all the others. What does the name *Peter* mean? On what will Christ build his church? Explain the play upon the word. Dwell upon the "rock element" in Peter as the Christian's defence against evil. The church of God cannot be overthrown so long as she holds her faith in the divinity of Christ and in his death as an atonement for sin. So Jesus takes Peter's words for a text from which to preach about his sufferings and death.


Peter called Jesus "the Christ," but did not know so well then all that was included in that name as we do. What offended him, rejoices us. Jesus is the Messiah just because he died for sinners. If you were asked the question, could you answer with Peter's faith, **My Saviour?**

Who is Jesus?

SOME SAY

JOHN
ELIJAH
JEREMIAH
A PROPHET

Peter says  The Christ

Can you say  My Saviour?

"Christ Jesus came . . . to save sinners."

Primary Department.

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

PRIMARY PREVIEW FOR THE FIRST QUARTER.

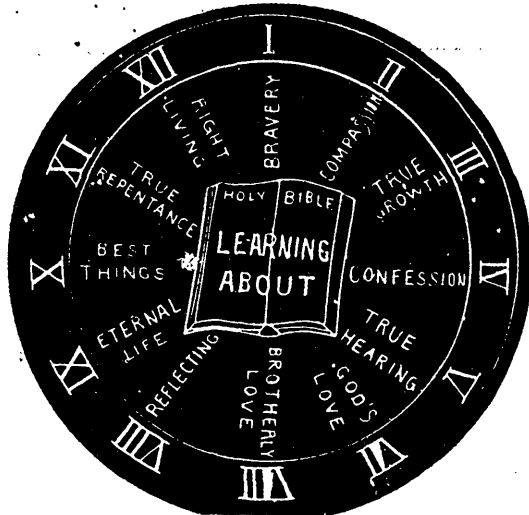
GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me."
Matt. 11:29.

One central thought is here chosen to teach. Only one truth should be taught to the little ones in each lesson. Make this truth the centre around which the other exercises cluster. Let the teacher tell the story, and the superintendent of the department apply the truth from the board. Examples are given each week. The suggestions will all be placed on the following preview. If you have two blackboards, or one large enough to divide in two, take half of it for the review each Sunday, and the other half for the lesson teaching. Draw or pin a picture of the Bible in the centre of the review board and leave it there, adding to it weekly the thought word. Also add one of the symbols* used in teaching the lesson. For example, Lesson I, the sword might be kept as a review symbol, to recall the idea, John the Baptist put to death with the sword. Thus at the end of the quarter your review will be already prepared.

Reviews fail because of:

- (1) Lack of careful preparation.
- (2) Because it is not thought of till nearly the end of the quarter.
- (3) Lack of definiteness.
- (4) Too much of each lesson taught rather than reviewed.
- (5) Lack of object lesson and blackboard work.

The above points will be overcome if this scheme is carried out. Vary it to suit your school and scholars. It is adapted for a primary class of eight years old and under.



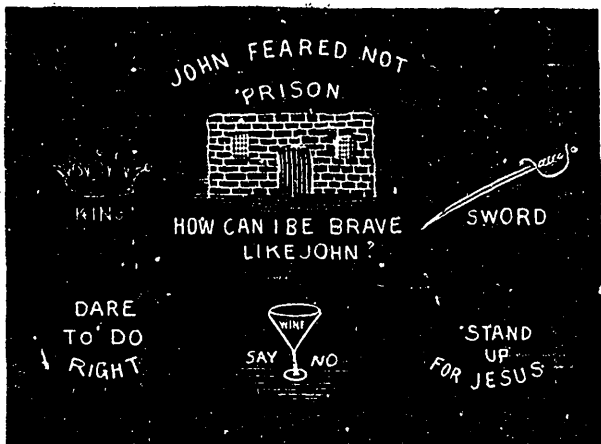
LESSON I. January 6th.

John the Baptist Beheaded. MARK 6: 17-29.

Begin the blackboard work with nothing on the board but the Golden Text. Put this on with yellow chalk, trimmed underneath, if you like, with red. I will not attempt, in the suggestions that follow, to clothe the skeleton in the language a teacher might use. These lessons are only intended to be hints to follow, and not to be used as given. Work at the lesson for yourself, and teach your class the lessons *they* need. We must be exceedingly careful not to try to teach too much. I was in a primary department recently, and heard the superintendent at the close try to teach seven distinct lessons. I have, in the following lesson, just one central truth I would teach. How can I be brave? Doing educates the emotions, being brave makes us more brave, therefore show the little ones how they may thus act.

*Patterns of any symbol used may be obtained by sending a two-cent stamp, either Canadian or American, for each symbol wanted, and another two-cent stamp for postage, to Miss Ethel Archibald, 93 Catherine Street, Springfield, Mass.

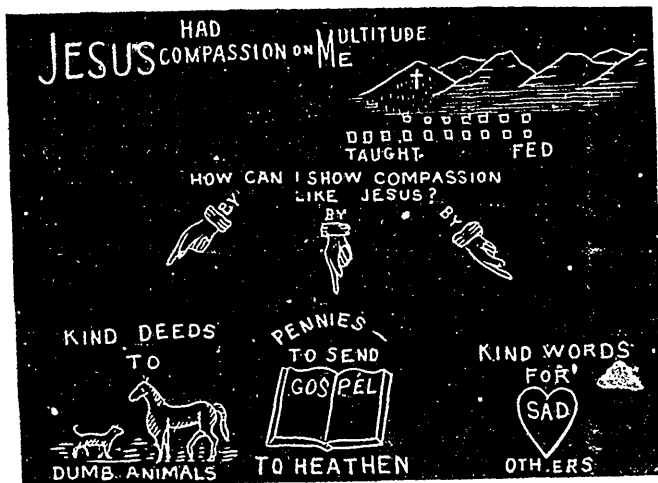
The lesson story can be impressed by the symbol of the crown and the sword, with, if you like, a drawing of the "prison" on the board. Draw as you talk. If you cannot draw, have the outline of the prison drawn on the board with a slate or lead pencil, and as you teach trace these lines with chalk. When the right time comes, pin the symbols to the board. Make much of the application, that is what you want to teach. Make it stand out clearly. Avoid teaching all sorts of lessons about John the Baptist. Teach the one truth and teach it thoroughly. Always develop the blackboard work before the class. Do not put it on beforehand.



LESSON II. January 13th.

Feeding the Five Thousand. MARK 6: 30-44.

Always do the work on the blackboard before the class. A few strokes of the crayon will make hills or mountains, and the sea. Draw out the facts of the lesson, and as you speak of the multitude make dots on the hillside. A white cross always signifies Christ. It is better than any picture. Now, as you tell the story, make twelve white lines for the twelve disciples, then, perhaps, a shorter one for the boy with the loaves and fishes. Make the squares as you tell of the companies into which the people were divided. Teach one central thought. Our one truth this week is *Compassion*. Bend all your energies to make the word understood. It is not too difficult for little ones.



Here is a chance to teach kindness to dumb animals. Get some pictures of a dog, cat, bird, horse, and pin in a group on the board. Then speak of the kind words to the sad in heart, and our pennies to send the gospel to the heathen. Draw the look if you can, and if not pin a picture of one on the board. If necessary, take the one from the preview board. Now, as you review, pin a hand pointing to each symbol, to make it more impressive.

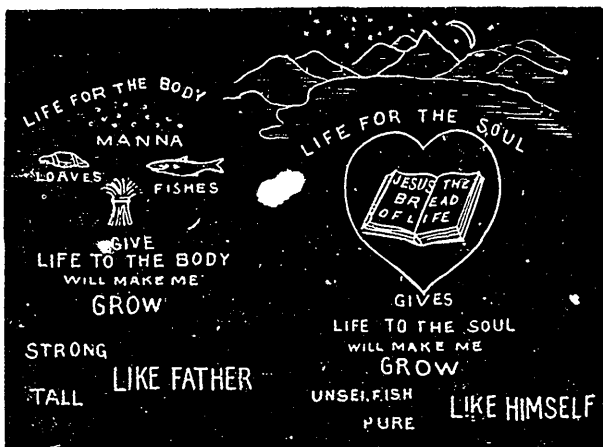
LESSON III—January 20th.

Christ the Bread of Life. JOHN 6: 25-35.

This is a very difficult lesson for the little ones, and great care must be taken with the teaching.

During the night Jesus walked on the water, and in the morning was found back in Capernaum. It was at night the manna fell, and it was also at night when Christ was born. Simply, therefore, to attract attention and make the scene interesting, sketch the hills and the sea as below, pin a few stars and a moon, cut from silver paper, to the board and make some clouds. Tell the lesson story, and if it has already been taught by teachers, draw by questions from the scholars.

Be sure and develop the lesson before the scholars, if you do not they will run ahead of you, and you will be unable to keep their attention. Pin or draw some loaves and not more than two fishes to the board, then a sheaf of wheat. If you cannot draw one and have not a picture, get some black paper and get a friend to draw one for you and pin it the board. Yellow chalk is always useful. You should have at least white, yellow, red, blue and green colors in chalk. Draw the Bible or pin a drawing of one to the board. When you have nearly finished the lesson, take two pieces of red chalk and draw a heart around the Bible. Use one piece in each hand, and beginning at the top centre draw both sides of the heart at once. Do it quickly. It is very easy thus to draw a heart. Try it beforehand. The lesson is obvious, manna, loaves, fishes, food for the body; Jesus, the bread of life, food for the soul.

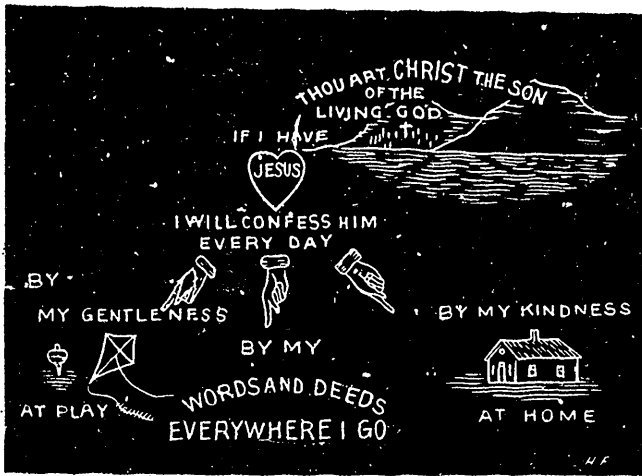


LESSON IV—January 27th.

The Great Confession. MATT. 16: 13-23.

In this lesson it might be as well to begin without anything on the board, not even the Golden Text. As a rule put this on beforehand, using yellow chalk, and place it up in the corner of the board. Begin with the hills and the plain below (a little green chalk will be helpful here), then make single strokes for the disciples and the white cross to signify Christ, and as you proceed make them teach the lesson story, so far as the movements of the disciples and Christ go. Then write the golden text on the board. Bring out the fact that

Peter confessed Christ because he believed in him. He loved Him and had seen His mighty works. The remainder of the lesson is so simple that I need scarcely speak of it. Use such symbols as you may have or draw the house and the toys.



PRIMARY QUESTION DRAWER.*

1. Why use a blackboard in Primary class?

- (1) You cannot do the best work without it.
- (2) There is nothing so helpful to attract attention.
- (3) There is nothing so helpful to hold the attention.
- (4) It helps to explain the lesson.
- (5) We can get into the heart through the eye most easily.
- (6) If carefully used the truth will live in the child's mind.
- (7) It is one of the best ways to impress the truth.
- (8) It aids the memory of the child.
- (9) It makes the lesson story clearer.
- (10) It makes the application clearer.
- (11) It enables us to condense the truth.
- (12) It is one of the best means of teaching geography.

(13) It saves time.

(14) It is helpful in teaching the golden text.

(15) The last look at the board recalls the lesson.

2. I cannot draw. How can I use the blackboard?

- (1) It is not necessary to draw well.
- (2) Pencil over the work beforehand with slate pencil.
- (3) Use symbols and pin them to the board.
- (4) Occasionally cover the work with paper until you teach.
- (5) Uncover it little by little.
- (6) Cut letters from white paper, join them together with black paper into words and pin them to the board.

(7) Get some black paper, draw beforehand with chalk the lesson in parts, and pin to the board as you teach the lesson.

Thus anyone who wishes can use a blackboard.

WERE THERE TWO BETHSAIDAS?

(Additional Note on Lesson 11: Feeding of the Five Thousand.)

According to Dr. Thomson and others there were not two Bethsaidas, but one city on the eastern and western banks of the Jordan where it enters the Sea of Galilee. The western side was the city of Andrew, and Peter, and Philip (John 1: 44; 12: 21), and the scene of many miracles (Matt. 11: 21). The eastern side had been built by Herod and named in honor of Julia, the daughter of Augustus and wife of Tiberias. It is objected to this theory that (1) in verse 45 it is stated that Jesus constrained his disciples to go to the other side before him unto Bethsaida, so that there must have been a city of that name on the western shore; and (2) John (12: 21) speaks of "Bethsaida of Galilee," which could not have been Bethsaida Julias, for it was partly in Gaulanitis. Still, writing so long after the political boundaries had changed, in Ephesus, and for Christians all over the world, John may have called the whole region around the lake by the name best known. And, in reference to the first objection, it may be said, that the disciples wanted to go to the north end of the lake, but were driven south by the storm, and forced to cross to Capernaum (John 6: 21-24). Certainly we have no need to assume the existence of another Bethsaida in order to get over the difficulty.

* Questions concerning primary work will be answered in these columns. Address Mr. Geo. H. Archibald, Springfield, Mass.

Normal Department.

Owing to the fact that this branch of the General Assembly's educational scheme has not yet been very generally adopted, the same text-book is continued for another year. Attention is drawn to the notice on the last page of the cover. It ought to be an object of ambition to our teachers and Bible-class scholars to take the Diploma for the year.

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT-BOOK.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER'S HANDBOOK: 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.

By THOMAS KIRKLAND, M. A.,

Principal, Normal and Model Schools, Toronto, Ont.

(These notes are by no means a mechanical dissection of the text book, but Principal Kirkland has, at the request of the committee, largely supplemented the author's treatment of a subject where such additional matter seemed to be called for. If you cannot obtain the text-book in the usual way, write to the Convener, enclosing its price (70 cents), and he will see that it is forwarded without delay.)

In studying Dr. Morrison's Book, the student is recommended to read the first two chapters, and to begin the study of the work by thoroughly mastering the third chapter; then take up chapter V, and follow this by a careful study of chapters VI, VII, VIII and IX. The order of study will then be, the Qualification of the Perfect Sabbath School Teacher, the Principles which lie at the foundation of all successful teaching, and the Art of Teaching deduced from these principles.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

I. **Personal Godliness.**—As the main object of Sabbath School teaching is 'conversion, the essential qualification of the teacher is personal godliness. Only those who *know* the love of Christ can sincerely speak of that love to others.

II. **A consistent walk and conversation.**—The main object of teaching both in the Public School and in the Sabbath School is not the communication of knowledge but the building up of character, and for this purpose, "example is better than precept." We teach not only by what we do and say, but to a far greater extent by what we are.

III. **The Sabbath School Teacher must know thoroughly and familiarly the subject he wishes to teach. He must teach from a full mind and a clear understanding.**—Nos. I and II may, in general, be taken for granted. There are few Sabbath School Teachers who do not possess these qualifications. The importance of III is not always appreciated, and yet there is no other characteristic or qualification which is so fundamental and essential.

(1) We can never convey into another mind nearly all of what we feel or know of any subject. There is always a large percentage of waste and loss in the act of transmission.

(2) What we really know we feel a strong inclination to teach. It is a law of human nature that there is an instinctive impulse to tell in some way our thoughts and emotions as soon as they become vivid and intense enough. "While I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue."

(3) Truth must be clearly and fully understood before it can be vividly felt; and it must be vividly felt by the teacher before it can be vividly felt by the pupil.

(4) When the subject is fully and familiarly known it leaves the teacher the full command of his powers for the purpose of teaching. A teacher possesses a certain amount of energy, and if part of this is employed in trying to think out the subject, just so much the less will be available for teaching it.

(5) And lastly, the ample knowledge of the teacher inspires the pupil with that confidence which every pupil should have in his teacher.

IV. **What the Sabbath School Teacher must possess:—**

(1) An intimate acquaintance with the Word of God.

(2) A knowledge of the chronology of the Bible, and the geography, both physical and political, of Bible lands. "He must needs go through Samaria." Why?

(3) A knowledge of contemporary history. Give illustrations.

(4) An acquaintance with the manners and customs of Eastern lands. Give illustrations.

(5) A knowledge of the natural history of the Bible.

V. **A Sabbath School Teacher should always be a learner.**—As soon as a teacher ceases to be a systematic student, he ceases to be an effective teacher. Pupils should not be asked to drink from a stagnant pool, but from a living fountain.

VI. **Patience and self-control are of prime importance in the Sabbath School Teacher.**—In order to control and influence others we must first be able to control ourselves.

VII. **A teacher must know the nature of childhood and be able and ready to sympathize with child-nature.**—A Sabbath School teacher should know the nature of the faculties which he is to develop and train, and the order in which these faculties are developed. The wisest training will be directed to these powers that are conspicuously active at the time.

VIII. **The Sabbath School Teacher should possess an agreeable manner and a cheerful disposition.**—To many a pupil his teacher is the representative and embodiment of what a Christian ought to be, and if that teacher is of a fault-finding, sad and whining disposition, the pupil will naturally think that Christianity is not that joyous and beautiful thing that it is represented to be.

IX. **Earnestness is a powerful factor in making a successful Sabbath School Teacher.**—If we wish to impress others, one of the first requisites is to be ourselves impressed. That which we know and greatly care about we very soon learn to impart, but that which we know and do *not* care about we will soon cease to know at all. We must feel deeply what we wish others to feel.

X. **And, lastly, Hopefulness is by no means the least important of the characteristics of the Sabbath School Teacher.**—The teacher should remember that he is doing God's work, and that God has never proved unfaithful, but has always owned and blessed every work done for him. The blessing may not always come when and in the manner we expect, but that it will come there is no doubt.

LESSON LIGHTS.

[A PROGRESSIVE OR REVIEW EXERCISE.]

Children are much interested in Bible Geography studied in connection with the present lessons on the "Life of Christ." Prepare an outline map (with black crayon, on muslin or cloth) of suitable size to be seen easily by the class. From colored cardboard cut a set of symbols which will be suggestive of the lessons studied from week to week. If preferred, the map may be colored with crayon or water colors to show the three divisions of Palestine, and the symbols made from white cardboard. As lessons are reviewed, allow children to pin the symbols in the position on the map which will indicate the geographical localities of places at which the events represented took place.

1. The following may be given for the quarter's lessons:—(1) Shepherd's Crook. (2) Two Birds. (3) Star. (4) Palm. (5) House—home at Nazareth. (6) Dove. (7) Mountain. (8) Boat. (9) Water Jar. (10) Scourge. (11) Moon and Stars. (12) Well.

2. The whole may be used as a sandmap or blackboard exercise for variety.

3. Enthusiasm is awakened and memory aided when the exercise is accompanied by music, symbols being hung when places are mentioned in song.—*Selected.*

THE INTERNATIONAL BIBLE READING ASSOCIATION.

This Association is connected with the Sunday School Union of London, England, and is presided over by Mr. Charles Waters, the Honorary General Secretary. It is represented in Canada by Honorary Secretaries for the various provinces as follows: Nova Scotia, Mr. Jas. S. Smith, Bland Street, Halifax; New Brunswick, Mr. S. J. Parsons, Woodstock; Quebec, Mr. R. Beaumont, P. O. box 1966 Montreal; Ontario, Mr. Jas. McNab, 125 Huntley Street, Toronto; and Manitoba, Mr. A. C. Coubrough, Stonewall. By the courtesy of Mr. Waters we have been permitted to adopt the selections of the I. B. R. A. on our lesson helps.

The object of the Association is to promote the topical reading of the Bible in connection with the International S. S. lessons. A Branch may be formed by not less than ten members in any church or Sabbath school. These appoint their Secretary, whose business is to conduct correspondence with the Secretary for the province and distribute cards, etc., to the members. Each member undertakes to read the daily portions, and subscribes three cents annually. In return he receives a card of membership, the monthly leaflets, containing hints on the daily readings, and quarterly-illustrated "circular letters."

If you have not a Branch in your Sabbath School, will you not organize one? The selections are admirable, the leaflets helpful, and the fact of being a member of a world-wide association numbering over 400,000 members is stimulating. The Honorary Secretary for your province, whose name is given above, will be pleased to answer any inquiries.