



# The Teacher's Monthly.

Vol. IV

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No. 9.

The Helps for three Lessons of this Quarter were prepared, in order of their date, by Rev. J. McDougall, Holton, P. Q.; Rev. Dr. MacVicar, Montreal, and Rev. A. S. Morton, Fairville, St. John, N.B.

Some Sabbath Schools in the country are open only in summer, owing to the long distances, the bad roads, the cold and storm, the short days, the work of heating a building for the school, and other winter hindrances in the country. On the other hand, some schools in the city close in the summer because many of their scholars are in the country, while in winter their attendance is largest. Where such intermissions must be, it would be of great advantage and help for the scholars to have our S. S. Quarterlies and study the Lessons and answer the questions at home. As the Lessons are usually a connected series, this would be helpful, not only in knowledge acquired from the Lesson itself, but in understanding the other Lessons for the Quarter, and in cultivating the habit of Bible study at home.

The month of September is an important one for all S. S. teachers and their work. Schools that close in winter will be nearing the end of their term. But few Sabbaths remain. What is to be done for the true well-being of the scholar must be done at once, if at all. Other schools are re-opening. It is of the highest importance to begin the S. S. year aright.

Did the S.S. teacher walk only by sight he would soon get discouraged. Sabbaths and seasons come and go; scholars pass in and out of the class, and often the teacher can see no definite results, and he feels, "Surely, I have labored in vain and spent my strength for nought and in vain." But when he turns to the promise, "My word shall not return unto

me void," he takes courage. Seeing not, he believes, that in some measure, by God's blessing, he has helped to shape lives for good.

To the teacher who most fully realizes and takes to heart the smallness of apparent success, the very discouragement may prove a blessing, for the one who knows self weak relies most upon the Holy Spirit, who never disappoints.

## OUR S. S. HELPS.

Westward, the S. S. Publications take their way. The Helps for 1899 are to be issued in Toronto.

Over a year ago, June, 1897, when the Assembly met in Winnipeg, the Sabbath School Committee reported that "*it has become quite impossible to conduct it*" (the business and work of the S. S. Publications) "*as in the past,*" and also that liabilities of "over \$5,000 must be met at once."

The Assembly was in a strait. Two problems faced it,—how to meet notes of about \$5,600, and how to continue the Helps. The former was solved by Rev. Drs. Robertson, Thompson, and Fletcher becoming personally responsible in the meantime, on the understanding that the proceeds of Children's Day were to be devoted to its payment.

As to the second problem, on the one hand it was stated by the Committee to be impossible to continue as in the past; and on the other, to appoint one specially to this work, and add the charge of his support to a deficit that had been steadily increasing, seemed in the meantime an unwise risk.

In this dilemma the Editor of the Record was asked if he would undertake them in addition to his own work. He agreed that, if there were no other way open, he would undertake them for a time, and in the beginning of 1898 they were transferred to Montreal.

Owing to failure in some of the Editor's arrangements for the Helps, failure which it was impossible for him to foresee, the issues of the first two Quarters were not in advance, as they should have been. During the latter part of the year this has been rectified, and the Publications have been regularly mailed by the printer in good season.

The success of the Helps has been encouraging, the highest total circulation during the year being 75,000, from 60,000 the previous year. Many kind and appreciative words, too, have been written, for all of which heartiest thanks are given.

But the work, in addition to that of the Records, has been too great for any one to carry on, and the Editor, at the recent Assembly, recommended that as there was good prospect, with economical management, of the S.S. Helps being self-supporting, they be issued from the beginning of 1899 in Toronto, and that a Committee be appointed to select one as Editor and Manager.

This was unanimously agreed to, and with equal unanimity the Committee at its meeting agreed to appoint Rev. R. Douglas Fraser to take charge of the work. It is hoped that his efforts to give to the church a good series of Lesson Helps will be cordially seconded by all our S.S. workers.

### THREE S. S. PROBLEMS.

#### THE PROBLEM OF THE LATE SCHOLAR.

The late scholar is no blessing, and yet he is far from an unmixed evil. The wise teacher will get all the good he can out of him.

Of course, he is to be transformed into the early scholar, care being taken lest by mistake he be transformed into the scholar absent altogether. And during this process of transformation there is a small harvest of advantage to be tended.

Let his entrance be a danger signal. Don't act mad. Of course, the electric current of interest is flowing by this time, or never, and the late scholar rudely breaks it. But never mind. Better the total loss of your scholars' interest in the lesson than the loss of their respect for you.

Remember, too, that there may be a good excuse,—even late coming may mean earnest

endeavor,—and premature impatience in such case will cause you dismayed repentance.

The late scholar cannot be ignored; don't try it. Sometimes we fiercely attempt to finish our sentences, or get answers to our lost questions. The late scholar is a potent and aggressive fact, and cannot be got rid of in that way.

No. Accept the situation promptly and sensibly. Stop short at once, and greet the late comer heartily. Don't let him sneak into a back seat but set him in the midst. See that he has a Bible or a lesson paper. Incorporate him. Then proceed thriftily to utilize him. He is your opportunity for a review. You probably need one at this stage of the lesson, anyway. Here is your chance for gathering up loose ends and binding all the truths thus far taught in a compact whole.

You may do it in this way: "Before you came in, Charley, we were talking about Christ's command to lay up treasures, not on earth, but in heaven. We've been deciding what some of the earth treasures are. We've agreed that they include money and clothes and houses and studies and friends, and that we mustn't win any of these in such a way that they will belong merely to earth. You see? And now, class, can any one think of another earth-treasure?"

Or you may do it in this way: "Here's Churley. John, will you please tell him what we've talked about at the beginning of the lesson? That's good. And Bess, tell him, please, what conclusion we have come to thus far. That's right. And now let us go on."

Similarly, all through the lesson, the late scholar may be your excuse for bringing up points mentioned at the opening of the hour, and needing repetition. "Something was said at the start which bears on that matter, and Charley wasn't here. Ned, please tell him what that was."

Bring him into the electric circle by a question as soon as you can. But remember that it takes time for him to become charged with interest and understanding as fully as the rest, and ask him easy questions at first, or, perhaps better, call on him to read a verse or two.

The late scholar's exit is fraught with as much danger as his entrance. You must utilize that also. Let your questioning be

jolly and indirect: "Too much sleep this morning, Billy?" "Sorry, Ellen, that you couldn't start with us;" "Some good points you missed at the opening, Fred."

If rightly used, this is an opportunity for learning of some need or temptation that besets your scholar. She may be lazy. He may be too fond of sleep. She may keep too late hours. He may be led astray by the Sunday morning papers. They may fail to see the value of the opening prayer and songs. You get fresh insight into their characters.

When Nature heals a broken bone she makes it the stronger for the break. And so, though the late scholar seem to fracture sadly the interest of the lesson, the wise teacher will know how to mend the matter in such shrewd fashion as to knit the whole class more firmly together.

#### THE PROBLEM OF "SIDE-TRACKING THE TEACHER."

Even the poorest teacher has a right to the course he has marked out for himself; even the smartest scholar has no right to side-track him.

Some scholars side-track their teacher merely to show that they understand how to use the switch; others do it by simply fooling with the switch, in pure carelessness and thoughtlessness; others really wish to bring the teacher nearer some private interest of their own.

Their motive must determine your treatment of them,—whether it is to be the bruskeness that rebukes conceit, the firm patience that resists carelessness, or the considerate postponement of questions that are prompted by a need.

But so far as its effect on the lesson is concerned, it makes no difference whether the teacher is side-tracked by a switch of gold or one of brass,—the lesson is "held up," and often permanently.

It is not always easy to tell when these question-switches are open, and when they are closed,—when they will side-track you, and when they will merely salute you with a friendly rattle and let you pass; the tokens are not so definite as on the red and white faces of the switch indicator. And yet you cannot engineer your class far without wrecking it, if you do not learn to read these ques-

tion indicators, and tell at a glance whither they will send you.

But what is the use of reading them, if you are to be at their mercy anyway? How shall we circumvent these mischief-making switchers?

Some would abruptly take away their switch-keys, and practically dismiss them from the force; that is, they would prohibit questioning altogether. But this is capitulating to the problem. Some would swing smilingly off upon the side-track, as if they had intended to go there. But that is surrendering their preparation. Some would rush precipitately into the side-track and through it, expecting to find at the other end a switch back to the main track. But thus the lesson is usually derailed.

On the railroad, of course, there is authority; but in the Sunday-school the less appeal to authority the better. No, the likeness, to a large extent, stops here; for in the Sunday-school the only way to deal with a scholar who side-tracks the train is to win him by friendly arts to become your helper rather than your hinderer.

In the first place, many a lesson is side-tracked because the main track is not made sufficiently plain to the scholars' apprehension. When the lesson winds like a snake, with a purpose known only to the teacher (if to him), small blame to the scholars if they switch it off the wrong way by a question. Strike out in a bee-line at the start, and stick to it. No one will then ignorantly side-track you.

In the second place, many a lesson is side-tracked because the teacher does not act as if he cared whether he ever arrived anywhere or not. Lackadaisical in manner and matter, his carelessness provokes equal carelessness in his scholars. Let him, on the other hand, appear to be eagerly on the scent of some truth, on the track of some fact, following the path of some event or demonstration, and his scholars will, in the main, be "forth and right on" with him.

In the third place, many a lesson is side-tracked because the scholars are not on the side of the teacher. Of course, when the two parties are at cross-purposes, things run on no more evenly than they would if the engineer of a train were out of touch with his crew. The teacher must get up an *esprit de corps*, a class spirit, or his class will be perpetually

flying off from him on a tangent. His scholars must be interested in him, if they are to be interested with him. He must draw them to himself, or they will never pull together. Friendship in his crew must take the place of authority in the railroad crew; and the more friendship, the less side-tracking.

In the fourth place, there must be frankness of speech. A misplaced switch on a railway, if it provoked no further collision, would at least provoke a clash of words. There is no reason why, if a question is too far aside from the main purpose of the lesson, the teacher should not say so. He may lay it away in his mind for later discussion; he may promise to talk it over after the session; but no fear of being thought incompetent, or unsympathetic or arbitrary, should induce him to turn aside from his one purpose. The wise teacher will make many exceptions, of course, to every rule; but nevertheless, a rule of the wise teacher it must be, to say to every irrelevant question, kindly and tactfully, yet firmly, "Get thee behind me." For the half hour is all too short. The impressions made are all too confused. The instruction given is all too fragmentary. However wise and earnest the individual moments may be, there is danger that the half hour may pass into oblivion at once, unless these individual moments have been wise and earnest to some single, distinct end.

There is a place for switches in our Sunday-school lesson. The train must be made up. Side excursions must often be made. There are sundry connecting lines whose cars must be switched in. But in genuine Sunday-school railroading there must be no delay upon side-tracks. Let all teachers, as far as possible, run express.

#### THE PROBLEM OF THE VISITOR.

The analogy for the class-building of some teachers is the arch. Every scholar is needed in his place, or the class-work collapses; and of course, there is no room for a visitor. The analogy for the true class is the electric circle. Join hands all around, and ever room and electricity for one more.

I do not mean to imply that the visitor is not a problem. He is an intrusion on your familiar little group. He is a foreign and constraining element. He is a problem, how-

ever, that you cannot get rid of, but must solve.

Utilize the visitor. Go to work in such way as to transform him into a scholar; or if circumstances forbid that, at any rate win from his visit fresh interest and inspiration for the class. Every visitor is an angel of opportunity, entertained—how often!—unawares.

Let your reception of the visitor be to your class an object-lesson in Christian courtesy. If he comes in alone, and awkwardly drops into a vacant seat, do not wait for the busy superintendent to get round to him. If he is of fit age for your class, drop everything,—the most valuable lesson you could be teaching is not so valuable as this practical example,—and go to the stranger. Introduce yourself cordially to him, and him to the rest of the class, or, at any rate, to his neighbors.

Sometimes resign the pleasure of seeking the visitor yourself, and send some persuasive scholar, thus letting him have a taste of the joy of giving invitations. Possibly it will help him into the habit of giving invitations outside.

Get your scholars to hand the visitor a lesson leaf or a Bible. Show them that he is their visitor as well as yours. They will soon learn to be delightfully courteous. But an iceberg teacher makes an iceberg class.

And now you are on trial before your class. They will judge you by the interest or the apathy of the visitor. They are watching him, ready to be ashamed or proud of you.

Yet do not fear your visitor. He may come from a better school or a better teacher. He may be critical and sneering, and skeptical. Nevertheless, he is your opportunity. Rejoice in it.

If he is a better scholar than any in your class, what a valuable and inspiring example he may be made to them! If a poorer scholar what an opportunity to make your class feel the joy and power of teaching some one.

If he is sneering and critical, the indignation of the class will bind them more enthusiastically to you. If he is skeptical, what a chance for examining and strengthening foundations.

The visitor is a mine of new ideas and experiences. Old thoughts take on novel forms when fitted to him. His questions and answers exhibit needs in your own class, unob-

served because unfamiliar. His ways and words freshen the stagnant class atmosphere.

And so he is your chance to get out of ruts and into new ways and moods. Bless Providence for him, and question him vigorously, making use of him to the utmost.

Two cautions, however. Let your questioning be clear. He is unused, remember, to your little mannerisms, and must not be confused by idiosyncrasies. And in your exultation over him do not neglect the others, nor seem to change your plans for the visitor, or to be striving to show off before him.

Final advantage of the visitor: Teach your scholars to ask him heartily to come again, not forgetting to do so cordially yourself. Committees on church extension, remember, are trained in the Sunday-school.

Thus to see that the value of the visitor does not depend upon the visitor so much as might be imagined. Yet just a word on how to visit well.

Go to give good. Take hearty interest in the lesson, and have some thought to add to the discussion. Better yet, have some earnest question to ask. And ask it. If you come from another school, consider yourself a Christian ambassador bearing greetings of brotherly good will and common endeavor.

Go to get good. Be unobtrusive and teachable. And especially, show that you have received good. Express appreciation, after the lesson, to teacher and scholar. Then will you be blessed, and, changing the meaning of the word "visitation," these words from the Wisdom of Solomon may be applied to you: "In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble."—*A. R. Wells, in S. S. Success.*

## SUNDAY-SCHOOL SINGING AND PRAYING.

### A SINGING SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

Lifeless singing means, usually, a dead Sunday-school. Many a superintendent might greatly increase the vigor of his school by getting a little snap into the music. Different ways of singing will not of themselves solve the problem, but they will go far toward it. Here are a few methods which will add to the singing the variety that is the spice of it as well as of nearly everything else.

Try reading the song in concert before it is sung. It would puzzle most even of us older folks to tell, after we have sung a hymn, what is in it. Concert reading brings out unsuspected beauties of thought, and the hymn will be sung afterward with fresh zest and with fuller intelligence. The superintendent may vary this plan by reading the stanzas alternately with the school, or the girls may alternate with the boys. Occasionally get a single scholar to read the hymn before the school, or, what is far better, to commit it to memory and recite it.

Indeed, memory hymns, to be committed to memory by the entire school, and sung without the book, will prove very popular. Select songs that are worth learning for their words as well as for their music,—a thing which, alas! cannot be said of all our Sunday-school songs. One memory hymn a month might possibly be achieved, and your children will rapidly grow independent of hymn-books, as their grandsires were.

They may like to vote upon a school hymn for the entire year, and learn it in this way,—one that shall serve as a sort of rallying-song throughout the twelve-month. The various classes, too, may be encouraged to select their own class songs, and to practice them at their class socials. Then, once in a while, the entire school may listen while one or two classes sing their class hymns.

It would do no harm, either, for the superintendent occasionally to bind the children's interest to the singing by asking them to call for their favorites, that the school may sing them. This privilege may be granted to the classes or scholars that have the best record in attendance.

It will add interest to the singing if bits of pleasant information are sometimes given about the authors of our familiar songs. At the opening of the session, for instance, tell something about the blind hymn-writer, Fanny Crosby, and then let all the songs sung that day be by her; or tell a little about Miss Havergal's beautiful life, or give a few bright anecdotes about Dr. S. F. Smith, and then use nothing but their hymns. Some such book as Hezekiah Butterworth's "Story of the Hymns" (New York: The American Tract Society. \$1.75), or Duffield's "English Hymns: Their Authors and History" (New

York: The Funk & Wagnalls Co. \$3), will afford a plentiful supply of biographical material. Once in a while get one of the scholars to read one of these hymn anecdotes, or to tell it in his own words.

Prayer songs—there are many most beautiful ones—may be used as prayers, all heads being bowed while they are sung softly; or they may be read in the same way.

Antiphonal songs are easily arranged. Choose two classes of good singers in distant parts of the room, and let one sing the verses and the other the choruses of some suitable song. A hymn arranged in the form of question and answer, such as "Watchman, tell us of the night," or "Art thou weary, art thou languid?" is very effective when sung in this way, or when read in dialogue, the superintendent taking the questions and the school the answers.

Other dispositions may be made, for the sake of variety. Get the girls to sing the stanzas, and the boys the choruses, or the girls to sing one verse, and the boys the next, all uniting on the choruses; or, let the school to the right of the center alternate in singing with the school to the left. Send a company of singers into another room, with closed doors, and have them sing the chorus as an echo, very softly. Get the teachers to sing the stanzas of some song, while the whole school sings the refrain.

Solos are good once in a while, especially if you make the school the chorus for them. A quartette of picked singers may be introduced very delightfully on occasions, especially if their selection is germane to the lesson topic, and, best of all, if the quartette is chosen from the scholars themselves. The primary department will hugely enjoy singing one of their songs to the main school, and the older scholars will enjoy it quite as heartily.

Possibly a Sunday-school choir might be organized to advantage, the strong singers from among the more mature scholars being banded together to practice new music and lead the singing. School orchestras have been very useful in many churches, the boys being proud to serve the school with violin and cornet.

Most useful, however, in adding zest to the singing, are the simple changes and variations that shrewdly call attention to the old by put-

ting it in a new place, or "putting it" in a new way. For instance, you might call fresh attention to a beautiful song by bidding all sing it without their books, while you "line it out" earnestly and brightly. You might preface a hymn with a sentence or two, telling why you think it just the hymn to sing in connection with the day's lesson. You might piece together several verses from different songs, and ask the school to sing them in immediate succession, without prelude or interlude, noting the connection and progress of the thought. You might stimulate the scholars in this and that corner by asking now one class and now another to consider themselves the leaders in the song next to be sung. You might have occasional "new-hymn" days, in which will be sung no song ever tried by the school. You might even steal ten minutes, on very rare occasions, for song services, carefully planned so as to bear effectively on the lesson for the day. The ways are almost endless whereby a music-loving, child-loving superintendent can introduce his two loves to each other.

A few more general suggestions. First, to the organist or pianist. Why do you think it necessary to hammer out an entire piece of music before you let the fidgety children sing it? They already know every note of it, and are not interested in your performance; nor is any one else. They can find the place quite as quickly as you can. Except in the case of new songs, do let us off with the chord, and we'll canonize you as a model of self-restraint and good sense.

Then to the precentor, or whoever is responsible for the time you keep. Why is it so slow? I never could see why hymns should be sung so drawlingly as to make it quiet impossible to grasp their thought. Time yourself in singing your next hymn, then read aloud the same hymn, forcing yourself to occupy the same time, and you will see why it is that our singing leaves our minds quite absolute blanks. This grievous fault must be remedied with the children if the singing of hymns is ever to be, to the average grown-up, an intellectual and spiritual as well as a physical occupation.

And, to the same end, why is it that your school can sing readily, even without the book, the first two or three stanzas of so many songs,

while every stanza beyond is an unknown land to them? It is because, owing chiefly to the slowness of our ordinary singing, we seldom compass the whole of a hymn. At the close of a well-written hymn is the climax, the thought up to which the whole has led, which binds it all together. Our songs, if they are to get hold upon our minds and lives, must be sung beyond their prelude, sung straight through.

*To get hold of minds and lives,—that must be the end sought by all our singing.*

#### A PRAYING SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

In no way can more Christianity be taught in less time than by a good prayer. A Sunday-school that is not opened with the right kind of prayer remains tight shut until the teachers get hold of it, while the right kind of prayer at the close of the lesson hour rivets the lesson on the week to come.

Yet I know of no point in Sunday-school management regarding which superintendents are more careless. The children must listen to Magellan prayers that circumnavigate the globe; to mechanical prayers, cast in stereotyped forms; to officious prayers that volunteer to teach the coming lesson; to peacock prayers that flaunt big words and fine phrases; to wrinkled prayers, dealing with experiences into which the children will not grow for three decades. In some schools the superintendent always makes the prayer himself, praying in the same terms and tones and order for the same things. Elsewhere the superintendent invites others to perform the service, but, with pitiless impartiality, calls upon all that will, heedless whether they are capable or totally unfit for the difficult duty.

For it is not easy to guide the devotions of these varied ages and characters. The words must be so simple that the youngest can understand them. The thoughts must be so noble as to furnish an uplift to the oldest. The expressions must be direct, as in the realized presence of Christ. The prayer must be brief, and bright, and deeply in earnest, sincere as a child.

To perform this task, therefore, no one should be invited merely for policy's sake, merely because he is a visiting clergyman, a church officer, or a good-hearted layman. Ask no one that does not know the glorious lan-

guage of a child's prayer. Give notice beforehand, since this prayer, if any, should be thought over and prayed over. And if you fear the prayer will lack a certain quality, shrewdly incorporate its name in your invitation, asking for a brief prayer, or a simple prayer, or a prayer about few things.

I wonder that this exercise is so seldom fixed upon the children's attention and interest by their own vocal participation in it. Indeed, it is not always that the school is able to repeat the Lord's Prayer together with the freedom and force born of long custom. The school may easily be taught to chant the Lord's Prayer, and that may be made most genuine praying. There are many suitable short Bible prayers that children might learn to say together, such as "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." Indeed, there are many prayer psalms that could be learned entire, the concert repetition of which would greatly enrich the Sunday-school hour. If yours is a model school, every scholar has his Bible, and Scripture prayers, not committed to memory, may be read in concert. And, besides, what more impressive conclusion to the session than the "Mizpah benediction," in which all voices join, or, perhaps better, the beautiful benediction in Numbers 6: 24-26, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee," etc.?

Then there is the hymn-book. If it is a good one, it contains many beautiful prayer hymns. Let the scholars all bow their heads, and sing softly Miss Havergal's tender consecration hymn, or "Nearer, my God, to thee," and you will find all hearts indeed drawn nearer heaven. Occasionally let the school read together one of these same hymns, also with their heads bowed.

And, by the way,—though it deserves more than a "by the way,"—insist on the bowing of the head,—not that the attitude is important in itself, but the reverence that the attitude arouses is of the highest importance. Wait till all heads are bowed before you begin the prayer or permit another to begin it. The half-minute of quiet or semi-quiet needed to gain this end is not ill-bestowed. Moreover, I should strongly advise you to go one step farther, and once in a while have the entire school go down on their knees. This, the



normal attitude of prayer, the children should be taught to assume in public, at least so often that it will not seem to them forced or unnatural.

Have you tried silent prayer? A blessed exercise it is, and one the children will love. Ask them to bend their heads or kneel, and then in perfect silence to pray for their teachers, or their pastor, or their dear ones at home, or some sick scholar. After a minute the superintendent will tenderly add a few closing sentences of vocal prayer.

And have you tried a chain prayer—a prayer started by a leader, who will also close it, to which ten or twenty of the scholars contribute sentences of praise or petition? You will be astonished to see how many of the scholars will join in these prayers,—you will be astonished, that is, unless you are familiar with the training along this line so nobly accomplished in our modern young people's religious societies.

Still another way to obtain the scholars' careful heed to the prayer, is to establish a form with which the superintendent will always begin his prayer, and which the entire school will repeat with him. The opening sentences of the Lord's Prayer may be used for such a purpose. Then, at the close of the prayer, after "for Jesus' sake," let all the scholars say "Amen."

An occasional Sunday-school prayer-meeting held for ten minutes at the close of the lesson hour, will do much to inspire in the school a deeper spirit of worship; that is, if the scholars themselves take part, and not the teacher only. And these Sunday-school prayer-meetings are magnificent opportunities for drawing the net. Hold them in a small room, that nearness may warm the coals of devotion to a glow. Do not hold them too frequently to be burdensome. Keep them brief and earnest. Let the teachers work for them in their classes, and use them as tests for their teaching. Above all, expect conversions in them, and, if you are faithful and faith-filled, you will get them.

This use of the scholar in the devotions of the school should be extended to his home. The superintendent may ask the scholars to pray every day during the coming week for the school, or for their teacher, or for their next lesson, that it may bring some one nearer

Christ. For several weeks there may stand in bold letters on the blackboard a list of things that may be prayed for at home. The teacher, of course, must enforce these recommendations. If he will courageously hold once in a while a little prayer-meeting with his scholars, in the class-room, about the class-table, or, best of all, at his own home or at one of theirs, he will thereby teach them as much Christianity as otherwise he might in a year.

Indeed, the teacher has much to do in making yours a praying Sunday-school. To say nothing about the teacher's prayers for his scholars, which will be like steam to his pedagogic engine, and to say nothing about the united prayers of the teachers in the teachers' meetings, the teacher's conduct during the prayer in the school is in itself half the scholar's attention, the knowledge on the part of the scholars that their teacher is praying for them will spur their home devotions, and the teacher's simple, ready participation in the school prayers will prompt their own. An excellent occasional method of opening the school is by a succession of very brief—almost sentence—prayers from six or eight of the teachers. A frequent topic for discussion in the teachers' meeting should be how best to inculcate in the school the spirit of devotion, since this great result is to be won only by the co-operation of all the working forces of the school.

Much is gained in this matter if you gain variety. Sometimes ask the older scholars themselves, several of them in succession, to offer brief prayers at the opening of the school. Sometimes let the superintendent's opening prayer attract attention by its exceeding brevity,—only three or four sentences, embodying a single petition. Do not place the prayer always at the same place in the programme; now let it come before the singing, now after; now lay emphasis on the prayer introductory to the lesson hour, now on the prayer that closes the hour and seeks to drive home its lessons. Be dead in earnest,—no, be alive in earnest. Be thoughtful and versatile. Be bright and cheery and simple-hearted and sympathetic. In these prayers, that should furnish the life-blood to the school, be all things to all—children, if by all means you may win one of them.—*Amos R. Wells, in S. S. Success.*

# LESSONS AND GOLDEN TEXTS FOR 1899.

## Studies in the Gospel by John.

### First Quarter.

1. Jan. 1.—*Christ the True Light.* John 1 : 14. Commit vs. 9-12. (Study John 1 : 1-34 ; 8 : 12-18 and 12 : 44-50.) Golden Text—In Him was life ; and the life was the light of men. John 1 : 4.
2. Jan. 8.—*Christ's First Disciples.* John 1 : 35-46. Commit vs. 35-37. (Study chap. 1 : 35-51 and Matt. 4 : 18-25.) Golden Text—Behold the Lamb of God ! John 1 : 36.
3. Jan. 15.—*Christ's First Miracle.* John 2 : 1-11. Commit v. 11. Golden Text—And His disciples believed on Him. John 2 : 11.
4. Jan. 22.—*Christ and Nicodemus.* John 3 : 1-16. Commit vs. 14-16. (Study vs. 1-21. Compare 2 Cor. 5 : 17-21.) Golden Text—For God so loved the world, etc., John 3 : 16.
5. Jan. 29.—*Christ at Jacob's Well.* John 4 : 5-15. Commit vs. 13-15. (Study chap. 4 : 1-42.) Golden Text—Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give Him shall never thirst. John 4 : 14. *Healing with*
6. Feb. 5.—*The Nobleman's Son Healed.* John 4 : 43-54. Commit vs. 49-51. Golden Text—Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth : and himself believed, and his whole house. John 4 : 53.
7. Feb. 12.—*Christ's Divine Authority.* John 5 : 17-27. Commit vs. 24-27. (Study chap 5 : 1-38.) Golden Text—This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. John 4 : 42.
8. Feb. 19.—*Christ Feeding the Five Thousand.* John 6 : 1-14. Commit vs. 9-11. (Compare Matt. 14 : 13-21 ; Mark 6 : 31-44 and Luke 9 : 10-17.) Golden Text—I am the bread of life. John 6 : 35.
9. Feb. 26.—*Christ at the Feast.* John 7 : 14, 28-37. Commit vs. 28-31. (Study the whole chapter.) Golden Text—If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. John 7 : 37.
10. March 5.—*Christ Freeing from Sin.* John 8 : 12, 31-36. (May be used as a Temperance Lesson.) Commit vs. 34-36. (Study John 8 : 12-59.) Golden Text—If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. John 8 : 36. *and*
11. March 12.—*Christ Healing the Blind Man.* John 9 : 1-11. Commit vs. 5-7. (Study the chapter.) Golden Text—One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see. John 9 : 25. *and*
12. March 19.—*Christ, the Good Shepherd.* John 10 : 1-16. Commit vs. 14-16. (Study the whole chapter ; also compare Ps. 23 ; Heb. 13 : 20, and 1 Peter, 5 : 4.) Golden Text—I am the good shepherd : the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. John 10 : 11.
13. March 26.—*Review.* Golden Text—My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. John 10 : 27.

### Second Quarter.

1. April 2.—*The Raising of Lazarus.* John 11 : 32-45. (A Lesson for Easter Sunday.) Commit vs. 41-44. (Study John 11 : 1-46 ; also 1 Cor. 15 : 1-58) Golden Text—I am the resurrection and the life. John 11 : 25.
2. April 9.—*The Anointing in Bethany.* John 12 : 1-11. Commit vs. 1-3. (Compare Matt. 26 : 1-13 and Mark 14 : 3-9.) Golden Text—She hath done what she could. Mark 14 : 8.
3. April 16.—*Jesus Teaching Humility.* John 13 : 1-17. Commit vs. 14-17. (Study the whole chapter.) Golden Text—I have given you an example. John 13 : 15.
4. April 23.—*Jesus, the Way and the Truth and the Life.* John 14 : 1-14. Commit vs. 2-6. (Study also Acts 4 : 8-12.) Golden Text—Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. John 14 : 6.
5. April 30.—*The Comforter Promised.* John 14 : 15-27. (A lesson for Pentecost.) Commit vs. 25, 26. (Study also John 16 : 1-15.) Golden Text—I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter. John 14 : 16.
6. May 7.—*The Vine and the Branches.* John 15 : 1-11. Commit vs. 6-8. (Compare John 15 : 16 and Matt. 7 : 16-20.) Golden Text—I am the vine, ye are the branches. John 15 : 5.
7. May 14.—*Christ Betrayed and Arrested.* John 18 : 1-14. Commit vs. 3-5. (Compare Matt. 26 : 47-56 ; Mark 14 : 43-52 and Luke 22 : 47-53.) Golden Text—He is despised and rejected of men. Isaiah 53 : 3.
8. May 21.—*Christ Before the High Priest.* John 18 : 15-27. Commit vs. 23-25. Golden Text—He came unto his own, and his own received him not. John 1 : 11.
9. May 28.—*Christ Before Pilate.* John 18 : 28-40. Commit vs. 38-40. (Compare Matt. 27 : 11-26 ; Mark 15 : 1-15 and Luke 23 : 1-25.) Golden Text—I find no fault in him. John 19 : 4.
10. June 4.—*Christ Crucified.* John 19 : 17-30. Commit vs. 28-30. (Compare Matt. 27 : 27-54 ; Mark 15 : 16-39 and Luke 23 : 33-47.) Golden Text—The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Gal. 2 : 20.
11. June 11.—*Christ Risen.* John 20 : 11-20. Commit vs. 11-14. (Compare Matt. 28 : 1-8 ; Mark 16 : 1-8 and Luke 24 : 1-12.) Golden Text—Now is Christ risen from the dead. 1 Cor. 15 : 20.
12. June 18.—*The New Life in Christ.* Col. 3 : 1-15. (May be used as a Temperance Lesson.) Commit vs. 1-4. (Read Eph. 4 : 17 to 5 : 24.) Golden Text—Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Col. 3 : 15.
13. June 25.—*Review.* Golden Text—This is a faithful saying, etc., 1 Tim. 1 : 15.

Third Quarter.

1. July 2.—*Gracious Invitations.* Hos. 14 : 1-9. Commit vs. 4-7. (Read chap. 10 : 1-13.) Golden Text—Come, and let us return unto the Lord. Hos. 6 : 1.

2. July 9.—*Daniel in Babylon.* Dan. 1 : 8-21. (May be used as a Temperance Lesson.) Commit vs. 17-20. (Read the whole chapter.) Golden Text—Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. Dan. 1 : 8.

3. July 16.—*The Hebrews in the Fiery Furnace.* Dan. 3 : 14-28. Commit vs. 16-18. (Read the chapter.) Golden Text—Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us. Dan. 3 : 17.

4. July 23.—*The Handwriting on the Wall.* Dan. 5 : 17-31. Commit vs. 24-28. (Read chaps. 4 and 5.) Golden Text—God is the judge. Psalm 75 : 7.

5. July 30.—*Daniel in the Den of Lions.* Dan. 6 : 10-23. Commit vs. 21-23. (Read the chapter.) Golden Text—The Lord is thy keeper. Psalm 121 : 5.

6. Aug. 6.—*The New Heart.* Ezek. 36 : 25-36. Commit vs. 25-27. (Read Ezek. 11 : 14-25 and Jer. 31 : 31-34.) Golden Text—A new heart also will I give you. Ezek. 36 : 26.

7. Aug. 13.—*Ezekiel's Great Vision.* Ezek. 37 : 1-14. Commit vs. 5, 6. (Read John 3 : 1-18.) Golden Text—I will put my spirit within you. Ezek. 36 : 27.

8. Aug. 20.—*The River of Salvation.*—Ezek. 47 : 1-12. Commit v. 12. (Compare Zech. 13 : 1 and 14 : 8, 9 and Matt. 13 : 31-33; also Rev. 22 : 1-5.) Golden Text—Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Rev. 22 : 17.

9. Aug. 27.—*Returning from Captivity.* Ezra 1 : 1-11. Commit vs. 2-4. (Read Ezra 2 : 64-70.) Golden Text—The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Psalm 126 : 3.

10. Sept. 3.—*Rebuilding the Temple.* Ezra 3 : 10 to 4 : 5. Commit vs. 10, 11. (Read chaps. 3 and 4.) Golden Text—The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. 1 Cor. 3 : 17.

11. Sept. 10.—*Encouraging the Builders.* Hag. 2 : 1-9. Commit vs. 4, 5. (Read the book of Haggai and Isaiah 60.) Golden Text—Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work : for I am with you. Hag. 2 : 4.

12. Sept. 17.—*Power through the Spirit.* Zech. 4 : 1-14. Commit vs. 8-10. (Read the chapter and compare Ezra 6 : 14-22.) Golden Text—Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Zech. 4 : 6.

13. Sept. 24. *Review.* Golden Text—The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Ps. 34 : 7.

1. Oct. 1.—*Joy in God's House* Psalm 122. Commit vs. 6-9. (Read Psalm 84.) Golden Text—I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Psalm 122 : 1.

2. Oct. 8.—*Haman's Plot Against the Jews.* Esth. 3 : 1-11. Commit vs. 5, 6. (Read chaps. 1-3.) Golden Text—If God be for us, who can be against us? Rom. 8 : 31.

3. Oct. 15.—*Esther Pleading for Her People.* Esth. 8 : 3-8 and 15-17. Commit vs. 15-17. (Read chaps. 8-10.) Golden Text—Commit thy way unto the Lord, etc., Psalm 37 : 5.

4. Oct. 22.—*Ezra's Journey to Jerusalem.* Ezra 8 : 21-32. Commit vs. 21-23. (Read chap. 7, and 8 : 15-36.) Golden Text—The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him. Ezra 8 : 22.

5. Oct. 29.—*Psalms of Deliverance.* Psalm 85 and 126. Commit Psalm 126. (Read Jer. 31.) Golden Text—They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Ps. 126 : 5.

6. Nov. 5.—*Nehemiah's Prayer.* Neh. 1 : 1-11. Commit vs. 8-10. (Read chap. 2.) Golden Text—Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day. Neh. 1 : 11.

7. Nov. 12.—*Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem.* Neh. 4 : 7-18. Commit vs. 15-18. (Read the chapter.) Golden Text—Watch and pray. Matt. 26 : 41.

8. Nov. 19.—*Public Reading of the Scriptures.* Neh. 8 : 1-12. Commit vs. 1-3. (Read the chapter; also Luke 4 : 16-22.) Golden Text—The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. Neh. 8 : 3.

9. Nov. 26.—*Woes of Intemperance.* Prov. 23 : 29-35. (Temperance Sunday in Great Britain.) Commit vs. 29-32. Golden Text—Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived etc., Prov. 20 : 1.

10. Dec. 3.—*Keeping the Sabbath.* Neh. 13 : 15-22. Commit vs. 15-17. (Read the chapter. Compare Isaiah 56 : 1-8; Jer. 17 : 19-27.) Golden Text—Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Ex. 20 : 8.

11. Dec. 10.—*Lessons in Giving.* Mal. 1 : 6-11 and 3 : 8-12. Commit chap. 3 : 10. (Read chap. 1; also 2 Cor. chaps. 8 and 9.) Golden Text—God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. 9 : 7.

12. Dec. 17.—*Fruits of Right and Wrong Doing.* Mal. 3 : 13 to 4 : 6. Commit vs. 16-18. (Compare Mal. 3 : 1-6; also Matt. 11 : 7-15.) Golden Text—Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Gal. 6 : 7.

13. Dec. 24.—*Christ's Coming Foretold.* Isaiah 9 : 2-7. Commit vs. 6, 7. (Read Isaiah 11 : 1-10.) Golden Text—Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2 : 11.

14. Dec. 31.—*Review.* Golden Text—Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Psalm 103 : 2.

Lesson, 2 Kings 13: 14-25. Read the Chapter. Commit vs. 20-21.

14. Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

15. And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.

16. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.

17. And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them.

18. And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.

19. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldst have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but

thrice.

20. And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.

21. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

22. But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.

23. And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet.

24. So Hazael king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead.

25. And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."—Psa. 116: 15.

## LESSON PLAN.

1. The prophet sought.
2. The prophecy given.
3. The prophet vindicated. The prophecy fulfilled.

## DAILY READINGS.

- M. Syrian oppression, 2 Kings 13: 1-9.  
 T. The death of Elisha, 2 Kings 13: 14-25.  
 W. Death of Moses, Deut. 34.  
 T. Reward to the upright, Isa. 33: 13-17.  
 F. Christ in life or death, Phil. 1: 12-24.  
 S. Fear of death rem. vcd, 2 Cor. 5: 1-10.  
 S. A peaceful end, Ps. 37: 23-37.

## CATECHISM.

Q. 34. What is adoption?  
 A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

## LESSON HYMNS.

No. 34 (Ps. 46), 191, 593, 596.

**The Lesson-link.**—Fifty-four years have passed since last lesson—a long interval in the lifetime of one man. For forty-five years before this closing scene not a word is said of Elisha. His last recorded act is the sending to anoint Jehu king. Three reigns have ended since and three begun. Probably he was not once noticed nor consulted by either Jehu or Jehoahaz. His work would lie not in the national sphere, the field of history, but in the Schools of the Prophets, the realm of influence. Had then that long half-century of service absolutely nothing worth recording for the church on earth? This closing act reveals the influence of his silent years. And the crowning day shall disclose what history does not record.

**The Dying Prophet Sought—**

14.—His sickness whereof he died. He had restored others to health and to life, but cannot arrest his own disease. Has faith failed or God withdrawn? Neither; but the field of miracle is bounded to faith's eyes by God's will. The power of working miracles is not given for any selfish end but for God's

glory, to be used not at will but under the leading of God's Spirit. Christ's miracles were all for others, none for self. Such self-denial seems marvellous to unbelief.

**Joash.**—One with Jehoash in v. 10. The name is the same in shorter form. V. 13 is the usual formula summing up his reign, given before the details which begin with this verse. Joash may not have been quite un-mindful of the prophet before, but probably was so, and now realizes the value of the blessing he had despised as it is about to be withdrawn. He does not express a sense of personal sorrow, but of public loss. The phrase he uses was applied to any eminent guardian of his country. Elisha had used the same words of Elijah at his departure. When God filled the mountain with horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha in the younger prophet's sight he showed the defence he had placed around Israel and at Elisha's command. Israel's actual war-chariots were now few since Syria's victories.

The king's coming showed that he had some measure of faith, which though weak is

accepted, and his faith secures the needed defence though Elisha dies. He learns that not in the prophet who passes, but in God the Eternal, is his defence.

**II. The Prophecy Given, 15-19.**—The prophet teaches by symbol, and the sign is most fit. War was declared by the formal discharge of an arrow or a spear into the enemy's territory. The command to shoot is at once a commission to Joash to attack the Syrians and a promise of success in the war. Once more God will march at the head of his hosts. But though God is the agent the King must be the instrument. The laying on of Elisha's hands signifies that the power comes from God through the prophet in response to the King's faith. Henry pithily says: "The King doubtless knew how to manage a bow better than the prophet, yet he receives the instructions, 'Put thine hand upon the bow,' 'open the window;' 'shoot.' Nay, as if he had been a child that never drew bow before, Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. The trembling hands of a dying prophet...gave this arrow more of force than the hands of the king in their full strength." O Teacher, preparing for your class, as you draw your bow at a venture, pray that the Lord's hands may be upon your own!

*The Lord's Deliverance.* The deliverance was certain, when once the king, believing, accepted the sign. *Aphek.* Not the Aphek, now Aska, which the Israelites were unable to capture from the Canaanites, Judges 1:31, and where the sons of Eli fell, 1 Sam. 4:1, but a city on the military road from Damascus to Palestine six miles east of the sea of Galilee, and now called Fik. Once before, in Ahab's reign, a miraculous victory had been given over Benhadad at this place.

*Smite upon the ground.*—The king, assured of victory, is now tested as to whether he will push that victory with zeal. His smiting the arrows into the ground was in token of his smiting Syria to the ground. The king knew well what the symbol meant, and should have shown himself determined to do his task thoroughly in winning freedom for God's people. His manner of using the symbol showed how he would do the work. He is ready to repeat the sin of Saul in sparing Agag, of Ahab in sparing Benhadad. Each stroke foretold a victory; the event proved that he gained but

three, whereas God would have given Syria fully into his hands. He was straitened in himself, not in God. His want of faithfulness decided his fate.

### III. The Prophet Vindicated.

**20.**—When Elisha died it would seem as if his prophecy was forgotten and needed to be recalled by a miracle. *Buried.* Not as with us, in the earth, but in a rock-hewn sepulchre. The Bulwark of Israel is buried! How plain to every sense and by all law that his work is ended. Surely the way is open now to Moab's hate and Syria's pride, and even the late-roused faith of Joash begins to fail. But God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and things which are not to bring to naught things that are. Elisha shall speedily be vindicated.

*Bands.*—Coming to pillage rather than conquer the country, as the Bedaween bands do still. The Moabites were the bitterest of the traditional foes of Israel. *Coming in of the year.* The springtime, after the rains were over, and when the fall-sown grain ripened. At this season military campaigns were generally begun, 2 Sam. 11:1, but it was the ripe grain, gathered and lying winnowed on the floor, but not yet garnered, which tempted these bands.

**21. Burying.**—Carrying the body to the grave. There was not time to reach the proper sepulchre; to lay down the body would be to expose it to insult; they themselves must flee for their lives. Elisha's sepulchre would be easily opened by removing the stone. The bodies not being in coffins but swathed in cloths, would come thus in contact. Then God called—Attention! and his forgetful, faithless people heard. The risen man, led doubtless straightway to the king, vindicates at once Elisha's prophecy and Jehovah's power.

### The Prophecy Fulfilled.

In verse 22 the narrative goes back for a moment to the previous reign and Hazael's oppressions. It was throughout this oppression, terrible as it was in its atrocities (2 K. 8:12) that God had respect unto Israel. His grace was shown in respite from the coming captivity. He cast them not from his presence as yet. And this sparing mercy was undeserved, for they continued their idolatry, and was shown for the covenant's sake. O

that men would learn that the sinful world is spared because of Christ who became our Surety!

Then Joash obeys Elisha's dying counsel. The arrow fired in symbol is now shot in fact, and God's power is shown to the full extent of the king's faith. Three decisive victories

are won, and only three. Did Joash regret too late his scant obedience in smiting the arrows into the ground? With what expectations then, Dear Teacher, do you go before your class with your lesson? "Ask great things of God, and expect great things for God."

## QUESTIONS.

### Juniors.

14.—What had now come to Elisha? Who was king of Israel at this time? What did he do when he heard Elisha was sick? What name did he give him? What kind of a king was Joash?

15.—What did Elisha tell him to do?

16.—What did Elisha himself do?

17.—Why was he to open that particular window? What did Elisha exclaim as the arrow was shot? Where did he say Joash would smite the Syrians?

18.—What did Elisha then tell Joash to do with the arrows? How many times did he strike?

19.—How did Elisha reprove him? How many times should he have smitten? What did the act signify? How many times would he defeat Syria?

20.—What other nation invaded Israel after Elisha's death? At what time? Where did the Moabites live?

21.—What took place hurriedly for fear of the Moabites? Where was the man hastily buried? What happened to him? What miracle of raising from the dead did Elisha perform when he was alive?

22.—From whom did Israel suffer?

23.—Why was Israel not completely destroyed?

24.—How did relief come to Israel?

25.—What other name is Joash called in this verse? What success did he have in the

war with Syria? How was Elisha's prophecy to him fulfilled?

### Seniors.

14-19.—What was the chief object of the king in visiting Elisha at this time? In what way did the prophets often teach? 1 Kings 11: 30; Ezech. 4, 1, etc. In what two ways did the dying Elisha picture to the king what he should do to Syria? What reason had the prophet to find fault with the king for not striking often with his bunch of arrows?

20-21.—How were the Moabites related to Israel? What was the character of the present deprivations? What is peculiar about this miracle in Scripture history? What would be the object of such a miracle? What can we learn as to its effect upon the people? What have we that is as convincing as the raising of one from the dead? Luke 16: 20.

What was the subject of last lesson? What is the title of this lesson? What were some of the leading events between the two lessons? See chapters 6 to 13. How old was Elisha? How long since he was called to the prophetic office?

22-25.—What Syrian king had been a special oppressor of Israel? How had he been in any way connected with the two great prophets? 1 Kings 19: 15; 2 Kings 8: 9-13. Why did God specially bear with them? See Rom. 11: 28. How does this principle of God's government find expression in our day? How was Elisha's dying prophecy fulfilled to king Joash.

## PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1.—"They also serve who only stand and wait." If Elisha on whom a double portion of Elijah's spirit fell, whose wide-spread fame brought from Benhadad a present of forty camel's burden, laboured for forty-five years in obscurity, should we not be content to be forgotten, if only God is served?

2.—"He saved others, himself he cannot save." What had Elisha done for Naaman in his sickness; and was the sickness of the Shunamite's son unto death? Surely Elisha need not anticipate what he had delivered others from. Yet no miracle is wrought in

his own behalf. Is he therefore to be pitied? Just the reverse. He knows God's power and love, and needs no miracle to confirm these.

3.—"Hast thou but one blessing, O my Father?" Blessings neglected while ours to take are often desired when departing. Joash neglected Elisha when in health and only realizes his loss when the prophet lies dying. So we value youth when youth is past; and prize our friends when they are gone.

4.—"At eventide it shall be light." Such a life as Elisha's could not close without some

final testimony. If not before, God may own us on our death beds.

5.—“Ye are the salt of the earth.” Good men are hostages against evil. Elisha was truly the chariot of Israel, more to her than heavy battalions. “I will not destroy it for ten’s sake.” But it is not only by averting punishment good men save a land. From them proceed the wholesome, righteous influences which conserve society. Literally the living are the salt which keeps the dead from corruption.

6.—“Whosoever will not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child.” We must learn God’s will as little children always. “Line upon line, precept upon precept.” Might not the king have said, in the spirit of Naaman, Behold, I thought He will surely do some great thing! Am I not skilled with my own good bow? Nothing requires greater docility of mind than being led by the spirit.

7.—“My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth.” The king’s thought was, “Alas, the defence of Israel is passing away.” But God teaches him that unto faith the needed defence shall be given, though the prophet dies. Let us rejoice when God uses greatly any one of his servants, but let us never think the work depends on anyone but God.

8.—“Follow the Lord fully.” How often

does the Christian fail where Joash did, and spare his ancient foes. How strange the failure of Joash would seem were it not so natural. With victory over sin assured us, how often do we spare some darling sin.

9.—“Ye are not straitened in me, but ye are straitened in yourselves.” The opportunity of his life had come to Joash and passes unimproved. And such opportunities come whenever the door of faith is opened. “Ask and ye shall receive.”

10.—“If thou hadst been here” “He hath been dead four days.” How prone we are to let our hope fail with its visible support. The bulwark of Israel is buried! Surely the way is open now to Moab’s hate and Syria’s pride!

11.—“Ye have a watch, make it as secure as ye can.” The purposes of God cannot be bound. Man’s extremity is always God’s opportunity. God’s plans rise like the fabled phoenix from their own ashes.

12.—“Because of his covenant.” This is the true source of all our blessings. When men sinned they forfeited all. Why was not death in its fullest meaning at once inflicted? Because of the covenant with Christ who undertook for us.

13.—“His promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus.” How accurately, how absolutely, was the prophecy fulfilled! So shall it be with every syllable of God’s word. Great is his faithfulness.

#### THE BLACKBOARD.

# THE PROPHECY

Help Sought  
Power Proved  
Given in Symbol  
Fulfilled in Fact.

Lesson, Amos 6: 1-8. Commit vs. 3-6.

1. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!

2. Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines: be they better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?

3. Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

4. That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

5. That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David;

6. That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

7. Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.

8. The Lord God hath sworn by himself, saith the Lord the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

"They also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way."—Isa. 28:7.

**LESSON PLAN.**

1. God's messenger to his people.
2. Their special sins.
3. The lessons he taught them.

**DAILY READINGS.**

- M. Finful indulgence, Amos 6: 1-8.  
 T. Be wise! Prov. 23: 15-23.  
 W. Walking wisely, Eph. 5: 6-21.  
 T. Punishment of sin, Isa. 24: 1-12.  
 F. Given to pleasure, Isa. 47: 5-11.  
 S. Sin of worldliness, Jas. 4: 1-10.  
 S. Love it not! 1 John 2: 12-17.

**CATECHISM.**

Q. 35. What is sanctification?  
 A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

**LESSON HYMNS.**

Nos. 127, 573, 529, 530.

**1. The messenger.—**

Amos prophesied in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, son of Joash, king of Israel. B. C. 750-740.

He was a native of Tekoa, a town on the borders of the desert of Judah, about twelve miles south of Jerusalem. Its ruins still exist under the ancient name Eltekon (Jos. 15: 59).

He was a shepherd and a dresser of sycamore trees, the fruit of which resembled wild figs and was used as food by the common people in Egypt and elsewhere. The Arabs to-day usually have a few fruit trees around the chief well of their pasture. And so Amos, while attending his dwarf sheep in the desert, cultivated in some low oasis this easily grown fruit of the sycamore.

Like John the Baptist, his manner of life was simple and free from the formalities and stately insincerities which are hostile to clear moral perception. "He was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel" (Lu. 1: 80). Like Jesus, before he entered upon his public mission among men, he was in the wilderness, "and was with the wild beasts" (Mark 1: 13). Hence his lessons and figures of speech are distinctly colored by these experiences. For example—"The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (3: 8). "As the shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of the lion a piece of an ear," etc. (3: 12.)

It was from amid scenes of this sort, and after he had, as a wool-grower and trader, gathered a good measure of knowledge of the people on his journeys among the markets of the land, that God called him to be a prophet. His education for the office was exceptional, and not that ordinarily enjoyed. So he himself declared to the priest at Bethel, who sought to prevent him prophesying in the kingdom of Israel: "I was no prophet, neither was I prophet's son," i. e., a student, "but I was an herdman, and a dresser of sycamore trees: and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said unto me, 'Go, prophesy unto my people Israel'" (7: 14-15). He did so, chiefly to the Ten Tribes, and in a subordinate degree to the tribe of Judah to which he belonged.

We have no reliable data for determining how long he continued his ministry. Probably he did so till within twenty years of the date at which Isaiah entered upon his brilliant career of instruction to the same stubborn and rebellious people.

**2. Their special sins.—**

Here we have to think not of the people as a whole, but mainly of one class. The prophet's address is directed to the rulers, the chief men. What are their offences? They "are at ease in Zion." Inactive so far as their sacred duties are concerned. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Not only are



they neglecting their opportunities of serving God and their nation, but indulging in criminal luxury and pride. While yielding to the slavery of base appetites they cherish an unwarrantable spirit of self-security. They trust in Zion and the mountain of Samaria as strongholds which cannot be overthrown. And this they do in spite of their knowledge of God's judgments in the past.

The prophet's picture of their conduct is most vivid. Their moral decay is simply appalling. They are not only at ease, but they put off the day of calamity, and draw near the sessions of injustice. They lie on ivory divans and sprawl on their couches. They eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall. They prate or babble to the sound of the viol, and as if they were David himself, invent for them instruments of song. They drink wine by ewerfuls—water-potfuls, and anoint with the finest of oil, yet never do they grieve for the havoc of Joseph!

What a description of moral depravity among the upper classes, the rich, the rulers, who have wealth and power and a form of religion, but no conscience, or true patriotism, or fear of God or regard for man! So that John Calvin truly says of them that they practised "tyranny and took the liberty to steal, to rob, to plunder, to oppress. When, therefore, they hardened themselves in all kinds of of licentiousness, he then drew nigh the throne of iniquity."

They were so bewitched by their own arrogance and debased by their gross intemperance that they laughed to scorn the most pointed and solemn warnings addressed to them. Hence Isaiah represents them as treating God with contempt. When he called them to repentance and sorrow for their abominable sins, they indulged all the more in "joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine, and saying, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die." (Isa. 22: 12-13.)

### 3. The lessons taught them.—

The first is a lesson of warning from the past. The prophet bids those who feel secure in Zion and the mountain of Samaria learn a lesson from the experience of others. "Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines," etc. (v. 2.)

If these strong fortresses were not sufficient to arrest the wrath of God, if his vengeance was executed against these fortified cities, then let no infatuation deceive you as to the impregnable nature of Zion and Samaria.

"Pass over into Calneh, and see," etc. "Consider, as in a mirror, what men can gain by their pride and haughtiness; when they harden themselves against God." Calneh, Hamath and Gath were laid waste because they had multiplied their iniquities and abused God's patience, and now how merciful and kind he is in teaching his own people and warning them by the righteous retribution which fell upon others.

This is often his method of instruction, turning our eyes to what others endure for their sins before his hand is laid upon us personally, in chastisement or judgment. Surely his tender mercies are over all his works; but the stroke of justice must ultimately descend upon the obdurately impenitent. This is the testimony of universal experience and of God's word.

Accordingly the prophet teaches these intemperate and debauched rulers a second and more stern lesson, viz., that the judgments of God shall certainly and speedily overtake them. "Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive," etc., (vs. 7-8). And to put this beyond the possibility of all uncertainty it is added: "The Lord hath sworn by himself."

The word of the Lord is as sure as his oath. Why then is the latter employed? To intimate that there can be absolutely no change or failure in regard to the matter referred to. To make assurance doubly sure—to afford the faith of man the strongest warrant.

Thus the priesthood of Christ (Psal. 110: 4,) the promises to Abraham and David, were confirmed by an oath on the part of Jehovah (Heb. 6: 13 and Acts 2: 29-30). No subsequent revelation could change or set aside what was thus established.

A divine announcement without the oath might be added to and so modified by a later disclosure of God's purpose. Thus, for example: the threatened destruction of Nineveh declared by Jonah (3: 4-10) was not confirmed by an oath, and was averted by the faith and repentance of the people.

No such issue is contemplated by Amos. The wickedness of the rulers of the people ha,

reached its culminating point. They cannot be brought to repentance. Hence "the Lord hath sworn by himself. I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces." The very glory bestowed by God upon his people is turned by their self-indulgence, intemperance and hypocrisy into an abominable sham against which he denounces his awful judgment. "Therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein." (V. 8.) Its day of grace is past. Repentance, reformation, God's infinite compassion, have been despised, and "now they are hid from their eyes." (Luke 19: 41-44).

### QUESTIONS FOR STUDY.

1. Mention the birth place and date of Amos.
2. Describe his occupation and manner of life.
3. Compare him in these respects with other men mentioned in the Bible.
4. Account for peculiarities of his style.
5. Indicate the nature of the special sins he dealt with.
6. What was the first lesson he delivered to those he sought to bring to repentance?
7. What does this method of teaching suggest regarding God's character and government?
8. Mention the second and sterner method of instruction followed by Amos.
9. What was to be the issue of all, and why?
10. Seeing the word of God is always true why did he sometimes swear by himself?
11. Give instances of this in the Old and New Testaments.
12. Enforce the practical lessons contained in the instances recorded in Heb. 6: 17, 18, by applying them to the members of your class.

### PRACTICAL THOUGHTS.

1. The Lord often calls his eminent messengers from the ranks of the humble. Moses was the son of a godly man and woman enslaved by Pharaoh. David and Amos were shepherds. Peter and Andrew and other apostles were fishermen. Jesus himself appeared among men, not as a prince but as a carpenter. By his spirit dwelling in them he qualified the woman of Samaria and the maniac of Gadara to be his successful messengers.

It is so still. Dr. Livingstone, Dr. John Cairns, and many other distinguished ministers and servants of God rose from the ranks.

2. Wicked rulers are a terrible calamity and curse to any nation. Their example descends and speedily corrupts the people. Their sin bring judgment upon all.

3. Conversely, godly rulers, like Queen Victoria, are among the greatest blessings that nations can enjoy. How needful, therefore, to pray for kings and all who bear rule over their fellows.

4. There is a law of progress in sin which ends in temporal and eternal ruin. "The wages of sin is death"

5. Men gradually but inevitably grow incorrigible and helpless by the indulgence of sinful appetites. The habitual use of stimulants and narcotics by persons in the enjoyment of normal health is indefensible from the standpoint of science, ethics and scripture.

6. The undeniable and awful ruin wrought by intemperance among all classes of citizens is God's loud call to his people, by all legitimate means and efforts, to put down the traffic fruitful of such results. Law, and moral suasion, and the gospel of the grace of God should be used for this purpose.

Sunday schools, public schools, colleges, and pulpits, should persist in educating the public mind and conscience in the right direction until our land is delivered from the scourge of intemperance.

### THE BLACKBOARD,

SINFUL INDULGENCE **W**astes Money and Time  
**W**recks Body, Mind, and Soul  
**W**rong Man and GOD

**Juniors.**

Who was Amos? What was his trade? To what other work did God call him? To what people did he preach?

1.—What two cities are mentioned in this verse? Of what two nations were they the capitals? What was the condition of the rulers who lived in these places?

2.—What other places had been overthrown for their sin?

3.—What did the people of Israel forget? What is meant by "the evil day"? What is meant by putting it far away? How may we do the same thing?

4-5.—How are their lives of ease and self-indulgence and luxury described?

6.—Of what degree was their drunkenness? What did these rulers think when they saw the people suffering?

7.—What was to come to them for their sin?

8.—What did God think of them on account of their self-indulgence and sin. What did he say he would do to them.

What does he say about all who forget God and practice sin? Ps. 9: 17.

**Seniors.**

How long since the Kingdom was divided? How much longer before the Northern Kingdom goes into captivity? What was their moral and spiritual condition?

What was the occupation of Amos before he

was called to the prophetic office? Where was his native place? Where did Christ go for his apostles? How does such an experience help to fit one for being a teacher or preacher?

1.—Who are denounced as "at ease"? What two capital cities are here referred to? What is included in the term "Woe"? To what different classes did Christ say "Woe"? What may we learn from the fact that Christ changeth not?

2.—To what three cities does the prophet point Israel? What rank as to power had these places occupied? What had been the doom of these places? What lesson is Israel to learn from their doom?

3-6.—What did they put far off? What is meant by "evil day"? What did they cause to come near? What is meant by "seat of violence"? What two things are said about their luxurious ease? What two things about their gluttony? What two things about their drunkenness and indulgence? How do the troubles of the people affect these rulers?

7-8.—What doom was to come to these ease-loving rulers who neglected their duty? How does God regard their present condition? What does he say he will do to them? How often do the principles of God's moral government change? What change is there in the application of these principles? What results must necessarily always follow the sins spoken of in this lesson?

**PRACTICAL LESSONS.**

Our humble occupations and circumstances do not prevent us rendering great service to God and our country.

We should not fail to testify by pure and godly living against prevailing sins in high places.

The possession of wealth and power and the holding of public office carry with them great responsibilities.

We should constantly watch and pray against entering upon sinful courses because of the deceitful nature of sin and of our own hearts.

We should ever rest secure, not in wealth, or temporal blessings of any kind, but in the protecting power of God.

A self-indulgent age, or habit, never makes heroes of any kind.

The true ideal of life is not the pleasure we get out of it, whether that pleasure be more gross or more refined, but the good we can put into it. Sinful indulgence is one of Satan's chief agencies in winning control over men. We can only guard ourselves successfully against him, by watching against self-indulgence. Paul "kept his body under."

Because of the dangers and temptations of self-indulgence, God often, in kindness to men, removes the means of such indulgence.

One evil that Canada is now trying to get rid of is the drink traffic, which leads so many into sinful indulgence. The duty of every ruler (voter) is to banish from our land the temptation to this sin.

The unspeakable kindness of God is shown by his warning and teaching us by the example of others with whom he has dealt both in mercy and judgment.

If we do not repent and turn from our sins and cleave to God, he will in the end visit us in wrath.

Our true course is to call upon him while he is near. However much enslaved we may be by intemperance, or any form of sinful indulgence, the apostle's word meets our case: Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. (Acts 8: 22.)

This gracious counsel, which we should all seek to obey, is as old as the days of David who said "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, for his wrath will soon be kindled." Psalm 2: 12.

Lesson, 2 Kings 17: 9-18. Read 2 Kings 17: 1-23; Amos 6; Hosea 5; Commit vs. 13, 14.

9. And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right, against the Lord their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

10. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree:

11. And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger:

12. For they served idols, whereof the Lord had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

13. Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

14. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but

hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, and did not believe in the Lord their God.

15. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them.

16. And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

17. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger.

18. Therefore, the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

### GOLDEN TEXT.

"If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever."—1 Chron. 28: 2.

### LESSON PLAN.

1. Secret sin, v. 9-12.
2. God's warning, v. 13.
3. Open Rebellion, v. 14-6.
4. God's judgments, v. 18.

### DAILY READINGS.

- M. Fruit of disobedience, 2 Kings 17: 1-8.
- T. Captivity of the ten tribes, 2 Kings 17: 9-18.
- W. Rejected of God, 2 Kings 17: 19-29.
- T. Prophecy of captivity, Hosea 10: 1-8.
- F. Consequences of sin, Isa. 1: 1-9.
- S. Punishment of pride, Isa. 9: 8-17.
- S. Sin of rejection, Matt. 21: 33-43.

### CATECHISM.

Q. 36. What are the benefits which, in this life, do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life, do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 69 (Ps. Sel.), 528, 217, 242.

Our lesson might well be entitled "The secret of the decline and fall of the kingdom of Israel."

### The Story of the Fall.—

Jeroboam II, of whom we read in our last lesson, had brought the ten tribes to the pitch of their glory. He was practically master of Palestine. We saw from the lesson in the book of Amos that this glory covered a deep-seated corruption in religion and morals—gross selfishness and cruelty as between man and man. Immediately after Jeroboam's death in 740 B.C., this corruption and cruelty invaded the seat of government.

**Zachariah** his son was murdered at a drunken feast after six months of a reign.

**Shallum**, the chief hand in the murder, enjoyed a short month of guilty honor when he too was assassinated.

**Menahem**, his murderer, reigned for ten years, for he put to the sword all those who might overthrow him.

While the kingdom of the Ten Tribes entered this new and calamitous phase of its existence, the kingdom of Assyria entered a new and glorious epoch.

Pul ascended the throne under the name of Tiglath-Pilezer. A great general, and a greater organizer, he abandoned the system of making hap-hazard raids upon neighboring countries, by which the Assyrians gained booty and tribute but often had to conquer the same country over and over again. Tiglath-Pilezer organized an army that became the terror of the world (see Isaiah's wonderful description, v. 26-29.) and set himself to break up the nations with it and reduce them to the position of Provinces of Assyria. Part of the plan was the carrying away of the leaders of a people into exile. It was this new system which ultimately wiped Israel out from among the nations.

Menahem only saved his people from immediate destruction by submitting early, and paying tribute. This with his sinful following in the ways of the former kings made the ten years of his reign years of degradation.

**Pekahiah** his son reigned two years ingloriously, when he was slain by Pekah, his general, who put himself at the head of an Anti-Assyrian party.

**Pekah**, gathered together a strong opposi-

tion to Assyria in the shape of an alliance to which Syria (under Rezin) Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Philistines, acceded. The first move was to put one of his own party on the throne of Ahaz in Jerusalem.

Ahaz sent tribute to Tiglath-Pileser to bring him upon Pekah and Rezin. Damascus and Samaria both fell, and the two kings were slain.

Damascus became the capital of an Assyrian province. Samaria seems only to have been saved by the existence of an Assyrian faction in it whose head became the new king Hoshea.

**Hoshea** was one of the best of the kings of Israel, but it is one of the awful consequences of sin that it leads the nation to a state when the best man in it cannot save it from destruction. It must have seemed as if a revival of religion were come, when men went upon Hezekiah's invitation in numbers from the Ten Tribes to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 30), but whether this revival was vain because due to fear of misfortune and not faith in God, or because it was now too late, it did not avert the end. When Tiglath-Pileser died and Shalmanezar IV, his successor, was busy suppressing rebels, Hoshea refused him tribute, relying on the help of Egypt in case of war. This brought the Assyrians upon him. He was slain. Samaria was besieged for three years and taken (722 B.C.) by Sargon, Shalmanezar's successor, and the kingdom of Israel became a mere name.

Sargon in his monuments thus confirms the story of the Bible: "I besieged the city of Samaria. I carried off 27,280 citizens. I chose 50 chariots for myself from the whole number taken; all the other property of the people of the town I left for my servants to take. I appointed resident officers over them and imposed on them the same tribute as had formerly been paid. In the place of those taken into captivity I sent thither inhabitants of lands conquered by me, and imposed the tribute on them which I require from Assyrians."

#### **Secret of the Fall.**—

(a) There was a reason for the fall. When you remember Israel, few in number and simply armed, brought out of Egypt, made conquerors of a land full of fenced cities; and you see an Israel strong in numbers and in arms carried into exile, you feel that there is a reason for the difference. God made it by

forsaking them. It is no accident that a nation goes to ruin—that the Roman Empire should crumble and fall, that Spain of the Armada should dwindle to misfortune, or Israel be carried to exile. God rules the world, meting out justice to the nations for their sin. "It is he that bringeth the princes to nothing. He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity."

(b) *The cause of the decline* may be said to be *immorality and selfishness.*

The blood of the murdered on the hands of so many of the kings, is only an indication of the selfishness and sin rampant among the people. Amos and Hosea tell us of priests guilty of blood, of the poor oppressed by the rich, of drunkenness and worse things at the religious feasts. The poor would hate their oppressors and refuse to die in battle to save them. The people would not esteem a murderer king nor follow him with a courage that could conquer. Luxury and debauchery had weakened the people, in body as in mind, and bravery was no more found in the land.

(c) *The true cause—idolatry.*

The Word of God gives a truer reason than this last. The selfishness of the people had its cause. They had ceased to worship the only true God in simple heart-felt devotion and service, they allowed the worship of idols, sensual and devilish in character, to take up their minds, and the sensualism and devilishness of their gods passed into their own character and lives,—as they will and must with every man—and paved the way to ruin.

Such a sinful people was no longer capable of having a part in God's work of redemption but must be set aside. More, their very sin deserved punishment. Hence the catastrophe.

#### **NOTES ON TEXT.**

**V. 9. Did secret!**—Under cover of the worship of Jehovah they introduced idolatrous practices.

**Against God.**—The secret of the fall of Israel. Their aims and life were contradictory to God's aims. God's thoughts were not their thoughts, neither their ways God's ways. Any man or nation thus against God must perish.

**High places.**—Altars in groves on high places.

At this period in Israel's history high places

were under suspicion, and even forbidden by the Lord's prophets as places where feasting, drunkenness, licentiousness and idolatry were too common.

**From the tower.**—Whence the watchman watched his sheep or vineyard. It shows how the land was honey-combed with idolatry when it reached such lonely spots.

**10. Images**—(R.V. pillars). Stone pillars perhaps carved but not actual images symbolic of the presence of Baal.

**Groves**—(R.V. Asherim). Along with Baal a female god was worshipped, sometimes under the name of Astarte (Greek Venus) Jud. 2: 13; 10: 6, sometimes Asherah, which is translated in A.V. as grove, but is really the goddess's name. 1 Kings 18: 19; 2 Kings 23: 6.

Large wooden pillars (Judges 6: 25.) were raised under the trees by the altar of Baal, betokening the presence of the goddess. Those are spoken of in the text as groves. The combined worship of the male and female gave rise to sensual thoughts and practices.

**11. When the Lord carried away.**—These iniquitous practices were taken from the surrounding nations. Their idols could not save them from Assyria, and yet Israel did not take warning.

**12. Served idols,** and wrought wicked things, two inevitable concomitants. See India, Africa, etc.

**The Lord had said—The law.**—See Ex. 20: 1-4, as the whole of the Ten Commandments. So they did not err in ignorance. They were further warned by prophets.

**13. Testified.**—Spoke again and again—admonished solemnly by prophetic messages.

**By all.**—Heb.: by all the prophets, every seer, a rhetorical way of saying by every kind of prophetic message. God sent in those days, as to-day, men of different character and ways, bearing the same message about sin and salvation, but they did not hear. Do we?

**14. Did not believe.**—Unbelief is the secret of sin just as faith is the secret of a holy life. Unbelief makes men stiff-necked, to follow their own devious courses.

Faith makes men easily led of God to true and noble conduct. Jesus says "except ye be converted, and become as little children, i.e., simple in mind, trustful, ye shall not enter the

kingdom of Heaven." Except we be willing to be led of God we shall not be saved.

**15. His statutes**—They rejected. (1) *The law* which God as king gave his creatures. (2) *The covenant*, which as a matter of sheer graciousness he made with his people. (3) *The testimony*.—The pleadings, remonstrances of a long-suffering God by his prophets.

**Vanity.**—"Whatever man sets before him as the object of his life apart from God, is vanity and idolatry, and leads to worthlessness and corruption." (Keil.) See Rom. 1: 21-25; where the downward path is sketched by a master-hand.

**16.**—When they got away from God's leading to their own devices the downward path was easy. First Jehovah worshipped by molten images, (later as Baal) then Asherim (A.V. Groves), then the whole host of heaven:

**17.**—Then they worship the fierce Moloch, and fierce like him sacrifice their own children. "The Rabbins tell us that this idol was made of brass, and that the head was that of a calf with a crown upon it. It was made hollow and a furious fire was kindled within it.

When the arms were red hot the victim was thrown into them and was almost immediately burned to death, while its cries were drowned with drums," (Schaff) cf. Milton Paradise Lost, 1: 392-405. Moloch, horrid king besmeared with blood of human sacrifice and parents tears," etc.

**Divinations.**—They tried to discover the secrets of the future by foolish superstitious rites, instead of leaving the future to God.

**Enchantments.**—They tried to attain their ends by magic spells, instead of waiting on God to do his will.

**18.**—So far we have only had an account of the conduct of Israel against God,—their idolatries, etc. Now comes the inevitable doom. "The Lord was angry and removed Israel out of his sight." See Luke 20: 18.

**Judah.**—The present faith of Judah saved that little people against all the arms of Assyria, but when the Jews in their turn forsook God, he forsook them, and they likewise were taken into exile.

## PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1.—God rules the destinies of nations as of men. Amos 9: 7. He brought Israel out of Egypt and took them into exile.

2.—God punishes the sins of nations as of individuals. Amos 1 and 2: 1-5. If Israel suffered it was because the world is not to be a chaos of iniquity, but God's kingdom is to come and his will be done on earth as in heaven.

3.—We learn how subtle the influence of companionship is, even upon nations. The friendly associations with idolatrous nations, which began in the time of Solomon, led Israel first to tolerate, then to adopt, idolatrous practices, and at last to worship idols themselves.

4.—Israel did not become so sinful in a day. It took hundreds of years of evil association and ambition to make Israel an idolatrous people. The growth of evil though gradual is all the more pernicious. First, doubtful associations, then doubtful practices, and at the last open worship of things which are not right in the eyes of God—idols in fact. The drunkard is the product of years of doubtful associations and practices, and of the worship of pleasure. The narrow selfish worldling once had generous impulses, but the service of the world starved them, and at last he became the unlovable thing that he is.

5.—Idolatry is the worst of sins, for from it spring all others. To set aside God and take any idol, be it pleasure or property, wealth or influence, or even such a desirable thing as a home or the family, is to close one's self to the influence of God, and leave one's self open to influences which make for sin. Idolatry is not only sin, but it is the mother of sins. How much cruelty the worship of Mammon breeds, how much debauchery the love of pleasure. How often has the worship of the family led kind and even Christian people to a lamentable heartlessness. How often does the worship of a nice home mean that we spend

on ourselves what God means us to spend on others. We must worship God and none other. We must hold him alone the end of our life. Our business as our pleasure, all things, must make for his service by equipping us with the health and the ability to serve him. "All things are yours, but ye are Christ's."

6.—When we prove ourselves, as a nation or as individuals, unfit by our character for God's service, we shall, like Israel, be cast aside. God's plans must be accomplished.

7.—Though God is long-suffering, there is a limit to his endurance of our frailty and sin, a limit set by the needs of his world scheme, and we may reach that at any time.

### QUESTIONS.

1. For what end did God choose Israel to be his people? Gen. 12: 2, 3.
2. Why after choosing Israel did God reject them? 1 Chron. 28: 9.
3. What idolatries were the Ten Tribes guilty of? Lesson V: 10, 16.
4. What was the consequence of their idolatry on their life? V. 11.
5. What was the consequence of their idolatry on God's attitude to them? V. 18.
6. Enumerate false gods worshipped in our land to-day.

### THE BLACKBOARD.

	GOD	
KEEPS		REJECTS
	HIS	
FAITHFUL		SINFUL
	PEOPLE.	



**Juniors.**

9, 10.—How were the children of Israel worshipping? What things did they do as told in these verses?

11, 12.—What did they do when they built the high places? Whose example were they following? What did the Lord think about their doings? What had he told them about this thing?

13.—Who besides Israel were doing wrong? What had the Lord done to win them from their wrong doing?

14.—How did they receive what God did for them? Whose example were they following in this?

15.—What does this verse teach as to the effect of bad company?

16.—What did they leave? What different things did they make? What did they worship?

17.—What did they do to their children?

18.—Since they still neglected the Lord what did he now do to them? Who were left?

**Seniors.**

What is the title of this lesson? Golden Text? Date?

Who was the first king of Israel after the division of the kingdom? What kind of worship did he set up? What effect did that have upon the nation? 1 Kings 16: 26; 22: 52, etc. What had been the course of the nation ever since that time? How long?

9, 10.—What is the condition of Israel in this lesson? What is the natural course of

evil if not resisted? What is meant by "secretly"? What different places and things did they build or set up? See 1 Kings 14: 23; Is. 57: 5; Ex. 34: 13; Deut. 16: 21; Deut. 12: 2; 2 Kings 16: 4.

11-12.—Whose example did Israel follow? What lesson is here taught with regard to young people and their companionship? How does the Lord look upon disobedience to his command? Which of the ten commandments is here specially mentioned as broken? What does this teach us as to the sin of idolatry? How may we break the first commandment? Lev. 18: 1; Deut. 5: 7-8.

13.—How did the Lord shew his patience with the two kingdoms? 1 Sam. 9: 9; Jer. 18: 11; 25: 5; 35: 15; How does He shew his patience towards us?

14-17.—What reception was given to God's messengers and message? What did they do with regard to his laws and statutes? What is the usual connection between disregarding God's messengers and rejecting his laws? What is a common result of young people from Christian lands and homes, making their homes where God is not honored. What special forms did their idolatry take? See Ex. 32: 8; 1 Kings 12: 28; 14: 15-23; 16: 31. What is meant by "passing through the fire" Lev. 18: 21; Ezek 23: 37. How were "divinations specially dishonoring to God? Deut. 18: 10.

18.—How long had God borne with Israel since the division of the kingdom? What did he now do with them? What has since become of them? What must ever be the doom of persistent sin?

**PRACTICAL THOUGHTS.**

This lesson is a natural result of the first lesson of the quarter. In that lesson the people not only forsook the "house of David," but the worship of God. In this, God leaves them and they perish. If men forsake God, though he bear long to win them back, he will leave them at last to their own choice.

They did "secretly" i.e., they pretended that the idols represented Jehovah, and they were worshipping him, while they were really idolaters. We may pretend to be worshipping God while in heart we are loving some other thing more than God.

What wonderful patience God had with Israel. For more than two centuries he waited and pleaded. He has patience now, waiting and pleading with men. What a wonder!

How badly Israel treated God's wonderful patience, when he waited and pleaded for more than two centuries, 215 years, sending prophets to win them back, but they only went farther astray. But those who are not serving him now are treating him far worse, for we have greater light and knowledge.

How much of evil one can do. The long

course of sin, is traced back, time and again, to Jeroboam "who made Israel to sin."

How careful people should be in making choice of men to bear rule, whether in Church, or State. Israel chose one who led them in doing wrong, and following him they perished. Our rulers all have influence for good or evil in proportion to their power.

The chief results of leading others into sin may come long after the one who has started the evil has passed away. 215 years after Jeroboam began to "make Israel sin," they went into captivity, never to return.

We should guard against the first beginnings of departure from God. He keeps those who keep near to him, but if men wander away from him, left to themselves, they perish.

Drifting is a very deceptive thing. When a boat lets go her anchorage, she drifts imperceptibly. When Israel departed from God they drifted to ruin. When a young person gives up God, gives up Bible reading, gives up prayer, gives up the house of God, he is sure to drift, and the end of drifting away from God is ruin.



## GOLDEN TEXT.

"No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."—Psa. 84:11.

## DAILY READINGS.

- M. The Kingdom divided, 1 Kings 12:16-25.  
 T. Elijah the prophet, 1 Kings 17:1-16.  
 W. Elijah on Carmel, 1 Kings 18:30-39.  
 T. Elijah's spirit on Elisha, 2 Kings 2:6-15.  
 F. The Shunamite's son, 2 Kings 4:25-37.  
 S. Naaman healed, 2 Kings 5:1-14.  
 S. Captivity of the Ten Tribes, 2 Kings 17:9-18.

## CATECHISM.

Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?  
 A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

## REVIEW CHART—THIRD QUARTER.

LESSON,	TITLE.	GOLDEN TEXT.
I. 1 Kings 12: 16-25	The Kingdom divided.....	A soft answer, etc. Prov. 15: 1.
II. " 17: 1-16	Elijah the prophet.....	And the barrel of meal, etc., 1 Kings 17: 16.
III. " 18: 30-40	Elijah on Carmel. .... [ment.	And when all the people saw it, etc., 1 K. 18: 39.
IV. " 19: 1-16	Elijah's fight and encourage-	Rest in the Lord and wait, etc., Ps. 37: 7.
V. " 21: 4-16	Naboth's Vineyard .....	Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Ex. 20: 17.
VI. 2 Kings 2: 6-15	Elijah's spirit on Elisha .....	How much more shall you, etc., Luke 11: 13.
VII. " 4: 25-37	The Shunamite's son .....	Cast thy burden upon the Lord, etc., Ps. 55: 22.
VIII. " 5: 1-14	Naaman Healed.....	Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed, etc., Jer. 17: 14.
IX. " 6: 8-18	Elisha at Dothan.....	The Angel of the Lord encampeth, etc., Is. 34: 7.
X. " 13: 14-25	The Death of Elisha. ....	Precious in the sight of the Lord, etc., Ps. 116: 15.
XI. Amos 6: 1-8	Sinful Indulgence.....	They also have erred through wine, etc., Is. 28: 7.
XII. 2 Kings 17: 9-18	Captivity of the Ten Tribes....	If thou seek Him, He will be, etc., 1 Chron. 28: 9.

What length of time is covered by the lessons of this quarter? With what do they begin, and end? What led to the events at the beginning, and ending? Who were the leaders in wandering away from God? In what ways did they wander from God? Who were God's messengers in warning the people and trying to win them back? What are the chief places mentioned during the quarter? What events were connected with these places in the lessons of the quarter? What do we learn during the quarter, and from

what lessons and incidents do we learn of the following things?—God's love? God's patience? God as the hearer and answerer of prayer? God's care for his people? God as the disposer of all events? God's power? God's truth? God's justice? The effect of bad home training? of foolish obstinacy? of evil associations and companionships? of the downward tendency of sin? of the doom of sin? of the Holy Spirit? of the resurrection of the dead?

A review lesson is usually a difficult one. All the lessons cannot be fully reviewed, and if they could, it would not be the best kind of review lesson.

The ideal review is the "new view" in which the Lessons of the Quarter are treated as one lesson, with one leading thought and aim, and not as a series of separate lessons.

The lessons of this Quarter lend themselves readily to such a "new view." They cluster readily around one centre. They are parts of one theme, the history of the ten tribes, from

the division of the kingdom at Solomon's death, to the taking of Samaria and the overthrow of the Northern Kingdom, and the captivity of the ten tribes.

Teachers should bear in mind that though the facts of Bible history, of God's people, Israel, are very simply and plainly set forth in the Bible, and though that Bible has been read by many from early years, yet there are few histories about which people pretend to know anything, of which their ideas are so hazy and uncertain,

The following outline facts may be helpful in giving a fairly clear grasp of Israel's history and of the lessons of this and the following Quarter.

#### SOME FACTS IN THE HISTORY OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

1. God brought Israel out of Egypt and gave them Canaan for their possession.

2. He commanded that he alone should be their king, and that judges of his choosing should be their rulers, and so he gave them judges for about four centuries.

3. Then they wanted a king like the nations round about them; and, displeased that they were not satisfied with him as their king, God gave them Saul, then David, then Solomon. Three kings, each of whom reigned forty years, ruled over the whole kingdom of Israel.

4. At the death of Solomon the ten northern tribes, who had been dissatisfied because of the heavy taxes which they had to pay, and which were spent chiefly in Jerusalem, in the tribe of Judah, asked for lighter taxation, and not getting it they rebelled against Rehoboam and chose a king for themselves, Jeroboam, one of their own young men, who had pushed his way from poverty to prominence.

5. This division of the kingdom, we are distinctly told, was of the Lord. The whole kingdom was drifting into idolatry, and by separating the ten Northern tribes from Judah, the latter, from which the Messiah was to come, was kept purer and better.

6. The Northern kingdom, the ten tribes, usually called the kingdom of Israel, went astray from God fast and far. One of the very first acts of their king Jeroboam was to set up idols, golden calves, one in Bethel in the South of his kingdom, one in Dan in the North, for the people to worship, to keep them from going to Jerusalem to the temple. Thus cut off from the house of God they sank farther and farther into idolatry.

7. For about 215 years, 937 B.C. to 722 B.C. God spared them as a separate people, and then, 722 B.C., as they persisted in forsaking him, he forsook them, and gave them into the hand of the Assyrians, who carried them away captive, and settled strangers, Assyrians, in their land, so that the country would not

be in danger of rebelling again. Thus ended, after 215 years, the kingdom of Israel. God cast them off forever.

8. The story of the kingdom of Judah, from the division of the kingdom at Solomon's death, to their final carrying away into Babylon, 586 B.C., or more than a century after the captivity of Israel, is the subject of the Sabbath School Lessons for the next Quarter.

The latter, the tribe of Judah, were sent back, some of them, by Cyrus, king of Persia, 530 B.C., after a captivity of seventy years, and dwelt in their own land until Christ came, the King of David's line who was long foretold by the prophets.

10. Then the Jewish people, after a greater act of wickedness than ever the nation had previously done, crucifying Jesus their king, and thus filling up the measure of their iniquity, were taken captive by the Romans, never again to be an independent people, but down-trodden by many peoples, while strangely preserving their identity as a race.

#### SOME FACTS AND THOUGHTS ON THE LESSONS FOR THE QUARTER, THE HISTORY OF THE TEN TRIBES.

1. From the beginning to the end of this Northern kingdom was, according to the revised Chronology, from 937 B.C. to 722 B.C., or 215 years.

2. During that time they had twenty-one kings, the average length of reign being ten and a half years.

These twenty-one kings were of nine different dynasties. Instead of the son quietly succeeding to the throne as the father passed away, a common way was that some ambitious officer or leader gathered a party to himself, slew the king and reigned in his stead, to be perhaps dealt with in his turn in the same manner.

3. This shows two things about the Northern Kingdom: (1) The turbulent and lawless spirit of the people, their disregard for law and order. (2) It shows something of the character of the kings, in that they made themselves odious in the sight of many of the people. (3) It shows that the fear of God, which tends to loyalty, was singularly wanting.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS.

The lessons of the quarter are very rich and fruitful in lessons for individuals and nations, which means for us, both as individuals and as citizens, for the nation is but the sum of the individuals. Some of these lessons are the following:

1. *Forsaking the House of God, leads to forsaking God.*—Jeroboam persuaded the people that they could worship as well at Bethel and Dan, as at Jerusalem; that it was too far to go to the latter place. They were led to forget God, and finally to ruin.

A young man may persuade himself or others, that the church is too far away, that we can worship just as well in the ease and comfort of home, or amid the beauties of nature, by mountain, stream, or sea, but the result, more or less often, is forgetting God, and sometimes temporal as well as eternal ruin by sin.

2. *Great is the responsibility of leadership.*—The expression most often used about Jeroboam, who first kept Israel away from the House of God, is, "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." What an unenviable way in which to have one's name transmitted to posterity.

Few can exert influence on so large a scale, but all have influence, more or less, and he who leads a companion in any measure away from God, must bear, in God's sight, a measure of the guilt of "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin."

3. *It is an evil thing when Christian people intermarry with the Godless and bad.*—Ahab married Jezebel, a Zidonian princess, a worshipper of idols; and her own wickedness and that to which she stirred up the people, and especially her husband, brought the three years' drought upon the land, and was one of the means of hurrying the nation to its sad end, the captivity from which it never returned.

The history of such marriages is usually a sad one, from a moral and spiritual standpoint. While there are exceptions, as a rule the godless side of the house drags the other down to its own level. The reason is plain. One whose love for man or woman, who hates

and rejects Christ, is strong enough to lead them to give that one the chief place in the heart, has not much of God there, and that little is likely to grow rapidly less. How can two loves dwell together except they be agreed, and how can one truly love God supremely, and give the chief human love of the heart to that which dislikes and dishonors and rejects God.

4 Nations like individuals, prosper, or otherwise, as they follow or turn away from God. It is well, not only that the individual lives of a nation be pure, but that the national life, the laws and government, the doings of the nation as a nation, be pure. At present our Dominion, Canada, allows the traffic in strong drink, and makes money out of it, by getting a revenue from it. The coming Plebiscite, 29th September, is to decide whether she will continue it, or abolish it.

May our country, in this regard, decide to do better than in the past, and our land be freed from the bitter fruits of the traffic, and the curse of the blood-money that comes from it.

5. The *chief end* of nations, as of "man," is to glorify God. When they cease to do that they must pass away and give place to others. All the great world powers of past ages have passed away. They honored not God. Our own British Empire is going on from strength to strength. She is better serving God's purposes in the world than any other nation that ever went before her. None other ever did so much in establishing righteousness and justice and liberty in the earth; and so long as she continues in the paths of righteousness, that righteousness will exalt her.

6. Both the loving patience and the justice of God are strikingly set forth in the history of the ten tribes. God bore with them for years, for over two centuries, sending them his servants, the prophets, to warn and entreat. And only at last, when all seemed in vain, he forsook them.

Some of the truths taught by the separate lessons, are in the following from our SENIOR QUARTERLY.

## SOME THINGS I HAVE LEARNED

FROM THE U. S. S. LESSONS OF THE PAST QUARTER.

### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON I

That I need not envy young people who are brought up in luxury, with nothing to do, and having all their own way, with every wish gratified. Rehoboam had all that, and it made his life so vain and self-willed that he lost his kingdom by it. I have learned that it is better to be taught to work, to think of others, and to realize that they have rights, and thus be fitted to live happily and usefully among others when I grow up.

I have learned too that mere worldly advancement does not make a successful life. Jeroboam, from poor boy to king, made a great failure of life, for he lived for himself and for the world. The one who at life's end has built up the best character, in the love and service of God, is the truly successful man, for he has the most to take with him to another life.

### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON II

That God reigns, and that he punishes a land for the people's sin. He withheld the rain from Israel for their sin.

I have learned from it also, that God will provide, sometimes in unexpected ways, for those who trust and obey him. He provided for Elijah, and for the widow of Zarephath. And he is the same God yet. He will provide in different ways; but in his own way, the best way, he will provide.

### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON III

That the God whom I have been taught to worship is the true God. He proved himself such at Carmel, and in many ways he proves himself now the true God.

That God is forgiving. As soon as the people acknowledged him to be God, he gave the rain in plenty.

That when we are doing any good work, we do not need to practice any tricks, or do anything deceitful, in order to gain our end. If it is a thing God wants done he will bring it about if we do right. There was no need for Elijah to hide fire about the altar, so that it might burn the sacrifice; God provided the fire. We should seek to do what is right and leave results with God.

### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON IV

That it is as much a duty to flee from danger at one time as to face it at another time. Where there is duty to be done, then we should face it, no matter what the danger. When duty does not call us, it is a sin to rush into, or remain in, danger. Elijah had nothing to do at Ahab's court, and when his life was threatened he fled.

That discouragement is often the result of bodily weariness, and one way to make the world brighter is to give it food and rest.

That the one thing which we should never forget, when discouraged, is to get alone with God. No one can remain long discouraged who is alone with him. And we do not have to travel forty days to meet him.

That religious movements which make the most noise, have not always the most of God in them.

### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON V

That being in a high place and having a great many things does not make one more happy or contented. Ahab was king and had much, but was unhappy because he could not get Naboth's one little bit of ground.

That I should not sulk because I cannot get everything I want.

That being kings and queens does not keep people from doing very childish things, or very mean and false and cruel things. Ahab sulked, and Jezebel lied and killed, all for a trifle.

That gain gotten by wrong-doing of any kind, is a curse and not a blessing. Ahab met Elijah when he went to take the vineyard, and we must meet our conscience and our God. He makes a bad bargain who sells his character, himself, for gain.

### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON VI

That the close of a good life is a grand thing. Other people do not always see the grand messengers that God sends to carry his children home, but they are there, and the home-going of every Christian is just as grand and glorious a thing as was that of Elijah. If I live right the close of my life here will be the grandest part of it, because it will be the beginning of a better one.

That when good men are taken away, other good men are needed to fill their places and do their work, in the Sabbath school, in the

church, in all the good that is being carried on in the world. So I should be fitting myself to fill some of these places when others are taken away.

That if we are willing to fill these places, God will give us the same spirit to fit us for the work; that they had who have gone before us.

That the best thing to seek for when good men are taken away, is not their property but the spirit that worked through them.

#### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON VII

That we should carry our griefs and troubles to God.

That a bad man in a good office may go through the forms of that office but cannot do any real good. Gehazi could carry the prophet's staff and use it, but the child did not awake.

That we should be persistent in prayer. The mother prayed, somewhat as did Jacob at Peniel, and would take no refusal, and her prayer was answered.

That we must get into "touch" with those whom we would cheer and help. An ounce of sympathy is worth a ton of lecture.

#### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON XIII.

That no place in life is free from ills. Naaman had a high place, but a loathsome disease. Many a one has wealth and honor and no health to enjoy them.

That no matter how small or humble our place in life we may be, we can be helpful to some one. The little captive maid had the kindly heart and the helpful spirit and was enabled to do great good.

That the way, the only way, to get the blessings which God promises, is to obey, in simple faith, the commands which he gives, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" is just as simple and as sure as the healing in the Jordan was to Naaman when he washed.

#### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON IX.

That God's eye is on man's plans, and if not in accord with his will, they will be brought to nought, be they ever so carefully made. The King of Syria guarded against men knowing his plans but he forgot that God saw.

That those whom God keeps and protects are safe. That if God be for us, those that be with us are more than those that be against us.

That when those who have been our enemies fall into our power, we should do them good, as did the King of Israel at Elisha's command: "If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink."

#### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON X.

That when God works with man there is certainty of success. The man of God put his hand upon the King's hand as a guarantee of success.

That a good man's usefulness does not cease at death. God wrought a miracle at Elisha's grave and so he often makes helpful the words and deeds of good men after they have gone. The more I seek to do for God and man while I live, the more will I be the means of doing after I have rested from life's work.

#### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON XI.

That the greatest foe to self is self; that self-indulgence is hurtful to our best interests as well as dishonoring to God.

That self-indulgence and sinful indulgence are very near neighbors.

That sinful indulgence is sure to undermine and ruin the strongest life or the strongest country.

That sinful indulgence in the good things of life, rather than using them to God's glory, is a grievous misuse of God's good gifts, and will bring ruin, sooner or later, upon him who thus misuses them.

#### I HAVE LEARNED FROM LESSON XII

That when people begin to desert the house of God, as in Lesson I, it is very liable to lead to the ruin of Lesson XII.

That God does not readily give men up or cast them off. He bore long with Israel and pleaded with them by his servants the prophets.

That the companionship of the ungodly and idolatrous is a dangerous thing. It is liable to lead men and women away from God.

That it is running into temptation for young people to choose their homes among idolaters of any kind.

That if men let go of God's hand they are sure to drift farther and farther from good and safety.

That though God waits long upon the sinner, doom must come at last upon sin; and if the sinner is still holding to the sin he must share its doom.

# Primary Department.

HELPS FOR TEACHERS OF LITTLE FOLKS, BY MR. & MRS. G. H. ARCHIBALD, MONTREAL.

## LESSON X.—September 4th, 1898.

### THE DEATH OF ELISHA. 2 Kings 13 14-25.

I. GOLDEN TEXT : " Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Psa. 118 : 15.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER. God's good gifts.

III. PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR TO-DAY'S LESSON. Peace, life and death.

#### IV. REVIEW :

1. What made the servant of Elisha afraid ?
2. What did Elisha pray for ?
3. What did the young man see ?
4. How were they delivered from the enemy ?

V. SYNOPSIS : Our lesson to-day brings us to the end of a great life. Following closely upon that of his predecessor, Elijah, the life of Elisha has been greatly used by God in bringing the nations back to himself. The dynasty of Ahab was a thing of the past. That of Jehu had taken its place. A period of nearly fifty years has intervened since our last lesson. Elisha was over eighty years of age, and had been a prophet for over sixty years. During his last sickness, he was visited by the King of Israel, who lamented over his sickness, and was bidden to shoot the arrows toward the enemy as a symbol of victory, with God as their leader. The man of God was indignant with the king for having stayed his hand so quickly, for each stroke was symbolic of a victory over Syria. The second division of our lesson is one of these remarkable stories in the history of Elisha. When the body of a man was let down into Elisha's grave and it touched his bones, he revived, and stood upon his feet. After the record of this instance we have four verses of history 22-25 added to our lesson.

#### VI. SUGGESTIVE STEPS :

The power of influence, would seem to be the thought we want to teach to-day. It is a sort of a review lesson, and we should now show the life of Elisha as a whole.

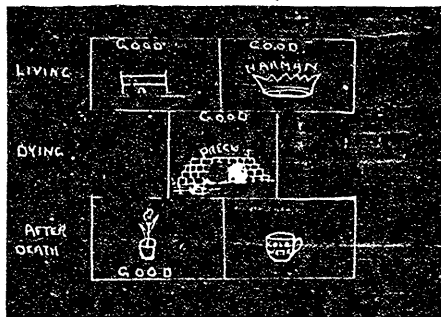
1. Living. 2. Dying. 3: After death.

1. There are two kinds of people in the world.

1. Those who make the world better for their having lived in it. 2. Those make it worse, I am sure we want to be like the first.

2. Tell the story of a boy who, while he lived was always doing kind things. One time when some wicked boys had upset the apple woman's stand, he helped her to gather the apples, and spoke kind words to her. Soon after the boy died. In the mind of the poor woman he lived, for many years, and again, and again, and again she told of his good deed to her. Here was a boy whose influence lived after he died.

3. Elisha seemed to be doing good to people all the time. Review some of the lessons. See how much the children have learned about the prophet, and as they tell some of the stories make a rough sketch, and keep writing the word Good, Good, Good. It was a good thing for Elisha to live.



4. Tell of Elisha's death. People who live well, need not be afraid to die. The same angels who took care of Elisha and his servant at Dothan, we are sure were at his bedside when he died. God is watching when his children die. It is a good thing to die or a bad thing? We will see what the Golden Text says about it.

5. Teach the Golden Text. Let us write up over the tomb of Elisha the word Good. The teacher may add the word Precious if the idea of death is emphasized, and it is felt that such teaching will be wise, and helpful.

6. Continue the story of Elisha, and tell how his very bones brought the dead man back to life. This will not be so with us, but like the boy and the apple woman the good deeds

we now do, will make our lives peaceful and our memories sweet. The flowers taken to the sick, the cup of cold water to the thirsty, The kind deeds and actions of our lives bring to us a peaceful death, and although we die the deeds live after us.

7. God gives us many good gifts, among others, peace while we live and peace when we die. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

## LESSON XI.—September 11th, 1898.

### SINFUL INDULGENCE. Amos 6: 1-8.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "They also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way." Isa. 28: 7.

**II. PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER:** God's good gifts.

**III. PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR TO-DAY'S LESSON:** Guidance through life.

#### IV. REVIEW:

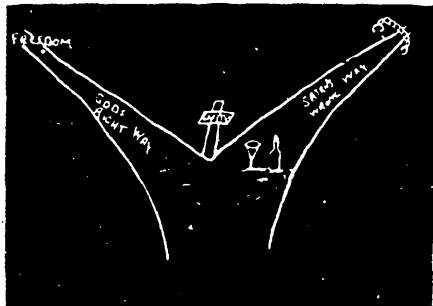
1. Name some of the good things Elisha did while living?
2. What happened when they buried a man in his tomb?
3. How do our good deeds live after us?
4. What was last Sunday's Golden Text?

**V. SYNOPSIS:** The prophet Amos, the writer of our lesson to-day, was a native of Tekoa, a place near Bethlehem. He was a herdsman and an unlettered man, who, like Elijah, must have lived close to God. He was a great evangelist of his time. He stood forth among the wicked and gainsaying people, and spoke without fear. "Prepare to meet your God, and woe to them that are at ease in Zion," are the striking words of his prophecy. His sermons, or his words of prophecy, or whatever you like to call them, are given to us in six chapters of his book, and are of great value to show us the sins into which the nations had fallen when he was the prophet. We can see that the sin of drink and debauchery was prevalent.

#### VI. SUGGESTIVE STEPS:

To-day's lesson is essentially a temperance lesson. There is no harder truth to teach than that of self-control. For the children, we need to broaden the subject out, and teach not only self-control in wine and strong drink, important as these may be, but self-control in other ways. Many of our children are not tempted with wine and strong drink, as they need to be, and if this is so, we must adapt

this to their temptations. Therefore, while we teach this lesson, while these suggestions refer only to the intemperance in drinking, yet it is easy to refer again and again to that of gluttony, and anger, and such like. To keep in the path of right, so as not to lose our way, is the truth we want to teach the children to-day.



1. Have the Golden Text printed on the blackboard.

2. Tell the story of a boy who was asked to a party in the city and who tried to find his own way. He would have been all right if he had been more careful, and looked at the little signs like this, that are on the corners of the streets. As you tell the story, with the flat of the chalk make a mark upon the board similar to that in the cut, mark the word—Safety—on it. He did not pay sufficiently careful attention to the sign board, and made a mistake in the name, and so was lost.

3. Tell another story. Perhaps you can make this a personal experience, about how you were going along a country road, and when you came to a place where two roads branched, you thought you knew the way, and did not pay much attention to the signs,

but you made a mistake, and soon got out of the way and so was lost. As you use these two illustrations, draw the bottom part of the cross, so that thus far it will look like the signboard commonly used on the road. At the same time, roughly sketch two roads as suggested in the cut.

4. Point to the Golden Text on the board, and have it repeated. Show that the people in the time of Amos made a mistake through drinking wine and strong drink. As these two things are referred to, hold up a wine-glass and bottle, cut out of white paper, and pin them to the blackboard. This is how they get out of the way, of God's right way, into Satan's wrong way. The Bible teaches us that we should not use wine or strong drink, but if we do err as these people did, if we make mistakes as the little boy did, and as

the teacher did, we too will get lost. Here introduce a lesson of self-control concerning eating, speaking, etc. All these things, as well as wine and strong drink, take us out of our way.

5. We must learn to follow our guide. The Bible says, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." Follow the guide or we will get out of the way.

6. As a last thought in the lesson, with the flat of the chalk, quickly draw the top of the cross, and write the word—Safety. The best guide of all is Jesus, the Saviour. Every boy and girl who is willing to follow him, and do as he bids, will not go out of the way. His way is the only safe way.

7. God's guidance is one of his best gifts. "No good things will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

## LESSON XII.—September 18th, 1898.

### CAPTIVITY OF THE TEN TRIBES. 2 Kings 17: 9-18.

I. GOLDEN TEXT. "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee: but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." 1 Chron. 28: 9.

II. PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER: God's good gifts.

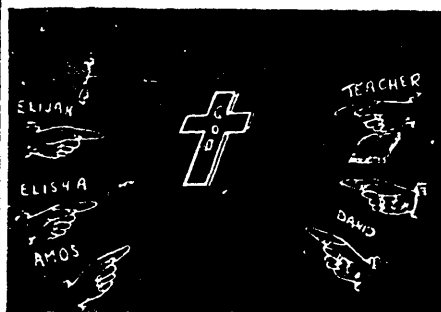
III. PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR TO-DAY'S LESSON: Jesus our Saviour.

#### IV. REVIEW:

1. What is the meaning of the word "erred"?
2. How did the people in the time of Amos, err?
3. What effect did that have? (See Golden Text).
4. What was the Golden Text last Sunday?

V. SYNOPSIS: The last lesson in the Quarter brings us to the end of the history of the Kingdom of Israel. It is now 253 years since the Kingdom was divided, and the two kings, Rehoboam and Jeroboam, crowned. The Southern Kingdom of Judah continued 135 years longer, but was finally carried into captivity. The words of our lesson show us the cause of God's anger against Israel. It is a catalogue of the offences of the people against Jehovah, amongst other's, secret sins, high places in all the cities, images and groves everywhere, the burning of incense, the serving of idols, causing the children to pass

through fire, and in all this, the Lord raised up prophet, after prophet, Their necks were hardened, and they would not believe in the



Lord, their God. Therefore, the Lord was angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight.

#### VI. SUGGESTIVE STEPS:

The thought that we want to teach to-day would seem to be contained in the Golden Text. We cannot help but make this somewhat of a warning lesson. While, of course, we always prefer positive, rather than negative, lessons, yet in this case, a lesson of this kind, if carefully taught, will be sure to prove helpful.



1. Place the Golden Text on the black-board.  
 2. Without dwelling too much upon the detail, suggest the story of a boy who had gone to Sunday School, and read his bible. He had good teachers, but he would not listen to them. He forsook their teaching, and did what was wrong. He was afterward put in prison.

3. Who remembers David the Shepherd King? After some talk of David, suggest that he wrote the Golden Text when he was an old man, giving it for advice to his son Solomon. Repeat the Golden Text together.

4. Review the first lesson of the Quarter. The divided kingdoms. Use the symbol of the tents to stand for the tribes, as there suggested. Speak of the divided home, and teach that the people had been separated through sin. God had sent Elijah and Amos to warn them, but they would not hearken to them, and forsook their teachings, and now the ten tribes are carried away into captivity. As you speak of this move the symbol eastward, and take it off the board. They would not seek for God, although Elijah pointed to him, and Elisha pointed to him, and Amos pointed to him. Cut from paper the index

hands as suggested. Write the word God in the middle of the blackboard, do not put the cross around the word until the very end of the lesson.

5. If boys and girls seek God, he will be found, but if they will not follow his guidance they will cast them from him forever. David in the Golden Text, points us to God. Teacher points us to God. The Bible points us to God, etc., etc.

6. How are we to know God and to follow him? All this quarter we have been learning of God's good gifts to his children. The best gift of all is Jesus, his Son. It is through him we learn of God. Now draw the cross around the word God. It may be penciled upon the blackboard beforehand to guide you. He who seeks for Jesus, God's best gift, will find him, but if we forsake him, we will be cast off forever.

7. Close this lesson, as indeed many of the lessons may well be closed by a few minutes silent prayer. And while all the heads are bowed and the eyes closed, ask the children to seek with their hearts to find God, for if we seek him, he will be found. "No good gift will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

LESSON XIII.—September 25th, 1898.

REVIEW.

I. GOLDEN TEXT: "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Ps. 84 : 11.

(See Preview.)

1 <b>A HAPPY HOME</b>	2 <b>FOOD and CLOTHING</b>	3 <b>HOLY SPIRIT OF FIRE</b>	4 <b>SEEN FRIENDS and UNSEEN</b>
5 <b>A CONTENTED HEART</b>	<b>GOD'S GOOD GIFTS</b>		6 <b>HOLY SPIRIT OF LOVE</b>
7 <b>LOVE FOR OTHERS</b>			8 <b>A CLEAN HEART</b>
9 <b>ANGELS EVER NEAR</b>	10 <b>PEACEFUL LIFE and DEATH</b>	11 <b>GUIDANCE THROUGH LIFE</b>	12 <b>JESUS Our SAVIOUR</b>