

Sunday School Banner

FOR TEACHERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE



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—By Art Burt

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SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

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DECEMBER, 1903

No. 12

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I gat me up to Bethlehem
All unaccompanied I;
(A miracle! A miracle!
A mocking crowd was nigh!)

I gat me up to Bethlehem,
No sound the silence stirred;
But on a sudden, like a roar,
"Hail, King of Jews!" I heard.

I gat me up to Bethlehem—
I trow 'twas somewhat far—
And I had wine to cheer, but ah,
I tasted vinegar!

I gat me up to Bethlehem;
How chanced it I should see
Where never yet a hill upreared,
A hill called Calvary?

I gat me up to Bethlehem
To find the little King;
(Meseemed I saw upon the way
A cross where felons swing).

I gat me up to Bethlehem
With saddened heart, I ween,
For well I knew upon that road
Prophetic sights I'd seen.

—Susie M. Best.

On the Road to Bethlehem

I gat me up to Bethlehem
To see a wonder rare;
(I heard it rumoured far and near
The Promised Prince was there).

I gat me up to Bethlehem
To find the Blessed Babe;
(Foretold by old-time saints to be
A lost world's astrolabe).

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Sunday School Banner

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor

TORONTO, DECEMBER, 1903

The Blessed Life.

THE next half year will be spent in the consecutive study of the life of our Lord. For six months the schools of Christendom will be studying that Matchless Life as it never was studied before in all the centuries since Christ came to save the world.

"And I if I be lifted up," said our Lord, "will draw all men unto me." Never was he so lifted up in all lands, and among all peoples as he will be during the next half year. In the crowded cities and the rural hamlet, amid the teeming populations of the great mission centres of Indian and China, and in the lonely outposts and frontiers of Christendom, that holy life, the work and words

of our Lord, shall be pondered as they never were before.

Assuredly the Divine and Eternal Spirit, the source of all illumination, will seal these holy truths upon myriads of souls, will lead to a consecration of the young life of Christendom, to loyal love and service to him who gave his life for us.

What a grand opportunity to walk in the very footsteps of our blessed Lord, to lean like John upon his bosom, to drink deeply of his spirit, to be conformed to his image. One of the great books of the ages which has moulded the thought and life of Christendom is the "Imitation of Christ," by Thomas a Kempis. Let us each write our Imitation of Christ by the thoughtful, loving study of his life and conformity to his will.

Lessons for 1904.

In the first six months the life and work of Christ from birth to resurrection will be studied, such lessons having been selected as will enable us to follow the deeds and teachings of the Lord Jesus as recorded by the first three evangelists.

Such a survey of our Lord's life must prove most beneficial, as it will bring us into the companionship of our Lord and impress upon us his work of redemption afresh. We should also be inspired by his example and teaching to renewed endeavour to lead a life of goodness and holiness. We should also be encouraged by the contemplation of his patience, readiness to help, and ability to aid, to continue joyfully in our Christian life with its duties, confident that he, who was so gracious, is the same now and will never fail to hear our prayers and enable us to triumph.

One of the remarkable features, in connection with the Bible lessons as outlined by the International Committee, has been the extraordinary interest shown in the study of the Old Testament lessons, beginning July, 1901, with the Creation. The lessons, with few exceptions, have been judiciously chosen.

The biographical and historical have been wisely prominent. Religious truth has been clothed in flesh and blood. Abstract truth has its place, but incarnate truth appeals to the average child and man. Error, too, as seen in the failures of men and women who have sinned and broken Gods law, is strong in its impression and vividly sets forth the consequences of sin.

These studies from the Old Testament are to be continued. The last six months of 1904 will be occupied with lessons from the Old Testament. The Third Quarter deals with the events from the death of Solomon to the death of Elijah; the Fourth Quarter from the death of Elijah to Isaiah. The lessons are richly historical and biographical and will also admit of graded treatment.

The Lessons for 1904 are, therefore, unusually promising. They can be made the basis of most effective religious teaching. However, let it be remembered that much will depend upon the individual teacher and his preparation. No system has been, or ever will be, devised that does, or will do, away with the painstaking preparation of the teacher and his tactful instruction. The efficiency of the work of the Sunday-school at the last is a question of the efficiency of the teacher.—The Augsburg Teacher.

Lesson Helps for 1904.

The testimony of experienced teachers is that no help is more valuable for the study of the life of our Lord than a Harmony of the Gospels. The advantages of such a Harmony, or Monotessaron, will be shown by the following extracts from an article by Prof. Amos R. Wells, in *The Sunday School Times*:

"Far above concordance, Bible index, Bible dictionary, I count the monotessaron the very best help to Bible study. The monotessaron, it might be parenthetically remarked for the benefit of the lexicon-lazy folk, is a harmony of the Four Gospels, so arranged as to make one continuous and complete story, in Scripture words alone. Speaking for one, I may say that through recent first acquaintance with a monotessaron, that Matchless Life has shone upon me with an entire splendour of beauty and majesty before unimagined."

There are several Harmonies from \$1.00 to \$1.50. One of the most serviceable is that by W. H. Withrow. (Toronto: William Briggs). Price 50 cents.

A Christmas Offering to Missions

"And opening their treasures, they offered unto Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh." (In the year 4 B.C.)

One hundred million dollars, it is estimated, are spent annually by the people of Christian lands for Christmas presents to one another. Other estimates place the figure at three hundred millions and more. Surely it would be pleasing to him whose birth at Christmas time we celebrate if the Christian Church would supplement this one hundred million dollars or more of personal expenditure with an offering of at least one million dollars for the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel.

Twelve leading missionary boards are uniting through the Young People's Missionary Movement in a campaign to secure a generous free-will offering from the Christian Church during the coming Christmas season.

A Christmas-box artistically lithographed in six colors and gold will be provided to receive the gifts.

During the weeks immediately preceding Christmas, as presents are being purchased for friends and relatives, this Christmas-box placed in the homes, will be a reminder of the debt of gratitude owed to the truest and best of Friends, and the question will come, what offering can we make that will be most pleasing to him who gave himself for a lost world?"

These gift boxes will be placed in the homes through the pastors, acting as representatives of the denominational missionary boards.

It is requested that prayer be offered daily by individuals and by family groups in behalf of this offering. It is urged also that the ministry of intercession be supplemented by a ministry of sacrifice.

Pastors are invited to speak on Novem-

ber 29th, on the propriety of bringing gifts to Christ at Christmas time.

Prominence will be given to the Christmas offering in the missionary and religious press during the months of November and December. As a fitting close to the campaign a programme will be provided for use on Christmas evening or the Sunday following Christmas, at which time the offering may be brought into the treasury and dedicated to the Master's service.

The hearty personal co-operation of all pastors and all Christian workers will guarantee a missionary gift that will honor him who said:

"As my Father hath sent me into the world even so send I you into the world."

"Though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor."

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

Methodist Magazine and Review for 1904.

ALMOST every country in the world has been exploited and described in this magazine, with but few exceptions. One of these is the comparatively little known continent of South America. It will be a surprise to many persons to learn from the handsomely illustrated articles on Brazil, Argentina, Chili, and Peru, what vast and varied and picturesque regions there are in that great continent. While a high degree of wealth and material civilization exists in its great cities, still the mass of the population are the most intensely Romanist of all Catholic people. Methodism has made remarkable advances in education and evangelism in those lands, which will be the subject of a series of papers of great interest. Special attention will, however, be paid to Our Own Country, its romantic and heroic story, its wonderful progress, its limitless outlook.

Our readers cannot fail to be pleased with the bright new cover and largely increased advertising patronage of this number.

Most of the subscriptions to this magazine terminate with the present volume. We hope our patrons will promptly renew for themselves and seek to send also the subscription of some neighbour or friend. Of some issues of the year we have had to print second, or even third, editions, notably of our Wesley Bicentenary number, of which nearly twice our usual circulation was called for. If we can secure a further circulation of two thousand we will surprise our friends with the improvement in this periodical, and will be able also to secure largely increased advertising patronage. We hope the preachers, who are our special agents, and all our friends will make an earnest effort to give us that increase. NOW is the best time to secure subscriptions. The November and December numbers will be given free to new subscribers.

Our full programme will appear in our January number. Among its chief items will be articles on New Ontario, The Front Door of Canada, Trees and Their Culture, The Romance of Canadian History, Men of the Empire, Romance of Commerce, Cycling in Europe, The Beneficence of Science, Mastery of the Pacific, Man as a Machine, Turkey Seen from Within, More About Radium. Nearly all of these will be fully illustrated. The Departments of Social and Religious Topics, Character Studies and Sketches, Missionary Sketches, Popular Science, Current Topics, with numerous Cartoons, Religious Intelligence, Book Notices, Serial and Short Stories, will all be fully maintained.

Many schools have taken from two to ten copies at the special rate of \$1.60 each, as being cheaper, better, and fresher than library books. Give it a trial.

Methodist Magazine and Review for November.

This number is rich in illustrated articles, among them: "The British House of Commons," "The Keswick Movement," "Picturesque Ireland," and three illustrated critical studies of much interest—the eccentric artist, J. A. McNeill Whistler, Rudyard Kipling, and the Canadian poet, Charles Sangster. "A Typical Canadian Camp-Meeting," by Dr. Sutherland, our Missionary Secretary, is a vivid picture of an old-time scene. Dr. J. S. Ross writes on "The Wesleyan Movement of the Eighteenth Century," the Editor on "The Oxford Movement" of the Nineteenth, the Rev. Wm. Harrison on "The Mechanical Conception of the Universe," and George E. Hartwell on "Our First Martyr in China," a story of tragic interest. A striking poem by Mark Guy Pearse, "The Local Preacher," and one by Dr. Gilder on John Wesley, are both of unique interest. A strong new serial is begun, and the November and December numbers, containing the opening chapters, are offered free to new subscribers.

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asked also each year to bring something for a donation from the class as a whole. The same thing is repeated in the Sunday School, each child giving to each teacher, and each one also expected in addition to contribute to some special charitable object. The father and mother of these three children each have Sunday School classes, one of seven scholars, the other of five. If they pursue the same method in their own classes and give a remembrance to each pupil and also contribute to the special object chosen by each class, the grand total of the presents given by this one family would reach the extraordinary number of twenty-six, aside from the immediate relatives and friends.

Is it any wonder, therefore, that Christmas becomes a great financial and nerve-exhausting strain? This is especially the case when the burden falls upon the tired mothers, who have to select the gifts. An overdoing of anything, however good of itself, ceases to be desirable. In the needless multiplication of Christmas gifts have not many of us lost the spirit of joyousness and true thankfulness? In our absorption in "much giving" do we not often forget to thank our Heavenly Father for the Gift of gifts, whose advent we are supposed to be celebrating?

A Mother.

Making Christmas a Burden

With the approaching Christmas season cannot a word of protest be uttered against the custom of exchanging gifts between pupils and teachers? The writer was present at the closing of a school term last year and saw a teacher open gift after gift piled up on her desk. It was easy to single out those who had not brought presents by their distressed and unhappy faces, their sensitive little hearts feeling as if they were under a ban for not being able to do as the others. A sorry beginning for so joyous a season. Even if the gifts are not brought to the school, but sent direct to the teachers' or scholars' homes, would it not be better simply to have the good wishes of the season exchanged, without the expense and formality of a present?

I know of one family where the three children expect to take a gift to each of their different teachers. They are

The Sweetest Strain.

It matters not to a heart in tune

With a certain old melodious strain;
If days be dark, or days be light,

For it knows that sunshine follows the
rain.

That sufferance long and a patience sweet
Is the clearest note in the hymn of
praise,

That love, rich love, is the tenderest note
Which the pure heart sings to the God
of days.

It matters not to a heart in tune

With the sweetest note in this joyous
strain,

If echoing hearts the air prolong
Or if love return to itself again.

There can be no jar, the best is done,

It has kept the measure, and held the
key,

And love bestowed without love's return
Is the sweetest note in its minstrelsy.

—MRS. S. E. KENNEDY.

Christmas Festivities

—
BY AMOS R. WELLS.

Author of "Sunday-School Success," etc.,
—

AM I wrong in thinking that I see a gradual drawing away from Christmas celebrations in the Sunday School? I hope I am. Teachers and officers, however, are very likely to shrink from the labour involved, to remember past turmoils, and to devise some makeshift of a celebration that is no pride to themselves or satisfaction to the children.

For the children, bless them! are not weary of these things. The glittering tree and the jovial Santa still fascinate them as they fascinated my own well-remembered boyhood, when they formed the sparkling cynosure of the entire year. And it seems a pity, since so much pleasure can be given so easily to so many, to minimize it or do away with it altogether.

I say "so easily," though I am well aware that the adverb will arouse sarcastic smiles. But I believe we make far too much fuss over our Christmas rejoicings, losing in multiplicity of parade the beautiful, simple lesson of the Advent. An ideal Christmas celebration may be purchased at little cost of money, time or strength. No one person, and no few persons, should be allowed to bear the burden of it, but it should be divided among many. Where the Sunday School is small by all means neighbouring schools or the schools of the entire town should unite for the festival, and thus put in practice that evening one of the chief teachings of Christmas. Divide the work among many committees, each with a responsible head. Let one group plan the decorations, let a committee obtain the evergreen boughs, another fashion the wreaths, another put them in place. Set a committee to arrange the singing. Set another committee over the ushering. The tree, the exercise, the presents—divide the work into little parcels, and then no back will break. Besides, far more good will be gained if many are thus interested in the celebration than if only a few receive the rewards of service. And if any superintendent says it is easier to do the thing himself than to superintend so many, ask him the meaning of the name of his office.

The matter of time will do much to decide whether the celebration is dreaded or anticipated with pleasure. Most of such festivals are sadly overcrowded. Time carefully each exercise, making generous allowance for "getting up and sitting down," for coming in and going out, and for the unexpected hitches that are sure to come. Leave liberal gaps, as men leave gaps between connecting railway rails, because heat expands. Rehearse everything, and "get a good ready." Insist on promptness. Set the hour early, and let people know you will begin at the hour, though only ten are there. Then, keep your word. Close early, before the fidgets come. "Early beginning and early to close, and oh, how successfully everything goes!"

Our Christmas celebrations should be, as far as possible, a re-embodiment of the Advent Day itself. There are four simple elements of that great event, and if we introduce those four elements into our Christmas exercises, they will be well-rounded, attractive and fruitful. There is:

First, upward; the thought of the star; the element of worship.

Second, downward; the angels' song of good will; the element of charity.

Third, inward; the manger and its blessedness; the element of rejoicing.

Fourth, outward; the magi and their offerings; the element of gifts.

1. Upward. Who has not attended Christmas festivals that might as well have been festivals in honour of Mercury or Juno? The real thought of Christmas has scarcely entered at all into the celebration. I have seen an evening's Christmas entertainment in a Sunday School that was based entirely on the Brownies; another year, entirely on the characters of Mother Goose's melodies!

Now I believe that the Christmas concert should be a gain to the religious life of every participant and auditor. I would precede it, on Christmas morning, with an early morning prayer-meeting—a sunrise prayer-meeting. Such a meeting has been held annually in my own church; it is very largely attended, by young and old, and scores take part. It gives a spiritual tone to the entire day. It is the best possible preparation for Christmas evening.

At the very outset of the evening's exercises, make plain the predominant purpose of the gathering—that it is to exalt the Saviour of men. Get the most eloquent speaker obtainable to present the theme, briefly but most winsomely. And

I would follow this with several short, simple prayers in swift succession. One of these prayers may well be given in brief, easy sentences, or parts of sentences, which the children, even the youngest, will repeat after the speaker, all heads being bowed.

Having in some such ways as these gained the upward look, next make sure of:

2. Downward. I have known Sunday Schools that gave up, by vote, their Christmas festivities, especially the gift part, in order to use the money for the pleasure and comfort of poor children. This spirit of self-denial can be cultivated in other ways, throughout the year, and in our well-to-do Sunday Schools it is not necessary to abandon the Sunday School "treat" in order to get the element of charity into the celebration.

In some way, however, this element must be incorporated. Make a strong appeal to the parents. Ask them to give each child a chance to earn something to give to the poor at Christmas. Do not consider your festival in commemoration of the Christ-child a success unless each of his children has brought something of his own, though only a stick of candy, to give away to Christ's other, less fortunate, children. And then let the scholars deliver these gifts in person, going about in groups under the conduct of their elders.

3. Inward. Christmas affords an unexampled opportunity to exalt the church in the children's minds as the centre of joy, even of jollity. As I remember my own boyhood (and I'm a good deal of a boy still!) and as I watch other children, I conclude that the Christmas jollity centres in Santa and the tree. Who tires of the tree? Who wants to bring in the gifts in prosaic wicker baskets? Never the children. Who wears of jovial St. Nicholas? The grown-ups that must wear the wig and furs, and for one short evening unbend their precious dignity: not the children. Why, I saw once in a department store a Santa Claus writing in a book the Christmas wishes of the boys and girls as they came up and revealed them—the surliest fellow, as to eyes, voice and evident spirit, I ever saw, a fellow with no heart at all for his blessed task; and yet the dear children flocked around him like bees to a bunch of old-fashioned phlox. It must have been the long white beard.

Have a tree, if it is only a stick; have a Santa Claus, if he is only a stick. Get a Santa who will omit the cheap jokes

and exalt Christ. But don't leave out the fun.

Much of this is true also of the Christmas "exercise," or "cantata," or "concert," or what you choose to call it. Circumstances differ so widely that I cannot name for you good exercises, though that would be a useful service. Your best plan is to send for samples galore, and make your choice. You will have ample range. Santa has been exploited in every possible phase. They have even gone on to Mrs. Santa and Santa junior, and Santa's sisters and cousins and aunts. A good exercise will introduce the element of surprise, it will not give the children much acting to do, it will be simple and rememberable, and it will contribute unmistakably to the genuine Christmas spirit; it will exalt Christ. Sometimes you can get best results by using the best parts of more than one exercise.

It is not at all necessary always to send away for an exercise in order to have a thoroughly successful Christmas celebration. Make your own. Advertise it as an original exercise, and you will increase the interest considerably.

One home-made exercise might be called "The Lighting of the Tree." The tree will be all ready for lighting, and will be in view as the audience gathers, but the lighting of each candle will come as a response to some appropriate Scripture verse repeated by a scholar, or some Christmas poem recited, or some Christmas song sung. Not until the last child has made his contribution will the tree shine out in its full beauty. Of course, the pastor will draw a little moral from this.

Another home-made exercise might be called "Christmas Questions." It would consist merely of a series of questions and answers, the former propounded by the superintendent and the latter given by the children. Now a single child would reply, now a class in concert, now the whole school. Now the answer would come in the form of a Bible verse, now as a stanza of a hymn, now as a poem recited, now as a bit of description read. As to the questions, they should cover the Christmas story, and whatever, growing out of it, the superintendent and teachers wish to bring out. For example, "Where was Jesus born?" would be answered, possibly, by the singing of Phillips Brooks' beautiful hymn, "O little town of Bethlehem!" "What great men came to find the infant Jesus?" would be answered by the recitation of Longfellow's poem, "The Three Kings,"

and by an abstract of Henry Van Dyke's story, "The Other Wise Man." The plan gives unlimited range to the ingenuity and skill of whoever may prepare the exercise.

A variation of this exercise may consist of brief addresses (limited to three minutes) by different persons, each address to end in a question, and each question to be answered by a song. There may be a choir of children hidden behind a curtain, or two choirs thus hidden at the ends of the room, singing antiphonally. For example, after a brief description of the scene at Bethlehem when the angels sang, introduce the question, "What did they sing about?" which the children will answer by singing softly E. H. Sears' lovely hymn, "It came upon the midnight clear." After a little talk on the theme of the refusal to receive Mary at the inn, ask: "Would you treat the Lord Jesus in that way?"

4. Outward. Just a word, in conclusion, as to the school "treat," the presents for the children. Probably every Sunday School has by this time seen the necessity of forbidding a general receipt and disbursement of gifts. Some parents are sure to take the opportunity for vulgar display. I have been present at Christmas entertainments when almost every alternate name called out belonged to a certain family, and their pew became filled with parcels almost to a level with its railing. The children enjoy watching for their names to be called, and with a brisk Santa the operation need not be tedious; but it is a wise school that prevents heartburnings by ruling that, for the sake of the poorer children, each scholar shall receive no more than one gift, in addition to the school treat of candy, nuts and fruit. And then, by shrewd management among the generous, see to it that not the poorest child fails to receive this second gift.

But cultivate at this season among the members of the church and school the lovely spirit of giving. Urge them to prepare gifts for others than relatives and nearest friends—for the lonely, for the sick, for the ugly, for non-Christians, for those that do not expect it. Organize among the children an S. S. S.—Santa's Secret Service. Arm this messenger corps with printed receipt-books, and be sure that each receipt, when signed, is returned to the giver; but provide for secrecy if the giver desires to remain unknown. This kindly mystery, this jolly unselfishness, is of the very heart of Christmas.—The Pilgrim Teacher.

The Dream of the Innkeeper's Wife

"Because there was no room for them in the inn."

The childless mother rose from sleep
While yet there was no light,
And thrust aside the casement wide
With hands that shook from fright,
And leaned far out, and all about
A wild storm tore the night.

"Oh, but this dream hath pierced my heart;
Since I was lain in bed
Methought mine own dead little son,
Who never word hath said,
Stood at my knee and spake to me
As one uncomforted.

"And, mother, oh, my mother," he said,
'The night is dread and drear,
But, hushed and warm from hurt and storm,
Ye sleep and know no fear;
Though in the wold one cried with cold,
Ye did not hark nor hear.

"And staunch and strong thy roof-tree is,
And filled my father's inn,
And every guest hath food and rest,
Yet this night through their din
Soft at thy door did one implore
Who entrance could not win.

"And mother, oh, my mother," he said
'Go take the linen fine
Where onetime I did softly lie,
The pillow that was mine,
For sick and sore on thy stable floor
One travails 'mongst the kine.'

"What was it of a star he spake?
My thoughts are shifting sand;
What else I heard fell strange and blurred,
I might not understand;
Yet did it seem not all a dream."
Her head dropped on her hand.

"Yea, of a child new-born he spake;
And this were truth, full fain
Were to fleet through wind and sleet
To where my kine are lain,
If on my breast could there be pressed
A little head again.

"Nay, let me to my weary bed
And bid the thought go by,"
She bent her head; the tears she shed
Fell swift and silently.

And while she wept a great star leapt
And flamed across the sky.
—Theodosia Garrison, in December Cen-
tury.

Is the Sunday School Doing Its Best ?

Frequently it is declared that the Sunday School is not doing its best. Well, what human institution is doing its best? It may not be doing its best, and yet be doing much good. Hence we should not be discouraged but should try to do better work. The India Sunday School Journal thus answers the question, Is the Sunday School doing its best?

No, the Sunday School is not doing its best; for it is a God-given institution committed to man's hands, and it would be difficult to point to any such institution on the pages of history that can be confidently written down as having done "its best." A Sunday School where every teacher and every officer, fifty-two Sundays and three hundred and thirteen week days in a year, is doing his and her best! There would be a new Pentecost in that town, or village, or city, or country district. Is your Sunday School doing its best, teacher, superintendent, scholar? Is your particular corner, or class, or share of work, doing its best? If not, why not?—S. S. Journal.

When, twenty-six years ago, Mr. Brockway began his famous prison reform work at Elmira, he declared it as his belief that about twenty per cent. of the men were incorrigible. Some time afterward he said he was not so sure about twenty per cent.—he had then a list of ten whom he could send to Auburn (where incorrigibles are sent), but he was giving them another chance. In a few weeks two of the men had shown decided improvement; a few weeks more and the entire list had disappeared on account of improvement. The way this wonderful work is done is to find out if possible the one thing that appeals to the man, and not try to run them all through the same mold.—S. S. Journal.

I will be with Thee.

BY PHILIP B. STRONG.

When thou passest through the waters,
When through rivers thou dost go,
I, thy God, will walk beside thee,
Over thee they shall not flow!

Lo, that promise, precious, proven,
True in distant decades dead,
Standeth fast to-day, forever—
Heart of mine, be comforted!

Better God amid the swellings
Of some Jordan-tide of woe,
Than without him earth's best gladness
Through a lengthened life to know.

A Christmas Song.

BY MARY A. LATHBURY.

Over the hills of Bethlehem,
A white star hung one night;
The low, gray walls of the little town
All lay in a silver light.

Over the hills of Bethlehem
Three wise men came from afar;
"Where is the baby King," they said,
"Who leadeth us by his star?"

Over the walls of Bethlehem
The great, white star hung low;
And they found the King on a manger
throne,
And the kine in a kneeling row.

Around the Baby of Bethlehem
The heavens once touched the earth,
And choirs of angels came thronging
down,
To carol the Saviour's birth.

Oh, where is the cradle of Bethlehem?
And where is the baby King?
Thy heart, dear child, is the cradle
throne,
And around it the angels sing.

And the King—the stars are under his
feet,
All worlds are within his hand,
And when thou art grown in the grace
of him,
Thy heart—it shall understand.

Book Notices.

"Faces Toward the Light," by Sylvanus Stall, D.D. Cloth, gilt top, 310 pages, \$1.00 net. The Vir Publishing Company, Philadelphia and London. William Briggs, Toronto, Canada.

Dr. Stall's ned devotional work is written in a bright and terse manner, which makes it exceedingly helpful and remarkably suggestive. The short chapters and pungent paragraphs are packed with spiritual truths that awaken the thought, move the heart, and bless and benefit the reader. It is intellectually suggestive, spiritually helpful, and its reading will prove conducive to a higher plane of Christian living. Dr. Stall displays the rare faculty of engaging and holding the attention of the reader by a captivating style, from the very beginning of the last page, and of arousing and quickening the conscience to better thoughts and deeds.

"The Story of the Churches." The Methodists. By John Alfred Faulkner, D.D. New York: The Baker & Taylor Co. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. 264. Price, \$1.00.

This series of books is intended to give a concise and clear sketch of the history of the several denominations of Christendom. The books on the Presbyterians and the Baptists have already appeared, the most recent edition, that on the Methodists, will be read with special interest during this bicentennial year. It is written in animated and popular style, it traces the rise and development of Methodism in the Old World and the New, its territorial expansion and progress in education, material resources, missionary enterprise. A score of pages is devoted to a brief resume of Canadian history. British Methodism is recognized as the mother of churches, but some of her numerous offspring had better remain in the old home than break up into so many and often estranged divisions. Canada has set the world the first and brightest example of the reunion of these severed branches. The book is an inspiring one, specially suitable for study by our young people.

"The Apostle Paul." By Alexander Whyte, D.D. Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. 231. Price, \$1.25.

Our recent studies in the life of St. Paul give special interest to this new volume on the great apostle. Dr. Whyte has won a high reputation as a writer. His "Bunyan Characters" have reached the twenty-first thousand, any many other books have been remarkably popular. He describes in his own vivacious way many aspects of St. Paul's life as a student, as a preacher, a pastor, a controversialist, a man of prayer, the chief of sinners, an evangelical mystic, Paul the aged, and the like. Paul's thorn in the flesh has been the subject of many speculations. Some think that it was epilepsy, others an affection of the eyes, others one of the persistent fevers of Asia Minor, others his remorse for his persecution of the Christians. Dr. Whyte shrewdly remarks, "To be told even by St. Paul himself just what that thorn was would not bring us one atom of benefit; but if I have a thorn in my own flesh and if I know what it is and why it is there and what I am to do for it that would be one of the divinest discoveries in the world to me, that will be to the salvation of my own soul."

"The Children's Year." Fifty-two Short Addresses to Boys and Girls. By J. Morgan Gibson. Author of "The Gospel of Fatherhood," etc. Manchester: James Robinson. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. x-270. Price, 2s 6d.

The place of the child in the Church is being recognized as never before. Provision for their teaching and training is an obvious duty, yet preaching to children is often a difficult task. This book will show how the difficulty may be overcome. For every week in the year the author has an admirable study. Among the attractive topics are, Coming to Jesus, Growing Up, Wasted Sundays, Springtime, Flowers and Birds, The White Sunday, Nagging and Bullying, Nutting, God's Voice, God's Gifts, Our Shepherd, Christmas Stocking. The Young folk will read these addresses with avidity, and the old folk may learn much in child-training therefrom.

The Star and the Song

O star that saw the Saviour's birth,
Still doth thy glory light the earth,
And not alone the wise men heed,
And follow wher its splendors lead;
From north to south, from east to west,
The weary nations join the quest,
And lift from longing hearts the plea,
"The world's Redeemer! Where is He?"

O song of angels, clear and sweet,
The tongues of men your notes repeat!
Your heavenly promise soars and swells
In every chime of Christian bells.
"Peace on the earth, good-will to men,"
In deeds of mercy speaks again,
And love, with precious sacrifice,
Leads where the world's Redeemer lies.

—Emily Huntington Miller, in Sunday School Times.

LESSONS AND GOLDEN TEXTS—FOURTH QUARTER.

Studies in the Old Testament from Samuel to Solomon.

LESSON 1. Oct. 4.—**DAVID BRINGS UP THE ARK.** 2 Sam. 6: 1-12. Study vs. 1-19. *Commit vs. 11, 12.* (Read 1 Chron. chs. 13, 15, 16; also 2 Sam. 5: 17-25.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Ps. 84: 4. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house.

2. Oct. 11.—GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID. 2 Sam. 7: 4-15. Study vs. 1-29. *Commit vs. 8, 9.* (Compare 1 Chron. 17 and Ps. 89. Read 2 Sam. chs. 8-10.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** 2 Sam. 7: 16. Thy throne shall be established for ever.

3. Oct. 18.—DAVID'S CONFESSION. Ps. 51: 1-17. Study vs. 1-19. *Commit vs. 1-4.* (Read 1 Sam. chs. 11, 12.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Ps. 51: 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God.

4. Oct. 25.—DAVID'S JOY OVER FORGIVENESS. Ps. 32. *Commit vs. 5-7.* (Read Rom. chs. 4, 5.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Ps. 31: 1. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

5. Nov. 1.—DAVID AND ABSALOM. 2 Sam. 15: 1-12. Study vs. 1-23. *Commit vs. 4-6.* (Read 2 Sam. chs. 13, 14.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Ex. 20: 12. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

6. Nov. 8.—DAVID'S GRIEF OVER ABSALOM. 2 Sam. 18: 24-33. *Commit vs. 31-33.* (Read 2 Sam. chs. 15-20.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Prov. 17: 25. A foolish son is a grief to his father.

7. Nov. 15.—DAVID'S TRUST IN GOD. Ps. 23. *Commit vs. 1-6.* **GOLDEN TEXT:** Ps. 23: 1. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

LESSON 8. Nov. 22.—**THE CURSE OF STRONG DRINK.** (World's Temperance Lesson.) Prov. 20: 1; 23: 29, 31, 29-35. *Commit vs. 23-29.* **GOLDEN TEXT:** Prov. 20: 1. Wine is a mocker.

9. Nov. 29.—DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON. 1 Chron. 28: 1-10. *Commit vs. 9, 10.* (Read 1 Chron. chs. 21-29.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Prov. 3: 5. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.

10. Dec. 6.—SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE. 1 Kings 3: 4-15. Study 3: 1-15; 4: 29-34. *Commit vs. 12, 13.* (Read 1 Kings chs. 1-4. Compare 1 Chron. chs. 5-7.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Prov. 9: 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

11. Dec. 13.—THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE. 1 Kings 8: 1-11, 62, 63. Study vs. 1-30, 62, 63. *Commit vs. 9-11.* (Read 1 Kings chs. 5-8; 2 Chron. chs. 5-7.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Ps. 122: 1. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.

12. Dec. 20.—THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON. 1 Kings 10: 1-13. Study vs. 1-13. *Commit vs. 6-9.* (Read 1 Kings chs. 9-11. Compare 2 Chron. chs. 8, 9.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Prov. 29: 2. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice.

OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST. (Christmas Lesson.) Matt. 2: 1-12. *Commit vs. 10, 11.* (Read vs. 7: 14-16; 9: 1-16.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Matt. 1: 23. Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

13. Dec. 27.—REVIEW. (Read Ps. 103.) **GOLDEN TEXT:** Ps. 103: 17. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.

ORDER OF SERVICES—FOURTH QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

- I. SILENCE.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. [Prov. 15, 26-33.]
SUPP. The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord:
SCHOOL. But the words of the pure are pleasant words.
SUPP. He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house;
SCHOOL. But he that hateth gifts shall live.
SUPP. The heart of the righteous studieth to answer:
SCHOOL. But the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.
SUPP. The Lord is far from the wicked:
SCHOOL. But he heareth the prayer of the righteous,
SUPP. The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart; and a good report maketh the bones fat.
SCHOOL. The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.
SUPP. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul:
SCHOOL. But he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.
SUPP. The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom;
SCHOOL. And before honour is humility.

- III. SINGING.
 IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.
 V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.
 VI. SINGING.

LESSON SERVICE.

- I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.
 II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.
 III. RECITATION OF THE TITLES AND GOLDEN TEXT by the school in concert.
 IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by Pastor or Superintendent.
 V. ADDITIONAL LESSON. [Special lesson in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.]
 VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS (especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer meetings.)

CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. SINGING.
 II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. [Psa. 28, 6, 7.]
SUPP. Blessed is the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.
SCHOOL. The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped:
ANS. Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

International Bible Lessons.

FOURTH QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

LESSON X. Solomon's Wise Choice.

[Dec. 6.]

GOLDEN TEXT. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Prov. 9. 10.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Study also 1 Kings 3. 1-3; 4. 29-34. Read 1 Kings chapters 1 to 4. Compare 2 Chron. 1.]

1 Kings 3. 4-15. [*Commit to memory verses 12, 13.*]

4 And the king went to Gib'e-on to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place; a thousand burnt offerings did Sol'o-mon offer upon that altar.

5 In Gib'e-on the LORD appeared to Sol'o-mon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Sol'o-mon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant Da'vid my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of Da'vid my father; and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

10 And the speech pleased the LORD, that Sol'o-mon had asked this thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honor; so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father Da'vid did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

REVISED VERSION.*

4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. 5. In Gibeon Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6 And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great loving-kindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great loving-kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7 And now, O Jehovah my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. 8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9 Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice; 12 Behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. 13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days. 14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen

*The Revised Version, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

15 And Sol'o-mon awoke; and, behold, *it was a dream*. And he came to Je-ru'-sa-lem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

thy days. 15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream; and he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

Time.—About B. C. 1015 (Usher). **Places.**—1. Gibeon, about six miles north of Jerusalem. 2. Mount Zion, in Jerusalem.

ment be reconciled with what we know of David's wrongdoing? Did Solomon feel competent to perform his kingly tasks? What did he ask for? Could he have made a wider request?

Home Readings.

- M.* Solomon's Wise Choice. 1 Kings 3. 4-15.
Tu. Choice of Moses. Heb. 11. 17-26.
W. Joshua's decision. Josh. 24. 1-15.
Th. Value of wisdom. Job 28. 12-28.
F. What profit! Matt. 16. 21-28.
S. The principal thing. Prov. 4. 1-13.
S. The first choice. Matt. 6. 25-34.

4. *God's Answer* (v. 10-14).—How did the Lord regard Solomon's request? What three desirable things had Solomon not asked for? What promise did God make about Solomon's wise and understanding heart? What blessing did he add? What two blessings did he add unconditionally? What conditional blessing did he promise? Where did Solomon return? Why did he worship before the ark after he worshipped before the tabernacle?

Lessor Hymns.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 231.

Oh, happy day that fixed my choice
 On thee, my Saviour and my God!
 Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
 And tell its raptures all abroad.

5. *The Feast at Jerusalem* (v. 15).—To what place did Solomon return? Why did he repeat his sacrifices to Jehovah? Before what sacred symbol did he offer burnt offerings and peace offerings?

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 233.

Oh, what shall I do my Saviour to praise,
 So faithful and true, so pteous in grace,
 So strong to deliver, so good to redeem,
 The weakest believer that hangs upon him!

Questions for Intermediate Scholars.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 439.

Take time to be holy,
 Speak oft with thy Lord;
 Abide in him always,
 And feed on his word.

1. *The Choice of Solomon* (v. 4-9).—Who went with Solomon to Gibeon? Why did they go there? What sacrifices were offered? How did God appear to Solomon? What was said to the king? What acknowledgments did Solomon make? What did he ask for? For what purpose?

Questions for Senior Scholars.

1. *The Sacrifice at Gibeon* (v. 4).—Why did Solomon go to Gibeon to sacrifice? What offering did he make to Jehovah? Where was the ark of the covenant? Where were the tabernacle and brazen altar? How long had Solomon been king?

2. *God's Answer to Solomon* (v. 10-15).—How did God regard Solomon's request? What was granted to him? What preeminence was he to have? Upon what was long life to depend? What further religious services were held?

2. *God's Offer* (v. 5).—Who had appeared to Solomon in a dream? What did he offer? To what degree is this offer made to each of us? What are our Lord's words about everyone that asketh and seeketh and knocketh? What is the reasonable attitude of Christians toward dreams to-day?

Questions for Younger Scholars.

3. *Solomon's Request* (v. 6-9).—What did Solomon carefully acknowledge? What was David's crowning blessing? How had David walked before the Lord? How can this state-

How long did David reign over his people? Who was king in his place? Was he a good king? Whom did he try to be like? How was he different? Where did David offer his sacrifices? Why should Solomon have done so too? What high place was the greatest? What were set up there? What came to Solomon there? A vision. Who spoke to him? What did he say? What did Solomon ask? Did this please the Lord? What did he tell Solomon? What did Solomon gain? *Three things more than he asked.* What did Solomon do when he came

home to Jerusalem? What should we seek first? *The kingdom of God.*

rites to God before the ark? 6. What is our GOLDEN TEXT? "*The fear,*" etc.

The Condensed Review.

1. What did God say to Solomon in a dream by night? "*Ask what I shall give thee.*" 2. For what did Solomon ask? *An understanding heart.* 3. How did God receive Solomon's reply? "*The speech pleased the Lord.*" 4. What did God also give Solomon in addition to wisdom? *Riches and honor.* 5. What did Solomon do when he awoke? *Offered sac-*

The Church Catechism.
52. What is the Church of Christ? A Church in any place is a body of faithful men among whom the divinely-appointed ordinances are maintained in all things necessary to the same; and the Church universal is the whole body of true believers in every age and place.

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

Essentials of True Prayer.

I. FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES.

Ask what I shall give thee. v. 5.

Thus saith the Lord, Ask me, and . . . command ye me. Isa. 45. 11.

All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Matt. 21. 22.

II. CONSCIOUSNESS OF UNWORTHINESS.

I am but a little child: I know not how. v. 7.

Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 18. 3.

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies thou hast showed. Gen. 32. 10.

III. REACHING OUT AFTER GOD'S IDEALS.

Give thy servant an understanding heart. v. 9.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. Matt. 6. 33.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. James 1. 5.

IV. ACCORDANCE WITH THE WILL OF GOD.

The speech pleased the Lord. v. 10.

When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. Prov. 16. 7.

Without faith it is impossible to please Him. Heb. 11. 6.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

David is now dead, and Solomon is firmly seated on the throne of Judah and Israel. The Hebrew nation takes rank with the great powers of the world; its king makes alliance with Egypt and marries Pharaoh's daughter, and all his affairs are ordered on a scale of magnificence unexampled in Hebrew history. A unique governmental organization contrived by David is now brought to perfection, and great public enterprises are undertaken with financial resources which for the time being appear almost unlimited. The walls of Millo, begun by David—a massive structure for the defense of the capital—must be completed; for the use of Pharaoh's daughter a palace must be built; for Solomon himself, according to Oriental precedent, a new palatial home is demanded; while the need of a central house of worship is felt as never before. All these works promptly are undertaken. We read also of the building by royal decree of fortified cities, such as Gezer, Baalath, the two Bethhorons, Hazor, Megiddo, and Tadmor; of the construction of arsenals, castles, and docks; of the building of a fleet at Ezion-geber; of the breeding of studs, and the organization of cavalry and chariot forces; and of the development of commerce along many lines. But most of these doings were innovations; and discontent early asserted itself. While, on the one hand, the population was greatly increased, and silver and gold became plentiful beyond all precedent, especially in Jerusalem; on the other hand, a large share of the nation came to feel itself unjustly burdened by the cost of the royal establishment and by these public works. The precise order of events is uncertain; but there are indications that from the beginning of his reign Solomon was hated by some of his subjects while enthusiastically supported by others. We catch glimpses of at least two problems which at the outset confronted him. The religious forces of the nation were in need of unification and organization; while, apparently, the judicial functions of the monarchy long had been neglected. "Who is sufficient for these things?" From our lesson text we gather that the ruling thought in Solomon's mind was the need of divine guidance. Full of desire for wisdom—especially that he might be able to administer justice—he goes to the most famous holy place of the land, Gibeon, and there celebrates his accession to the throne by the offering of great sac-

rifices before the ancient tabernacle. There God says to him, "Ask what I shall give thee." When the wonderful offer was made to Solomon he remembered that "Wisdom is the principal thing" (Prov. 4. 7), and that "the Lord giveth wisdom" (Prov. 2. 6); and he made a choice which "pleased the Lord."

Verse 4. *The king went to Gibeon.* An ancient city, once the capital of the Hivites, between five and six miles northwest of Jerusalem. It commanded the pass of Beth-horon, and has been called "the gate to central Palestine." El-jib, a small village, is its present representative. *To sacrifice there.* And thus to take leading part in the national religious festival which was to inaugurate his reign. From Chronicles we learn that the tribal chieftains and government officials had been assembled at Jerusalem to escort the king to Gibeon. *That was the great high place.* The most prominent of the traditional holy places of Palestine. Here were the remains of the tabernacle made by Moses in the wilderness, and of the brazen altar, five hundred years old. And here, as well as before the ark in Jerusalem, public worship was regularly maintained. *A thousand burnt offerings.* Sacrifices in which all the flesh of the victims was consumed on the altar. *Did Solomon offer upon the altar.* At this time (verse 3) Solomon "loved Jehovah, and walked in the statutes of David." The Hebrew tense indicates that the services were conducted through successive days. Nowhere in the Bible is special credit given to an offering because of its largeness. The prophet Samuel was content to sacrifice one animal. Solomon was not one thousand times as religious as Samuel, only one thousand times as pompous.

5. *In Gibeon the Lord ["Jehovah"] appeared to Solomon.* A real manifestation of God: what is called by scholars "a theophany." *In a dream.* In dreaming one's intellectual powers are torpid, while one's imagination is alert. The most frivolous dreams, therefore, properly regarded, are full of meaning; for the fancies of nighttime are apt to be as correct revelations of characteristic inclinations as most of the words or deeds of waking hours. The common tendency to force a special meaning from dreams springs from and tends to harmful superstition. But important moral messages come to our souls through dreams as readily as through music or through color. "Solomon worshiped God by day," says Bishop Hall, "so God appeared to Solomon by night"—probably the night following the days of his great offerings. *God said, Ask what I shall give thee.* A wonderful offer—which, however, is measurably presented to every youth. What one chooses is a true index to character. Human choice often is self-stu-

lifying. In the old story King Midas wished that everything he touched might turn to gold. His desire was granted. And forthwith his couch turned to gold, and was too hard to repose upon; his food turned to gold and could not be eaten; his weapons were changed to gold, and were no longer usable. The wishes of many if gratified would prove as disastrous.

6-9. "Solomon's prayer includes an acknowledgment of God's favor, a confession of helplessness, and a request." For *great mercy* and *great kindness* the Revision gives in each case "great loving-kindness." Solomon makes the goodness of God depend on David's truth [trustworthiness], *righteousness* [rightness of standing], and *uprightness of heart* [rectitude of character]; "not that David earned God's loving-kindness—that would be a contradiction of terms—but that he responded to it." [W. J. Beecher.] Those who sincerely go to God are cordially received, and though David's life was full of sins and blunders, his sincerity of religious purpose was recognized by God. The keen appreciation here shown by Solomon of divine mercy and of moral excellence shows "a spiritual condition appropriate to ask and to receive God's best gifts." *O Lord ["Jehovah"] my God, thou hast made thy servant king.* The simple creed of ancient Israel saw divine providence everywhere. God had placed Solomon on the throne; he therefore has a right to ask God to help him to be a just king. In the presence of his captains and officers and governors Solomon felt himself but a *little child* with gigantic tasks committed to him. It is supposed that at this time he was not much more than twenty years of age. Josephus says fourteen. But youth and inexperience do not detract from his ambition or purpose; they only make him feel the need of divine help. *I know not how to go out or come in.* An idiomatic phrase for conduct (see Num. 27. 17; Deut. 31. 2; Josh. 14. 11); going out represented public life; coming in, private life. He moves in the *midst of the people*, in that "fierce light that beats about a throne;" and the people having been *chosen* by Jehovah, Solomon feels peculiarly responsible for their welfare. Israel is a *great people that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.* The hyperbole is common to all languages. The promises of Gen. 13. 16; 15. 5; 32. 12 are now fulfilled. The greatness of the realm increased the king's sense of need. Al-

ready Solomon had to a good degree what he asked for, *an understanding heart* (which in the Revised marginal reading is "a hearing heart," a listening heart, attentive to revelation and providence). He asks to be fitted to *judge the people*. "One of the chief functions of the ancient Oriental monarch was to hear and decide cases. Judicial, legislative, and executive functions were not so nicely discriminated as with us." *Who is able to judge*. This reminds us of Paul's question, "Who is sufficient for these things?" "Absalom, who was a fool, wished himself a judge; Solomon, who was a wise man, trembles at the undertaking, and suspects his own fitness."—*Matthew Henry*. *This thy so great a people*. The Revision omits "so." The word for great is not the same as that used in verse 8. The margin here substitutes the word "weighty," suggesting the burdensomeness of the king's responsibilities.

10-14. *The speech pleased the Lord*. Compare James 1. 5. The word for Lord here is not the divine name, and therefore does not appear in capitals. It points to the supreme governor—King of kings and Lord of lords. Solomon's choice, though made in a dream, had sprung from his deepest desires. Instead of asking for temporal success—*long life, riches, the life of one's enemies*—Solomon had asked *understanding to discern judgment* ["justice"]. Every human being, consciously or not, makes supreme choice between physical and spiritual good. Every one's life is an endeavor either toward secular success or toward spiritual success. One's character depends upon what one supremely seeks. *Because thou hast asked this thing. . . . I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart*. "The choice of wisdom is itself wise, the choice of goodness is itself good." No prayer for that which accords with the will of God can fail. See 1 John 5. 14. *There was* ["hath been"] *none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee*. Solomon was to be unique in wisdom, and in temporal prosperity also. Doubtless he had climbed over his baser self before he was able to offer this prayer. The added blessings must have gratified natural desires which he had held in abeyance. We cannot fully understand the self-renunciation of Solomon's choice until we have given full valuation to his luxurious, pompous nature. He had "mortified" many "deeds of the body" before he was able to pour out his heart in this request. *That which thou hast not asked*. "One's own advantage often comes when one has forgotten to seek it, in one's earnestness after something nobler." *Riches*

and honor. These, also, to an unparalleled degree. "Wisdom was given to Solomon because he did ask it; wealth because he did not."—*Henry*. Silver became "as stones" in Jerusalem, and in "the splendid mansions that rose on every hand" cedarwood superseded the sycamore heretofore used. But riches and honor are not to be taken as a sign of God's pleasure or his displeasure. On condition of faithful adherence to God's statutes and commandments, long life also is promised to Solomon. He did not fulfill the conditions, and died probably before he was sixty. Riches and honor Solomon afterward declared to be in Wisdom's left hand, and length of days in her right hand. *There shall not be any*. Margin, "hath not been." *If thou wilt walk in my ways. . . as thy father David walked*. Not every detail of David's life should be imitated, but its general purpose and effort was to please God.

15. *It was a dream*. But not therefore unreal. The vision vanished, the reality remained. It had been a real transaction, as *Dr. W. H. Green* has said; a real offer had been made by God; and a profound choice had been made by Solomon during the hours of sleep. All psychology teaches that no such choice could have been made during sleeping hours if it had not been characteristic of waking hours. *He came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord*. The anomalous condition of Israel's religion at this time compelled this return journey to Jerusalem and the second formal offering of sacrifices. There was no central sanctuary. The ark was on Mount Zion, where it had been taken by David, the altar of burnt offerings in Gibeon; public service was observed in both places, and there were two high priests (2 Sam. 8. 17; 20. 25). Not until the temple was completed was this duplication or dualism of religious services set aside. *Dr. Terry* believes that Solomon's sacrifice at Gibeon was the last public service of the kind held in that place, and that his present act of worship may be regarded as a public transfer of sacrificial worship from the wandering unsettled tabernacle to its settled abode in Jerusalem. *The feast to all his servants* may have served as a sort of coronation banquet, but it probably was identical with the sacrificial meal ordained in Deut. 14. 29, to which the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, were invited. (Comp. 2 Sam. 6. 19; 1 Chron. 16. 3.) *Burnt offerings* signified consecration; *peace offerings*, thanksgiving; both of which were required in all worship, in the Mosaic as well as in the Christian dispensation.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

David the great is dead. Solomon, the greater in some respects, reigns.

It was a magnificent procession, on an auspicious morning, when a great company left Jerusalem for a journey of six miles a little to the northwest of Jerusalem. The objective point of the march of this brilliant pageant was Gibeon. Here was located the old tabernacle, much worn and much patched, around which clustered the remarkable history of this remarkable people. Before the court was located the large brazen altar, as old as the tabernacle itself. This was the chief high place, and while an interdiction obtained against worship at high places, because of the idolatrous practices associated therewith, this company needed no apology for its being found there. It came for the eminent purpose of worshiping Jehovah, under the leadership of King Solomon, and each man and each woman in that immense multitude—for it numbered thousands—felt a thrill of gratitude and a tinge of deep, true devotion in being permitted thus to engage. That this was the condition of mind, while the king is the immediate beneficiary, is evidenced by the result.

It was eminently a religious gathering for religious purposes. It would seem from this circumstance, together with the after choice of Solomon, that he was an extraordinary man, to begin with. His conceptions were large, magnificent! Everything must be done on the grand scale. One thousand burnt offerings! What a spectacular exhibit! How it must have impressed the company! What seeming lavishness, and yet evidently acceptable—highly acceptable—to Jehovah! Something of the personality of this king is manifest in this circumstance. There stands out very distinctly the magnificence of the Being he worships, and his conception of grandeur in reference to his God indicates a performance in keeping with his lofty thought. While it is a dazzling spectacle, it is to be thought of as purely religious and elevating. Just such an inference is warranted in the abasement of the king, when he afterward holds converse with Jehovah—"I am but a child."

There is an effort to turn this expression aside by coloring it with a rhetorical complexion. It is rhetoric; but the kind that speaks from a heart in the presence of a divine personality, and confronting a grave responsibility. On the other hand, to me, this but evidences the cast, character, and greatness of the mind of Solo-

mon before his special endowment. At the close of this great day, when curtained about by the walls of night, not an unusual, but a very positive, experience goes on. The king has evidently carried his waking thoughts into his sleeping period, and lives again the scenes of the day in spite of the limitations of the flesh. The vision plays before him. He has had a sweet consciousness of God in his devotions, he has felt a measure of his blessedness, but now, when sense is shut, God comes by that private way of access to all human hearts, whether awake or asleep, and communes directly with his spirit. All dreams are not God-inspired, nor God-resulting. But many may be; and many an element of character, or quality of experience, dates its origin from just such a circumstance. In fact, if you look at this day's service, you would not be overreaching in sense, or bold in assumption, if you should expect just such an eventful night. It is no extraordinary stretch of faith, but a natural sequence to an intense mind in unfeigned devotion.

God appears to this man, God had appeared to him; but now he enters the friendliest of all relations, and speaks to Solomon as though he were indebted to him—"Ask what I shall give thee." What breadth of invitation! What limitlessness in ability to supply! None but God dare be so lavish in invitation and so prodigal in bestowment. Solomon has sacrificed magnificently; God responds more magnificently. Thus Solomon enumerates the things nearest his heart's life. A very fine trait of character at once appears—his reverence for his father David. This son is not vain. He does not think of a disparaging element in the father's character. And this lets us into something of David's homelife; for whatever other faults David may have had he lived with sufficient moral rectitude and home recognition of God to induce this son to recount the fact in the presence of God. No matter how great David may have been, it was all a product of the greater mercies of God to him. More than that, the son recognizes that his father's prosperity was conditioned on his obedience to, and observance of, the commands of God. In fact, Solomon's coming to the throne was recognized as in the list of these mercies. While another son of David might have fulfilled just as readily the prophecy or promises that his seed should inherit after him, yet it might not have induced the filial affection and religious devotion to acknowledge the succession in the

list of God's mercies. God was great in mercy. David was great in effect through that mercy. Solomon was filial and devout in recognizing these facts.

Solomon was humble in the presence of God. He has three conceptions—the vastness of the trust, the smallness of ability, the largeness needed for the discharge of the trust. This trio makes up a great mind; especially if it is in position, and possessed of sufficient energy to obtain the needed ability for the discharge of the great trust. A conception of this order may make an arrant coward of a man, but not so Solomon. He is in the presence of God, and now is his opportunity. Grandly does he embrace that privilege. He is so honest in his abasement that God tells him he "has done just what he asks." Shortly after Solomon being put to the test he abundantly proves to his beholders and satisfies his own consciousness that God has literally done as he had asked. For how many things he might have asked!—riches, fame, victory over enemies, self-aggrandizement along any line! But all are relegated to the background. One and one only thought is dominant—that great trust. "Give me ability to discharge it! Make me equal to the conditions!" is his cry. Even in this he himself does not appear. It is not for Solomon. *It is to judge right*—to meet the requirements of this people, and lead them up the heights God has made possible to them.

We need nothing further to place Solomon in the front rank of men. When such self-displacement exists God's mercies and gifts flood in to fill up every vacancy. No wonder, then, that the additional gifts are given—riches, and honor, and fame. It is true God knew that Solomon needed this gift; he knew further that he would ask for it. But he must ask. The asking is part of the devotional spirit; and he himself becomes more conscious of the source of his supplies, as well as becomes an example to the world. "Ask what I shall give thee." It is the voice of God to Solomon. It is the voice of God to every man. We are not all placed in like circumstances to Solomon; but we all need that divine wisdom. We may have knowledge, but we need the wisdom that applies the knowledge. We are warranted in thinking that God will bestow just as magnificently upon each of us, up to our need, when we are willing to trust him as did Solomon.

There was one conditional gift—length of days, if he should be obedient to God's statutes and commandments. This is where the shadow begins to tinge this brilliance. Solomon did not

keep them, and so his life was short and his kingdom became disrupted. He discovers this is a dream. Yes, it is a dream! But it is one of those psychological exercises independent of flesh, or sense exercises. That this is the case observe the after conduct of the man. He goes to Jerusalem. He seeks out the ark of the covenant, finding it under the temporary tent erected by his father, David. There he sacrifices more lavishly than on the preceding night.

There are three prominent incidents—a large religious service, a more remarkable night communion, a larger religious observance. The relation these hold, as well as the immediate effect arising out of these incidents, preclude the possibility of disposing of them in any hurried or slighting way. They were fact to him, and fact in effect to those associated with him.

His equal was neither before, nor after him, so great is this man in tradition and history. Many illustrations of his greatness might be given, but this paper is already too long. Our own blessed Lord had occasion to point one of his sayings with a reference to this great king, when he said that "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Evidently, the Jew, even in the Lord's day, looked upon Solomon as the standard of all excellence. If the half that is said of him is true, well might they so think.

This is the beginning of a brilliant, God-consecrated life; but in spite of the great bestowment, and consequent rich promise, what a dreadful failure! Life must begin in consecration and end in consecration if it is to be successful. No measure of ability separated from God is an assurance, and the smallest with God may result in magnificent success.

Prismatic Lights on the Lesson.

BY BISHOP WARREN.

"THE WELL-BALANCED WORLD ON HINGES HUNG."

There is a crisis in every life.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side."

There may be more than one. But we can easily imagine that if a drop of water falling on the Rocky Mountains could intelligently choose to flow eastward and had come as far as Lake Winnipeg, it could not go to the Pacific Ocean after that.

Points: 1. The Lord appeared to him (verse 5). This was not the exclusive privilege of Solomon. The Spirit is given to every man to profit

withal. 2. Ask what I shall give thee. There are no restrictions.

"Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For his grace and love are such
Thou canst never ask too much."

Solomon asked for means of service, not for self (verse 9). God gave the wisdom asked for, and every possible personal good besides. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added. The administration is one in all dispensations.

It is a perpetual proof of the completeness of God's forgiveness that Solomon, son of David and Bath-sheba after their sin, was chosen to be the greatest king. Peter after his sin is another significant example. The administration is one.

Who has decided once for all? The elements of decision are: I am in the midst of great opportunities and everlasting responsibilities (verse 8). I can have God's continual help in every event of life if I ask a heart to judge between good and evil for the service of God and his people. I choose—?

Thoughts for Young People.

"ASK WHAT I SHALL GIVE THEE."

1. *Grace.* Solomon's prayer was acceptable to God (1) because every true and faithful prayer is so acceptable, and (2) because of all prayers he loveth best those that are wholly unselfish, those in which all thoughts of self are absorbed and annihilated in thoughts of him and of our fellow-men.

2. *Providence.* Even of things earthly God says to each of us, "Ask what I shall give thee." Our lives may be very much what we choose to make them. Asking God for gifts at the hands of time or opportunity does not mean mere asking; he who asks must, if his prayer is to be listened to, be sincere in his petition, and if he be sincere, will naturally and necessarily take the means which God appoints. Were it not so—if vice could with a wish yawn into being the rewards of virtue, if sluggishness could at a touch appropriate to itself the gifts of toil—then prayer would corrupt the world. Action, effort, perseverance—these are the touchstones that test the pure gold of sincerity.

3. *Salvation.* Though this be true of earthly things, it is ten times more indisputably true of the better and the heavenly. Dost thou love uprightness? Ask it, will it, and thou shalt be upright. Dost thou love purity? Ask it, will it,

and thou shalt be pure. "Ask what I shall give thee." God said it to Solomon in the dim visions of the night; he says it to us by the voice of his eternal Son. "Everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." [Farrar.]

Teaching Hints for Intermediate Classes.

BY REV. A. H. MC KINNEY.

NOTES.

Our quarter's study and teaching outline will be continued through this month as follows (see note to the lesson for October 4):

PRELIMINARY.
SURROUNDINGS.
APPROACH.
LESSON TEXT.
MEMORY WORK.
STUDY IN ADVANCE.

PRELIMINARY.

Have the pupils read what they have written on "The Death of David" and on "David's Character." Recall also what they wrote about Solomon.

SURROUNDINGS.

Time. Solomon's reign, 1015 B. C. (or 977 according to some authorities).

Places. Gibeon, six miles north of Jerusalem (have it pointed out on the map); Jerusalem.

Books of Kings. A few minutes should be spent in locating Kings in reference to the other books of the Bible. Practice the pupils on turning rapidly to the various books from Genesis to Second Chronicles inclusive.

APPROACH.

Years ago a boy had to choose between pleasure with unrighteousness and wisdom with righteousness. He chose wisdom. He had to work very hard in order to earn his daily bread. At the same time he studied diligently in order to get the knowledge for which he craved so much. No time was lost. Day and night he was either working for his employer or poring over his books. To-day he has great wisdom, but he has lauch more. He occupies an influential and responsible position which yields him a fine income, and in addition he is doing a grand work for the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. (If the teacher can tell a story like the above concerning some one with whom he was personally acquainted it will have additional force as an approach.)

LESSON TEXT.

Two pictures may be drawn:

1. *The Great Assembly at Gibeon.* Picture the famous hill at Gibeon, with its altar upon which were sacrificed a thousand burnt offerings. Ask: Who went up to this sacrifice? (See 2 Chron. 1, 2, and 3.) What was done with the flesh of the animals offered?

2. *Solomon in a Dream.* The teacher should be ready to answer questions about dreams. Questions about Solomon, namely, as to his parentage, his age, his position, his character. (See last lesson.) Then say: Let us turn to our lesson text in order to answer two questions:

(1) *What Did Solomon Ask?* Have some one read aloud verse 9. Explain what is meant by "understanding heart."

(2) *What Did God Promise Solomon.* Have some one read aloud verses 13-15, and have the pupils print the names of the things promised to Solomon, namely:

WISDOM,
RICHES,
HONOR,
LONG LIFE.

Finally, picture the young king awaking from his dream, returning to Jerusalem, and again making offering unto the Lord.

MEMORY WORK.

Let the pupils summarize the facts of the lesson and memorize them as follows:

Solomon

ASKED WISDOM.
WAS PROMISED
WISDOM, RICHES,
HONOR, LONG LIFE.

Have the Golden Text repeated by several. Explain what "the fear of the Lord" and "beginning" mean and illustrate. Then ask all who will promise to do so to make and to print the following resolve:

I WILL PRAY THE LORD FOR
WISDOM
THAT I MAY DO RIGHT ALWAYS.

STUDY IN ADVANCE.

Ask the pupils to learn during the week and to write all they can about Solomon's temple.

Review words, "Choice," "Wisdom."

By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

The Power of Choice. We cannot say, "I will be rich," "I will be great," but we can say, "I will love thee, O Lord." So far as character is concerned, the Christian maintains the sovereignty of the will. The astronomer teaches that the peculiar angle of the earth's axis is the true cause of the seasons—the sweet spring, the glowing summer, the ripe autumn, the white winter; and moreover he tells us that this angle is determined from within, internal forces exercising more influence in producing the turn of the earth's axis than all the external influences of the planets. So also the determining power is within the heart of man. It may be thought that we can no more lift ourselves into character than we can lift ourselves by the waistband; this metaphor, however, is badly chosen. In the act of will we plant our feet on God's promises and grace, and thus we are raised into heavenly places. The desired goodness is not willed directly, but the act of willing fixes the eye on the promises and power of God, and thus the change is wrought.—W. L. Watkinson.

"Ask what I shall give thee." This is God's offer to everyone. "Ask what ye will" is the universal command. The Saviour upbraids his disciples that up to that time they had asked nothing. Parents have much greater ambition for their children than the children have for themselves. A parent said to his ten-year-old son, "What do you want father to do for you?" "Are you a stockholder in the street railway?" asked the boy. "Yes." "As soon as I am big enough I wish you would get me a place to be conductor." The father hastened to say, "O, my son, if you could only understand it, father has plans for you a thousandfold better than that. Give up your plan and take mine. I have planned college and travel abroad and every preparation for a splendid profession." We are bidden to ask for the best and biggest things.

Solomon's Wise Choice. In Shakespeare's story of "The Merchant of Venice" there were three suitors for the hand of the beautiful Portia. Her father had arranged three jewel caskets, one of gold, one of silver, and one of lead. The suitors were to choose a casket, and the suitor who chose a casket containing her portrait might have Portia. The first chose the gold and found within a picture of death and the inscription, "All that glitters is not gold." The second chose silver and found a fool's head within. Bassanio, the wise man, reflected that true worth often does not glitter nor appeal to

the eye on first sight, and so he chose the lead casket. He found fair Portia within. Gold and silver are not the only things worth choosing. That which does not glitter may contain the supreme gift.

The great gift included all other things. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." That man was wise who was asked by an oriental king to choose what gift he desired, and it would be given. He chose the king's daughter, and this included wealth, position, and eventually the kingdom. A man who has come to prominence in political life said, "I chose Christ in early manhood, and every good thing has come from it—my position in business, my wife whom I found in a prayer meeting, my friends and the honors of life."

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES.

Solomon is unique—"none like him before him, neither after him shall any arise like unto him." Yet there are principles underlying his characteristics and experiences which apply to present-day times and people. God gave him riches and wisdom beyond anything most of us can expect, for reasons we do not know. But as the record of every Bible character is given for our instruction Solomon may be of great service to us if we find out the secret of his success—and of his failures too, for he missed the mark in later life as conspicuously as he struck it in his youth. His spirit, when a boy, was beautiful. He was humble, teachable, eager for the best. Recognizing the obligation of reverence and worship, he put himself in such an attitude that God could speak to him.

To every one of us God, in his great love, says, "Ask what I shall give thee;" but we are so busy thinking what we can do for ourselves without regard to God that we miss the grand opportunities he would offer us. We find it out too late, when life has disappointed our eager hopes. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom in business or religion. Solomon felt his responsibility to God. He called himself his "servant." He was full of the eagerness of youth, but he understood there was One who had a right to command him and to expect from him a reasonable service. He saw, too, the serious side of life. It was not mere play. There was something to do and an account to be made for the doing.

Great need there is for such conviction in the minds of young people now! For those who

have wealth and leisure life is too often a laugh, a song, a whirl of pleasure, a book to dream over, a slipping of responsibility, travel, changes, anything to "kill time." O think of killing a thing so precious, and so short-lived at best! And for those who must work to live, so often it is only dreary drudgery with no sense of the dignity and use of labor and the relation of every soul to God which lifts toil out of the commonplace. *Responsibility, accountability*—these are the first principles of true living. They are not burdensome, nor inconsistent with the merry heart which belongs to youth. They are incentives to courageous, earnest, hopeful activity. Such a view of life gave to the young king a right estimate of himself. Said one, "You can tell a self-conceited fellow as soon as you see him." "Yes," was the answer, "You can tell him, but it's no use, for he thinks he knows it all." But the wise young king felt the need of guidance as everyone does who sees life in its true light; so he asked for the one thing which included all fitness to meet responsibility—and accountability—a *hearing heart*. Long life might become a burden; riches might ruin him if left to himself to manage; honor would gratify only until death ended all things earthly. But a "hearing heart" opened to him all the treasury of God.

God could confide to such a heart secrets of wisdom; could trust it with wealth because it would seek guidance in its use; honor could be heaped upon a man with such a heart because it would not turn his head. You have no occasion to envy men or women who possess riches and honor without a hearing heart; but those who possess these gifts with it are the happy benefactors of the world. There are others, happiest of all perhaps, who, having neither riches nor honor, but with a hearing heart, listen to God's will and love it better than anything they could choose for themselves.

So I think a "hearing heart" is the best we can ask, and the best that God can give. If Solomon had kept it the beauty of his youth would have grown brighter to the end. "But he turned away from God to know madness and folly," and died a weary and lonely old man.

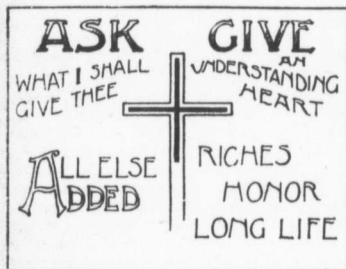
The Teachers' Meeting.

The lesson analyzed: God offered a choice to Solomon (verse 5), the goodness of which offer was emphasized by God's mercy to David and his faithfulness to his promises (verse 6). Solomon's humility leads him to a proper choice. He is modest because of his age (verse 7), and

because of his lack of experience and knowledge (verse 8). He has a large and great estimate of the moral responsibilities of his position, and therefore asks for an "understanding heart" that he may as supreme governor discern between good and bad. With this choice God was pleased (verse 10), and showed his pleasure by granting Solomon's request (verse 12) and adding thereto riches and honor (verse 13), and conditionally long life (verse 14). Verse 15 ends the dream and begins the record of Solomon's waking activities... This lesson is an historic illustration of our Lord's dictum concerning little children entering the kingdom of heaven... This lesson inferentially refutes the current nonsense concerning strenuousness. It plainly shows that in God's view the thing most to be desired is not power or wealth, but wisdom, and that wisdom is to be reached not by strenuous endeavor but by reverent attention to God's commands and practical holy living.

Blackboard.

BY THOMAS G. ROGERS.



A man's choice indicates his character, for in the act judgment and desire are concentrated and voiced with unmistakable clearness. The offer which Jehovah presents to the young king is the opportunity of his life, and is purposely

given at the time when he is about to assume the office and duties of kingship. A just conception of his task and its obligations is in Solomon's mind, and consideration of his father's career and reflection on God's merciful providence, have inspired within him a strong desire to possess that wisdom without which he could not hope to emulate the one or benefit by the other. Other considerations are overshadowed by the thought of the divine blessing. What wonder that his response to the unconditional offer should meet with instant approval and commendation! The material blessings which are promised unasked were to be the visible sign of the favor of Jehovah, but their continuance was dependent upon the exercise of the wisdom which now he seeks.

Coloring.—"Ask" and "Give," white, shaded purple; cross, cream; plus, red; phrases, yellow and light blue.

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BY REV. S. G. AYRES.

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LESSON XI. The Dedication of the Temple.

[Dec. 13.]

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

Psa. 122. 1.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Study also verses 12-30. Read 1 Kings chapters 5 to 8; 2 Chron. chapters 5 to 7.]

1 Kings 8. 1-11, 62, 63. [Commit to memory verses 9-11.]

1 Then Sol'o-mon assembled the elders of Is'ra-el, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Is'ra-el,

REVISED VERSION.*

1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the princes of the fathers' houses of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, to

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unto king Sol'o-mon in Je-ru'sa-lem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of Da'vid, which is Zi'on.

2 And all the men of Is'ra-el assembled themselves unto king Sol'o-mon at the feast in the month Eth'a-nim, which is the seventh month.

3 And all the elders of Is'ra-el came, and the priests took up the ark.

4 And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Le'vites bring up.

5 And king Sol'o-mon, and all the congregation of Is'ra-el, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

6 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.

7 For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

8 And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.

9 There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Mo'ses put there at Ho'reb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Is'ra-el, when they came out of the land of E'gypt.

10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD,

11 So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

62 And the king, and all Is'ra-el with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD.

63 And Sol'o-mon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Is'ra-el dedicated the house of the LORD.

bring up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of the city of David, which is Zion. 2 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. 3 And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. 4 And they brought up the ark of Jehovah, and the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent; even these did the priests and the Levites bring up. 5 And king Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be counted nor numbered for multitude. 6 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of Jehovah unto its place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim. 7 For the cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above. 8 And the staves were so long that the ends of the staves were seen from the holy place before the oracle; but they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day. 9 There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when Jehovah made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. 10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of Jehovah, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah.

62 And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before Jehovah. 63 And Solomon offered for the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto Jehovah, two and twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of Jehovah.

Time.—Very uncertain; not far from B. C. 1000 (Usher). **Place.**—Mount Moriah, in Jerusalem.

Home Readings.

- M.* The Dedication of the Temple. 1 Kings 8. 11, 62, 63.
Tu. God's promise fulfilled. 1 Kings 8. 12-21.
W. Solomon's prayer. 1 Kings 8. 22-30.
Th. A refuge in trouble. 1 Kings 8. 31-40.
F. Great gladness. 2 Chron. 7. 1-11.
S. God's answer. 2 Chron. 7. 12-22.
S. Joy in God's house. Psalm 122.

Lesson Hymns.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 27.

The Church's one foundation
 Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
 She is his new creation
 By water and the word.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 224.

My faith looks up to thee,
 Thou Lamb of Calvary,
 Saviour divine;
 Now hear me while I pray.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 227.

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
 And when my voice is lost in death,
 Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
 My days of praise shall ne'er be past.

Questions for Senior Scholars.

1. *The Transfer of the Ark* (v. 1-4).—Where was the temple? By whom was it built? How long had it been completed? Why did Solomon assemble the elders of Israel and the heads of the tribes? Why was the transfer of the ark of the covenant a special event of importance? Why was Zion called the city of David? Where have we an account of a somewhat similar national religious movement? In what time of the year was the month of Ethanim?

2. *The Contents of the Ark* (v. 5-9).—What classes of men were delegated to bring up the ark and the holy vessels? Why were these tasks assigned to priests and Levites? What holy characteristic was shown in the sacrifice of sheep and oxen? What human weakness was shown by Solomon in the magnificence with which he surrounded his worship? What was the oracle of the house? Explain the difference between the holy place and the most holy.

3. *The Manifestation of Jehovah* (v. 10, 11).—What happened when the priests came out of the holy place? What impression did this make upon the people? What do we learn from verses 12-30 which are omitted from our lesson?

4. *The Formal Worship of Jehovah* (v. 62, 63).—By what magnificent sacrifice was the dedication of the house of the Lord completed? Is it wrong to have worship accompanied by beauty and the expenditure of wealth?

Questions for Intermediate Scholars.

1. *Bringing Up the Ark* (v. 1-5).—What persons gathered at Jerusalem to take part in the dedication? What was first done? In what month did the event take place? How was the ark carried? What else besides the ark was taken to the temple that day? What sacrifices were offered?

2. *The Ark Put in its Place* (v. 6-11).—Where was the ark placed? What was done with the staves? What did the ark contain? What was done when the placing of the ark was

finished? What sign of God's presence appeared? What effect did it have upon the priests?

3. *The Closing Ceremonies* (v. 62, 63).—What part did Solomon take in the exercises? What sacrifices were offered? What festivities were held? How long did the feasting continue?

Questions for Younger Scholars.

How long was the temple in building? How many men were at work? *About one hundred and eighty-five thousand men.* Where did many work? *In the forests of Lebanon.* Where were others? *In the quarries and workshops.* For whom was the house prepared? What sign of his presence was there? *The ark of the covenant.* When did another sign of his presence come into the temple? *After the ark came in.* What was it? *A cloud.* Who gave the house to God in a prayer? Have we each a temple to give to God? Have we given it to him? Who blessed the people? What were offered to God? What sacrifices can we offer? What is better than sacrifice? *Obedience.*

The Condensed Review.

1. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? "*I was glad,*" etc. 2. What house of the Lord had Solomon prepared? *The temple in Jerusalem.* 3. What was in the ark of the Lord? *The Ten Commandments on two tables of stone.* 4. How did the Lord manifest his presence? *The glory of the Lord filled the house.* 5. Why did Solomon build the temple? *That the people should not only worship God in their hearts but also in his holy place on the Sabbath.* 6. Who joined Solomon in building and dedicating the temple? *All Israel.*

The Church Catechism.

53. Which, according to Holy Scriptures, are the ordinances of the Christian Church? According to Holy Scripture, the ordinances of the Christian Church are Preaching of the Word, Prayer, Fellowship, the Holy Sacraments, and Church Discipline.

Acts ii. 41, 42.

THE LESSON OUTLINE.**The Essentials of Public Worship.****I. TIME AND PLACE DEDICATED TO GOD.**

The priests brought in the ark to the most holy place. v. 6.

They that feared the Lord spake often one

to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard. Mal. 3. 16.

Upon the first day of the week... the disciples came together. Acts 20. 7.

II. THE EXALTATION OF THE LAW OF THE LORD.

Nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone. v. 9.

The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. Psa. 119. 72.

I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. Psa. 119. 47.

III. SPIRITUALITY IN WORSHIP.

The glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. v. 11.

God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. John 4. 24.

We all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image. 2 Cor. 3. 18.

IV. CONSECRATION OF WORLDLY WEALTH.

Israel with him, offered sacrifice. v. 62.

God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. 9. 7.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. - Psa. 51. 17.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Our lesson gives an account: 1. Of the preparation for the dedication of the completed temple (verses 1-4); 2. Of the act of dedication (verses 5-9); 3. Of the cloud of glory (verses 10, 11); 4. Of the formal worship of Jehovah by sacrifice. Between the third and fourth of these divisions come the Additional Study Verses (12-30), which record Solomon's address and prayer. No better introduction can be given of our lesson than that furnished by this dedicatory prayer. It would be well to secure its careful reading by every pupil. Other illustrative passages are 2 Chron. chapters 5 and 6, and Psalms 24, 47, 97, and 132. We should carry in our mind the long process of the construction of the temple, the impressment of foreign subjects, the levying of heavy taxes mainly (probably) on subjected provinces, material and skill furnished by Hiram of Tyre, the erection in silence of the house until it stood within its courts complete in majestic beauty. There was much to be done in the transfer of the treasures dedicated by David to the sacred house, and in perfecting arrangements for its formal dedication. In this service it was fitting for the whole nation to take part, and so we read of another representative assembly such as that described in verse 9. Notable among those gathered together are the priests and Levites, who had been reorganized by David. According to some chronologists the year chosen for the dedication of the temple was the first of a new century (by Hebrew reckoning), and was a "jubilee year." This cannot be stated positively, but the month at least was one held sacred to the feast of tabernacles, one of the most joyous festivals of the year, a national commemoration of national blessings combined with such thanksgiving and merriment as have in all ages and nations characterized the "harvest home." By this feast the population of the city was for the time being enormously increased. When, in addition, we note the assemblage of verse 1, it becomes evident that it was in the presence of an audience representing the entire nation that Solomon offered his dedicatory prayer.

Verse 1. *Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief ["princes"] of the fathers ["fathers' houses"] of the children of Israel.* Our notes on verse 9 convey some understanding of the nature of this representative assemblage. Upon the old tribal and clannish structure of the nation David, in the process of organizing his permanent monarchy, had prepared a new system of "chiefs," and the successive assemblages that became characteristic of the later days of David's and the earlier days of Solomon's reign took cognizance of both these aristocracies—the hereditary chieftainships and the royal appointees. All these officers were now gathered in Jerusalem, which within a few years must have been greatly increased in population, while it had been rebuilt in splendor. The purpose stated is that they might ["to"] bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord ["Jehovah"]

out of the city of David, which is Zion. That they might transfer the ark from David's tabernacle, on Zion, one of the hills on which Jerusalem was built, to Moriah, another of those hills, on which the temple now stood. But though this procession is the only one directly mentioned in our lesson, another of equal importance is implied. The ancient Mosaic tabernacle, with its venerable altars, was still in Gibeon, and these memorials of the religious past also were now about to be brought to the temple.

2. *All the men of Israel assembled themselves.* As was usual at this time of the year; but observe that both of these assemblages gathered unto king Solomon. The wise monarch kept himself in the very center of all national movements, religious and secular. *The feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month,* was, as we have already explained, the Feast of

Tabernacles. On this occasion it was to be made subsidiary to the dedication of the temple.

3. *All the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.* The dedicated men, according to the ancient law, carried the dedicated things, and while doing so were escorted, for safety and honor, by the secular dignitaries of the nation.

4. *They brought up the ark of the Lord ["Jehovah"], and the tabernacle of the congregation ["tent of meeting"], and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle ["tent of meeting"].* The ark, as we have noted, was brought from one part of the city to another, while the tabernacle and its "vessels" had been brought over the hills from Gibeon.

5. *King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him were with him before the ark.* It had not yet been placed in solemn privacy in the Holy of Holies. Perhaps as each party of priests and Levites reached Solomon they stopped and worshiped God by the rite of sacrifice. Some have supposed that priests were stationed all along the way to offer sheep and oxen so many that they could not be told ["counted"] nor numbered for multitude. The procession was marked by great display and holy gladness. Singers and trumpeters, harpers and those who played on cymbals and psalteries, made music as it advanced.

6. *The priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord ["Jehovah"] unto his ["its"] place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place.* They advanced through the rectangular room called the Holy Place to which they only were thereafter to be admitted, and passed the curtain or "veil" into the Holy of Holies, which thereafter was to be entered by none but the high priest, and by him only once a year. The golden wings of the cherubims were a canopy for the presence of Jehovah himself—a Presence unseen, but accepted by faith.

7. This verse is a parenthetical explanation.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

King David had many ambitions. Not the least and most laudable of these was a consuming desire to build a house for the indwelling of his God. It seems to be a cause of constant complaint, on his part, that he dwelt in a house of cedar and fir but there was no temple or dwelling for Jehovah.

God respected this holy desire on the part of David, but could not consent to his undertaking the work. David was a man of war and blood; his hands reeked with the blood of many

The ark was a box, the covering of which, regarded as the seat of Jehovah, was called the mercy seat. The staves were projecting rods by which it could be carried, for it was a sin to touch the holy thing.

8. *They [the priests] drew out the staves.* The Revised Version is preferable: *The staves were so long that the ends of the staves were seen from the holy place before the oracle; but they were not seen without.* This day means, of course, the time of the compilation of the book.

9. *There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb.* None of the precious things bestowed on the temple by David or Solomon were a tithe so precious as these two tables of stone. We are not to think of them as great slabs such as were pictured by the painters of the Renaissance, but rather as comparatively small tablets, possibly resembling in shape the literary cylinders of Assyria. As the priests came out again to view there was a great burst of music. The whole assembly joined in some such refrain as that of Psalm 136, and the act of dedication was completed. It had consisted of the presenting of the sacrifices, of the placing of the ark in the mystic darkness of the inner sanctuary, and finally, of the outburst of musical praise.

10, 11. While the hundred and twenty priests made music with their trumpets and the people sang, "For He is good, for his mercy endureth forever," a mystic splendor filled the house of the Lord, a cloud of glory which drove the attendant priests from their places and broke up the program for the day. All present recognized that God visibly had taken possession of his temple.

62, 63. The great sacrifices of peace offerings with which the ceremony closed was on a scale equal to the other lavish acts of the dedication.

people, and God wanted a man of peace to build his house. He promised David that his son should build him a house. So the next best thing left to David was to make the largest possible provision for the erection of this temple at the hands of his son and successor.

I think a little lesson appears just on the surface of this incident, so that we may stop a minute to look at it. A man may be possessed of a high, holy ambition for the purposes of God, and the thought and devotion may be

pleasing to God, and yet that man, or the circumstances in which he is placed, may not be favorable for his accomplishment. All that is left, while he is not a failure, is to make preparation for another to do the work. "One soweth and another reapeth, . . . and ye are entered into their labor."

In the fourth year of Solomon's reign he began the erection of this great structure, and finished it in the eleventh year; so that it required seven years to build it.

Much might be said of the activity in Jerusalem and on the Lebanon hills, and of the compact between King Hiram and Solomon—the many men the former furnished and the multitude the latter engaged on this work; but my theme is the dedication of this structure.

The preparation for the dedication—what a day this was to Israel! What masses of people were assembled! How gorgeous the festivities! How the mighty of the nation appeared on this occasion! There were two companies—one bringing the ark of the covenant and the sacred vessels and relics King David had provided and preserved, from Mount Zion, and the other bringing the old tabernacle of the congregation from Gibeon. Everybody was on dress parade, not only filled with a spirit of national pride, but in some sense felt a mysterious religious influence associated with the time. Some of these people had been days on the march to the capital. They had been coming from all sections of the country and taking up their abode as best they could.

It was the great day of national purification. All the old high places, or places of worship, were to be crystallized into this center. Henceforth Jerusalem was to be the most sacred place to these people. In fact, this nation is born into unit life through this circumstance. When the processions meet and begin to put in place the objects of sacred reverence, how rife memory is in reference to the history of these things! How that old ark, around which gathered such memories, must have inflamed their minds! There was the symbol of the covenant of God, under which they existed as a nation. There was the evidence of God's mysterious dealings with them. Every item of their peculiar history was in some way associated with this ark. What majesty in their steps—in fact, we can almost hear the footfall as it moves with measured rhythm toward this to be sacred place. Heads are bared, hearts bowed, breath abated as it passes along! It could suggest only one thing to them, and that was God, and God in awful nearness!

When this ark is put in place, what a sense of relief must be had to know that that sacred, dreaded thing was in its resting place! Then the great service properly begins. Solomon has his musicians and singers in place. They are ready for whatever service may be asked of them; but he himself is the chief figure in the whole performance. The mass of people are packed in everywhere.

After the priests retire from the Holy Place the glory of the Lord in form of a great cloud fills the house. Solomon seeing this, and interpreting it to mean the acceptance of the place for his abode, turns himself about and blesses the great gathering of people. Then he lifts heart and voice in prayer to Almighty God to accept this place of abode and receive these people as his people. This prayer ought to be studied by the student and a disposition had that its spirit might influence his spirit.

Everything about this temple is of a symbolic character, and well it may serve the purpose of large suggestion to these wondering people. The ark of the covenant contains the most noted document of the world—the tables of stone written by God and given to Moses. All "Magna Charta" pale into insignificance in contrast; and, in fact, they are only possible because these tables have existed. These tables form the basis of the constitution of this people. They are the basis of all after moral teaching. Israel never outgrew them; and the world has never improved on them. They are the measure of the man, and none but the most comprehending mind ever could have written them. Israel recognized something of their high character, but in no sense exhausted their application.

The ark resting in the shadow of the outstretched wings of cherubim, the priests having withdrawn from the Holy Place, the house filled with the glory of the Lord, it is forever consecrated to that Jehovah of power and might. How futile now would seem the attempt at dedication! Jehovah has made it sacred and holy. The sacred presence exceeds the power of words; and this instance suggests Lincoln's address at Gettysburg, when he asked, "How can we dedicate with words what already has been made sacred by deeds and blood?" But Jehovah permits the ceremony to go on, and the great sacrifice begins. The altar is found too small, and the space in front of the Holy of Holies is cleared and used for the great service. Through a period of two weeks the service goes on, and the people remain in rapt devotion, never tiring in the long but delightful ceremony. There seems to be a certain oppressiveness in

the marked manifestation of God, and a degree of confusion comes upon the people.

There are times when it is necessary to withdraw from the blazory of God's presence and we become but beholders afar off. The profit of such visitations are not lost on us, but show us how brilliant God may make himself appear to mortal eye. The glory we have seen may be great, but not comparable with the glory we may see. This temple in its dedication, together with the marked appearing of God, is only illustrative of that other temple, more magnificent, better fitted for his presence than even Solomon's—the living body of a humble son of man. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" (1 Cor. 3. 16). "Ye are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor. 6. 16). What honor is placed on this poor flesh! How we ought to make it fit for the indwelling, by such a dedication, that it would be always clean! "Holy, holy, holy," ought to be written on every part of it; for this is the dwelling place of God!

Prismatic Lights on the Lesson.

DEDICATION: GIVEN TO GOD.

Why should things be given to God, who owns all things? Paul asked aid of the Philippiaans, not because he sought a gift or was in want, but because fruit might abound to their account; that God might supply their every need according to his glory. There is no richer scripture than Phil. 4. 10-20. How God returns values for value was seen in the last lesson.

Why should things be given to God? When he had all time and all the world he gave them to the children of men with express reservation that one seventh of the time and one tenth of the income should be his. He established a mutual interchange. Men were not to be pampered paupers, but were to be fellow-merchants with God. Only his love and wealth are such that he is always glad to give men the best of the bargain; his gold for our brass.

What should be given to God? The best—a temple of cedar, gold, and precious stones—but especially the temple of one's body for a habitation of the Spirit.

God accepts any offering. Remember the lad with his five loaves and two fishes (John 6. 9). How gloriously he accepted the temple (verse 11)!

He adds to every gift; his glory to the temple stones and gold, food for food to the lad's lunch, himself to man's self.

Thoughts for Young People.

FIRST CHRONICLES TWENTY-NINE, ONE.

1. *Man needs a place of worship.* There is a sense in which we might without irreverence almost invert these words, and yet gain rather than lose their true significance. "The palace is not for God," we might even say, as a literal resting place. It is for man as the worshiper, as the servant, as the conscious and devout adorer, of Him who created him after his own image; for man as a place of worship which may reclaim, and purify, and uplift his fallen nature, which may bring him into communion with his Father and his God.

2. *The building of a church is a great work.* We also may echo the words which the chronicler places in the mouth of David, and say that the work he planned was great—great in itself, greater in results achieved, outliving its own ruin and the destruction of its successor. Yet, like all human works, it contained elements of imperfection, germs of decay. The very existence of the temple was made the plea for establishing rival sanctuaries, dedicated to another worship than that of Jehovah.

3. *The true uses of a church.* The second and the newer temple found no rival, stood supreme in the nation's heart. But a sevenfold darker spirit entered into the empty house of the Jewish church. The material altar received their superstitious reverence. He who sanctified the altar was forgotten. In the name of, and as defenders of, that temple, the temple's guardians condemned to death One greater than the temple—One who taught his people to look forward to a worship that should be confined to no temple's walls, whose disciple breathed his Master's spirit when he saw in vision a city of Jerusalem of which he could say, "I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." [Bradley.]

Teaching Hints for Intermediate Classes.

PRELIMINARY.

It will be profitable for the teacher to post himself thoroughly on the development of the various places of worship in the Old Testament economy. These were as follows: The altar, the tabernacle, the temple, the synagogue.

The Christian Church was a development and a modification of the synagogue rather than of the temple. Drill the pupils in the above facts, so that they may have them in mind as a background for many things that they are to read

and to learn. It is always a great help to know just where a fact or a truth belongs.

SURROUNDINGS.

Time. 1005 or 965 B. C. (?)

Place. Jerusalem.

Temple. Have the pupils read what they have written about the temple. The teacher should be prepared to remove any confusion of mind on the part of the learners concerning the various temples—Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, Herod's.

APPROACH.

It is a festive day at the new church. The people are present in their best clothes and happiest moods. The building is decorated most beautifully, and special music has been prepared. Several excellent speakers take part. Why? This is the day for the dedication of the church. What does that mean? Let us turn to our

LESSON TEXT

for an account of another dedication. We have an opportunity to paint a number of pictures of men in action, in which our Intermediates will take great interest:

1. *The Assembly.* Picture the assembling of the elders, the heads of the tribes, and the princes of Israel. Explain who are meant by these various classes of persons. Ask: At what place did they gather? Unto whom? When? For what purposes? (Have the answers given from the open Bibles in the hands of the pupils.)

2. *The Procession.* Describe briefly the ark and the tabernacle, and picture the processions. Then ask: What was the ark? What was in it? What was the tabernacle? What were the holy vessels? (See NOTES.) Where was the ark placed?

3. *The Divine Presence.* Picture the priests retiring from the Holy Place, and the cloud so filling the temple that the priests were not able to continue their ministrations. Explain what the cloud symbolized.

4. *The Sacrifices.* Picture the sacrificing of an immense number of oxen and sheep, and explain that that was the prescribed method of worshipping God in those days.

MEMORY WORK.

Have the pupils print the following:

THE TEMPLE

BUILT BY SOLOMON.
DEDICATED TO GOD.
USED FOR WORSHIP.

Explain what this outline means, and ask the pupils to memorize it. Then have all print:

I DEDICATE

MY BODY

AS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

STUDY IN ADVANCE.

Ask the pupils to learn during the week all they can about the queen of Sheba, and to write a summary of what they have learned. Review words, "Temple," "Body."

Tell the pupils to be sure to bring all their lesson cards to class on next Sunday.

By Way of Illustration.

God's Temple. The church is not a clubhouse where a few can gather to enjoy themselves. It is not a vestibuled train of parlor cars, express to heaven on the Sunday railroad, where men have through tickets and can read their newspapers as they roll along, regardless of the world outside. "A true church is an echo of God," says Joseph Cook, "and the building should be the fittest instrument for expressing and repeating that echo." The church should stand before the community as the expression to the world that religion is the most important thing there.

Verses 10, 11. What was more important than all those grand ceremonies? God's presence. God among his people with no temple would have been far better than a temple and no God. Just so in our day, a mere church building, without the power and presence of God, is of no avail. It may be that the splendid edifice only ministers to the pride of those who have built it. They may think much of the brick and mortar and the fine organ, and not realize that the main thing is to have God's Spirit there. Far better have a log church and the Holy Spirit present than the most gorgeous cathedral without that.

As the body without the soul is of small account, even though it be decked with jewels and clad in fine textures, so the temple without God's presence would have been of small account. The story of its dedication never would have come down to us. An oriental philosopher once made a man and attempted to make him stand and walk. After repeated failures he said, "He needs something inside him that I cannot make." So God's presence gave the temple its value and its significance.

The Dedication. "There is nothing abnormal or startling in the ceremony of dedication," says Bishop Warren. "Everything remains at its best, and in the most normal way. Only its labor takes a definite direction. The stone of the temple remains stone; the gold, gold; but about it plays the halo of the loftiest service." The temple remained for the use of the people after it was given to God. A man's heart and hands remain his in a higher sense than before, after they are consecrated to divine service. They are made to work into higher plans than he could himself devise. To give to God is to give to one's own best self. A father and mother dedicated their little boy to God. On his little dress these words were embroidered: "Given to God." In that neighborhood at that time another boy was born for whom no dedication service was held. The mother said, "We don't give our baby to God or to anyone else. He is ours." The dedicated boy grew up to be the sole support of his parents, giving them food, shelter, and tenderest care in old age. The other boy became dissolute and drunken, an endless source of sorrow and expense to the parents who thought they were too wise to give him to God.

Golden Text. The Necessity of Worship. Many men build their characters for eternity as cathedrals were built—the part nearest the ground finished, but that part which soars toward heaven, the turrets and the spires, forever incomplete. Many men are mere warehouses full of merchandise; the head and the heart are stuffed with goods. Like those houses in the lower streets of the city which were once family dwellings, but are now used for commercial purposes, there are apartments in their souls which were once tenanted by love and joy and worship, but they all are deserted now, and the rooms are filled with earthly and material things.—*H. W. Beecher.*

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

Our chief interest in the temple is its spiritual symbolism. It was a magnificent building. Its massive walls dug up from under the dust of centuries in Jerusalem to-day excite wonder and admiration. But these, with the golden vessels and all manner of precious stones, are things which pass away. They were not intended to be permanent. God inspired Solomon to build this beautiful house, and all within it, to teach us spiritual truth which abides forever. Jesus said to the woman at the well in Samaria, "Neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem shall men worship the Father. The hour has

come when the true worshiper shall worship him in spirit and in truth." The temple has gone to ruin. There are no more sacrifices of burnt offerings; your heart and mine is the only "meeting place with God," and Christ is for us the "one perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction."

The study of the construction of the material temple interests us the same as any other piece of architecture, but it has no further value. The study of its spiritual meaning enriches the mind and heart. Like the tabernacle which preceded it, it represented the house where God lives; because he said, "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat; and I will dwell in the midst of Israel and be their God." St. Paul says, "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The temple was not made by man's design; it was the thought of God. So is your heart a wonderful, perfectly planned place for his own indwelling. No gold or silver or lily work can compare with the exquisite workmanship, the preciousness, the costly value of a soul, fashioned for the dwelling place of God. You do not have to build the temple of your heart. God has made it just as he wants it to be; but like Solomon's temple, it fulfills its purpose only when dedicated to him and filled with his presence. The first act of dedication was to put the ark containing the covenant in the most holy place. Christ, in whom all the law and the covenant is fulfilled, must be taken into the secret, most holy place, in our hearts. God's law must be written by his Spirit, not on tables of stone, but in the heart and mind, for he will not dwell where his commandments are dishonored. No faith is genuine that does not produce the fruit of obedience. Jesus says it is not worth while to call him Lord and not do the things that he says. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

So, when the heart is thus dedicated to God, by taking Christ as our Saviour, Master, Teacher, Friend, it becomes our "meeting place" with him. No material temple, no form, no ceremonies, no outward worship, can take the place of this. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Glad because the hymns, the prayers, the teaching of the word, prepare the way for God to come into our own souls. Outward worship for any other purpose is vain. The heart is the true temple. Love and obedience the only acceptable sacrifice.

The Teachers' Meeting.

The building of Solomon's temple: Its location (1 Chron. 21. 28-30; 22. 1; 2 Chron. 3. 1). David's plans (2 Sam. 7. 2; 1 Chron. 22. 3-5, 7, 14; 29. 3-5). Built by Solomon (2 Sam. 7. 12, 13; 1 Chron. 22. 6, 7, 11). Progress of the work (1 Kings 5. 13-18; 6. 7; 2 Chron. 3. 2, 3). The ideals for the temple (2 Chron. 5. 1; 7. 12; Isa. 56. 7). The symbolism of the temple (John 2. 19-21; 1 Cor. 3. 16; 6. 19; Eph. 2. 20-22).

Blackboard.

The most signal manner in which Jehovah might be honored was by means of the temple and its services. It is still the most appropriate place to commemorate the goodness and mercy of

the Lord, but in that day it was singularly fitting that he should be worshiped and his name honored in the house which had been erected as a religious center for the nation. It had been built under the explicit direction of God, and now enshrined the sacred ark and the holy vessels of the tabernacle. The visible glory of the Shekinah was the immediate answer to the overtures of the priests and people, and the attestation that their dedication of the temple met with divine recognition and acceptance.

Coloring.—Doorway, light brown; words, red; lettering, white and yellow, shaded in purple.

Library References.

THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.—Edersheim, *The Temple and Its Services*. Ferguson, *The Temple of the Hebrews*. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*. Bannister, *The Temples of the Hebrews*. Bruce, *First Three Kings of Israel*, pages 446-478. Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. ii, Index. Graetz, *History of the Jews*, vol. ii, page 201. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, vol. iii. Bible dictionaries.

FIRST PRAYER IN THE TEMPLE.—Graver *Thoughts of a Country Parson*, second series, vol. ii, page 201.

SERMONS ON THE LESSON.

There are several sermons on other verses of this chapter, but none on the verses of the lesson.

LESSON XII. The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon.

[Dec. 20.]

GOLDEN TEXT. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. Prov. 29. 2.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Study also verses 11-13. Read 1 Kings chapters 9 to 11. Compare 2 Chron. chapters 8, 9.]

1 Kings 10. 1-10. [Commit to memory verses 6-9.]

1 And when the queen of She'ba heard of the fame of Sol'o-mon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions.

2 And she came to Je-ru'sa-lem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Sol'o-mon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

3 And Sol'o-mon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

4 And when the queen of She'ba had seen all Sol'o-mon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his min-

REVISED VERSION.*

1 And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Jehovah, she came to prove him with hard questions. 2 And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. 3 And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king which he told her not. 4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, 5 and the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his as-

*The Revised Version, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

isters, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

8 Happy *are* thy men, happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

9 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

10 And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Sol'o-mon.

cent by which he went up unto the house of Jehovah; there was no more spirit in her. 6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. 7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame which I heard. 8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. 9 Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because Jehovah loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king, to do justice and righteousness. 10 And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

Time.—Uncertain; according to Usher about B. C. 1060. **Place.**—Jerusalem.

Home Readings.

M. The Queen of Sheba's Visit to Solomon.

1 Kings 10, 1-13.

Tu. Solomon's riches and wisdom. 1 Kings 10, 14-25.

W. Solomon's judgment. 1 Kings 3, 16-28.

Th. Riches unsatisfying. Eccles. 2, 1-11.

F. Excellency of wisdom. Eccles. 7, 11-19.

S. A greater than Solomon. Matt. 12, 38-42.

S. The throne of God. Rev. 4.

Lesson Hymns.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 468.

Jesus, the very thought of thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far thy face to see.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 458.

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 259.

We'll all gather home in the morning,
On the banks of the bright jasper sea;
We'll meet all the good and the faithful.

Questions for Senior Scholars.

How was Solomon's fame extended? By what means? What was its unique quality? With what was his name chiefly associated? To

whom did he attribute his glory, wisdom, and power? Where was Sheba? What attracted Solomon's merchantmen thither? What traits does the incident reveal in the queen? What does the distance and danger of the journey show in her?

Questions for Intermediate Scholars.

1. *The Visit of the Queen of Sheba* (v. 1-5).—What report reached the queen? What did she set out to do? What did she take with her? What did she ask Solomon? What was Solomon able to do? What other things made a great impression on her?

2. *The Speech of the Queen* (v. 6-9).—What did she say of the report she had heard? What did she say of what she had heard and seen? What people did she say were happy? To what source was all the wisdom and prosperity ascribed?

3. *The Gifts of the Queen* (v. 10).—What presents did she make to Solomon? What part of the gifts were of special value? What did Solomon give to her? (v. 13.)

Questions for Younger Scholars.

What was said of Solomon in many lands? *That he was great and rich and wise.* Who carried these sayings to them? Who came to find out for herself? Where was Sheba? *South of Canaan.* In what country may it have been? What did she come to get? Whose home did she wish to know more of? What did she bring as gifts? What did she ask? Could Solomon answer them? What did she think of the palace

and the temple? What did she say of Solomon's wisdom? Do you think she felt paid for coming? How did she go home? What do you think she did with what she had learned? Are we as eager to learn as was the queen of Sheba?

5. What did the navy of Hiram bring to Solomon? *Almug trees and precious stones.* 6. What is our GOLDEN TEXT? "*When the righteous,*" etc.

The Church Catechism.

54. How are the ordinances secured in perpetuity in the Church? The ordinances are secured in perpetuity in the Christian Church through men called of God and ordained by the Church; and through the co-operation with them of evangelists, teachers, and other laborers, according to the gift and grace of God.

The Condensed Review.

1. For what did the queen of Sheba come to Solomon? "*To prove him with hard questions.*" 2. Did Solomon answer her questions? "*Solomon told her all her questions.*" 3. What did the queen say of Solomon's wisdom? "*The half was not told me.*" 4. What did the queen give Solomon? *Gold, spices, and precious stones.*

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

Solomon Considered as a Type of Christ.

I. WE SHOULD BRING ALL OUR TROUBLES TO THE SAVIOUR.

She came to prove him with hard questions. v. 1.

It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 13. 11. I will make darkness light before them. Isa. 42. 16.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise. Prov. 13. 20.

II. THE SAVIOUR IS OUR UNFAILING TEACHER AND GUIDE.

Solomon told her all. v. 3.

A greater than Solomon is here. Matt. 12. 42.

In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col. 2. 3.

Who is made unto us wisdom. 1 Cor. 1. 30.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men. James 1. 5.

III. THE SAVIOUR IS THE SOURCE OF ALL TRUE WISDOM AND JOY.

Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants. v. 8.

The lips of the righteous feed many. Prov. 10. 21.

Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates. Prov. 8. 34.

Mary sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. Luke 10. 39.

IV. THROUGH THE SAVIOUR WE HAVE INTERCOURSE WITH GOD.

The Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king. v. 9.

Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it. Luke 11. 28.

Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. Isa. 42. 1.

We love him, because he first loved us. 1 John 4. 19.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

The fame and glory of Solomon because of commerce, wealth, and wisdom were brightened to a supernatural splendor "concerning the name of the Lord," "The Queen of the South" sought Solomon's wisdom, and in its presence "there was no more spirit in her." In her day, in the absence of the press, sages made long journeys for knowledge [Crock]. Her curiosity was eager, honest, and reverent. Her quest for the source of Solomon's wisdom suggests those wise men who from a farther East brought gifts—"gold, frankincense, and myrrh"—to the infant Christ. Her course shows the characteristics of all search for divine wisdom: 1. Inquiry (verse 1); 2. Conviction (verse 4); 3. Confession (verse 6); 4. Praise (verse 9); 5. Fruit (verse 10) [North]. She "will rise in judgment with the men of this generation" who reject a "greater than Solomon."

Verse 1. *The queen of Sheba.* Queen of the Sabæans in southwest Arabia. We have repeated glimpses of these people in the sacred narrative, and they are mentioned also in Assyrian inscriptions. Tiglath-pileser III (745

B. C.), who is mentioned in Scripture as gaining a victory over Pekah, king of Israel, and carrying off a vast number of his people to Gozan in the Far East (B. C. 745-727), records that he received tribute from the Sabæans. The

kings of Sheba and Seba are mentioned in Psa. 72. 10. Gold and incense are brought from Sheba (Isa. 60. 6), and its caravans pass through Job's pages, and Ezekiel mentions (27. 22) its merchants as trading in spices, jewels, and gold. (Compare Ezek. 38. 13.) To Joel's eyes they merely are a "people afar off." *The fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord ["Jehovah"]*. This clause is obscure. It is hardly safe to understand with Rawlinson that it means religious fame as distinguished from literary or political fame. Two great facts stand out in Solomon's career—he had built an unequalled temple to Jehovah, and his wisdom was recognized as the special gift of Jehovah. To this gift probably the text alludes. Menander of Ephesus represents Solomon and Hiram of Tyre as rival sages. *She came to prove him with hard questions*. To test his wisdom. The practical sense of modern civilization tests the wisdom of the wise only for practical purposes, but in the Orient even to-day, and without limit in ancient days, imagination dominated reason, and the queen's hard questions would include "nearly all forms of intellectual exercise," problems made up on purpose to display keenness on both sides. Kent (*History of the Hebrew People*) thinks that one of the chief objects of the queen's visit was to bring about a commercial trade with Solomon.

2, 3. *She came to Jerusalem with a very great train*. Consonant with her queenly dignity. *Camels that bare spices*. Arabia was famous for its spices, and the whole land was said to be fragrant with them; and camels, as is well known, were the regular means of carriage. *Very much gold, and precious stones*. Possibly the produce of her country. *When she was come to Solomon, she commended with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions*. Those who understand the Socratic method of teaching by compelling the scholar to answer questions and thus stimulating the thought will not find it difficult to reproduce this scene. *There was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not*. No problem was too hard for him. The legends of the East concerning the test questions of Sheba's queen are too many and too absurd to quote. They are not characteristic of ancient learning, but rather of the petty smartness of the modern Bedouins, among whom they originated.

4, 5. *When the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom*. Seen evidences of it, not only in his conversation with herself, but in the great national organization over which he presided. *And the house that he had built*. An

account of this is given in 1 Kings 7. 1-12. It included great courts for national business, and, according to Josephus, had a majestic dining hall and was nested in gardens. Captain Warren's excavations make it probable that the site of this palace was the southwest corner of the modern temple inclosure. *The meat ["food"] of his table*. This may refer to the table luxuries, but the preferable reference is to the novel system of supply for the palatial table. We have several allusions to the elaborate system of provisioning existing throughout Solomon's empire, by means of which tribute in kind came from each province, so that the choicest products of field and forest alike were constantly on "his table." *The sitting of his servants, and the attendance (Margin, "standing") of his ministers*. "Servants" and "ministers" were officers of various degree. Their "sitting" means their position, including their clothing and lodgings. Their "standing" means the magnificent order of their service. *His cupbearers*. Attendants on table. *His ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord ["Jehovah"]*. It is usual to explain this as a private passageway from the king's palace to the temple, and it has been suggested that as a foreigner and pagan the queen was not admitted to the temple courts, but could only see the architectural beauty of its "ascent." But the words also may be translated "his burnt offering which he offered in the house of Jehovah," and nothing would more impress an Arabian queen than slaughtering such hecatombs as are described in other passages. *There was no more spirit in her*. No more spirit of questioning or testing. She surrendered to the glory and the wisdom of the king.

7. *I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it*. This skepticism was justifiable, when combined with the eagerness that brought the queen from her distant land and the fairness of mind shown by her words in verse 6. *The half was not told me*. A phrase which, with a holier application, exultant Christians have woven into songs of thanksgiving. *Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth ["exceed"] the fame which I heard*. Hebrew, "Thy house added wisdom and goodness to the fame."

8. *Happy are thy men*. The Arabic, the Syriac, and the Septuagint all have "women" instead of "men," which is probably correct, the allusion being to his wives, who were, according to oriental standards incomparably favored. *Happy are these thy servants*. This phrase includes all the "men" of the court. *Which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom*. Every great oriental court is marked by a

gathering of richly appareled ministers, soldiers, and slaves, who stand stock still in the presence of their sovereign. We are here to suppose Solomon discoursing in wise fashion before such a court.

9. *Blessed be the Lord* ["Jehovah"] *thy God, which* ["who"] *delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel.* There is no hint here of a conversion to Judaism. There was nothing in ancient heathenism to hinder the worshiper of one God from making frank acknowledgment of the greatness and goodness of another. *The*

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

The queen of Sheba is one of the numerous characters found in the Old Testament that remain in obscurity, and at the present time there is little promise of unraveling the mystery. However, the little historic account that we have of her points to a real personality. There are some historic observations that go on the line of her having come from Seba of Arabia, whither the Jokshanites, descendants of Abraham through Keturah, took up their abode. This Seba seems to have the preference in authority over a place of the same name in Ethiopia. However, let her come from where she may, and her country be what it might, she came to Jerusalem to satisfy her mind as to the reports she had heard of Solomon the king. She is called by the Koran Balkis; and by the Abyssinians Mequeda. Our Lord when speaking of her simply calls her "the queen of the south."

In view of the gifts, she brought her country may be judged great and rich; and the retinue necessary for the carrying of these gifts would indicate the strength of her kingdom, as well as the protection needed for the transport. We can fancy her with a great cavalcade after the fashion of travel in those days, slowly winding her way over hill and through dale, to the astonishment of the many people she would pass; and the query often started as to the import and purport of such a cortege. The Jewish people themselves seemed amazed at the richness of display and the lavishness of style. The abundance of gold and the quantity of spices seemed to dazzle them. But why should she come at all? Intercourse between countries was so infrequent and travel so inconvenient and insecure in those days.

At the end of the journey is a prodigy. Many great men have been, many great men may be, but here is one whose fame exceeds that of all others. And while he is king of Judea, and only the third king of that people, yet his fame has filled the land.

Lord ["Jehovah"] *loved Israel forever.* "Loved Israel to establish them forever," is the rendering of the Septuagint and the plain meaning of this passage. *Judgment and justice.* "Justice and righteousness."

10. *An hundred and twenty talents of gold.* This sum it is impossible to measure exactly by the value of modern coin, but it probably would reach up to millions of dollars. *There came no more such abundances of spices.* It was the very dawn of commerce, and this "abundance" was astounding. See notes on verse 2.

We need not be surprised at this spread of fame. Solomon had a compact with Hiram king of Tyre. Hiram's sailors taught the men of Solomon's kingdom "the way of the sea." Solomon had an alliance with Egypt, as well as had married a daughter of the king of that country. He had laid under tribute everything and everyone with whom he might come in contact. Jerusalem had been filled with sheiks from far and near on the occasion of the dedication of the temple, the greatest unifying influence in Israel's life, and the most positive exhibit of the presence of God among these people. All these helped to spread abroad his name and his fame; and we are not at all surprised at the visit of this woman. I take it, also, that the queen herself was no ordinary woman, in that, finding something of greatness, she was keen enough to appreciate it and desired a definite acquaintance with it.

In the first verse of the lesson the reason for her coming is definitely stated—"the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Jehovah, she came to prove him with hard questions." In view of this explicit statement many of the traditions in reference to the character of the questions and his doings must be completely tossed aside. There does not seem to be any burlesque, buffoonery, and fanciful discussions, but a serious inquiry in reference to the presence of God with the monarch. She plied her questions after the fashion of a Greek master in dialectics; and he, more able than these masters, answers to her satisfaction and consternation. Days are spent in these discussions, and as he turns off fact and fancy in rapid manner, here answering a question to her delight, and there puzzling her with a proposition, she stands in confused bewilderment at the amazing presence of wisdom. She is on a tour of investigation, and makes a close scrutiny of everything connected with the royal establishment—his officers and his men at service, their manner of

deportment, their food on the table, the gorgeousness of the halls, the setting and effect of the buildings, the stateliness of everything about him—until the magnificence completely prostrates her—"there was no more spirit in her."

Some things smite us with their largeness, and we become spiritless in their presence. St. Peter's of Rome, with its huge capaciousness, has had this effect; for it seems like the inclosure of all outdoors within walls. Some characters in life produce this effect. There is a certain stateliness, a real grandeur, an awe-inspiring thrill, and smaller men become dumb in the presence of their greatness. This was the effect of Solomon's massiveness on the queen. She now confesses as to her prejudice in reference to the reports she had heard concerning him; and she is still further honest enough to declare, "Behold the half was not told me."

It is true that this is a captivated judgment in the presence of the inspiring cause; but it is the honest expression of a convinced judgment in the presence of the fact. The fact must not be overlooked that she recognized this wisdom as coming from the Lord. This would imply that while she may have been a heathen, yet she had some knowledge of dependence on God, and the especial greatness of Jehovah. No doubt Solomon took pains, if need existed, to instruct her in the truth pertaining to Jehovah. Solomon was not only king, he exercised the function of priest at the dedication of the temple, and very probably continued in the exercise of that office, as occasion required; and also he was a great teacher. Certainly, then, he would take advantage of this opportunity to instruct in the way of the Lord. If she became a proselyte, all right. If not, she might carry the result of her contact with Solomon into her own country, and there proclaim the greatness of the God of Solomon. I do not think that Solomon would be behind the ordinary man, influenced with the Spirit of God, in unfolding that fact to those with whom he might commune, and especially to one having come for the express purpose of interviewing him along the line of his special gifts.

Just here the Christian Church of to-day is a loser. While we have not inspiration after the fashion of the Solomonic, yet we have Spirit presence after the fashion of God in Christ; and it is ours to unfold, as individuals, that fact to the world. What a world of opportunity just at hand! Old and young, rich and poor, ought to be ready to declare for the presence of God, and the fullness of the Spirit that dwells in them. Jehovah is thus praised.

Prismatic Lights on the Lesson.

SOLOMON AND THE GREATER THAN HE.

Our race is itinerant. It always seeks some fountain of perpetual youth, some El Dorado, some Solomon, or greater than Solomon, or some Holy Grail. All this prepares it to seek a better world.

This seventy-five-day camel journey of the queen of Sheba is in harmony with race characteristics; modern queens of society undertake them every day now.

The highest use of this visit was made by Christ (Matt. 12. 42). The queen of Sheba came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Come farther to hear a Greater.

She asked Solomon all her hard questions; not merely tests of cunning, but questions of personal and eternal interest. So bring questions of present duty, future life, of God and our relation to him, to the Greater.

The queen found wisdom greatly exceeding her expectations. The half had not been told her by enthusiastic witnesses. The Greater will astonish us still more.

The queen bore testimony to the ends of the earth of this great wisdom, and was persuaded that Jehovah only could have given it (verse 9). Ye are my witnesses.

The queen brought presents. Solomon gave presents in return that greatly exceeded hers in value. Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.

David's life had a fierce thunderstorm in midday, clearing away and leaving the day cooler, brighter, brilliant with rainbows in the light of evening time. Solomon's ceased in storm; the lightnings were the wrath of God because Solomon's heart was turned to idols. The darkness was impenetrable, for clouds had been rising for years from the malarious swamp of a sensual nature. Neither riches, wisdom, nor great power avail to insure perfect allegiance to God.

Thoughts for Young People.

THE QUEEN'S HARD QUESTIONS.

The world and the Church together are fore-shown by this queen; all to whom ever the word, sight, name of Christ come within ken are warned by her example; while the king whose wisdom awoke such a rapturous feeling is the pale shadow of the wisdom which Christ among us is ever uttering.

1. Worthy Ambition. The principle which makes the oriental visit of barbaric splendor

worth a Christian study is this, that the queen recognized the existence of a higher wisdom than filled as yet her daily life, and that she was laborious. With her, wealth given and received was but a starting point, only a means of obtaining higher things. She owned and she sought out wisdom, knowledge, learning, thought, as something of a different order, and infinitely more precious; plants, proverbs, music, songs, simple names, indeed, yet standing at the beginning of lines of knowledge which are dignified by greater names, and opening out before the eyes which were first lifted to them dreams and possibilities which were yet in the far distance.

2. Negligence. We do not always understand what a distinction there is between the progressive and thoughtful and the careless, whose days from sunrise to sunset add nothing of wisdom to their hearts or of knowledge to their minds. Christ draws the greatest distinction between the one class and the other, between the inattentive listener to his words and the attentive one with infinitely less advantages.

3. Opportunity. Christians in the world, and thoughtful Christians among nominal ones, are like these very men whom the queen so envied. We stand about the throne of Christ. Happy are we if we know and realize our privileges. [Benson.]

Teaching Hints for Intermediate Classes.

PRELIMINARY.

Have the pupils read what they have written about the queen of Sheba. From a study of the NOTES be prepared to correct mistakes and to give such additional facts as will enable the pupils to definitely understand who this ruler was.

SURROUNDINGS.

Time. Uncertain. Solomon had been king for twenty years.

Places. Jerusalem, Sheba. Locate this latter place for the pupils, and note its distance from Jerusalem.

APPROACH.

Perhaps the very best approach to the lesson will be a brief but vivid description of the glories of Solomon's kingdom at this time. Speak of the size of the kingdom, the enlargement of Jerusalem, the temple about which we studied in our last lesson, the waterworks, the palaces, and the fortresses. Recall the exodus from Egypt, the wanderings in the desert, and the troublous times of the Judges. Show how the separated tribes were now united in a compact nation with an army, a navy, commerce, and revenue. Moreover, teach that all the ad-

vancements were not confined to material things, for the nation had a literature and an elaborate religious service.

LESSON TEXT.

This we will deal with in a series of questions:

1. What Had the Queen of Sheba Heard? This question presents an opportunity to review what was told the pupils in the Approach. Note that she seemed particularly impressed with what she had heard concerning the religious life of Solomon.

2. What Did She Do? Have one pupil point on the map to Jerusalem, and another to Sheba, in southern Arabia. Picture the journey of over fifteen hundred miles on camels. It was a long, tiresome trip, mostly through a wilderness, and would occupy about two and a half months. Ask: What did the queen bring with her? For what purpose?

3. What Did She See? Picture the queen asking questions of Solomon, eating with him, watching his officers and his attendants going through the passage from the palace to the temple. The result was that she was speechless with amazement.

4. What Did She Say? Let the pupils answer from their Bibles: (1) She told of what she had heard (verse 6). (2) She confessed that she had not believed the reports (verse 7). (3) She declared that the half had not been told (verse 7). (4) She pronounced Solomon a happy man (verse 8). (5) She praises the Lord (verse 8).

5. What Did She Then Do? The value of the gold presented to Solomon is estimated at three and a half million dollars. Besides this the value of the precious stones was enormous. Note what Solomon gave his visitor in return.

MEMORY WORK.

Have the pupils print:

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

HEARD
DID
SAW
SAID
DID

WHAT?

Questions on these various points until the pupils understand them, and then ask them to memorize them so that they will have clearly in mind the story of the queen of Sheba.

Have several pupils repeat the Golden Text. Show that in our country, where the people are supposed to rule, the happiness of the nation depends upon the righteousness of the individual. Hence, the practical application of the lesson is:

We should each strive to be righteous in order to make the people happy.

Have all print :

I WILL BE ONE OF THE RIGHTEOUS,

IN ORDER TO MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY.

STUDY IN ADVANCE.

Next Sunday is review day. We will have no difficulty, as we have been preparing for the review all through the quarter.

In the first place, examine their cards to see that the pupils have the various review words printed on their Preview. (See lesson for October 18.)

Second, see that the various outlines of Memory Work are printed on the cards. Have each pupil show his or her card.

Third, say: On next Sunday we will review:

- (1) The titles and Golden Texts.
- (2) The memory outline and a few facts connected with each lesson.
- (3) The memorized application of each lesson.

To-day's review words are "Queen," "Righteousness."

By Way of Illustration.

The Power of One Man to Inspire Others. Solomon little knew how he was influencing men and women in far-away lands. He had not known the queen of Sheba, but she had been moved by the report of his greatness to seek him for a personal interview. He had kindled a desire for truth in her heart, so that she undertook a long, weary journey from Arabia and sacrificed personal ease to commune with him. Solomon's fame made a seeker after truth. His light kindled a light in the far-off darkness of heathenism. One mind sent a ray of light into a responsive mind beyond the limits of personal intercourse. The north star, millions of miles away, guides the mariner across the sea of this little earth; so one great good heart is a beacon light of truth in the darkness of this world. No one knows how the influence of his life is shaping and guiding other lives.—*Dr. Edward S. Teed.*

An Earnest Seeker. Earnest seekers after truth always make an impression. In the year 1832 four Indians of the Flathead tribe, living on the Pacific coast, crossed the Rocky Mountains, and, traversing three thousand miles of intervening wilderness, appeared at St. Louis.

They had been sent by their nation to inquire about the white man's God and the book that revealed him, of both of which they had heard from a hunter, who had witnessed some of their pagan rites and told them they were all wrong in their worship, and that far to the east the white man had a book that revealed the true God. They were received and instructed. Two of the chiefs died in St. Louis, worn out with their long journey, and it is not known whether the other two succeeded in reaching their people. But the story of these earnest seekers aroused such interest in the Indians of the northwest coast that missionaries were at once sent to them.

Verses 6-9. The queen's words and gifts suggest true truths. Reality transcends all report and expectation. Every heart that is blessed by the sweetness of love feels that, after all the speech of poets from the beginning of the world, words cannot declare it. After all that saints and evangelists have said about Christ, each soul which enters into faithful fellowship with him finds that the half has not been told. No painter can put the melting glories of sunset on his canvas. No description can give one who has not heard it a true impression of the majesty and pathos of Beethoven's music. Nothing but tasting for ourselves can tell us how good the Lord is.

A Satisfied Seeker. Solomon was able to answer all her questions and to solve all her problems. It is not strange that she breaks forth into a benediction. Her quest had not been in vain. Even so Christ, "the greater than Solomon," is the answer to all our questions. There is a famous picture by Olivier Merson, "The Repose in Egypt," which represents Mary and the infant Jesus as resting in the arms of the Sphinx. The Sphinx stands for the unanswered problem of life and destiny. These questions are answered by Him who brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel. The desert is lighted by radiance from him, and life finds its meaning.

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

Of the people who refused to hear his teaching Jesus said the queen of Sheba would rise in judgment against them; for she came a long journey to investigate the truth of what had been told her. What does this visit teach us about coming to him, the greater than Solomon. "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"? Was this king really so wise as she had heard? She would see for herself. She would prove him with hard questions. Can

Jesus answer the problems that vex us? Can he lighten our burdens? Can he brighten our darkness? Come and see. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not." She brought her treasures with her, to give to the king in token of her respect for all she had heard concerning him. Strange that we even count it a sacrifice to offer anything we possess to our great and glorious King! She communed with him of all that was in her heart. "In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God." We may pour out our heart to him. He is interested. He will hear. Communion with him is sweet and satisfying. Of him the prophet says, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to the weary; he wakeneth mine ear to hear."

When the royal visitor had seen and heard for herself the grandeur and wisdom of the king "there was no more spirit in her." So one who has a revelation of Jesus says:

"Like some bright dream that comes unsought
When slumbers o'er me roll,
Thine image ever fills my thought,
And charms my ravished soul."

She said, "I believed not until I came." If we stay away from Jesus we will never believe. We say, "I cannot believe, therefore I will not come." But we must come in order to believe. When she had seen and believed she said, "The half was not told me." "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

"Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts,
Thou joy of all the meek,
To those who ask how kind thou art,
How good to those who seek!
But what to those who find? Ah, this
No tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is
Only his loved ones know."

"Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom," said the wondering queen. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable." "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee." "These words have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

The visit ended with an exchange of gifts. The king "gave her all her desire, whatsoever she asked." "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." There came no more such abundance of gold and spices as the queen gave to Solomon.

"Take my love, my Lord; I pour
At thy feet its treasure store.
Take my life, and let me be
Ever, only, all, for thee."

The Teachers' Meeting.

The lesson analyzed: The queen of Sheba made a long and difficult journey to ask Solomon hard questions (verse 1), and Solomon solved every problem (verse 3). The source of Solomon's wisdom should be recalled. The queen of Sheba saw Solomon "in all his glory." Her expectations of his wisdom and wealth were far surpassed, and its divine origin and its divine blessedness she thoroughly recognized and understood (verses 8, 9). The queen of Sheba brought rich gifts to Solomon (verses 2, 10), and wealth came from many other sources (verses 11, 12). Of all this wealth Solomon dedicated much to the Lord's service (verse 12). Some of it he devoted to his own use, and some of it he returned in gifts to the queen of Sheba (verse 13) . . . The duty of search for wisdom and goodness, the value of questions, the best ways of learning the use of the eyes—observation. . . . Before the queen saw and heard she believed not; "seeing is believing," "testing the promises," "experimental religion." . . . God's love for his chosen ones (verse 9) . . . Compare the wealth contributed to Solomon by the queen of Sheba with the treasure offered to the infant Saviour (Matt. 2. 11).

Blackboard.

The reign of Solomon marked a golden era in the history of Israel, and he was himself the embodiment of the material prosperity and advancement visible throughout the land and apparent most of all in the splendor of the capital and appointments of the royal house. City, palace, and temple were far famed for their magnificence, and the wealth and wisdom of the king attracted the homage of aliens to his court. But there is no concealment of the fact that his success is due to the blessing of Jehovah. His indebtedness to him is recognized by the queen in her beautiful words of confession and

compliment. The highest state of enjoyment and prosperity is not incompatible with righteous



ness, when God is acknowledged in the life and honored by the possessions of his servants.

Coloring.—First and last phrase, white; second, yellow and purple; crown, orange.

Library References.

QUEEN OF SHEBA.—Wharton, *Famous Women of the Old Testament*, page 241. Geikie, *Old Testament Characters*, page 268. Baring-Gould, *Legends of Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 358. Chandler, *Life of David*, page 490. Ewald, *History of Israel*, vol. iii, pages 277, 284. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, vol. iii, pages 476-478.

SERMONS ON THE LESSON.

Verse 1.—*Homiletic Monthly*, vol. viii, page 868. Verse 5.—Benson, E. W., *Boy Life*, page 96. Verse 7.—*Homiletic Review*, vol. xix, page 247. *Preacher's Magazine*, 1897, page 493.

LESSON XII. The Birth of Christ.

[Dec. 20.

GOLDEN TEXT. Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.

Matt. 1. 21.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Read Isa. 7. 14-16; 9. 1-6.]

Matt. 2. 1-12. [Commit to memory verses 10, 11.]

Now when Je'sus was born in Beth'le-hem of Ju-de'a in the days of Her'od the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Je-ru'-sa-lem,

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 When Her'od the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Je-ru'-sa-lem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Beth'le-hem of Ju-de'a: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 And thou Beth'le-hem, in the land of Ju'da, art not the least among the princes of Ju'da: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Is'ra-el.

7 Then Her'od, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Beth'le-hem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

REVISED VERSION.*

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, 2 Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3 And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written through the prophet,

6 And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:

For out of thee shall come forth a governor, Who shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

7 Then Herod privily called the Wise men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him. 9 And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

*The Revised Version, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Ma'ry his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11 And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshiped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Time.—Possibly the end of B. C. 5, or early in B. C. 4. **Places.**—Bethlehem; the far East; Jerusalem.

Home Readings.

M. The Birth of Christ. Matt. 2. 1-12.

Tu. Danger and deliverance. Matt. 2. 13-23.

W. The angel song. Luke 2. 8-20.

Th. Simeon's blessing. Luke 2. 25-35.

F. The Divine Word. John 1. 1-14.

S. The Prince of Peace. Isa. 9. 1-7.

§. Sent of God. 1 John 4. 9-19.

Lesson Hymns.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 301.

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 299.

Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 298.

Glory to God in the highest,
Glory to God! glory to God!
Glory to God in the highest.

Questions for Senior Scholars.

Locate Bethlehem. Give some facts about it. What do you know of the Herods? What of this Herod's character? What had occurred to bring the Magi to Jerusalem? Who were the Magi? How did Herod hear of them? Why did he call the scribes together? What did they say? From what prophet did they quote? Why should Herod be troubled? What did he tell the Magi to do? Did they follow his direction? Why not? What was meant by the offering of gold, frankincense, and myrrh?

Questions for Intermediate Scholars.

1. *Wise Men Seeking the Infant Messiah* (v. 1-3).—Where was Jesus born? Who came

looking for him? What made them start to seek him? Of whom did they inquire? Why did they desire to find him? Who were disturbed by the inquiries made?

2. *Herod Inquiring about the Christ* (v. 4-8).—Whom did Herod call together? What did he ask them? How did they find out? What prophecy speaks of the place of Messiah's birth? What illustrious ancestor of Christ's was born at Bethlehem? What did Herod do next? What command did he give to the wise men?

3. *The Wise Men Find the Infant King* (v. 9-12).—What guidance did the Magi have when they left Herod? What effect did it have upon them? Where did they find Jesus? What did they do? What did they offer to him? What directions did God give to them?

Questions for Younger Scholars.

Where was Jesus born? *In Bethlehem of Judea*. What Roman ruled Judea? *Herod*. Who came to Jerusalem? What led them there? What did they ask? Why was Herod troubled? What did the priests and scribes tell Herod? What prophet wrote of Bethlehem? *Micah*. Where did the wise men then go? Why did Herod wish to know if they found the Child? Did he wish to worship him. *No*. What did the star do? How did the wise men feel when they saw it? What did they find in the house? What did they do? What were their gifts? What did they dream that night?

The Condensed Review.

1. What name was given to the Saviour before his birth, as given in the GOLDEN TEXT? *Thou shalt call*, etc. 2. Where was Jesus born? *In Bethlehem of Judea*. 3. Who came to Jerusalem seeking him? *Wise men from the East*. 4. By what were they led to Christ? *By a star*. 5. How did they honor him? *With worship and gifts*.

The Church Catechism.

54. How are the ordinances secured in perpetuity in the Church? The ordinances are secured in perpetuity in the Christian Church through men

called of God and ordained by the Church; and through the co-operation with them of evangelists, teachers, and other laborers, according to the gift and grace of God.

Ephesians iv. 11, 12

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

The King.

I. THE SEEKERS OF THE KING.

Where is he that is born King. v. 2.

There shall come a Star out of Jacob.
Num. 24. 17.

Sir, we would see Jesus. John 12. 21.

Oh that I knew where I might find him!
Job 23. 3.

II. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE KING.

When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled. v. 3.

The wicked are like the troubled sea. Isa. 57. 20.

The wicked plotteth against the just. Psa. 37. 12.

Herod slew all the children in Bethlehem.
Matt. 2. 16.

III. DIVINE PROTECTION OF THE KING.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced. v. 10.

I will show wonders in the heavens. Joel 2. 30.

I rejoiced in the Lord greatly. Phil. 4. 10.

He shall give his angels charge over thee.
Psa. 91. 11.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

We have no ground for supposing that a manger was still "the cradle" of our infant Lord when the wise men appeared. There are several reasons why the presentation in the temple (Luke 2. 22-38) could not have taken place after their visit; consequently Jesus must have been at least six weeks old when they came. He may have been very much older. We must rather picture to ourselves the humble lodging of a carpenter, who, having perhaps found work in the town of his ancestors, proposes to take up his abode there altogether. See Matt. 2. 19-23. It was indeed otherwise ordained. Jesus, though really born in royal Bethlehem, was to be "called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2. 23; John 1. 46; 7. 40-42, 52). But before he left King David's town he was to receive there the homage due to a king. [Stock.] The Magi are among the most striking examples of faith in the Bible. They "rejoiced when they saw the star." Do we rejoice over God's written word—that "light unto our path" (Psa. 119. 105), which, if followed, will guide us to Christ?

Verse 1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king. By this clause Matthew passes over the beautiful narrative of Luke, the journey of Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the shepherds watching their flocks by night, the appearance and the song of the angels, and the midnight journey by the shepherds to Bethlehem where they saw the infant Saviour. The events of our present lesson must be placed after these, possibly immediately, more probably a year or two later; there is no exactness in the phrase "now when." Bethlehem is six miles south of Jerusalem. The word Judea is added to distinguish this Bethlehem from another town of the same name in the north of Palestine. The particular Herod here mentioned must carefully be distinguished from the other monarchs of the same name mentioned in the New Testament. This was Herod the Great; he was king over all Palestine, a cruel, unjust, and singularly bloody ruler. It is generally reckoned that Jesus was

born in the last year of his reign. *There came wise men (magi) from the east to Jerusalem.* The word magi implies that the lore of the wise men was Babylonian. [Burney.] According to the Chaldean priest Berossus, astronomical observations had been carried on by the Babylonians from the remotest antiquity. "The star which these men saw at its rising was evidently such as to be regarded as a portent only by practiced astrologers."

2. Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen ["saw"] his star in the east, and are come to worship him. At the beginning of the Christian era moral corruption and disheartenment had, to an unexampled degree, spread all over the world. Conditions of life were bad beyond comparison with any modern era. The best and wisest people felt themselves entirely unable to cope with the difficulties. Partially relieving this disheartenment was a widespread conviction that a moral Saviour was to be born. There are indications of

this in both oriental and occidental tradition and in various passages of the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, Num. 24. 17; Isa. 11. 1; Mic. 5. 2; Isa. 9. 6; Psa. 2. 6; Zech. 9. 9 gave authority to this conviction. From the Hebrew Scriptures it might be gathered that the Saviour was to be a babe, a king, a king of the Jews, and born in Bethlehem. *Come to worship him.* The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature as in Matt. 4. 9; 18. 26, or to the Creator as in Matt. 4. 10. It is noticeable that Herod and all Jerusalem (verse 3) do not appear to have observed the star until the strangers arrived, and Herod asks no one to scour the heavens to find the star, but asks the wise men to ascertain with all possible exactness the time of the star's appearance. We cannot suppose that a comet is meant or a new star like the others of the heavens. Kepler located a conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces at this date, and in the year 1463 A. D., when such a conjunction was observed, an eminent Portuguese rabbi proclaimed that the birth of the Messiah was at hand. Other arguments have been advanced in favor of the conjunction of Jupiter and Venus which took place in the spring of 6 B. C. Objections to this theory to the effect that there is only one star mentioned are met by Mr. C. F. Burney by the statement that the reference to this star would not necessarily be to the conjunction as a whole, but rather to one planet which by its peculiar position was calculated to cast the nativity of the king of the Jews.

3. *When Herod the king had heard these things ["heard it"] he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.* He feared that this rumor brought from a distant foreign country might presage the fall of his dynasty, and perhaps his own ruin, for he knew that he was widely hated. "All Jerusalem" was troubled, not knowing what the despot might do in an emergency.

4. What he did, however, was crafty and dignified—he gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together. By which we may possibly understand the Sanhedrin, or pos-

sibly professional men of distinguished wisdom. *He demanded ["inquired"] of them where ["the"] Christ should be born.* Note that Christ is not here a name, but stands for the Anointed One, the predestined Deliverer of the world.

5, 6. *In Bethlehem of Judea.* "The prophet" is Micah (5. 2). The passage is given in poetic form in the Revised Version. *Juda*, which should be spelled Judah, was the ancient form of the name Judea.

7. *Privily.* Privately. *The wise men.* As before, the magi, a professional title. *Inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.* "Learned of them exactly the time of the star that appeared."

8. *He sent them to Bethlehem.* Forwarded their plans, seeking at the same time to conform them to his own. *Go and search diligently for the young child.* "Go, and search out exactly concerning the young child." *And when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.* The note on "worship" on verse 2 also applies here.

9. *When they heard the king, they departed.* "And they, having heard the king, went their way." *The star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.* This description would seem to imply a meteor rather than a star.

10. *When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.* They seem to have lost its guidance before arrival at Jerusalem. This may have been God's providential method of bringing public attention to the birth of the Saviour.

11. *When they were come into the house ["they came into the house"], they saw the young child with Mary his mother.* Some authorities believe that between the adoration of the shepherds and that of the Magi the holy family had returned to Nazareth and come back again. *Fell down, and worshiped him.* See note on verse 2.

12. In this verse the providential care of God is clearly described.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

This is the event of events. All prior to it seem to hasten toward it in order for confirmation. All after it seem to look backward for authority.

Christ is born in Bethlehem. The time of the birth is not given, but the place is definitely stated. This Bethlehem—the house of bread—

of Judea, situated six miles to the south of Jerusalem, seated on an eminence, has a wide scope of territory for its outlook, and commands the world in its thinking. It is the city of David the king, and of David's greater Son. No use to ask why God selected such a seemingly insignificant place for the birthplace of his son,

for God can afford to disregard all our rules of thinking and proceeding, and effect results in keeping with his own high purposes. This Son is to be a world's Saviour, and it does not matter where the birth takes place, so that there is a sufficiency of power in him.

He further proposes introducing him to the lowly of earth, as his first heralds of the event, and, these being close at hand, afterward to the stranger from afar. Many things have transpired to produce world-wide expectancy in reference to this coming Messiah, so that the Jew is not alone interested in his appearance, but peoples everywhere. The periods of captivity which the nation had undergone were used by God for more purposes than disciplinary processes on the offenders, but wherever they went, they carried the "law and the prophets" with them, and in this way disseminated among the people with whom they sojourned much of their religious expectancy.

Then we find these Magi as the foremost visitors to this illustrious Being. The place from which they came is in some doubt, both Arabia and Persia being in the list; with probably the weight of authority in favor of Persia. This arises from the term Magi being in all probability Persian in origin, and these people being great astrologers, or star gazers. This was almost a science with these people, if such a practice could be so dignified. Natural conditions of sky, together with religious practices, may have been the causes which led these people to this form of observation.

That a star should be associated with the birth of Christ seemed a natural consequence, for he is spoken of so frequently under the figure of a star. Dr. Whedon says: "This was perhaps the star seen in prophetic vision by the Gentile Baalim as being far distant from himself in time: 'I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall arise out of Israel' (Num. 24. 17). And by the coming of the Magi was fulfilled in type, 'The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising' (Isa. 60. 3). These Magi were as the ambassadors of the Gentile nations."

While several efforts have been made to press natural phenomena into the solution of the difficulty of the star, and not one of them fits well, I think we had better accept the bald supernatural of the whole circumstance. If, at any rate, the statement of the evangelist is to be accepted, especially along the line of the presence of a star at all, the supernatural must come in

to interpret the "star's going before them," their "losing it," and it again appearing and standing "over where the young child was." We lose nothing by this process, and, since we cannot explain, it places the circumstances among the inexplicable things of this life, and we patiently await God's own time for revealing.

The inquiry of these wise men at Jerusalem produced great alarm. There was a miserable wretch of an old murderous, blood-stained king on the throne. He, in great alarm, hearing the phrase "born King of the Jews," assembled the chief priests and scribes, and demanded of them where this distinguished personage was to be born. It is jealous alarm, that a rival should spring up in his kingdom. Jerusalem, sinful, foul, debauched Jerusalem, was troubled with him. But this arose because of the wickedness of this proud city. The inhabitants did not want a Saviour from sin; they preferred the luxuries of carnality, as the after sequel shows, to a Saviour who might disturb them in the gratification of their lusts. So "Jerusalem was troubled with him."

When the chief priests and scribes gave the desired information to the Magi Herod called them secretly and sought to covenant with them as to their giving him information when they have found the young child. The king's hypocrisy appears at this point. He has no intention of worshipping this prince, but he has a large desire to destroy him.

The wise men continue their journey, and it is now that the distinctively supernatural in relation to the star appears, for they find it goes before them and it "stood over where the young child was." They are enraptured with the sight, and generously bestow their gifts, and as devoutly worship. It is the nations of the world at the feet of its child King. We hear nothing of any one of the priests or scribes going to Bethlehem with these strangers, and I would infer that both classes looked upon these aged, careworn travelers with some measure of contemptuous pity. But the constitution of the mind of the Jew is very apparent in this circumstance. He could not grasp the element of humility in such a circumstance, and therefore passed it by.

God now appears in another way to the Magi, and warns them not to return to Jerusalem, and leads them out of the country by another road. Herod discovers that he is mocked, and in fiery wrath seeks the end he aimed at, by ordering the butchery of the innocent children in and about Bethlehem, from two years of age and under, in accord with the information obtained

from the Magi as to the time of the appearance of the star. But Joseph and Mary and the young child have gone almost as quickly and strangely as they came. Violent hands are not to fall upon him so early in life. He is to be a sacrifice, but he has an important message to deliver, and a long road to travel before he arrives at the altar. Herod will sleep in the cold grave, remembered only for his cruelty, but this King will be the joy of the whole earth; and though he shall die the death of the Crucified One, yet myriads shall find life and peace through his suffering and death.

Prismatic Lights on the Lesson.

THE KEYNOTE OF CHRISTIANITY.

There was once a joy on earth great enough to set heaven's choir of cherubim in song to celebrate it. That could have been no temporary or local joy. It must have been for all the world, all time, all eternity. It is only the prepared and harmonized instrument that takes up the impulses of the celestial ether and gets light, the impulses of electricity from wire or wireless telegraphy and gets intelligence. So of hearts. There may be men agnostic of God as blind men are of color, or deaf men of sound. "A man may be as much a fool from a lack of sensibility as from a lack of sense." Who knows the joy?

1. Wise men (verse 8). 2. Wise men believe that the King is born; hence seek him in faith (verse 2).

3. Earnest seekers. They are willing to come from far lands. Earnest seekers find stars of guidance. Others, unprepared and unexpected, may not see these stars, but wise men do. They may not be in the sky. They may be the stars of the churches, pastors, or teachers. But they are God-given (verse 9). A recognition of a second divine guidance gives great joy (verse 10).

4. Wise men find, worship Him, and gladly give great gifts (verse 11). They are rewarded, not merely with great joy at the time, but with divine guidance afterward (verse 12).

Not only was the beginning of Christ's dispensation a note of great joy, but it is the whole significance of that dispensation. He wants our joy to be full. It was his dying legacy (John 15. 11). It is heaven's chief characteristic.

The lessons have led up in ideals and realizations of blessed individual and national life, through God-guided prophets and kings to David, Solomon, and David's greater Son; through kings imperfect to the King of kings, perfect, and of whose dominion there shall be no end.

Thoughts for Young People.

WHAT THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN SHOWS US.

1. How variously God speaks to us—how many are the voices whereby he calls us, if we will, out of darkness, whether of mind or of heart, into his marvelous light. He uses a language to each which each can understand. The Universal Father sooner or later has a word, a star, for all of us.

2. How truth, if it is to be grasped in its fullness, must be earnestly sought for. These wise men had a little stock of truth to start with, but they made the most of that which had been given them. Some word, some example, some passing inward inspiration, may be the star in the East, bidding the soul hope and persevere.

3. This history teaches what is the real object in religious inquiry. Worship is the joint result of thought, affection, and will, rising upward toward God, and then shrinking into the very dust before him. It is much more than mere religious thought, it is the soul seeking the true center of the spiritual universe with all its powers. [Liddon.]

Teaching Hints for Intermediate Classes.

PRELIMINARY.

The pupil's familiarity with the Christmas story should not deter the teacher from making especial preparation in order to produce not only a new but also a lasting impression. The fact that the members of the class are not ignorant of what is to be taught should be the spur to an earnest endeavor to get the very most out of the lesson. The dual aim should be to leave in their minds a clear-cut understanding of the essential facts of the lesson text and an intelligent determination to act because of the facts.

SURROUNDINGS.

The teacher should review the facts connected with the birth of Christ both for his own sake and in order to be prepared to answer questions, but overmuch time should not be given to them in the class. The distinction between B. C. and A. D. may be explained to the pupils.

APPROACH.

If the teacher has some knowledge of astronomy he may talk a little about the stars in order to arouse an interest in the lesson, and then have all turn to verse 2 and make that the starting point for the consideration of the text.

Something like the following may be used as an approach: In a certain church in a large city, each year a few days before Christmas, there is placed behind and above the pulpit a number of gas jets arranged as a large star. During the Sunday evening services and at the time of the Christmas festival this star is a mass of brilliant light. Ask: Why do you suppose this star is put up at Christmas time? That is correct. It represents the star of Bethlehem. Now let us open our Bibles to our

LESSON TEXT

and we will study about that star.

Have provided for each member of the class a card or a piece of stiff paper on the obverse of which is drawn a star like this:



On the reverse side well over to the left hand margin have printed this outline:

JESUS BORN:

WHERE?
WHEN?
HOW?

WHAT SHOULD I DO FOR HIM?

From their open Bibles let the pupils give their answers to these four questions, and have them jot down these answers in the proper places to the right of the questions.

The answer to the question, Why was Jesus born? is given in the Golden Text, which should be repeated until every member of the class knows it. The teacher should take especial pains to have all understand its meaning.

In answering the question, What should I do for him? some time should be spent on verse 11, and the pupils should be asked to write what they think they ought to do for Jesus. Have the answers read, and comment on them for the purpose of leading up to the thoughts: If I am not a Christian I ought to give myself to Jesus. If I am a Christian I should give to Jesus my very best worship and my best possessions.

MEMORY HELP.

To sum up what has been said, ask the pupils to print on another card or piece of paper the following:

MY CHRISTMAS PRESENT TO

JESUS

WILL BE MYSELF.

In cases where the pupils are Christians (not by profession merely, but in reality) have them substitute the following for the third line: THE BEST I POSSESS. Ask them to copy this resolve at home and to look at it frequently.

By Way of Illustration.

The Miraculousness and Quietness of the Advent. It is easy to believe in the miraculousness of it when we realize its importance. If ever miracle might be let loose out of the rigid hand of law, when should it be but now, when the King of all laws is coming in his personality? If there are angels, now certainly is the time for them to appear. If the stars can ever have a message and lead men, now is the time when their ministry can plead its strongest warrant. If ever the thin veil between the natural and the supernatural may break asunder, it must be now, when the supernatural power enters earthly life and God is present among the sons of men. The breakage through the ordinary laws of nature's life seems natural and fitting, as when a king passes through a city we expect to hear trumpets and cannon replace the common sounds of trade and domestic life, which are all that its streets commonly echo.

With the miraculousness comes an impressive quietness. Quiet even to homeliness will be the simple scenery on which the supernatural light is thrown. The village inn, the carpenter's household, the group of peasants—all is as simple as a peasant's childhood. Wonderful power with wonderful stillness. It is a spiritual miracle, and the miracles of the spiritual life are always as still as they are powerful, and as powerful as they are still.—*Phillips Brooks.*

Seeking the King. The highest wisdom is to seek the best. Herod sought a crown; the people of Jerusalem sought riches and pleasure; these men sought the King. They were merchantmen seeking goodly pearls who found the pearl of great price. Earnest seekers are sure to be rewarded. There appeared at the door of our mission house in Unalaska, Alaska, an

Eskimo boy who had come a thousand miles, working his way as he could, because he had heard through some traders that at the mission house was a man who could tell him of the great King whom he should worship. The missionary, to test him, asked, "Would you like to study books?" "Study books little; study about great King very much," answered the boy. That earnest seeker was given the knowledge for which he hungered, and will become an enlightener to his own people.

Gifts. When they had opened their treasures they presented gifts. What a procession that is which the wise men lead! Through all the years wise men and women have been bringing gifts to the Christ. The poor widow is there, and the noble souls of all ages who have opened their treasures and given their most precious things. Some gifts have been like that of the young man who said, when the collection plate was being passed, "Put the plate a little lower, I want to step into it myself." The rich young man who chokes his possessions in place of Christ is *not* there, nor can the man be found in this procession who boasted that he had a religion which had not cost him a cent in twenty years! Thank God that the art of beneficence is not a lost art, but the finest of the fine arts, since God himself is the artist!—*Bishop C. C. McCabe.*

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

Once more the Christian bells ring the music of peace, good will to men.

"There's a tumult of joy
O'er the wonderful birth,
For the mother's sweet boy
Is the Lord of the earth."

Earth hears the message with clearer understanding as the years go by. Dark and heavy-hearted as it is, humanity lifts its voice to God with better language than "a cry." To millions it is yet a faint and far-off strain, like the first twitter of a forest bird in the dusk of early day; but even so, the music of the name Wonderful, the Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace is breaking the spell of the evil spirit in the world as David's harp with Saul, or as minstrels woke the power of the prophets to work miracles in the old days. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, for Jesus is the synonym of love, and love must conquer. "In the great conflict with evil Satan sometimes wins in the skirmish, but God always in the battle." So let us celebrate the Conqueror's birth with joyful hearts.

What called the Peace Congress to consider

a way to settle national strifes without bloodshed? Why is patient thought given to questions of capital and labor? Why is there everywhere a hot protest against child-labor? Why a determined resistance to the cruelty of sweat-shops? Why is there a Consumers' League to care for the rights and the comforts of saleswomen? Why are there beneficent tenement-house laws, health regulations, sanitary provisions for stamping out disease? Why are criminals treated humanely and given a chance to reform if they will? Why are problems of charity studied carefully for the good of the unfortunate, and even of the unworthy poor? Why is the conscience and the compassion of the world roused by the massacre of despised Jews? Why have the conditions and the public sentiment of non-Christian nations regarding woman's social position and education so hopelessly changed in the past few years? What has made it possible for the editor of a Mohammedan paper to say that the old conditions are "entirely unsuited to the march of progress as progress is understood at the present day," and for a book to be issued by a learned Mohammedan jurist making a plea for the emancipation of women? How does it come to pass that while the hymn "Rejoice, the kingdom of Christ is coming" was being sung in one of the schools of India a Hindu teacher exclaimed, "His kingdom has come! Here we are, Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, high caste, low caste, all sitting together on the same mat, singing his praises. His kingdom has come!" Why, over in China, have there been examples of heroic dying for truth's sake never surpassed in pathos, magnificent courage, and fidelity?

Hold your ear to the shell, and listen to its unceasing murmur. In it are blended all the sounds of the sea—the whistling of strained cordage in the storm; the beating of the ship's heart as she travels the paths of the waters; the voices of pleasure, of commerce, of all the interests of the great wide world. So in the Christmas chimes we hear the music of that name in which all the discords and the hopes of earth are blended in the harmonies of love and peace.

"The Christmas star climbs higher every year.

The woes of earth grow lighter
And the hope of hearts grows brighter
In its cheer."

The Teachers' Meeting.

The lesson analyzed: The King of the Jews sought by wise men (Magi) (verse 1), who inquired at Jerusalem concerning the King (verse

2), and told of signs of his coming which had appeared in the heavens (verse 2). Their purpose in seeking him was to worship him (verse 2). The reigning king, Herod, was troubled by hearing of the arrival (verse 3), and whenever he was troubled he had a way of troubling all Jerusalem with him (verse 3). Being king, he took the lead in the investigation of the birth-place of the Messiah (verse 4). The priests and scribes found the Messiah foretold in the Scriptures (verses 5, 6), and friends and foes alike—the Magi and Herod—pushed the search for the newborn King (verses 7, 8). Herod's part was insincere (verses 8, 12). The star which had guided them from their own land now guided them to Bethlehem (verses 9, 10). They rejoiced greatly (verse 10), and gave their treasures to the newborn King (verse 11), who was protected by God.

Blackboard.



The answering music of the church bells tell us once more the story of the wondrous Babe of Bethlehem. It is a time of gladness for all the world, for the coming of Jesus brought to men the possibilities of salvation from their sins and fellowship with God. Even as lowly shepherds and men of other lands beheld and worshipped the infant Christ, so may we draw near to him to-day, and offer the loving homage of our hearts.

Coloring.—Bell, cream; phrases, white and purple; text, yellow.

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SERMONS ON THE LESSONS

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FOURTH QUARTERLY REVIEW.

December 27.

Golden Text.

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. Psa. 103. 17.

Home Readings.

- M. David Brings Up the Ark. 2 Sam. 6. 1-12.
 Tu. God's Covenant with David. 2 Sam. 7. 4-16.
 W. David's Joy over Forgiveness. Psa. 32.
 Th. David's Grief over Absalom. 2 Sam. 18. 24-33.
 F. The Birth of Christ. Matt. 2. 1-12.
 S. David's Charge to Solomon. 1 Chron. 28. 1-10.
 S. Solomon's Wise Choice. 1 Kings 3. 4-15.

Lesson Hymns.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 301.

Hark! the herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the new-born King,
 Peace on earth, and mercy mild;
 God and sinners reconciled."

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4-15.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 303.

The Gospel bells are ringing,
Over land, from sea to sea :
Blessed news of free salvation.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 302.

Hark ! what mean those holy voices,
Sweetly sounding through the skies ?
Lo ! the angelic host rejoices.

Questions for Senior Scholars.

LESSON I.

What was David's purpose in bringing the ark to his capital? Why was this statesmanship? How was it the work of a religious reformer?

LESSON II.

The lesson discloses what features in the character of David? In the character of Nathan? In the character of Jehovah? In the condition of Israel?

LESSON III.

What conception of sin do we find in the terms "transgression," "iniquity," "sin"? What is sin? Who is the sinner?

LESSON IV.

Is this psalm a personal utterance? How does it differ from the fifty-first psalm? What is its theme? Its keynote? Its climax?

LESSON V.

Why was Absalom exiled? Was David's course right? How did it affect Absalom? Was his course wise? What light do successive events throw on Absalom's character?

LESSON VI.

Where did the two armies meet? Who was in command of each? The result? The political effect? What elements entered into David's grief?

LESSON VII.

What is the message of this psalm? Is it personal? Is it Davidic? Why the change of figure in it? How do you account for the continued power of comfort in this psalm? Is it sufficient for a creed? As an utterance of faith how does it compare with Phil. 4. 4-13?

LESSON VIII.

As a description of the degradation of intemperance how does this paragraph compare with other descriptions in sacred and profane literature? What is its moral?

LESSON IX.

What assembly is here described? For what purpose called? What was the substance of David's address? What were affirmed as the conditions of permanence for Israel?

LESSON X.

What was the nature of Solomon's sacrifice at Gibeon? Were such sacrifices peculiar to the Jews? Right or wrong here? What was Solomon's request?

LESSON XI.

How long had the temple been completed before dedication? Describe the various parts of the service. What was the meaning and intent of the service?

LESSON XII.

What spirit did the queen of Sheba show? What responsibility should her visit have impressed upon Solomon?

Questions for Intermediate Scholars.

LESSON I.—David Brings Up the Ark. 2 Sam. 6. 1-12.—Who did David bring together to help him? In whose charge had the ark been? What was done when the ark was removed? What stopped the proceedings? Where was the ark put? What was done with it afterward?

LESSON II.—God's Covenant with David. 2 Sam. 7. 4-16.—What did David greatly desire to do? What message was sent to him about it? What facts in David's history were mentioned? What promises were made to him?

LESSON III.—David's Confession. Psa. 51. 1-17.—For what was the psalmist specially seeking? What confession did he make? What did he desire as well as forgiveness? By what means did he expect to be made pure? What vows did he make?

LESSON IV.—David's Joy over Forgiveness. Psa. 32.—What blessedness is spoken of? What painful experience came first? How was peace obtained? What counsel is given? What are the blessings of the righteous?

LESSON V.—David and Absalom. 2 Sam. 15. 1-12.—Who was Absalom? What did he do to gain the favor of the people? What was his purpose? What permission did he obtain from David? What secret arrangements had he made? What help did he get?

LESSON VI.—David's Grief over Absalom. 2 Sam. 18. 24-33.—What battle was being

fought? Where had David stayed? What two messengers came? What tidings did they bring? How was David affected by the news?

LESSON VII.—David's Trust in God. Psa. 23.—What is God called? What does he do for those who trust him? Through what peculiar trials does he comfort? What enjoyment does he give? What companions go with God's people?

LESSON VIII.—The Curse of Strong Drink. Prov. 20. 1; 23. 20, 21, 29-35.—What is said of the effects of strong drink? What company is to be avoided? What effects of wine drinking are mentioned? What counsel is given concerning wine? What further bad results are spoken of? What is the safe thing to do in respect to intoxicating liquors?

LESSON IX.—David's Charge to Solomon. 1 Chron. 28. 1-10.—Who came together on this occasion? What did David say about the temple? What did he say about Solomon? What did he exhort the people to do? What commands did he give to Solomon?

LESSON X.—Solomon's Wise Choice. 1 Kings 3. 4-15.—What had Solomon gone to do? What was offered to him? What did he choose? What was promised to him? Upon what conditions was long life promised? What grateful recognition did he make?

LESSON XI.—The Dedication of the Temple. 1 Kings 8. 1-11, 62, 63.—Who were present at the dedication? What was the first thing done? How was the ark carried? Where was it placed? What occurred as soon as it was in its place? What did Solomon do? What sacrifices were offered?

LESSON XII.—The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon. 1 Kings 10. 1-10.—What led the queen to visit Solomon? What did she take with her? What did Solomon tell her? What did she see? What did she say? What did she give to Solomon? What presents did he make to her?

LESSON XII (Christmas Lesson).—The Birth of Christ. Matt. 2. 1-12.—What strange visitors came to Jerusalem? Whom were they seeking? Why did they come to Jerusalem? What effect did their coming have? What was done to find out where Christ was born? What plan did Herod have? How was the infant Christ found? What honors were paid to him by the wise men? How was Herod's plan made to fail?

Teaching Hints for Intermediate Classes.

PART ONE.

Have printed on a large sheet of paper or on the blackboard the following:

LESSON

I. ARK—	RELIGION.
II. COVENANT—	THRONE.
III. CONFESSION—	HEART.
IV. FORGIVENESS—	BLESSEDNESS.
V. REBELLION—	HONOR.
VI. GRIEF—	FOOLISHNESS.

If the review is conducted from the platform let one person point to the first column of words and another question as follows concerning each word:

1. What is the title of this lesson?
2. What is the Golden Text?
3. What was the memory outline?

Follow this with four or five clear-cut questions on the most essential points of the lesson story.

Then have the words in the second column pointed to in order and ask: What truth did you memorize in connection with this word?

When the six lessons have been gone through in this manner rest the school by having them sing a well-known spirited hymn, while all stand.

If the review is conducted in the class the teacher must do the pointing and questioning, using a pad or a lap tablet. Instead of the singing the teacher should have the pupils change their positions and move about for two or three minutes.

LESSON

VII. SHEPHERD—	OBEDIENCE.
VIII. DRINK—	MOCKER.
IX. CHARGE—	TRUST.
X. CHOICE—	WISDOM.
XI. TEMPLE—	BODY.
XII. QUEEN—	RIGHTEOUS.

With these six lessons proceed as indicated above. Have another break before proceeding to the next part. Sing a well-known spirited hymn, while all stand.

PART THREE.

Here the endeavor should be made to impress some one vital truth to be remembered as one of the results of the quarter's study. For example, the truth impressed in connection with Lesson VII is suggested. (See below.) Conclude the

review with earnest prayer for the Spirit's blessing upon the word as it has been taught.

The following are the applications that were given in the Memory Work from week to week:

I.

REAL, SPIRITUAL
RELIGION
ALWAYS BRINGS BLESSINGS.

II.

I WILL NOT BARTER MY
HEAVENLY THRONE
FOR ANY EARTHLY THING.

III.

CREATE IN ME
A CLEAN HEART
O GOD!

IV.

LORD, GIVE ME THE
BLESSEDNESS
OF FORGIVEN SIN.

V.

I WILL ALWAYS
HONOR
MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER.

VI.

I WILL NOT LET MY
FOOLISHNESS
LEAD ME INTO SIN.

VII.

I WILL YIELD LOVING
O BEDIENCE
TO THE LORD, MY SHEPHERD.

VIII.

I WILL SHUN THAT
MOCKER
THAT DECEIVES SO MANY.

IX.

I WILL MAKE THE LORD MY
TRUST
ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE.

X.

I WILL PRAY THE LORD FOR
WISDOM
THAT I MAY DO RIGHT ALWAYS.

XI.

I DEDICATE
MY BODY
AS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

XII.

I WILL BE ONE OF THE
RIGHTEOUS
IN ORDER TO MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY.

Heart Talks on the Lesson.

It is good to be thankful. It is bad for yourself, bad for those who look at you, altogether every way bad, to have a depressed spirit or

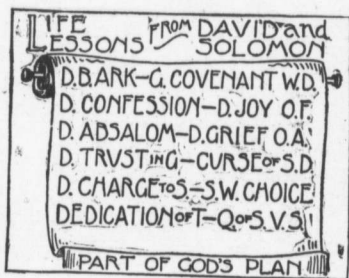
carry a doleful face. Open the windows and let in the sunshine! Nothing so soon clears the spiritual sky as a hymn of praise. If you think the world goes hard with you and everyone is better off than yourself, read the one hundred and third psalm and say "amen" at the close of every verse. Bless the Lord, all that is within me; love, memory, hope, reason, imagination, power of thought, eye, ear, lip, all physical senses and powers, bless his holy name, and forget not all his benefits.

How can we be forgetful, as we are, of One so good and loving as our God? Every good gift is from him; he does not send the evil which we suffer; that is the fruit of sin. Not always our own sin, but sin which has disordered the world which was at first made perfect and good. We complain of our discomforts and sorrows, and too often have hard thoughts as if God were the cause of them and as if he took pleasure in afflicting us. Such a view of our loving Father is most false; we mistake him altogether. God is love. He is grieved with the wrongs of his creatures, and is doing everything that can be done, as rapidly as it is possible to do it, to remedy all that hurts. Never attribute either sorrow or wrong to God. Know always that as he said of his people in Egypt, so he ever says of burdened human beings everywhere, "I know their sorrows, and am come down to deliver them."

We must trust our Father. We must believe that he is doing the very best possible for us under all circumstances. Instead of growing cold and hard toward him we must feel the fellowship of his sympathy, and cooperate with him in every gracious plan to bring good out of the evil. Read this beautiful psalm. Commit it to memory. It is a picture of the Divine Heart. Looking at it, we cannot help loving God. Forgiving, healing, redeeming from destruction, crowning with loving-kindness and tender mercies, satisfying the mouth with good things, executing righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, never dealing with us on the plane of our sins nor rewarding us in measure or kind as we have sinned; high as heaven is above earth is his mercy so that he has put away our transgressions as far as the east is from the west. The east can never touch the west, nor can sin harm the soul that accepts by faith the full atonement of the perfect Saviour. As a father pities his children, so he pities us, for he knows how weak we are and how unable we are to bear alone the temptations and sorrows that befall us.

Our earthly life is short; we fall like flowers beaten by the wind; but that is not calamity. Even death cannot defeat God's purpose of blessing for us. His mercy (mercy includes every strong, beautiful, tender characteristic of love) is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. It embraces us far back to remote generations, and far into ages before us, to our children and children's children as well as to ourselves. Is this a God to be complained of? Is not this a God to love? "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name." "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion; bless the Lord, O my soul."

Blackboard.



In the light and shadow of these Bible narratives we see the unfolding of God's providential plan. The studies are from the lives of two great kings, divinely appointed and conscious of their obligations to Jehovah. We see that those who wrought with God were blessed, while disaster and reproach was the condemnation of those who walked contrary to his will. In the whole-heartedness of David, the willfulness and death of Absalom, and the growing greatness of the youthful king we read lessons whose import will aid us in living rightly ourselves. The prominent word in each title will bring to mind the subject of the lesson and the chief point to be emphasized.

Coloring.—Scroll, orange; wording, white; phrases, light blue.

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RESPONSIVE REVIEW SERVICE FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER.

LESSON I. DAVID BRINGS UP THE ARK.

Superintendent. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart. And when they came to Nacchon's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it.

Scholars. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God. So David would not remove the ark of the Lord into the city of David; but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom.

Teachers. And it was told king David, saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom unto the city of David with gladness.

All. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house. (Golden Text.)

LESSON II. GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID.

Superintendent. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheeppcot, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people.

Scholars. And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have made thee a great name. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more.

Teachers. I will set up thy seed after thee. He shall build an house for my name.

All. Thy throne shall be established forever. (Golden Text.)

LESSON III. DAVID'S CONFESSION.

Superintendent. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Scholars. For I acknowledge my transgressions. *Teachers.* Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

All. Create in me a clean heart, O God. (Golden Text.)

LESSON IV. DAVID'S JOY OVER FORGIVENESS.

Superintendent. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

Scholars. Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

Teachers. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

All. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. (Golden Text.)

LESSON V. DAVID AND ABSALOM.

Superintendent. And Absalom rose up early and stood beside the way of the gate, so that when any man had a suit which should come to the king for judgment, Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Oh that I were made judge in the land!

Scholars. Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed unto the Lord in Hebron. And the king said unto him, Go in peace.

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

All. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. (Golden Text.)

LESSON VI. DAVID'S GRIEF OVER ABSALOM.

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

Scholars. And the king said unto Cushai, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushai answered, The enemies of my Lord the king, and all that rise up against thee do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

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

All. A foolish son is a grief to his father. (Golden Text.)

LESSON VII. DAVID'S TRUST IN GOD.

Superintendent. The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

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

Scholars. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Teachers. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

All. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. (Golden Text.)

LESSON VIII. THE CURSE OF STRONG DRINK.

Superintendent. Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

Scholars. They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

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

All. Wine is a mocker. (Golden Text.)

LESSON IX. DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON.

Superintendent. Then David the king said, Hear me, my brethren and my people: as for me, it was in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord. But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.

Scholars. He hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house.

Teachers. And thou, Solomon my son, know thou

the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: if thou seek him he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.

All. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. (Golden Text.)

LESSON X. SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE.

Superintendent. The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

Scholars. Thou hast made thy servant king: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or to come in. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

Teachers. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment: behold, I have done according to thy words: and I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor.

All. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (Golden Text.)

LESSON XI. THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.

Superintendent. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim.

Scholars. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.

Teachers. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord.

All. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. (Golden Text.)

LESSON XII. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON.

Superintendent. And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold and precious stones.

Scholars. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built: she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

Teachers. And behold, the half was not told me. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel.

All. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. (Golden Text.)

PRACTICAL NOTES.

Lesson I.

It is possible to do a good thing in a wrong way. We need to be taught the necessity of reverence. Irreverence tends to the destruction of religion itself.

Lesson II.

It is something to have a grand purpose although it may never come to anything visible.

David dreamed a temple, and he was better for the dream.

Lesson III.

David never apologizes for his sin. The Bible offers no apology for him. Greatness and genius are no excuse for wrongdoing.

Lesson IV.

The hopeful element in David's case was the intensity of his pain on account of his sin. The diseased limb that feels no pain is hopeless, because absence of feeling is a sign of death.

Lesson V.

There are often sad results when the head of a family is so absorbed in business, public or private, that he neglects the training of his children.

Lesson VI.

God gave us human fathers and their love that we might know something of the infinite love of our heavenly Father and his yearning over his rebellious children.

Lesson VII.

If the Lord is our Shepherd we shall have all things temporal and spiritual with which to supply every want of body and soul.

Lesson VIII.

Wine is a mocker. At first it is the grateful stimulus of an hour, at the last it is the worm that never dies and the fire that never shall be quenched.

Lesson IX.

When Israel marched with God the nation became great and strong with a glorious career.

Lesson X.

Every young person should make Solomon's wise choice for the same reasons he made it: God's goodness in the past. God has given him a work to do. He is young and inexperienced. Upon the issues depend life or death.

Lesson XI.

Solomon's temple is the type of God's kingdom: all the world will contribute to it: distant kings have often prepared the way for it. In its beauty and grandeur it is the glory of the whole earth.

Lesson XII.

Heathen nations are attracted to Christianity because of the higher civilization. National prosperity is a testimony to the God of nations.

Primary Teachers' Department.

Teaching the Word.

THE primary teacher can do no more far-reaching and effective work than to help store away Bible texts in the minds of little children. The simple texts should be chosen—"milk for babes"—and there are several ways of making this kind of an exercise attractive.

Have you tried the "Scripture Alphabet"? Select as many texts as there are letters of the alphabet, beginning A, B, C, etc. Teach one each Sunday, reviewing those previously learned. Six months will easily compass this, and thereafter the children should be reviewed occasionally.

Have you tried the "Golden Chain"? You may make it as long or as short as you choose, only let the last word of each text be the opening word of the succeeding.

These little devices are an aid to memory, and the law of association works powerfully with little children, as with grown people. Of course the Golden and Tiny Texts should be emphasized, and the mothers should be urged to teach them to the children at home.

The "Chautauqua Drill," so well known, is also most helpful, as well as suggestive. Many Bible texts may be taught by the aid of motions, which are always a help in making any exercise pleasing to the children.

Decision Day for Our Youngest.

SHOULD the wee people of our primary classes be asked to come to Christ? Should the subject of personal salvation ever be presented to them? This is indeed a question as delicate as it is important. That there is a sad need of conversion in the lives of even the best children in early childhood is certain, and as much as we admire the innocence of those dear little ones we have ample proof from their own deeds that they have been born in sin.

Whether or not the subject of personal salvation is presented to the little ones, they should be taught the fundamental doctrines of religion. At home and elsewhere they receive the impression that it is one's own goodness that takes one to heaven. In view of this fact, no wonder it is so impossible to remove this idea from the minds of adults. Thousands who call themselves orthodox and have been brought up in this faith declare in times of revival throughout the country that they have done many good works, and that these will entitle

them to entrance to heaven. They do not seem to realize that the Saviour has no part in their experience.

From what I have seen of child life I have come to the conclusion that unless the children are converted in the Primary Department they will never be converted. I have seen dozens leave the primary room and commence at once a downward career. It seems scarcely possible that children between the ages of eight and fourteen could learn and practice so much evil; yet facts show that they do, and "facts are stubborn things."

"The age of conversion," as psychologists term it, is at the age of adolescence; then a child has a natural craving for God and a sense of his own unworthiness. It is very easy at such a time to lead a child to his Saviour. When a child is converted he is saved from future sins, and how much better to be saved from uncommitted sins of the future than from already committed sins of the past. O yes, it is a great, great gain when one can be instrumental in saving the soul of a child in his early teens. But greater is the gain when the child's conversion is secured before this age. In the first place, the nervous system is extremely sensitive at the age of adolescence; the child is conscious of himself as he has never been before, he begins to take a new interest in life, hence he has a great sufficiency to attend to without the addition of a conviction after sin, for every one who has had any dealings with the religious life of children know that to them come convictions as intense as any that come to adults.

Moreover, the child needs conversion before this period of life in order to keep him from sin he would be more likely to commit before he reaches the age of adolescence.

I find that the child's idea of a Christian is of a person who commits no intentional wrong, and it is wonderful to see what a high ideal of virtue even a young child has. Even if a child has experienced no remarkable change of heart (few do, since a child's conversion is of necessity different from that of an adult), if he considers himself a Christian there will be a remarkable change in his conduct—he will realize instinctively what is right and what is wrong and will in most cases do what is right.

A. M. D.

BE sure to read the "Word of exhortation" on page 893 entitled "A Help that Helps."

International Bible Lessons.

FOURTH QUARTER.

LESSON X. (December 6.)

SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE. 1 Kings 3. 4-15.

GOLDEN TEXT: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Prov. 9. 10.

Primary Notes.

BY JULIA H. JOHNSTON.



Approach. Thought to impress, the need of making up the mind to take the best—not for what it looks like, but for what it is. Tell story of children allowed to choose presents before leaving their aunt's home after a

visit. A number of things were offered. One took some very beautiful flowers, but they soon faded. Another took some fine toys, which were soon out of order, or broken. Another chose some tools, which were very useful for a while, but he grew tired of them. Another took a plain little box that did not look as if it were worth much, but it held a precious stone that was worth much and would never change.

Is it the biggest thing that is always the best? Is it always the one prettiest to look at? No, it is the thing that is worth the most for some good reason, and the best reason of all is that one can do a great deal with it and it will not wear out; it can be turned into something useful at any time, as a precious stone can be changed for money.

Show picture, or draw one, of a pair of scales, with the world in one scale and wisdom in the other. One takes up more room than the other, but which is worth more? Is there time to get all the money, all the pleasure in this world, and to get the truest wisdom, too? No, one must choose. To-day we learn about a wise choice. Let us find out about

The One Who Chose. Spend a little time in making Solomon a real person. Whose son? Where did he live? Does living in a palace make a man a prince? No, but being the king's son does. Was Solomon rich? young? strong? happy? Had he everything needed? It seems not. God gave him a chance to choose what he would have now, besides all that was already

his. What did his father tell him to do, as we have learned? Know the God his father loved, and serve, love, and trust him. Solomon could choose to do this, or he could refuse. Something he did showed that he was thinking about his father's God. He went to Gibeon, where was an altar, and made a thousand offerings to the Lord. This would do no good unless his heart went with his gifts and prayers. God saw the young king's heart, and came to him in a dream by night, saying, "Ask what I shall give thee." How wonderful this was—how good and kind!

The Choice. Draw out from children what Solomon might have asked. What would the scholars ask for if they could have just what they wished? We show what we are by what we wish for. One who wishes only for toys cares most for play. If one wishes only for books it shows that he loves to read. A greedy fellow asks only for good things to eat, or for money to get what he wants. Solomon might have asked long life, great riches, or victory in battle, but he asked for wisdom. He wished to know what to do and how to do it, as king over God's people. God was pleased. He promised to give what Solomon asked, and also many things which he did not ask. God gives us many blessings we do not even think to pray for. But some things we must choose if we are to have them at all.

Write on board SOLOMON'S CHOICE—WISDOM; under it, MY CHOICE, and after it an interrogation mark. Let each one answer to God in his own heart.

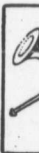
Memory Thought for the Roll: Choose the Best. We cannot make people wish for the best things, nor choose them, but we can beg them to. We can ask them to listen to God's voice, telling them what to do and what is best.



Draw out from children what is the best thing. The best choice is Jesus himself. He

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knows everything and can teach us what to do and how to do it. He can make us what he wants us to be—his loving little followers.

Thought for Teachers. "Ask what I shall give thee." God's loving voice thus entreats us by day and by night. How shall we care for his little ones? Where shall we get wisdom? Have we asked? Have we taken? Let us try to realize how our Father loves to have us ask. It is his good pleasure to give.

LESSON XI. (December 13.)

THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.

1 Kings 8. 1-11, 62, 63.

GOLDEN TEXT: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Psa. 122. 1.

Primary Notes.



Approach. Teach this with the definite purpose of making the children feel that God's house is a happy place, where all should be glad to go. Begin with the meaning of dedication—

setting apart. A soldier who makes a solemn promise to follow the flag is set apart to fight for his country. In a new house one room may be set apart for visitors and kept for them. Once a good woman noticed a prophet, or, as we would call him, a minister, passing her house. She said to her husband, "Let us build a little extra room, and put a bed and stool and candlestick in it and have it always ready for this good man, that he may stop and rest in the place whenever he passes." They did this, and the room was set apart to be the prophet's, to be used only by him. Do you suppose these good people were sorry to see the prophet coming to stay in his room? Was he sorry to turn aside and rest there? Don't you suppose they all had some happy times together in that house where the man of God was made welcome? I think so.

To-day we learn about

The House Built for God. Who built it? Solomon. But who wished to build it? David. He gathered precious things for the building, about four million dollars' worth of gold and silver, besides brass, iron, copper, stone, and wood. Then Solomon and the people added more precious things, and sent to Tyre, upon the sea-

shore, for the finest wood and for men who could do fine work, and about ten thousand men a month, altogether, helped in the building of this wonderful house. It took seven and a half years to finish it. All the beautiful stones were squared and smoothed away from the place, and the cedar wood covered with gold, and everything was put in place silently with no noise of saw or hammer. How do you suppose Solomon and all the people felt when this, the most beautiful building in all the world, was finished?

The House Given to God. The Lord allowed his children to gather all this gold and silver, and get the white stones and precious wood. It was all his, but now he wished them to give back to him what he had let them get and give. God's house must be dedicated, or set apart for prayer and praise. O what a glad day this was!

Fix these details of the lesson story: The great gathering of joyful people, and teach Golden Text in connection; the bringing up of the precious ark, in the right way, and putting it in place, beneath the golden angels in the holiest of all; the wonderful cloud of glorious light filling the house, showing that God was there; and the offerings which the king made. So God's house was dedicated, or given to him with joy and with gifts.

Memory Thought: Be Glad in God's House. Whose house? We call it now not temple but church. Why be glad there? Why did not all those people have to be driven to the temple long ago? Should we need to be made to come to church and Sunday school? Do we run home to mother and father to stay because we would be punished if we did not? Emphasize the love thought of the lesson, that we should be glad because it is our Father's house. If we can help to build it, or take care of it, we shall love it more. How can we show our love and gladness? Enumerate ways for children to do this.



Thought for Teachers. We must never forget that some in our care have no home nurture in

love for God's house. We must make up for this. As far as possible let us keep the associations wholly allied with sacred things, not with week-day play, and make the place so sweet that little ones will love to meet the Saviour there.

LESSON XII. (December 20.)

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON. 1 Kings 10. 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT: "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice." Prov. 29. 2.

Primary Notes.



Approach. Aim to lead children to learn of Jesus, bringing all questions to him. Begin by asking about school life. What is a teacher? Why do we have teachers? What are we in school for? What sort of teachers do we

need? Wise ones, who know much more than we? Tell the sweet story of Mary of old who sat at Jesus's feet and learned of him. She took a low place and looked up to her great Teacher. Jesus says to each of us, "Learn of me." Do we think we know all things? Then we are not ready to learn. Even a great and rich queen may not know everything. There was one long ago who had many questions she wished answered. To-day we learn about

The Queen's Questions. Make this a picture lesson. Its oriental coloring should be made to attract attention. Draw picture frames on the board, but make word pictures to fill them, and let children draw upon imagination to see them. Picture the queen in her palace. How rich and great she is! But she is not rich enough in knowing things. She wishes more wisdom. She is puzzled over things. Bring before the eye the travelers passing who tell of Solomon's wisdom. The queen decided to visit him. Now comes the procession. What a "very great train"! Tell of the camels and the servants, the spices and gold and precious stones, a great store, fit for a queen to give and a king to take. Describe the long journey from the part of Arabia where the queen lived. How tiresome it must have been! She surely would not have gone, with this long procession and all the pres-

ents, for sake of seeing Solomon's riches, for she had riches enough herself, and in her country gold was so plentiful that people even used it on doors and roofs of houses. Their wonderful spices, the best in the world, also brought them much money. No, it was not riches, but wisdom, the queen wished. That was her purpose, or what she went for. So she went on with her servants, camels, gold, and spices. We have had, beginning with P,

THE QUEEN'S PROCESSION, PRESENTS, PURPOSE.

Picture now the arrival in Jerusalem and all the wonders of the place. Then the hard questions are asked and answered. The wisdom God gave in answer to Solomon's prayer is now given out to Sheba's queen. We have

THE WONDERS OF THE KINGDOM, ISDOM OF THE KING.

What now? O, she calls even the servants happy, and all the people blessed, because they have such a wise king. She praises God for all the wisdom, she gives her presents, receives greater ones, and goes home saying the half had not been told her. Now she knew, for she had been to see for herself. That is the only way. What sorrow would have filled her heart if Solomon had not been able to answer her questions. Now she returns with joy. Teach Golden Text.

Memory Thought: Learn from the King. Who is our King? Who is wise enough to tell us all we need to understand? Who can make plain to us what puzzles and troubles? Who loves to listen, and to teach us? Who always gives us far more than we can bring to him? Are we learning, then, of King Jesus, who said



himself he was wiser than Solomon? How can we learn of him?

Show very simply how we can learn by reading and hearing his word, by Sunday school lessons and sermons, by listening to those wiser than we, by prayer, most of all, and watching to see what he will show us, and listening to his voice in our hearts. Whenever troubled or puzzled about anything let us just tell Jesus about it. He will always help us.

Thoughts for Teachers.

The half has not been told us,
By any passer-by,
Of all the love and wisdom
In Christ who rules on high.
We too must hasten to him,
Though o'er a desert way,
With all our doubts and questions
To hear what he will say.
He covets such communings—
Come, let us go to-day.

LESSON XIII. (December 27.)

REVIEW.

GOLDEN TEXT: "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him." Psa. 103. 17.

Primary Notes.



Approach. Seek to give children an idea of mercy, preparatory to teaching Golden Text for Review.

Tell of a great king who took many captives in war. It used to be the custom to kill such soldiers as were taken prisoners. This was thought right, because they had been taken while fighting against the king who won the battle. But this king said, "I might kill them, but I will set them free instead. I have a right to kill them, and they have no right to expect me to set them free, but I am sorry for them, and will let them go back to their homes." That was mercy. To pay the soldiers who fought for him would only be right and what they ought to ask for. We call that justice—what one deserves. But the enemies of the king, who did not deserve to be set free, had kindness shown them which they could not ask for as others asked for their pay. Such kindness is called mercy. Many men have shown mercy, but how long can one keep on showing it? By and by people get tired, but there is one

whose mercy began so long ago and lasts so long that it is called mercy which lasts forever, or mercy from everlasting to everlasting. It is the Lord's mercy. Teach Text.

Our Memory Roll. The lessons we have had are part of the Bible story, written about two kings, David and Solomon. The story of what is past is called history. We have been trying to learn some wonderful history, written in God's book, and our Memory Roll has on it the lessons we have been taught by this wonderful history. Writing lessons on a roll does not write them on our memory, but it helps. We will now see if the lessons have been written on our memories. All the history shows our Father's mercy and goodness. He has always been the same and always will be. If he was kind to David and Solomon he will be good to us. He never changes. Because he is so good and merciful ought we not to try to please him? The lessons on our Memory Roll are all things we ought to do. Why? Because our loving Father tells us to, and we ought to obey because he has a right to tell us what to do, and we should love to do it because of his tender mercy to each of us.

Here are lessons from the Memory Roll, in order: 1. Take Jesus home. 2. Take God at his word. 3. Be sorry for sin and say so. 4. Ask God to forgive. 5. Be obedient. 6. Be wise and give joy. 7. Follow the Shepherd. 8. Look not upon the wine. 9. Trust and obey. 10. Choose the best. 11. Be glad in God's house. 12. Learn from the King. For to-day add this: Trust in God's mercy.

The teacher may go over lesson titles and texts, and review the lesson teachings in connection. If possible, turn back the roll, and pull it down space by space, revealing but a lesson at a time. Help class to see connection of teaching with the Golden Text. If the children have



complied with request at the beginning of the quarter and often repeated during the weeks, to

write these lesson teachings down at home, they should be asked to bring them now, and some recognition of faithfulness should be made.

Sing, to tune "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," the lesson hymn verse for quarter:

God is love and God is mercy,
Ready to forgive and bless;
Watching daily o'er his children,
Full of grace and tenderness.
O, how glad to love and please him
All his little ones should be;
Help us, Lord, to learn these lessons,
May we trust and follow thee.

Thought for Teachers. The bridge of our quarterly review must rest on the piles we have driven week by week.

In the Primary Realm.

"If it be true that no one ever looked into the kingdom of heaven except through the eyes of a little child; if it be true that the eyes of every unspoiled child are such a window, take the vision and be thankful."—*Edward Howard Griggs.*

Whisper Songs for December.

TENTH LESSON.

JESUS, I would choose thee
As my Guide and Friend.
Teach me, lead me, love me,
Always to the end.

ELEVENTH LESSON.

In thy house, dear Father,
Give thy child a place,
And for faithful service,
Give me strength and grace.

TWELFTH LESSON.

Make me strong for service,
Rich in love and truth,
Wise to choose thy wisdom
In my early youth.

THIRTEENTH LESSON.

Write thy name, dear Jesus,
On my heart to-day;
And into thine image
Let me grow, I pray.

Order of Service

FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

Fourth Quarter.

CONCERT RECITATION.

"All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord has made them all."

SINGING.

"Jesus, where'er thy people meet,
There they behold thy mercy seat;
Where'er they seek thee, thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground."

Teacher. Jesus called a little child unto him.
Class. "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me."

T. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house.
C. They will be still praising thee.

PRaise SONG. "Praise him, praise him," suggested.

ADDITIONAL LESSON. (Five minutes.)

SINGING. "I think, when I read that sweet story of old." (Two stanzas.)

WHISPER PRAYER.

"Dear Saviour, as in days of old—
Thou didst thy little one enfold
Within thy loving arm,
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