

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 27.]

DECEMBER, 1893.

[No. 12.

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The Sunday-School Banner

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SUNDAY SCHOOL BARBER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. XXVII.]

DECEMBER, 1893.

[No. 12.

Christmas Carol.

When the Holy Babe was born
Angels, singing, woke the morn,
Chanting praises to our Lord,
Peace on earth and glad accord ;
For He came to set us free ;
He was born our Lord to be,
From sin and pain to set us free.

Star-led kings their gifts unrolled,
Myrrh and frankincense and gold ;
From the farthest East they came,
From the North and South they came,
That all peoples of the earth
Should pay homage at His birth,
Prince of Peace and Lord of Earth.

Prince of Peace ! alas, the shame
That the blessedness He came
Yearning to bestow on men
Still no nearer seems than then
We it is who hinder peace :
Through us sin and pain increase,
He would give the whole world peace.

Holy Babe of Bethlehem,
Number us, we pray, with them
In whose heart is echoed still,
" Peace on earth, to men good-will : "
That Thy will in us be done,
Let our will with Thine be one,
Then we shall not be undone.

SOLOMON spent his money for that which was not bread, he found it all ashes and emptiness. Every one should bend over his ear to listen to every word of God. The Samuel spirit is the fitting and reverent attitude of the heart. A whisper of Jesus should bind like an iron chain. Those who are one with Christ, by trusting in Him, have the promise of all blessings and mercies. Jesus shares with them all that He has.

Is the Sunday-school "A Necessary Evil?"

BY THE EDITOR.

ON the affirmative of this subject our friend, Mr. Thomas Bengough, read a clever paper at the Baptist Sunday-school Association in Toronto. The Sunday-school has been very much belauded and complimented of late, so perhaps, it is just as well that the other side of the shield should be presented. Mr. Bengough's bold challenge will certainly attract attention. No one pretends that the modern Sunday-school is by any means a perfect institution. We believe that it is only in the beginning of its evolution to a much more perfect instrument than it is.

" Faithful," says the Good Book, " are the wounds of a friend," and we will let Mr. Bengough speak for himself. In humorous vein he describes the inefficiency of some schools and some teachers and superintendents and defects of the library, with its books of the " whipped-cream variety, easily digested, pleasant to the taste, and 'light' on the intellectual stomach."

A heavy charge against the school is that it is often considered to relieve parents of their personal responsibility in the training of their children. We fear that this charge is too true, and that Mr. Bengough here puts his finger upon a serious evil. He says :

" During the school exercises outlined above, where are the parents of these scholars who have been handed over for the time to the care of these teachers? Probably they are talking or on a journey (for health, of course), or per-adventure they are sleeping and must be awaked. They show the utmost confidence in the ability, piety and watch-care of the teachers by letting them severely alone. Occasionally, on some special day, a few parents, having nothing better to do, straggle into the school room and 'patronize' the performance, giving

it their countenance for a few moments. A very few attend the Bible classes."

Mr. Bengough points out that the institution of the Sunday-school by Robert Raikes, "awakened a desire to provide a better general education, and thus the public day school sprang into being. That the ability to read thus acquired necessitated an increased supply of books, and the Religious Tract Society was created to meet this want. The demand which this created for copies of the Scriptures led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society and all the blessings that that institution has conferred upon the world." A pretty good record for the Sunday-school!

But Mr. Bengough thinks that the Sunday-school has largely outgrown its usefulness in that respect—that it is now a "spiritual baby farm," to which careless parents send their children in order to get rid of them that they "may have a quiet snooze on Sunday afternoon." It is, to change the figure, very much like a kodak camera, "You press the button, we do the rest." It has almost entirely relieved the conscience of the parents of their responsibility for the spiritual education of their children. He asks, "What percentage of parents know even the name of the teacher to whom they have committed the spiritual up-bringing of their children? Men are more interested in the name of the man at the livery stable who feeds and grooms their horses."

He discusses the evils of children going unprepared to Sunday-school—they do not know the books of the Bible, do not know the leading events, do not know anything to make the lesson interesting. The following is his

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

What can parents do then to co-operate with the teachers, and make the school better, assuming that it is determined not to shut up our Sunday-schools?

1. Parents can get acquainted with the teachers, and tell them about their children—their little peculiarities, their difficulties, their surroundings. They can invite the teachers to their houses occasionally, so that the teachers may adapt their instruction to the home life of the scholars.

2. Parents can pray for the teachers, and see that their children do so also.

3. Parents can speak a cheering word occasionally to and for the teacher, and to the child they can show that they have sincere regard for the teacher. They should not allow the children to speak disrespectfully of the teachers.

4. Parents can co-operate with the teachers in the maintenance of order. There can be no true profit without respectful attention in the class, and parents are bound to command their children to give their teacher a fair chance.

5. Parents might occasionally bring together in their homes the class as a class, with the teacher, and spend the evening together in mutual intercourse and fellowship.

6. Parents might, could, and should help the scholars to prepare the lessons. Let the lesson for next Sabbath form the selection for reading at the family altar, and let prayer be offered for help in the study of it. Then let father, or mother, or both, explain the hard words, give the story of the lesson in its relation to the book of which it forms part. Give some facts about the lesson which cannot be found in the Bible; help the scholar to hunt up references, etc.

7. Parents should hear each of their children repeat the Golden Text before going to Sunday-school, and on returning they should catechise them on the lesson learned.

8. Parents should visit the school, should talk about the school to the children and in their presence; and

9. Parents should attend the Bible classes where possible, or co-operate as visitors, or in some other way, with the teachers and officers.

10. Parents should take an interest in the library of the school—get acquainted with the books; read them to their children, or better still, get the children to read them aloud around the fireside. So with the Sunday-school papers.

11. Parents who have no time to give to their children should drop lodges, clubs, politics, business, or anything else that interferes as a barrier to prevent the fullest, freest confidences between them and their children.

12. Lastly, parents should teach their children the truths of God's Word as fully and independently as though there were no Sunday-schools in existence—which then would not be if parents did this.

With much in Mr. Bengough's paper, we cannot but agree, and we strongly commend the twelve points of his application above given. There is, however, another side to the question. Of course, in urging his reform he presents all the reasons he can why it should be promoted. But there are many parents, even in our congregations—more's the pity—who are ill-fitted, or not fitted at all, for the discharge of their solemn responsibilities to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. These children would be almost entirely neglected but for the Sunday-school.

The one great advantage of the modern Sunday-school system is the enormous stimulus which it has given to Bible study, and to the preparation of short, terse comments and explanations of Holy Writ, whereby otherwise ill-equipped teachers may be able to do most efficient work. Light from every source has been focussed on the sacred page. Whole commentaries have been condensed into fly leaves, which are scattered like the leaves of autumn all over the land. And these leaves, like the leaves of the Tree of Life, are "for the healing of the nations." We have seen in the heart of the black belt in Alabama, poor, ignorant, but pious, coloured teachers, gathering the children around them, and by means of the cheap, simple

lesson helps provided by the school, enabled to bring to the minds of the children the best thought of the best Bible students of the world.

A corrective to the evils of which Mr. Bengough speaks, we think, will be found in the Home Department of the Sunday-school work. To this we referred in the November BANNER. No subject received more prominent attention at the late Sunday-school Convention. We shall refer to this again. This, we believe, will enlist the co-operation of parents as nothing ever did before, and will greatly react in promoting the efficiency and success of the Sunday-school.

OUR PUBLICATIONS.

Christian Guardian, weekly	\$2 00
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Guardian and Magazine together	3 50
Magazine, Guardian and Onward	4 00
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Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, DECEMBER, 1893.

Our Sunday-school Periodicals.

The Sunday-school Banner for '94 will keep in the very forefront of the lesson helps published on this continent, for full, yet concise, varied and comprehensive illustrative notes, engraved blackboard exercises and other cuts on the Sunday-school lessons. It will have full-page maps, which are so essential to a comprehensive conception of the countries referred to in the lessons. The first of these will be a beautiful radial key map illustrating the lessons from Genesis and Exodus in the first six

months. It exhibits the wide region from the Caspian Sea to the Libyan Desert, from Mount Ararat, in the north, to Mount Sinai, in the south.

It gives also a separate map of the rich delta of the Nile, showing the land of Goshen, the ancient cities of Bubastis, Rameses, Pithom and Memphis. Also special map of the Sinaic peninsula. It is printed in five colours, and shows the physical character of the country as "cultivable," "desert," "sand" or "gravel" and "granite."

These maps involve considerable additional expense, but no effort or reasonable expense shall be spared by publisher and editor in making this increasingly popular magazine worthy of the patronage of all our schools. Its size has been increased from thirty-two pages a month to fifty-four pages, without increase of price. An octavo volume of over six hundred pages for the small price of sixty cents, or five cents a month, is certainly within the reach of every teacher. Over one hundred pages of specially prepared lesson helps for ten cents.

Onward—Our new young people's eight-page weekly paper has been a great success. Has reached already a circulation of 35,000, and will be constantly improved. It is beautifully illustrated, adapted for circulation among the senior class of our Sunday-schools, Epworth Leagues, and other young people's societies, teachers, and in the homes of our people. It contains also notes on the Sunday-school Lessons, and hints and helps on Sunday-school work, suitable to the higher classes. It is the highest of our graded series of Sunday-school papers. Among the special features of the year will be strongly written Serial Stories and able Temperance and Missionary Departments. Single copies, or under five, 60 cents per year each. Five copies or over, to one address, 50 cents per year each.

Pleasant Hours—A weekly paper, four pages, illustrated; adapted for the intermediate scholars of our Sunday-schools. Special prominence is given to Christian Missions, Temperance, and Patriotic Topics, and Short Temperance Stories. *Pleasant Hours* has been considerably enlarged during the year and will print still more next year than during 1893. Price, single copies, 30 cents per year each; less than 20 copies, to one address, 25 cents per year each; over 20 copies, to one address, 24 cents per year each.

By taking both *Onward* and *Pleasant Hours* for the Senior and Intermediate Classes respectively, a greater number and variety of papers and quantity of specially prepared and graded reading can be procured for the same amount of money than in any other way.

The Sunbeam—Four pages, published every fortnight, is, as its name indicates, bright, sparkling, and beautiful, with reading and illustrations suitable for the primary classes. It contains short stories, simple

poems, and easy lesson notes. Under ten copies, 15 cents per year each; over ten copies, to one address, 12 cents per year each.

Happy Days—Four pages, published every fortnight, is of the same size and character as *The Sunbeam*, and is intended, when taken in connection with *The Sunbeam*, to form a weekly paper. The price is also the same, viz., under ten copies, 15 cents per year each; over ten copies, to one address, 12 cents per year each. By printing these "solid" both *Sunbeam* and *Happy Days* contain a considerably greater amount of reading than heretofore.

We confidently believe that there are no other papers in existence, of equal size, illustrations, and general excellence, that APPROACH THEM in cheapness. WE CHALLENGE COMPARISON.

They abound in Pictures, Poems, Stories, Sketches, and to a Canadian, what should be the greatest excellence, they are imbued with a thoroughly loyal and Canadian sentiment, which in itself should be the strongest commendation to their use in Canadian Schools.

The Berean Leaf—Four pages, monthly, contains Lesson Notes, Lesson Hymns, and Catechism Questions for each month, for distribution to the scholars. It is exceedingly cheap, 100 copies for one year, \$5.50, or 5½ cents per copy per year. No order accepted for less than six copies to one address.

The Berean Quarterly will resume its form of a few years ago, and will consist of sixteen pages each quarter, stitched, and will include Opening and Closing Exercises, Review Services, Descriptive Index, besides the Lesson Notes for each Sunday. Subscriptions must be for three, six, nine or twelve months, and begin and end with the regular quarters of the year.

The Quarterly Review Service gives Review Questions, Responsive Readings, Hymns, etc. Very popular. By the year, 24 cents per dozen; \$2.00 per 100. Per quarter, 6 cents per dozen; 50 cents per 100.

The above rates include postage to Canadian and United States post offices. Subscriptions to Newfoundland and Bermuda will be required to add postage at the rate of 1 cent per 2 oz. Specimens will be sent free to any address.

Graded Lessons—Schools desiring Graded Lessons will find them in these papers. The simplest of all, for the primary classes, are in *The Sunbeam*. For the great intermediate mass of scholars the lessons in *Pleasant Hours* will be best suited. For the advanced classes, *Onward* will be found in every way suitable; while the Commentary and full Lesson Notes in THE BANNER will be found specially adapted to the Bible-classes and Sunday-school Teachers of our Schools.

The "Methodist Magazine" for 1894.

WE beg to call the attention of our readers to the announcement of the programme of the *Magazine* for the coming year. It is, we believe, by far the best and most interesting and instructive announcement that that periodical has ever presented. Many of its articles will be of special interest to Sunday-school teachers, senior scholars, and, in fact, all Bible students and Bible readers. One of these series of papers which will run through the year, "Tent Life in Palestine and Syria," gives a full, fresh and accurate account from notes taken on the spot, of a journey from Hebron to Damascus. It describes with pen and pencil all the sacred places, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Bethel, Samaria, Nain, Cana, Tabor, Nazareth, Galilee, Tiberias, Capernaum, Dan, Mount Hermon, Baalbec, Mount Lebanon, Beyrout, and gives special prominence to the scenes in the life of our Lord which are the subject of the Sunday-school lessons for 1894.

The Rev. J. G. Bond, whose "Vagabond Vignettes" of travel have been read with such interest, will also discuss the important question of "The Site of Calvary—the Traditional and the True," "The Rock City of Petra," and other important physical Biblical questions. These questions will be illustrated with numerous and striking pictures of the sacred sites and scenes of the Lord's land.

Many schools, instead of library books, have taken from two to forty copies of the *Magazine*, as being fresher, brighter, cheaper and more interesting and attractive reading than can be procured in books, or in any other way, for the same amount of money. It will be furnished to schools for this purpose in quantities of two or more at the rate of \$1.60 each (for six months, 80 cents) instead of \$2, the regular price—a great reduction which is only warranted by receiving large orders from one address.

A special feature of the *Magazine* will be its beautiful illustrations. If these, some of which are reprinted in this number, be compared with *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, or the *Century*, they will be found to be much clearer and better engraved. They are specially made for us by a great house in Zurich, in Switzerland, where some of the best engraving of the world is done.

Special prominence will be given in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1894 to "SOCIAL TOPICS AND MORAL REFORM." These are among the most pressing issues of the times. Among the subjects treated under this head will be: "Prison Life in Toronto and Elsewhere," "Hours in the Toronto General Hospital," "The Training of the Blind and of Deaf Mutes in Canada," "The City, its Sins and Sorrows," "How to Save the Boys," "Hard

Times, Their Cause and Cure," "People's Banks, or How to Save Money," "The Rough House, and its Inmates," "Christian Socialism," "The Emancipation of Women," "Social Christianity at Work," "Profit Sharing," and the like.

Special attention will also be given to the important subject of "CHRISTIAN MISSIONS." Each number will contain, as during the past year, a striking paper, generally illustrated, on some biographical or other study of Christian missions. Among these will be: "Bishop Patteson, the Martyr of Milanesia," "Mission Work in China," "The Apostle to the Indians," "New Japan," "Women Workers in the Mission Field," "The Martyr of Erromanga: Missionary Trials and Triumphs in Madagascar"; also missionary papers by the Revs. Dr. Carman, Dr. Sutherland, Dr. S. P. Rose, and by a number of lady contributors.

Important papers on "POPULAR SCIENCE": "The Achievements of Electricity," "The New Astronomy," "Our Molten Globe," and others, will be presented.

A number of serial stories of special interest will be given, including Mrs. Barr's last story, one of great power describing phases of Methodist life in Cornwall. "Spindles and Oars," a story by a Methodist minister's daughter, describing life in a Methodist parsonage in Scotland; "The Dragon and the Teakettle," a temperance story by Mrs. Julia McNair Wright, of special interest. Also short stories and studies, by the author of the "Sticket Minister," the Revs. Mark Guy Pearse, Dr. Geo. Bond, J. V. Smith, D.D., and others.

Special prepared articles will be given by Chancellor Burwash, Bishop Ninde, Professor Wallace, Prof. Reynar, Dr. Allison; and contributions on subjects of vital importance are also expected from the Revs. Dr. Shaw, Dr. Douglas, Mr. E. Gurney and others.

Another series of papers, with striking illustrations, of great interest on "Light in Dark Places," by Mrs. Campbell. Among the other illustrated papers will be: "Over Mount Hermon," and "A Canadian Lady's Adventures in Greece," a continuation of "Tent Life in Palestine," by the Editor, "Italian Lakes," "Climbing Monte Generoso," "Florence and its Memories," etc., "Over the Semmering Pass," "Through Styria," "Among the Glaciers," "Round About England Papers," "Greater Canada," "Grand Manan," "The Mound Builders," etc.

The *Magazine* contains nearly one-tenth more matter than formerly, being printed solid and having more smaller type, than leaded as it formerly was.

Methodist Magazine, per year	\$2 00
Guardian and Magazine together	3 50
Guardian, Magazine and Onward together	4 00
Guardian, weekly	2 00
The Wesleyan, Halifax, weekly	1 50

Report of Secretary of Sunday-school and Epworth League Board.

THE comparison of the minutes of the Conference this year with those of last year shows the following very gratifying increase in almost every particular:

Preaching appointments	4,494
Increase	62
Schools	3,229
Increase	87
Teachers and officers	30,576
Increase	569
Scholars	244,774
Increase	5,416
Scholars members of the Church	53,935
Increase	4,088
Conversions during the year	11,503
Increase	1,246
Scholars learning the catechism	32,360
Decrease	211
Scholars who have taken the temperance pledge	71,913
Decrease	222
Money raised for missions	\$27,039.25
Increase	782.97
Money for school purposes	127,182.78
Increase	9,412.17
Money for Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund	2,748.21
Increase	241.71
Epworth Leagues to October	1,025
Increase since April, 1892 ..	278

It is gratifying to find that there is an increase of 35,517 reported in the circulation of our Sunday-school periodicals.

The increase of 87 schools and 567 teachers and officers and 5,416 scholars is cause for devout thanksgiving. To this grand success the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund has very largely contributed by making liberal grants to new schools in the more remote and newer parts of the country. If brethren will kindly try to establish a Methodist school wherever a handful of children can be gathered and a loving heart found to instruct them, the Sunday-school Aid Fund will help them to the extent of its ability.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL AID AND EXTENSION FUND.

I know of no fund of so small an amount which is doing so large an amount of good as the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund. Its income is about \$5,000, yet by its aid during the year 87 new schools have been established, and about 300 more, in remote and destitute places, have been assisted with books and papers. The degree of destitution existing in many of these places is difficult to conceive. I am continually in receipt of letters of a most pathetic nature,

showing the great straits under which our devoted missionaries labour, and their self-denying efforts to break the bread of life to people who are perishing for lack of knowledge, and to train up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. A superintendent in Newfoundland writes that to raise funds for the school the teachers have gone around and begged fish from the people, which they expected to sell for \$7, and asks help for their school. [Schools are expected to pay, if possible, one-half the value of the grant they receive.]

In many places instead of having the surfeit of books and papers which many possess, these Sunday-school papers are almost the only reading of any sort that they get. By means of this Society schools have been planted, out of which in many places churches have grown, among the fishing villages along the stormy coasts of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, in the lumbering settlements of New Brunswick and the Upper Ottawa, among the scattered farmsteads and ranches of Manitoba and the vast North-West Territories, and among the mining camps of British Columbia. I get many letters which touch my eyes to thankfulness and tears, expressing the good which is being accomplished by means of these papers, from such remote and lonely places as Topsail Harbour, Nipper's Cove, Seldom Come-by Inlet, in Newfoundland, and from Red Bay, Labrador, to the Upper Skeena and Naas River on the borders of Alaska. By these means many devoted Sunday-school workers are aided and cheered, who, in isolation and loneliness, far from the knowledge of the praise of men, but not unnoticed by the eye of God, are seeking to lay broad and sure and stable the foundations of the commonweal in righteousness and truth and the love and fear of God—the great principles which are the corner-stone of our national greatness and which are the pledge of the stability of our institutions.

It will be observed that though there is a steady increase in schools from year to year, there is also an increase in the number of preaching appointments, and there are still over a thousand appointments where no schools are organized. In a very large number of these which are chiefly in remote and mission circuits, there are union schools. In many places it would be impossible to organize an exclusively Methodist school. But year after year there are an increased number of distinctly Methodist schools being organized in connection with our work. A most gratifying feature is the increase of 417 in the number of schools which are kept open the whole year.

It is a cause for devout gratitude that over fifty thousand young people in our schools are active members of the Church, and that 11,503 conversions are reported in the schools during the year, but in the 190,000 who are not yet enrolled in the books of the Church there is a hopeful field for training in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

TEMPERANCE IN THE SCHOOL.

Nearly 80,000 are reported as having taken the pledge, making a very respectable army, and will doubtless greatly mould the future of the Church. We trust that superintendents and teachers will do all in their power to get all the children enrolled: thus will be trained up a mighty army who, in a few years in the home and at the polls, will do much to drive out of the community that crime against humanity and sin against God, the sale of intoxicating liquors. Our publishing houses at Toronto, Montreal and Halifax issue pledges in many forms. In the Sunday-school class book is also a form of pledge, in which every teacher should induce the young people in his class to inscribe their names.

The number learning the catechism exhibits a slight decrease and the number is much too small. A committee has the revision of the catechism in hand to somewhat simplify it. We trust that the new catechism will be far more extensively taught our young people.

THE EPWORTH LEAGUE.

Over one thousand Epworth Leagues have also been organized in less than four years. These are proving a vigorous auxiliary to the Church in carrying on aggressive Christian work, especially among its young people.

It is a matter for devout thanksgiving that in the four years that have elapsed since the organization of the League in the United States and Canada not less than one million Methodist young people have been enrolled in its ranks and organized into vital and vigorous auxiliaries of the Church, for Christian culture and for Christian service. If in four short years this new organization has reached such magnitude and accomplished such results, what may not be expected of it in the near future? Most thoughtful minds in Methodism on both sides of the line regard it as one of the most hopeful auguries of the future of our Church in these lands and throughout the world.

It is believed that the youthful consecration of these sons and daughters of the households of Methodism will intensely react in deepening the spirituality, broadening the intelligence, intensifying the loyalty, guiding the zeal, and in consecrating the givings of the Church of to-morrow. As we look back on the record of these four short years we may devoutly exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!"

The remarkable growth of the Epworth League is surely to be regarded as the seal of divine approval upon this organization, and is a demonstration that it is indeed a child of Providence, and that no mistake has been made in its adoption as the authorized young people's association of the M. E. Church South, and the Methodist Church in Canada. The Epworth League stands, in the words of John Wesley, for the broadest fraternity, and for the most

cordial fellowship with every soldier of Jesus Christ.

The following resolutions were passed by the Joint Sunday-school and Epworth League Board at its last session in August, 1892 :

RESOLUTIONS.

Whereas, the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund has, during the past eighteen years, rendered very valuable service in the planting of new schools and helping of needy schools by the distribution of nearly \$40,000 in grants of books and papers ; and whereas, there are many without schools, and must so remain ; and whereas, the resources of this fund have been taxed to the utmost, and in fact overdrawn, in helping to establish and sustain schools in remote and destitute neighbourhoods ; Resolved, That this Board recommend this fund to the kind consideration of our Sunday-schools everywhere, that by their increased liberality it may be enabled to more fully and efficiently help the many deserving claims which are laid upon it.

Resolved, That the marvellous growth of the Epworth League in three branches of Methodism during the last four years, reaching the grand aggregate of 1,000,000 of enrolled members, calls for devout thanksgiving to Almighty God ; that we regard this organization as a special means in the providence of God for deepening individual piety, for broadening spiritual sympathy, for intensifying religious zeal, for promoting co-operation in Christian work, for cultivating deeper acquaintance with the doctrines, traditions and heroic history of our beloved Church, and for cultivating the heartiest loyalty, not only to the local church, but to that great connexion of which the local church is but a part.

In the words of Wesley, "with charity to all and with malice to none," in the spirit of broadest fraternity and good-will, we urge the young people of our congregations everywhere to enroll themselves under the broad banner of the Epworth League, to adopt the constitution provided by the General Conference, and to become fellow-labourers with the pastors, the under shepherds in the flock of Christ, in bringing into the fold of the Good Shepherd the wandering sheep who know Him not, and in seeking especially to feed the lambs of the fold. Resolved, also, That we strongly urge, for the purpose of creating a more intelligent acquaintance with the historic past of Methodism in this land and in other lands, the adoption of the cheap but comprehensive courses of reading recommended in the constitution of the Epworth League.

Resolved, That *Onward*, the organ of the League, be heartily commended to the patronage of these societies as furnishing an important means of intercommunication between these societies and valuable helps, hints and suggestions for their administration.

We have heard with great pleasure of the great interest felt in the organization of the Junior League, that important auxiliary of our Epworth Leagues in training the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Resolved. That we strongly urge the organization of such Junior Leagues wherever practicable in accordance with the constitution prepared by the authority of this Board ; and for cultivating the heartiest loyalty, not only to the local church, but to that great connexion of which our churches are but a part.

Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund.

SPECIAL prominence is given to the missionary operations of the Sunday-school Board in promoting the establishment of new schools in remote and destitute neighbourhoods, by means of grants of books and papers from the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund. In this way 498 new schools were established in the last Quadrennium, and very many more, which in all probability could not have maintained an existence without the aid of the Fund, were liberally assisted. Schools applying for aid are required if possible, to contribute something toward the grant given. In this way the schools assisted have, during the last Quadrennium, contributed in part payment for grants the sum of \$5,175, as against \$1,822 during the previous Quadrennium, being an increase of \$3,353. The grants last year were about \$5,000.

Within a very small fraction of the entire income of the Board is disbursed directly for the benefit of poor schools, there being no expenses of management beyond a small amount for postage and petty sundries of the kind.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

The following, out of many scores of letters received, will indicate the character of the work that is being done by this Aid and Extension Fund. This fund has been growing in favour from year to year. The entire fund is devoted to the carrying on of our Sunday-school work, not one penny being diverted for expenses of administration, although this demands the expenditure of a great deal of time and labour.

A missionary in Manitoba writes, May 12, 1893 : "This Sunday-school is one of several struggling Sunday-schools on the prairie where most of the scholars come several miles to attend, and not one of the teachers lives less than three or four miles away. The Sunday-school helps and papers are a great boon to such a community."

Rev. W. Swan, of Burin, Newfoundland, writes : "These papers are in my judgment exercising a greater influence for good amongst our people generally than any other class of

literature; they are prized and read by both old and young, and to many they are almost the only reading matter that can be obtained."

A superintendent at Acadia Mines, N.S., writes thus in Dec., 1892: "We are very poor indeed, and if it was not for the help we get from you we could not keep up at all, for I do not think that there is a poorer mission in our Conference, all through the stoppage, about two years ago, of the principal works here. It would take too long to tell you the struggle that the minister and a few others have to maintain the cause here."

A correspondent in northern Ontario writes: "I am more than surprised to see you not only keeping up life, freshness, and ever-growing interest in the reading matter, but a constant improvement in the mechanical beauty of your periodicals year after year. The day of judgment alone will reveal the amount of good done to hundreds of thousands of the youth of our land by those marvellously cheap and instructive publications."

A minister in north-western Ontario writes: "I am glad to say our school is doing well. We organized with one teacher and four scholars a year ago; we now number seventy-five, and expect to reach a hundred before Conference. The assistance from Sunday-school Aid Fund was very valuable in giving us a start."

Another missionary writes: "In visiting the homes I found that many had not enough chairs to seat their family upon. I found one family of eight members living in one room, four beds being in a room. I therefore, from what I have seen, and from what I know of the people, confidently appeal to you for assistance."

From New Brunswick: "I cannot find words to express the welcome which these papers meet in the schools, and also in the homes from which no scholars can come."

A brother in British Columbia writes: "This mission is over two hundred miles in length, and we can get only a few scholars in a place, but we must do what can to save them. Although a very hard field, we rejoice that the work of God is making some advancement."

Another missionary writes: "To those scholars and teachers who go on the Labrador, we shall send papers, etc., during the fishing season, so as to keep them supplied with profitable reading matter."

A minister in Newfoundland writes: "You have no idea of the great good being done by the supplies above named. Since my last, over fifty of our Sunday-school scholars have been brought to God and joined the Church, many of whom are grown-up young women, and a few young men and boys."

A minister in New Brunswick writes: "The people are all very poor, and not able to support a minister, and they think the next best thing is to keep up their own Methodist School, and to keep Methodist teaching alive among their children."

Another minister in New Brunswick writes:

"These precious papers are about the only religious literature ever put into some of these homes. This fund is as truly a mission fund as that which bears the name."

Another missionary in Newfoundland also writes: "In some of the poorer homes, no other literature—periodical or otherwise—is ever seen. The parents 'con' the papers almost as eagerly as the youngsters. Our enterprising Canadian Church is doing a grand work in the gratuitous distribution of healthy literature for juvenile capacities. With many thanks on behalf of one hundred and fifty delighted children."

A missionary in Newfoundland writes: "The papers come as blessings to many of the homes in this neighbourhood. A succession of bad seasons have reduced very many of the families to the extremest poverty, in which state they are unable to obtain sufficient clothing necessary to attend the ordinary means of grace, and to these homes the papers bring the only bit of Gospel they are able to obtain, exclusive of the pastoral visitation. The children, many of them, come short of life's common necessities, to say nothing of clothes and boots."

A missionary in Newfoundland writes: "The papers are a great boon to us. They are eagerly sought after by adults as well as children, and eternity alone will reveal the amount of good done by them. Methodism has a hard fight here. When going about among these people, I have often thanked God that I had papers that I could give them so full of the Gospel message."

From New Brunswick: "I cannot find words to express the welcome which these papers meet in the schools, and also in the homes from which no scholars can come, for surplus numbers from one independent school are promptly distributed in the course of my pastoral visitation."

A missionary on the Island of Grand Manan, N.B., writes: "Your Sabbath-school publications are considered by all classes here superior to any extant, as far as we know. You are doing a glorious work for the youth of our fair Dominion."

An earnest missionary writes from New Brunswick: "The school has all the appearance of a glorious success. Up to date I have collected back numbers of your *soul-stirring* papers, which I have given to the scholars—even the *old* papers have worked up an interest. Thank God! I expect the new ones to influence many to gather into our schools."

WHETHER God's omnipresence is simply potential or essential in the sense of being coextensive with immensity is a question with which we need not trouble ourselves. The fact is that no creature can either be or go where God's knowledge will not follow him and His power will not act upon him. This to everyone is practical omnipresence for all the purposes of divine action.

Book Notices.

A Physician's Notes on Apostolic Times. By REV. S. V. ROBINSON. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Toronto: William Briggs. Price 60c.

This striking title is given to a brief comment on the Acts of the Apostles, including a discussion on the personality of Luke, the sources of his information and other aspects of the Acts. The subject is treated with freshness and vigour.

Bible Characters. By D. L. MOODY. New York and Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company. Toronto: William Briggs.

This book consists of a series of studies of Daniel, Enoch, Lot, Jacob, John the Baptist, the blind man and Joseph of Arimathea, by the greatest evangelist of the present, or we think, of any other age. It is marked by the homely shrewdness, sanctified commonsense and intense moral earnestness, which characterize every utterance of the author.

The Primary Teacher, With Helps and Exercises. By MARTHA VAN MALTER. Introduction by JESSE LYMAN HURLBUT, D.D. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Toronto: William Briggs.

The parting admonition of the Saviour, "Feed My Lambs," is becoming more and more appreciated in the Church of Christ. The primary class and the junior Epworth League are attracting attention, thought and labour, as never before. An experienced primary worker gathers into this little volume a number of hints, helps and suggestions on class organization, ways and means, methods and devices, the class singing, praying, working, child festivals, junior league, temperance, teaching with illustrative exercises. It will be of great value to every primary teacher or junior league leader.

Bible Studies Covering the International Sunday-School Lessons for 1894. The Pentateuch and the Life of Christ. By the REV. GEORGE F. PENTECOST, D.D. Pp. 415. Cloth, \$1.00; paper, 60c. New York and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell.

Among the many helpful and stimulating commentaries published on the Sunday-school lessons for the ensuing year, this volume will doubtless rank among the most popular. Sunday-school teachers and Bible students have already learned to look for the annual appearance of Dr. Pentecost's "Bible Studies," which are intended to cover the whole Bible in the course of seven years. The plan and typographical dress of all the volumes in this series is uniform, and those who procure the whole set will have a cheap, neatly bound, and con-

venient sized commentary on the Bible. We commend the present volume to our teachers and senior scholars for its full, lucid, terse, and skillfully combined exposition and exegesis.

Illustrative Notes, 1894. A guide to the study of the Sunday-school lessons, with original and selected comments, methods of teaching, illustrative stories, practical applications, notes on eastern life, library references, maps, tables, pictures and diagrams. By JESSE LYMAN HURLBUT and ROBERT REMINGTON DOHERTY. Pp. 396, octavo. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Toronto: William Briggs. Price \$1.25.

This handsome volume is an illustration of the noble advance which has been made in the preparation of Sunday-school helps under the impetus of the International Lesson System. The editors seem to have aimed at surpassing any previous volume. The notes are very full, and the range of illustration is wide, including citations from nearly four hundred authors. There are also many maps, charts, diagrams, and black-board exercises, and specially engraved pictures illustrating the lessons. With the monthly visits of the BANNER supplemented by this book, any teacher will have ample apparatus for the teaching of the lesson.

Manual for Church Officers. By D. H. DYER, D.D. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Toronto: William Briggs.

This is a well-considered and well-written book on an important subject. It treats first the responsibilities and rewards of official membership in the Methodist Church, their relation to each other, to the pastor, and to their own religious life; the specific duties of official members, of ministers, of local preachers, Sunday-school superintendents, Epworth League leaders, stewards, trustees, etc. There are also chapters on lay organization of the different churches, Methodist, Protestant Episcopal, Presbyterian and Baptist, by Professor Little and others.

On the religious life the following excellent points are made: "The official member must be a nobler and holier man than before. Church work in itself does not sanctify. Our great need is spiritual-mindedness. How shall a busy man to an already burdened mind add the cares of the church and retain this spiritual mind? As all men do, only by prayer and submission of the whole being to God, by study of His word and personal work for their fellowmen; and verily they shall have their reward. Their work is the greatest committed to human hands."

These words apply with special force to the great army of Sunday-school teachers who are doing so much to lay the foundations of a nobler civilization, and a greater manhood and womanhood, than the world has ever seen.

Praying and Working: Being Some Account of What Men Can Do When in Earnest. By the REV. WILLIAM FLEMING STEVENSON, Dublin. New York: The Order of St. Christopher. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. xiv.-411.

The stories of Christian philanthropy and Christian missions told in this book have more than the interest of romance. Immanuel Wichern's "Rough House" at Hamburg has been the inspiration of Bowman Stephenson, Dr. Bernardo and others, in rescuing the boys from slum life to honest industry. But the German Brothers of the "Inner Mission," we think, have not yet found their counterpart in any English-speaking community except in the Brotherhood of St. Christopher, at the Burnham Industrial Farm, New York, by whom this book is published.

In what would seem the uncongenial soil of this new world, has been successfully established one of these loving Protestant brotherhoods which is working out by methods of Christian love, the salvation of rough lads, either criminal or of criminal tendencies, and training them to uprightness and industry.

The story of Theodore Fliedner and his deaconesses is more familiar and even more remarkable. John Falk and John Gossner are, or were to many of us before this account was published, mere names and nothing more, if, indeed, they were even names. The narrative of the wonderful achievement of Louis Harms, in Christian labour and missionary work, is one of the most remarkable in the volume.

Literary Notes.

The Missionary Review of the World for November. The marvellous story of "Metlakahla," the centre of early missionary work among the Indians of Canada and Alaska, is graphically told by Rev. D. L. Leonard; and Dr. Sutherland follows with a comprehensive and interesting paper on "Missions Among the Chinese in America." Published monthly by Funk & Wagnalls Company, 18 and 20 Astor Place, New York, at \$2.00 a year.

Late numbers of *The Living Age* have many articles which few would willingly leave unread. Among the most striking are "A Visit to Prince Bismarck," by George W. Smalley; "Ethics and the Struggle for Existence," by Leslie Stephen; "Some Ruskin Letters," by George Stronach; "The Fall of The Ancient Regime"; "John Ruskin"; "The Tuscan Nationality," by Grant Allen; "American Life through English Spectacles," by A. S. Northcote; "Under British Protection," by J. Theodore Bent; etc., etc. The names of the authors are a sufficient guarantee of the value of their papers. The subscription price is \$8.00 a year. Address Littell & Co., 31 Bedford St., Boston, Mass.

Opening and Closing Services.

FOURTH QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

- I. Silence.
- II. The Gloria; or, the Doxology (all standing).
- III. The Lord's Prayer (all standing).
- IV. Responsive Sentences.
 - Supt.* O how I love thy law;
 - School.* It is my meditation all the day.
 - Supt.* Open thou mine eyes,
 - School.* That I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.
 - Supt.* I will walk at liberty;
 - School.* For I seek thy precepts.
 - Supt.* The law of thy mouth is better unto me
 - School.* Than thousands of gold and silver.
 - Supt.* Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
 - School.* And a light unto my path.
- V. Singing.
- VI. Prayer.
- VII. Responsive Reading of the Scripture appropriate to the Sunday School Lesson for the day.

LESSON SERVICE.

- I. Class Study of the Lesson.
- II. Singing Lesson Hymn.
- III. Recitation of Title, Golden Text, Outline, and Doctrinal Suggestion.
- IV. Review and Application of the Lesson, by Pastor or Superintendent.
- V. The Supplemental Lesson. [Special lessons in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.]

CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. Singing.
- II. Responsive Sentences.
 - Supt.* Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,
 - School.* To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power,
 - Supt.* Both now and ever. Amen.
- III. Dismissal.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FOURTH QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE EPISTLES.

A. D. 45.]

LESSON X. GRATEFUL OBEDIENCE.

[Dec. 3.]

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

Authorized Version.

James 1. 16-27. [Commit to memory verses 26, 27.]

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18 Of his own will bega he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridlETH not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Revised Version.

16 Be not deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

19 Ye know *this*, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your

23 own selves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing. If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridlETH not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

TIME.—Written (perhaps) in A. D. 45.
PLACE.—This epistle was written from Jerusalem by James, the Lord's brother, to the Jewish disciples of Christ throughout the Roman Empire.
DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The unchangeableness of God.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Grateful obedience. James 1. 16-27.
 Tu. Remember and do. Deut. 4. 1-8.
 W. God's requirement. Micah 6. 1-8.
 Th. Hearing and doing. Luke 6. 45-49.
 F. Fruit-bearing. John 15. 1-14.
 S. Unworthy example. Matt. 23. 1-12.
 S. The true motive. Rom. 6. 11-18.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 168, New Canadian Hymnal.

As pants the hart for cooling streams.

No. 165, New Canadian Hymnal.

Work, for the night is coming.

Work through the morning hours.

No. 166, New Canadian Hymnal.

Now, the sowing and the weeping.

Working hard, and waiting long.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Father of Lights, v. 17-21.

By whom, when, and for what purpose was this epistle written?

Who was its author?

What reason for hearing and doing the word is given in verse 17?

How should we hear and speak?
 What should we "lay apart?"
 In what spirit should we receive God's word?
 What is the word here called? (Verse 21.)
 How does the word save our souls?

2. The Law of Liberty, v. 22-26.

Why should we do as well as hear the word?
 To what is the mere hearer likened, and wherein?

What illustration of this is found in Rev. 3, 14-18?

What law is here spoken of, and what is it called?

What shall be the result of doing as well as hearing?

What is the prevailing trait of a vain religion?

3. The Pure Religion, v. 27.

How is a genuine religion shown?

What may we learn from the phrase "unspotted from the world?"

What was said about the lifework of our Lord?

Practical Teachings.

What are here shown—

1. As the characteristics of a false religion?
2. As the characteristics of a true religion?
3. As the results of a true religion?

Hints for Home Study.

1. How many of the leaders of the primitive Church were named James, and which of them wrote this epistle?
2. Find what you can concerning the life and death of this apostle.
3. Collect the figures of speech used in this lesson, and define each.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Father of Lights, v. 17-21.

From whom do all good gifts come?
 Who is "the Father of lights?"
 What is said of his character?
 Why and how did he beget us?
 In what should we be quick, and in what slow?

What cannot man's wrath work?

What should be laid aside?

What should be meekly received?

How are we saved through the truth? (1 Thess.

2, 13.)

2. The Law of Liberty, v. 22-26.

What is necessary beyond hearing the word?

To what is a non-doer likened?

What does such a one forget?

What man is pronounced blessed?

Whose religion is vain?

Who is the perfect man? (James 3, 2.)

3. The Pure Religion, v. 27.

What is pure religion?

Before whom is this shown?

How does Jesus describe pure religion? (Matt. 23, 35, 36.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. The source of all blessedness?
2. The secret of all happiness?
3. The way of usefulness?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

This lesson uses many figures of speech to make plain the truths taught. Tell what is taught by each of the following: the sun; the first fruits of harvest; a mirror; a wild horse; the spattering of mud on a rainy road.

What can you ascertain concerning the author of this epistle?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was James? **One of the apostles.**
 To whom was his letter written? **To the churches abroad.**

From whom do all good gifts come? **From the Father of lights.**

What did he send to his children? **The word of truth.**

What does this word teach us to hear? **The truth.**

To what should we be slow? **To wrath.**

What does harm? **The wrath of man.**

What should be laid aside? **All that is wrong.**

What should be received with meekness? **The word of God.**

Who deceive themselves? **Those who hear God's word and do not obey it.**

What is such a man like? **One who forgets how he looks.**

What is the perfect law of liberty? **The law of God.**

What man is blessed in his work? **The man who obeys this law.**

What is said of the man who speaks wrong words? **His religion is vain.**

What is pure religion? **To love God and the neighbor.**

Words with Little People.

A FORGETFUL HEARER IS . . .	{ Careless.
	{ Disobedient.
	{ Untrue.
A DOER OF THE WORD IS . . .	{ Thoughtful.
	{ Earnest.
	{ Loving.

Lesson Precept.

Be ye doers of the word.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH.D.

General Statement.

James, who wrote the epistle from which this lesson is taken, was called "the Lord's brother" because of his close relationship to Jesus, which cannot, however, be certainly defined; he has been called "James the Just" because of his devout fulfillment of the Hebrew law, even after he had become a Christian leader. Tradition tells us that during most of his public career he was almost as profoundly venerated by the unbelieving Jews as by the Christians. During the life of our Lord, James, it would seem, did not believe in him, and was not therefore numbered among the apostles; but after the resurrection he took foremost rank in the infant Church, and was called "Bishop of Jerusalem." His epistle contrasts strangely with the epistles of Paul, which, however, it does not contradict, but complements. Its spirit is that of the Sermon on the Mount, and its figures of speech resemble those of Jesus. Emphasizing good works rather than faith, and passing almost silently by the great doctrines of the atonement of Jesus and his resurrection, James shows with unexampled clearness the holy characteristics which belong to those who have accepted that atonement and become heirs of the resurrection of the just. The Gospel of Salvation—the good news that

"Nothing, either great or small,
Remains for me to do"—

is announced by Paul; the Gospel of Righteousness—"Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works"—is proclaimed by James. Neither can be consistently received without the other. The old historians tell us that James in his old age died a martyr because of his distinct statement that "the Son of man sitteth at the right hand of power, and will come again on the clouds of heaven." Our lesson is peculiarly complementary to the teachings of Paul. It sketches the perfect man continuing in the Gospel law of liberty, and shows how love may be manifested by obedience.

Verse 16. Do not err. Strange, that either Jews or Christians should need to be placed on guard against the foul doctrine that God is the author of sin; and yet the same error has sprung up in later centuries in various sections of Christendom. **My beloved brethren** is added for the sake of emphasis. The epistle was addressed primarily to Jews who recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

17. (1) *Not only does God originate no evil, but he is the Author of all good.* **Father of lights.** By the Hebrew idiom "father" was used in the sense of source, or originator; so the "Father of lights" means the Origin of all brightness. "Lights" here refers first of all to sun, moon, and stars. But not only in the physical world has our Lord said, "Let there be light." All the knowledge and holy inspiration which illuminate the darkness of men's minds and souls come from him. **No variableness, neither shadow of turning.** In James's day clocks were hardly known, and time was marked by sundials; that is, by the "shadow of turning" of the sun. But the dials were not made upon scientific principles. They could only show the time of daylight, whether at midwinter or at midsummer, divided into twelve parts, or hours; so that the season of the year might be rudely guessed from the length of the shadow cast by the gnomon, which in winter reached the wider of two semi-

circles marked on the dial, in summer came near to the lowest. This variableness was a great annoyance to those who desired an exact record of time, but they knew no better means than the dial. And they blamed not the dial, but the sun, with which there seemed to be so much "variableness." With God, James says, unlike the sun which he has created, there is no "daily change of noonday height, nor hourly turning shadow."

18. **Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.** This "begetting" is what we call the "new birth," or "conversion." (2) *Christians are brought into new spiritual life by God's will.* Their good purposes never originated with themselves. "We love him because he first loved us." This is one of the evidences that God's nature is to do good and not evil. **A kind of first fruits of his creatures.** The "first fruits" so often alluded to in the Scriptures were those early specimens of harvest and vineyard which were consecrated to God in the temple, as a symbol of the consecration of the entire produce. So the firstborn of man and cattle were formally given to God. "The first Christians, to whom St. James is writing," says Alford, "were, as first born of the great family, thus dedicated to God." We are here taught that (3) *The life of man must be renewed from its very roots*; that (4) *Only God can impart this renewal*; and that (5) *This regeneration is a free act of God's*

love, not induced by any act of man. **The word of truth.** The Gospel message which brings to men a new life and a new heart.

19. Wherefore. This should be "Ye know," as in the Revised Version, or "Know ye," a command. **Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.** Profoundly wise advice for all men everywhere. (6) *Be eager to listen, not eager to discourse, and not easily provoked.* The truth is as wide in its application as the Church of Christ, and as enduring as the world; and yet we are probably not wrong in supposing that it has reference primarily to the difficulties which the Jewish disciples met whenever they attended synagogue; and the apostle is advising them to provoke their unbelieving Jewish friends as little as possible. Stephen and Paul may "dispute" with great advantage to God's cause; so, perhaps, may the great leaders of our modern churches—though of this I am not so sure; but for you and me this nineteenth verse is a Silver, if not a Golden, Rule.

20. The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Good men sometimes forget themselves in the whirl of passion, and show bad temper in the advocacy of a good cause. Every such mistake is a serious one. (7) *God's goodness needs no human infirmity to defend it.*

21. Lay apart. Set aside; put away. **Superfluity of naughtiness.** This phrase is wonderfully improved by being turned into the pure Saxon of the Revised Version, "overflowing of wickedness." **Receive with meekness.** With humility and without pugnacity. **The ingrafted word.** Better, "the implanted word." Sown in our hearts, like seed in the soil.

22. Doers of the word. Make it your business to practice Gospel principles. **Deceiving your own selves.** As everyone does who regards Church or Bible, or any means of grace, as anything more than means. We are not to rever-

ence the letter merely; we are to have the spirit in our hearts. It should be our first work in life to put into practice the principles of God's word.

23, 24. His natural face. His born features; the face which he has carried from his cradle, and has seen by reflection thousands of times, and which yet he can recollect only vaguely. **A glass.** A mirror. The ancients had not the art of making glass for mirrors, and so used brass and other metals instead. Many people are stirred in conscience when they see their moral likenesses, but soon forget their condition because they neglect their duty.

26. Religious. Worshipful; addicted to religious practices. **Bridleth not his tongue.** A few verses before this lesson begins James taught that the true worshiper of God should control his temper as a horse is controlled with bit and bridle. He here refers to that thought. **Vain.** Empty, good for nothing.

27. Pure religion and undefiled. The religion that is negatively and positively pure. **God and the Father.** Our God and Father. **The fatherless and widows,** mournful as their condition is, are, thank God, but few in comparison with our whole population, and they are not set off in any way as a distinct class. But their loneliness and need appeal to many, even to those who have not identified themselves with Christ. But in the ancient world cruelty and lack of conscience of the governing classes made innumerable widows and orphans, and the prevailing selfishness led to their being set apart almost like an outcast class; wretched, forlorn, without any defense, they were exposed to every abuse and to every temptation. **Keep himself.** With jealous watchfulness and prayer. To keep ourselves is both God's work and our work. Compare John 17. 15 with 1 Tim. 5. 22. **Unspotted from the world.** In the world, but not of it.

CRITICAL NOTES.

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The Epistle of James is eminently practical. It is addressed to "the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion" (that is, to those who have become Christians), and is designed to encourage patience under trial and to warn against certain errors in belief and practice. This epistle is remarkable for the correctness of its Greek diction, says Dean Scott in the *Bible Commentary*, yet it is essentially Hebrew in tone of thought and feeling, and even phraseology. James seems to be imbued with the wisdom and literature of his people. It is to be observed how much stress he lays on the sins of the tongue and its unruliness, and on the relations between rich and poor. His style also is of that gnomic character so common in Proverbs.

Verses 16-18. Our lesson for to-day opens

with an assertion illustrative, on the positive side, of the statement in verses 13, 14, that all good comes from God, most especially that spiritual blessing of regeneration the possession of which strongly contrasts with the condition of heart presented in verses 14, 15.

19-27 show how the word is to be received, and what effect it will have on the life.

16. Be not deceived. That is, do not think God tempts you; your own lusts draw you away and entice you to evil. God is the source of every good gift.

17. Every good gift and every perfect boon. This phrase in the Greek forms an hexameter verse, and has been thought by Ewald to be a quotation from some Hellenistic poem. *Dosis*, gift,

and *dorema*, boon, may be distinguished by referring one to "the gradual instilling of wisdom," and the other to "the final crown of life."—*Mayor, Epistle of James. Father of lights, with whom can be, etc.* God is the creator of the heavenly bodies, but especially is he the source of all intellectual and spiritual light. However, unlike the variation and change constantly going on among the heavenly bodies in the alternations of night and day, or in eclipses, God remains the same; across the light of spiritual truth and wisdom emanating from him no shadow of eclipse is ever cast.

18. He brought us forth. The Greek word belongs to the mother: "He is our Father and mother in one."—*Bengel. By the word of truth.* The instrument or means of regeneration. See 1 Peter 1. 23, 25; Eph. 1. 13; John 6. 63; 17. 17.

19. Ye know this. Referring probably to verses 16-18. **Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.** Be not too ready with your advice; do not be opinionative; especially do not get angry with people who differ from you. It is wise to listen and learn something valuable, worth saying. It is bad to speak on an empty brain.

20. Worketh not the righteousness of God. Man's wrath is mere ignorance and selfishness mixed. He cannot see far enough, nor can he be disinterested enough, to determine on what occasion wrath should be displayed. See Rom. 12. 19.

21. Wherefore put away, etc. A necessary preparation for the proper reception of the implanted word which is able to save the soul. See verse 18. On **overflowing of wickedness** see margin. Malice includes the sensual and malignant sins, those against one's self and those against one's neighbor.

22. The word must be not only received, but also obeyed, in order to work its saving results. To think that hearing is sufficient is self-deception, the worst form of deception, as it indicates spiritual blindness to one's own real condition.

23-25 illustrate the preceding verse by a figure. **Beholdeth himself** (verse 24) is strongly contrasted with **looketh into the perfect law** (verse 25). The former indicates a careless glance without a second look; the latter marks the attitude of "an eager observer as he bends over and gazes." **The perfect law, the law of liberty.** That new law of love which is always contrasted with the old ceremonial law, and which shows its fruits of joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, self-control, against which there is no law; it is a law of liberty.

26. Thinketh himself to be religious. Possibility of self-deception again shown, particularly in the use of the tongue in a way inconsistent with the word that has been taught. A religion

that cannot purify and exalt the speech is empty; it is as good as no religion at all.

27. Pure . . . undefiled. Positive and negative characterization of religion. These words would have great force with Jews, who put much stress on them, especially in a ceremonial sense. James gives the words an eminently practical meaning. **Before God and the Father.** The only source of correct judgment. How does God look at our lives? is the only question of moment. See Matt. 6. 1-18. **Visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.** The Father's especial care is over those who are left fatherless and alone. The substance of Christian ethics is to give help where it is needed. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6. 2). **To keep himself unspotted from the world.** Purity of character for one's self and helpfulness for others make up the religious life. Moral purity is not to be attained by withdrawing from the world (John 17. 15), but by living aright in the world. Its pursuits, its ideals, its judgments, and its estimates of life are in no way to corrupt the thought or modify the practice of the child of God.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." But is every gift from above good and perfect?

God bestows the sunshine, rain, and other good things on the just and unjust alike (Matt. 5. 45); but certain things we receive "from above" accord with our character. "To the evil comes evil—"fire from the Lord out of heaven" for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19. 24); plagues upon the Egyptians (Psalm 105. 28-36); "evil from the Lord" to the gates of Jerusalem (Micah 1. 12). God creates evil (Isa. 45. 7); but it is an evil of punishment, not of sin. As St. Augustine (cited by Pusey) has aptly said, "Evil which is sin the Lord hath not done; evil which is punishment the Lord bringeth."

Question 2. Could "the lively hope of the inheritance" have been communicated to man apart from the resurrection of Christ?

It could not. God assuredly chose the only possible way to communicate to humankind the hope of the inheritance "reserved in heaven." He would be unjust to permit his Son to assume our nature, taste death for every man, and rise again from the dead when the knowledge thus conveyed to a sinful world might have been effectually imparted in some other manner. In the ninth chapter of Hebrews it is argued thus: "And for this cause he [Christ] is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the

promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator."—*Rev. J. B. Kenyon.*

Question 3. *If "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," how then shall "the wrath of man praise him?" (Psalm 76. 10.)*

In neither of these passages is the wrath of man represented as a thing to be commended. The meaning of the reference in the Seventy-sixth Psalm is that God by his wisdom and power overrules that which of itself is an evil, so that in the display of his might, as well as in the final result, he is praised and his name is glorified. The meaning of the second passage is that the natural result of anger is unrighteousness. The corrupt tree brings forth corrupt fruit.

Question 4. *What is religion as meant by the author of this epistle? Do the virtues referred to in verse 27 constitute its sum and substance?*

James means by religion neither its inward life nor that form of its outward expression which we call worship, but that other form we call conduct. And while the virtues referred to do not constitute its sum, they do represent its substance. The world leads us to sins which are against ourselves—sins of impurity; and against our fellows—sins of injustice. "Unspotted from the world" represents, therefore, the virtues of personal purity and justice to others. "Visiting the fatherless and widows" represents what is necessary to supplement justice—that is, mercy. Purity, justice, and mercy are representative of the virtues which constitute outward religion.

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

Laws of Christian Conduct.

- I. THE LAW OF DIVINE LIKENESS.
The Father... begat he us. v. 17, 18.
"Giveth us richly." 1 Tim. 6. 17.
"Power... sons of God." John 1. 12.
- II. THE LAW OF SELF-CONTROL.
1. *Slow to speak, slow to wrath.* v. 19.
"Better than the mighty." Prov. 16. 32.
2. *Bridleth not... tongue... vain.* v. 26.
"Offend not in word... perfect." James 3. 2.
- III. THE LAW OF TEACHABLENESS.
With meekness... ingrafted word. v. 21.
"Heard the word, keep it." Luke 8. 15.
- IV. THE LAW OF OBEDIENCE.
Doers of the word. v. 22-25.
"Enter in... he that doeth." Matt. 7. 21.
"Happy are ye if ye do." John 13. 17.

V. THE LAW OF SYMPATHY.

- Pure religion... to visit.* v. 27.
"Sick, and ye visited." Matt. 25. 36.
"Judge the fatherless." Isa. 1. 17.

VI. THE LAW OF PURITY.

- Unspotted from the world.* v. 27.
"Not conformed to this world." Rom. 12. 2.
"Commandment... is pure." Psalm 19. 8.

Thoughts for Young People.

The Law of Liberty.

1. *The law of liberty calls upon us to see God in his true relation toward us, as our loving Father, constant in his love and abundant in blessing.* (Verses 17, 18.)
2. *The law of liberty calls upon us to exercise self-mastery, to hold passion in check, and to hear others candidly, without being eager and self-asserting in uttering our views, since God's cause is never furthered by a spirit of controversy.* (Verses 19, 20.)
3. *The law of liberty calls us to a spirit of meekness and teachableness in relation to the word of life, which we are not to make a subject of strife, but a means of salvation, by taking it to our hearts.* (Verse 21.)
4. *The law of liberty requires us not only to hear the word, but to be doers of it; making practical obedience to God's will the chief business of life.* (Verses 22-25.)
5. *The law of liberty demands goodness of life. It requires us not only to be worshipful in demeanor, but to show the sincerity of our worship by doing good and being good.* (Verses 26, 27.)

Lesson Word-Pictures.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

There is a thought coming over him with force, that he was of so much interest and value to God that he had been made his child, begotten "with the word of truth," raised, exalted to this high privilege to be "a kind of first fruits of his creatures!" Watch his face! How it kindles with the ardor of a soul having its first great thought upon this relation of special service to God! His soul is thrilled all through and through. What carefulness should there be in every act, every purpose! O, so "swift to hear, so slow to speak, so slow to wrath!" Let the sense of hearing be only a watchman on the wall to catch every sound from without. Is it a cry of distress from one who stands in sore need, his hands beckoning, his voice begging? Let love be quick to speak and give relief. But what if the eye flash, the cheeks flush, the breath come quick, because a derisive, mocking word is heard? He wants to speak. There is a hurricane of heat swelling in his breast. Shall

he be swift to speak as well as hear? No; he lets the hot blood cool, the whirlwind die down. The tongue is restive, but he holds it in with bit and bridle. "Slow to speak, slow to wrath," he murmurs, "like my Master!" It is not human wrath that works divine righteousness, he reasons. Rather, through that gateway kept open between his soul and heaven let peaceful, gracious influences throng in!

How swift he is to hear the word of truth! He may be in church. How eagerly is the face upturned to listen and receive! What thoughts of heaven come flying into his soul, as if good angels, there to fold their wings! It may be that the cross of Jesus suddenly bursts upon the sight, and from that drooping head and anguished form love's tones issue with tender, solemn appeal to this human heart. What swiftness to hear there is then!

And his name is not only Hearer, but Doer. He has hands with which to lift, and feet wherewith he runs love's errands wherever the opportunity be seen.

Wherever seen! Because he has an eye to see, how much it means! It is not an eye to forget. Was it he that, passing a mirror, saw his features in its brightly polished surface—an image lingering there one moment—and then did he hasten on to forget all that faithfulness of reflection?

No, one day he saw himself in the Gospel mirror. How poor and deficient and needy a creature was there. He seemed to see, also, a cross rising up out of that brightly shining surface. Redeeming love was there, its voice echoing forth its assurance of forgiveness to the penitent, of liberty to the bound, of accepted service to every willing heart. He saw, he yielded his heart to the gracious encouragement, and on what a joyous service he entered!

"Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath!" Who is practicing deceit? There may be one at the church service to-day. He has bent his knees in prayer. He has sobbed, "Our Father!" He has risen and sung jubilantly, "Praise God!" What a sounding bridle is on his tongue! Follow him, though, out of Sunday into Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. The bridle is off. There is a loose speech in his business. In his home there is a tongue whose only "bit" is when he has bitten somebody. Is not his religion vain?

But follow religion's true possessor into the daily life. In yonder house of what a beautiful scene he is the center! There is a widow bowed amid her fatherless ones. No fire is in the stove. No food is on the table. But a step is heard at the door. He enters who bears religion's impression and is its expression also. With him come food, warmth, joy, heaven, Christ. What sincerity of faith!

To-morrow he is out in the world. The pleasures of sin beckon. From its enchanted gardens are wafted the drowsy odors of poison flowers. Soft

music breathes out its enticement. Sweet voices call. O how swift he is to hear and see, yet turn away and keep himself unspotted from the world! To good angels and his Lord he keeps clean and pure the chambers of his soul.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

Verse 17. That James should designate God as the "Father of lights" has a meaning to an oriental mind quite beyond what at first impresses us. Star worship, moon worship, and sun worship are, one may say, universal in Asia to-day, except as limited by the presence of Mohammedanism and Christianity. The Chinese emperor represents the nation in his annual worship of the heavens. The Hindoo worships, he rhetorically says, three hundred and thirty-three millions of gods; but, whatever else he may or may not worship, he worships the sun, making offerings to it in connection with his sacred bathing and in other ways. The Parsees are said to be sun worshippers, which is not quite exact of the modern Parsee in India, who worships with his face turned toward some bright object, never blows out a candle or extinguishes light in any form, and may be said to pay his adoration to light. The Arabian peninsula was full of astral worship. The Babylonian and Assyrian pantheons teemed with symbols of the celestial bodies which were deified and in whose hands was human destiny. There is something positively sublime in this phraseology of James, with the environments of the Orient, declaring that God was the Source, the Fountain, the Author, the Creator, and therefore supreme over all these so-called gods. It was a master stroke as well as a master truth to announce to an oriental world that all illumination comes from the supreme One, who said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Verse 25. "The perfect law of liberty" is nowhere even announced outside of Christianity. Not long ago a man came to Bombay who had loaded himself down with six hundred pounds of chains. He had come from North India. It was said that when he traveled by the train he was charged partly as a passenger and partly as freight. He was a Mohammedan and wished to go as a pilgrim to Mecca. To reach Mecca he must take a steamer. A ticket was bought for him, but when he arrived at the ship the astonished captain declined to allow him to come aboard. In his chains were tied some large iron pegs and a heavy iron mallet. They were used in fixing him firmly down when he wished to stay in any particular spot. When inquired of why he was carrying such a crushing load, he replied that as a young man he was very wicked and wished to give up his wicked

edness, and so he determined to chain himself to keep from sin. But he still sinned, and so he put on another chain, then another, until at last there hung from his limbs the six hundred pounds, and he could no longer walk.

Verse 26. "If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridled not his tongue," is true in all nations, but eminently among people who have reduced villification by speech to such a black art as cannot be represented to decent society. What the Hindoos and Mohammedans call *gali dena* may be called giving abuse by the tongue; but much of it could not be translated into any other language of the West, dead or living, without paraphrase and exposition. This vile vernacular is systematically cultivated and taught even to little children in the mother's arms. A writer recently said in *The Missionary*: "No one who has not lived in a heathen country and mixed freely with heathen, understanding what this tongue utters, can have any conception of the vile, filthy, and atrociously abominable language which this little vile member can give expression to, especially when brought into play by heathen women; and it is one of the surest signs of conversion when the tongue has been 'tamed' and its vile habits cleansed and purified. It is very often the case that Christians suffer great losses because they cannot give license to the tongue, and the heathen, knowing this, take advantage to harass and defraud them of their property." A man, all the members of whose family were Christians but himself, told a missionary he had to remain heathen to protect the others, as, being Christians, they could not use vile language.

By Way of Illustration.

Verse 17. All good things flow from the upper spring. There are lower channels or conveyances, such as the written word, sacraments, prayer, meditation; but as David said, "All my springs are in thee." The Father of lights is the fountain head.—*Manton.*

The greatest excellencies in us do as much depend on God as the light does upon the sun. Here is wisdom, but it is from above. Here is some weak love working toward Christ, but it is from above. Here is joy and comfort and peace, but these are all the flowers of paradise; they never grow in nature's garden.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 21. "Receive the word." Young converts are often told to look up to find Christ. Rather, look for Christ in his word. The Bible is the wire along which runs the electric current—the Holy Spirit.—*Bishop Vincent.*

Verse 22. A minister asked a poor shopwoman of his congregation what she remembered of his

last Sunday's sermon, which had been about dishonesty. "I can't remember anything," she said, "not even the text, for I'm a poor hearer; but I went home and burned my measure, which was a little small." "Ah," he answered, "you were the best kind of a hearer, for you were a doer of the word."

Verse 25. Mere professors have but a slight and glancing knowledge of the word; like a man beholding his face in a glass while passing it, or like the glare of a sunbeam upon a wave, it is seen and gone in a moment. But in meditation there is this benefit, that a steady, constant light is the result. The expression "looketh into" refers to the bending posture of the cherubim that were over the ark of the covenant and the anxious search which the angels use to find out the mysteries of salvation: "Which things the angels desire to look into." The word means not a transient glance, but a bending of the body with a piercing inquiry of eye; it means diligence of search and investigation.

Verse 27. The key word of James is, Works. It is the epistle of holy living. Great stress is laid upon works, not apart from faith, but as both the proof and fruit of faith. Every true inward grace bears outward fruits. Paul the apostle of faith and James the apostle of works do not conflict. They stand not face to face, beating each other, but back to back, beating off common foes.—*Dr. A. T. Pierson.*

When the disciples find themselves like their Master going about and doing good, the people who watch them know well how to account for it. "They have been," they whisper, "with Jesus."—*Drummond.*

The soul of religion is the practical part. This Talkative is not aware of; he thinks that hearing and saying will make a good Christian; and thus he deceiveth his own soul. Hearing is but the sowing of the seed; talking is not sufficient to prove that fruit is in the life. The end of the world is compared to our harvest; and you know men at harvest regard nothing but fruit.—*Bunyan.*

The Teachers' Meeting.

Let the lesson be read in both versions, the old and the Revised; one section of the teachers' meeting reading a verse from the old version, and another, or a single reader, giving the same verse from the new. Notice the corrections of the Revised Version.... Keep in mind James's purpose, not to speak of the Gospel in its essence as an experience, but in its outward aspect as a life.... Define the use of the following expressions, and their special reference in this lesson: "Father of lights;" "shadow of turning;" "first fruits of his

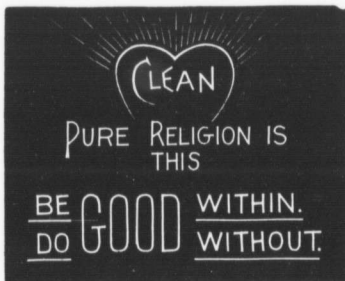
creatures;" "righteousness of God;" "superfluity of naughtiness;" "ingrafted word;" "face in a glass;" "law of liberty;" "pure religion;" etc. . . . Taking the GOLDEN TEXT as the key, notice, first, what things are here forbidden, taking up the verses in order, and observing their probabilities. . . . Then, what things are here required. . . . Or, take "the law of liberty," and see what are the principles of life which it suggests, as here illustrated. . . . A good way to begin the lesson in the class would be by showing a small handmirror, and talking about it, as in verses 22-25.

References.

FREEMAN'S HANDBOOK. Ver. 23: Metallic mirrors, 139. . . . FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 3712, 7522, 7895, 9152, 10332. Ver. 16: Prose, 3997. Ver. 17: Prose, 2451, 2548, 5492, 9008, 10250. Ver. 19: Prose, 3317, 3318, 5628. Ver. 22: Prose, 6805, 7225, 9362. Vers. 23, 24: Prose, 2807, 2820. Ver. 27: Prose, 4946, 4276.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



I. Our blessings come from God. II. The greatest blessing is salvation. III. He bestows it freely; it is a gift. IV. Having received it, we should do something on our part (verses 21, 22). V. In doing this added blessings will be given (verse 25). VI. The true worshiper must control his words as well as his acts. Careful what you say, when you say it, where you say it, and to whom you say it. Learn to control your temper. Do not gossip, and hold no communication with "they say" people who speak ill of their neighbors. Read verse 27. What does the blackboard say? Pure religion is to be good *within* (because it is possible to seem to be good and yet be very bad)—and what? *Do good without*. That is it. "Keep himself unspotted from the world," not shut up in a convent, but "be ye doers of the word," with a clean heart and an active, useful life.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY MARTHA VAN MABTER.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Hearing and Doing.*

Introductory. The letter from which this lesson is taken was written by one of the disciples of the Lord Jesus, whose name was James. Jesus had many followers who were called disciples, because they learned of him. The word disciple means a learner. Would you not all wish to learn of Jesus, the great teacher, and thus become his disciples?

James wrote this letter to Christians who were scattered abroad in different lands. They must have been glad to have it read to them. You must remember that there were no books or papers printed in those days, but letters were written and sent by the hand of faithful messengers. The Christians to whom James wrote this letter were men and women whom he loved and whom he wanted to help. They needed help very much, for they were hated and badly used because they were Christians. Hence in this letter he tells them how to live right, and tries to cheer their hearts in the midst of sorrow and of temptation. As this letter was written to help people to be good, it belongs to us, and we must learn all we can from it.

[Make a sun with yellow crayon at the top of the board, with rays reaching down several inches on the board. In the rays print "Father of Lights."] Which do you like best, a sunny or a cloudy day? The sun gives warmth and light. It makes the trees and grass grow and the flowers blossom. The sun is so good and helps us so much that we often use it as a kind of picture of the good God. James says that God is the Father of lights. All the light that shines upon the world, and all that shines in our hearts, comes down from him. "Every good gift" comes from him. Let us think of some of our good gifts and remember that each one comes down to us from God our Father because he loves us. [Let children help to name some of their blessings, and print on the rays.]

Do you know that one of the best gifts our Father has given us is the Holy Bible? It is worth more than gold to us, because it tells us how to live here so that we may live in heaven when this life is over. The letter that James wrote is a part of the Bible, and it has a good lesson for us to-day.

What is the word I am printing? You may spell it as I write: H-E-A-R-I-N-G.

Harry was playing on the porch one morning, when his papa called him. "Harry, here is a letter which must go out in the next mail. Will you carry it to the office right away?" "Yes, papa," said Harry; "put it on the table." Papa went back to his work, and Harry kept on playing. He heard, but did not do, and so he forgot, and his papa was much displeased and troubled.

This is the way some people hear what God says

to them. They do not make haste to do what he says, and so they become "forgetful hearers" of the word. James says that such people are like a man who looks at himself in a glass, and then goes away and forgets how he looks. God is not pleased with us if we hear his word and forget to do it. He wants us to be "doers of the word," and not hearers only.

To do God's word is to obey it. A boy heard, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." But that same day he went behind his father's barn to play ball with another boy! He was a hearer, but not a doer of the word.

God's word tells us to speak the truth, to be kind, to obey parents, and many other things that any little child can understand.

Who among you will try not only to hear, but to do, or obey, God's word?



[Use Hears Symbol.] The one who hears but does not obey is like this dead branch. There is no sweet, good life of God in him. He cannot bear fruit, and no lovely blossoms of good thoughts and deeds are seen in him. But the one who obeys God's word is like the living branch, pleasant to see, and good for all right uses. We will print over this dead branch "Hearer," and over the living one "Doer."

Which one do you want to be like?

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

O, let us be glad in our Saviour and King,
Wondrous words! how rich in blessing.

Come with thy sins to the fountain.
Jesus, my Saviour, thou Lamb of God.
More love to thee, O Christ.

No. 2.

There is a name I love to hear.
God loved the world of sinners lost.
Ever looking upward, as a trusting child.
"Jesus only," is the motto.
O! the thought that Jesus loves me.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. From whom do we receive every good and perfect gift? **From the Father.**
2. How should we receive the word? **With meekness.**
3. What should we be? **Doers of the word.**
4. When is religion vain? **When the tongue is not bridled.**
5. What is pure religion and undefiled before God? **To visit the afflicted and live uprightly.**
6. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"We love him,"** etc.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

73. What was the Lord's deepest humiliation?

He was "reckoned with transgressors" (Luke xxii. 37), and endured the shameful death of the cross.

Philippians ii. 8. Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

About A.D. 65 (†). LESSON XI. THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE. [Dec. 10.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Col. 1. 12.

Authorized Version.

1 Peter 1. 1-12. [Commit to memory verses 3-5.]

1 Pe'ter, an apostle of Je'sus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pon'tus, Ga-la'ti-a, Cap-pa-do-ci-a, A'si-a, and Bi-thyn'i-a,

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Je'sus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Je'sus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Je'sus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through

Revised Version.

- 1 Pe'ter, an apostle of Je'sus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pon'tus, Ga-la'ti-a, Cap-pa-do-ci-a, A'si-a, and
- 2 Bi-thyn'i-a, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Je'sus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.
- 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Je'sus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Je'sus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven
- 5 for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be re-

faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations :

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Je'sus Christ :

8 Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory :

9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the *grace that should come* unto you :

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven ; which things the angels desire to look into.

6 vealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold temptations, 7 that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and 8 honor at the revelation of Je'sus Christ ; whom not having seen ye love ; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory : 9 receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls. Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that *should come* 11 unto you : searching what *time* or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories 12 that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the Gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven ; which things angels desire to look into.

TIME OF WRITING.—After A. D. 63 ; possibly after A. D. 67. **PLACE.**—This epistle was probably written from the city of Babylon. **ENVIRONMENTS.**—It appears to have been addressed to the districts in which Paul had labored, possibly during the imprisonment of that apostle. It contains "elevated Christian doctrine mixed with practical exhortation." **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The second coming of Christ.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The heavenly inheritance. 1 Peter 1. 1-12.
Tv. Waiting. Rom. 8. 18-28.
W. A place prepared. John 14. 1-10.
Tk. With Jesus. John 17. 20-26.
F. Fitted for the inheritance. Col. 1. 1-13.
S. A grand inheritance. Rev. 21. 1-7.
S. Face to face. Rev. 22. 1-10.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 248, New Canadian Hymnal.

Give me the wings of faith to rise
 Within the veil, and see.

No. 246, New Canadian Hymnal.

In the Christian's home in glory,
 There remains a land of rest.

No. 256, New Canadian Hymnal.

I will sing you a song of that beautiful land,
 The far away home of the soul.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Inheritance of Faith, v. 1-5.

To whom was Peter's epistle addressed ?
 By whose means were the Christians of these places converted ?

In what sense are Christians the "elect" of God ?

Mention the saving work of each person in the Godhead as given in verse 2 ?

What ritual practice is alluded to by "sprinkling of the blood ?"

What is the meaning of the phrase "a lively hope ?"

Into what hope has God caused us to be born again ?

In what sense is eternal life our inheritance ?

What four descriptive phrases are used concerning this inheritance ?

What keeps a Christian safe ?

How is salvation to be revealed in the "last time ?"

2. The Trial of Faith, v. 6-8.

In what happy state of mind were the Christians, in spite of their manifold temptations ?

To what metallic test is the trial of faith compared ?

At what time will the final test be applied to our characters ?

What makes us, who have never seen Christ, able still to love him ?

By what means can "joy unspeakable" be obtained on earth ?

3. The End of Faith, v. 9-12.

Who had inquired and searched diligently concerning this salvation?

What did these prophets foresee?

Who really saw what the prophets had foretold?

What additional blessing was received by Christians after Jesus went to heaven?

What is the attitude of angels toward these divine mysteries?

What should be our constant attitude of soul? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are we taught that—

1. In the severest trials the Christian may be happy?

2. Under the most powerful temptations the Christian is kept by the power of God?

3. For each Christian an inheritance is reserved in heaven?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Write a brief sketch of Peter's life, mentioning, if possible, five events which occurred after the resurrection of our Lord.

2. Find, if possible, an event in Paul's life connected with each of the five places mentioned in verse 1.

3. Find a passage in one of the prophets which contains an allusion to the refiner's fire.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**1. The Inheritance of Faith, v. 1-5.**

To whom did Peter write this letter?

What had the Father, Son, and Spirit done for them?

What blessing did Peter invoke on them?

To whom did he offer thanksgiving?

What was the ground of their hope?

What was the object of their hope?

What thanksgiving would this call forth?

How were they kept unto salvation?

When would that salvation be revealed?

What says Paul about this final reward? (2 Tim. 4. 8.)

2. The Trial of Faith, v. 6-8.

What was the present experience of these disciples?

Than what was their trial of faith better?

What was the object of the trial?

Whom did they love, though unseen?

What fruit followed their faith?

What says Jesus of those who believe without seeing? (John 20. 29.)

3. The End of Faith, v. 9-12.

What was the reward of their faith?

What interest had the prophets in this salvation?

After what did they search?

What twofold testimony did the Spirit bear?

To whom did the prophets minister?

How was the Gospel preached in early days?
Who besides prophets were interested?
Whom does God intend shall learn from the Church? (Eph. 3. 10.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. The nature of the Christian's inheritance?

2. The Christian's title to his inheritance?

3. The cost of the inheritance of faith?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find a passage in one of the prophets which speaks of the refiner's fire.

Find a passage in Isaiah which tells of the suffering of Christ and the glory which should follow.

Find as many cases as you can where angels assisted our Lord in the great work of redemption.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was another apostle who wrote letters? **Peter.**

To whom did he write two letters? **To the strangers abroad.**

To whom were these people not strangers? **To Christ.**

Who had chosen them to be his servants? **God the Father.**

What happy hope had he given them? **The hope of life in heaven.**

What reason had they for this hope? **The resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

How were they kept from the evils of this world? **By the power of God.**

What sometimes made them sad? **Temptations.**

What is more precious than gold? **The trial of faith.**

Why are such trials allowed? **To make the soul ready to see Jesus.**

Who are happy in knowing the Lord Jesus? **Those who believe in him.**

What is the end of true faith? **Salvation.**

Who told of the grace that was coming? **The prophets.**

What Spirit showed them these things? **The Spirit of Christ.**

What did not the prophets understand? **When Christ would come.**

Who wanted to look into these things? **The angels in heaven.**

Words with Little People.

We may not see our blessed Lord
While here on earth we stay;
But we may know him through his word,
And live with him alway.

Lesson Motto.

Whom not having seen, we love.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

The First Epistle of Peter is of peculiar interest (1) because of its author—the fervid, magnanimous apostle, who throws his picturesque characteristics into his writing as thoroughly as he did into his speech and action; (2) because of the place of writing—Babylon (that Peter, a quarter of a century or so after our Lord's resurrection, should write this letter from Babylon to the "Dispersion in Asia" lifts a veil and gives a glimpse of the world-wide activity of the apostles, of which the "Acts" is a mere fragmentary record); and especially (3) because of the gentle, tolerant, comprehensive catholicity of the epistle which this "pillar of the Church" writes. It is an instructive task to compare this letter in plan, in doctrine, and in literary style with those of Paul. The occasion of the epistle was the "fiery trials" of the Christians, who were just at this time exposed to unusual outrage on every hand. Our lesson speaks of that calm faith in God which is especially needed in such hours of trial; the foundation of such a faith, its trial, and its outcome.

Verse 1. An apostle of Jesus Christ. A delegate; one especially chosen by the Messiah of God to represent him. **Strangers.** Instead of "strangers scattered throughout," the Revised Version has "sojourners of the Dispersion;" aliens would perhaps be a better word than either, and it is used with reference to the people among whom these foreign-born Jews dwelt, for Peter is now writing to representatives of that large portion of the Jewish race who had not been born in Palestine. He writes, of course, only to those who are "elect"—that is, God's "chosen ones;" in other words, Christians. "Four several, but related, meanings are expressed by the word elect: (1) chosen; (2) separated; (3) excellent; (4) beloved; in all of which senses it applied to those here addressed. See 1 Thess. 1-4."—*Curry*. **Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia.** These five names stand for Asia Minor at large. Cappadocia was an ancient kingdom which had comprehended all the country lying between Mount Taurus and the Euxine Sea. Pontus was originally part of Cappadocia, and Galatia was the province which bounded Cappadocia on the north and west. Bithynia was northwest of Galatia, and comprehended the region directly opposite Constantinople. Asia, as here used, included the three eastern provinces of Asia—Mysia, Lydia, and Caria—together with the interior of Phrygia. See map of Asia Minor.

2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God. The word elect, or "chosen ones," is joined in the Revised Version to "sojourners" in verse 1. The choice and foreknowledge here spoken of are not the capricious decisions of an arbitrary will; the chosen ones were chosen because of their longing for God. They are the "choice" ones. **Through sanctification of the Spirit.** This is the means by which God's choice is made effective unto obedience. This is the purpose for which God chose his people. **Sprinkling of the blood.** This is a poetic reference at once to the death of our Lord and to the blood of the sacrifices. Christ's death made the love of God effective to us.

Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. They had both grace and peace; but there is no limit to God's blessing, and no limit to Peter's prayer.

3. Blessed. God cannot be blessed in the sense in which man is blessed. For two very different Greek words one English equivalent has been used by the translators. "Blessed" in our Lord's beatitudes means happy—to be congratulated; here it means honored—to be adored. **According to his abundant mercy.** We had no right to forgiveness; it is of God's free will we are saved. **Begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus.** Peter here speaks especially of the experiences of the apostles, which were, however, largely typical of the experiences of Christians in all ages. All the hope of Jesus's followers died with his death, but by his resurrection a new and infinitely brighter hope was "begotten"—a hope not merely of a life beyond death, but of a purer, broader, more vigorous life of intellect and heart than without Christ it ever could have entered the heart of man to conceive. *Dr. Brown* profoundly notes that John is the disciple of *love*, Paul of *faith*, and Peter of *hope*.

4. An inheritance. If begotten by God, we are his children, and if children, then heirs. **Incorruptible, and undefiled.** Without the corruption of either death or filthy life. **That fadeeth not away.** Not only is our glorious inheritance proof against decay ("incorruptible"), and proof against impurity ("undefiled"), but its grace and glory can never lessen. **Reserved in heaven.** Preserved. Christians are like these "dispersed" Jews, sojourners in a strange land; but there is a permanent home kept for them in heaven.

5. Who are kept. The inheritance, it has been quaintly said, is reserved for us; we are preserved for it. The word for "kept" means garrisoned, or defended, as in a castle. As *Bengel* says, the inheritance is kept, the heirs are guarded. **The power of God.** If God be for us, who can

be against us? Our defense is stronger than all our enemies. **Through faith.** Without faith we can do nothing. **Unto salvation.** Ready to be revealed in the last time. Notice that the Revised Version puts the article "a" before salvation. We are saved now, but the fullness of salvation will never be disclosed to us until the last days.

6. Wherein. This "wherein" refers to all the preceding advantages and privileges. **Greatly rejoice.** Exult. **Now for a season.** This is a beautiful assurance, all the stronger because it is by implication that the present trials which they are suffering are temporary. **If need be.** God never sends a sorrow that is not needed. **Ye are in heaviness.** Ye were grieved. **Manifold temptations.** A manifold fable, or manifold envelopes, will furnish handy illustrations of this text. These good Christians, and many others since their day, were severely strained by one trial folded into another, as if trials were tucked away in every corner of their lives.

7. The trial of your faith. The testing of your faithfulness. **Much more precious than of gold.** That is, the result of the testing is more

precious. When gold has been tested the dross is removed and the pure ore is greatly increased in value; but that is little compared with the increase of value which the earnest Christian has as a result of trial. **Gold that perisheth.** It is less perishable than most other precious metals, but it is far from being incorruptible and undefiled and fadeless. **Though it be tried with fire.** Read "yet" in place of "though." Though perishable, yet it is tried; but our souls are imperishable. **Might be found.** Recognized, tested, proved. **Praise and honor and glory.** Christians are downhearted even now, but they will all have praise and honor and glory if faithful to the end.

8, 9. Having not seen, ye love. He has just said in the last words of the preceding verse, "the appearing of Jesus Christ." These Christians did not see him when first he appeared, but loved his character. **The end of your faith.** The issue or reward of your faith; the goal of your faith; the salvation of your souls. From how much our souls are saved; to how much they are saved!

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. Peter, an apostle. The name conferred upon him by his Lord (Matt. 16. 18). **To the elect . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.** The puzzling questions raised by metaphysicians out of such expressions are vain. The foreknowledge of God, in its relation to the free will of man, has never yet been explained in a satisfactory way, except to those who have a theory to support on one side or the other. As yet the whole problem is a mystery about which it is presumptuous for us to dogmatize. The apostle, we know, simply says, "The elect," chosen ones, "according to the foreknowledge of God." We also know that the whole weight of New Testament teaching is against favoritism in God's treatment of his children. Whatever the future world may reveal to us, it will not reveal anything in God inconsistent with his character of Love. **Sojourners of the Dispersion.** See James 1. 1. The Jews of the Dispersion considered themselves sojourner: who were some time to be gathered again from all nations and brought back to Jerusalem. Peter doubtless here spiritualizes this conception, considering all believers as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, whose hope was centered upon that New Jerusalem in the heavens. Heb. 11. 10 sets forth the same conception concerning Abraham.

2. In sanctification of the Spirit. Sanctification means separation from the evil of the world and consecration to God. The expression here may mean either the work of the divine Spirit in the soul or consecration of the human spirit itself to the service of God. **Unto obedience**

and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The end of our election and consecration is obedience to God and purification from our sins through the atonement of Christ.

3-5. "Thanksgiving for the privileges of Christians; namely, regeneration, living hope, and a future inheritance and preservation unto final salvation."

6-12. The Christian is to rejoice in the midst of severe trials, inasmuch as suffering attests and develops his faith.

3. A living hope, as opposed to a vain, unreliable hope. Living, in that it was based on the work of the risen Lord. Peter so frequently and earnestly dwells upon the resurrection and the hope that springs therefrom that he has been called the apostle of hope, as Paul has been called the apostle of faith, and John of love.

4. Unto an inheritance. Not only is there a new life within the soul, but there is an objective future life reserved in heaven.

5. Who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation, etc. Faith—that is, trust—is the spiritual condition by which we appropriate all the circumstances of life as providential manifestations of God's power in guarding us unto salvation. **Ready to be revealed in the last time.** The salvation is not yet fully manifest, although secured. The "last time" means the *parousia*, but whether or not Peter thought it near is not made evident from the text.

6. If need be, as though no affliction comes except through the wise dispensation of God for

our good. We need it and therefore it is sent. **Manifold temptations.** See margin, Revised Version.

7. That the proof of your faith. This testing of trials brings out the faith of the believer to his great honor and glory at the *parousia*. The beauties of character now veiled will then be revealed in fullness.

8. Perhaps a memory of the words of Jesus to Thomas (John 20, 29).

10. The prophets sought and searched diligently. Dean Plumptre takes the prophets to be those of Christian times, especially because they are instructed by the spirit of Christ. But for the most part it is considered that the Hebrew prophets are meant.

11. What time or what manner of time. "The first refers to the simple date, the second to the characteristic features of the time." **The spirit of Christ.** This shows the identity of the Hebrew and Christian dispensations. The same love that manifested itself on Calvary was revealing itself on Sinai.

12. Now have been announced unto you through them that preached the Gospel. The same spirit working out the divine plan inspires those that preach the Gospel.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. *If the Christians were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God," "begotten by God," and "kept by the power of God" alone, what place is there for their own choice or effort, either in beginning or continuing the Christian life?*

Though Christians are "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God," they must believe in order to be saved (Acts 16, 31); those that believe are the ones "elected" to salvation (1 Cor. 1, 21). The condition of being "born of God" is faith in Jesus Christ (1 John 5, 1); and only those are "kept" who trust Jehovah (Isa. 26, 3). Obedience (Heb. 5, 9) is as necessary as faith. The continuance of the Christian life is conditioned on our "patient continuance in well-doing" (Rom. 2, 7).

Question 2. *How can it be said that with God "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," when he is scripturally represented as glad and sorry, angry and repenting, choosing men and rejecting them?*

We would find it difficult, if not impossible, to think of God without investing him with certain human traits. Hence, accommodating themselves to our infirmity, the Scriptures present to us the divine character anthropomorphically. But God is not subject to changefulness or caprice. When our relation to him is altered in any wise the change is in us, not in him. His lines have gone out through all the earth, and they are

eternal. If we choose to abide under the law of evil, from the necessity of his nature God cannot do other than manifest toward us his displeasure. When he smiles upon us it is not that he has changed, but that we have chosen to dwell under the law of righteousness rather than of sin. If a vapor move between us and the sun, it is our eyes that are darkened; the sun shines steadily on as it did before.

Question 3. *Does salvation mean "getting to heaven?" What is "heaven?"*

Salvation certainly contains the thought of entering upon the heavenly inheritance. The phrase, "getting to heaven," is quite as certainly far from being an adequate definition of salvation. In the New Testament meaning of salvation there are at least these factors: First, rescue from present trouble and danger; second, the cure of the soul, its restoration to spiritual soundness and health; and third, the preservation of the soul from final loss and ruin. "Heaven" is the eternal home of the saved, and also the state of blessedness in which the saved are to dwell forever.—*Rev. F. H. Knight.*

Question 4. *Why should trial and temptation be permitted? Why should there not be an abundant entrance into glory without them?*

Perfect through growth alone is the law of such finite life as contains no evil. Perfect through suffering as well is the law of fallen nature, in which are germs of evil. Growth alone would mature these as well as the good. Untried prosperity would never know them as evil. But trial leads to self-examination, a prime condition of their removal. Prosperity also develops independence and world-dependence. Trial and temptation show us our weakness and deepen our dependence on God. Without trial and temptation there could be no entrance into glory, because they are thus conditions—not causes—of the removal of evil and rebellion.

Analytical and Biblical Outline. Christians in Eight Aspects.

I. ALIENS IN THE WORLD.

The strangers scattered. v. 1.

"Love not the world." 1 John 2, 15.

"The world hateth you." John 15, 18, 19.

II. CHOSEN OF GOD.

Elect... of God the Father. v. 2.

"Hath chosen us in him." Eph. 1, 4.

"A chosen generation." 1 Peter 2, 9.

III. SANCTIFIED BY THE SPIRIT.

Through sanctification. v. 2.

"This is the will of God." 1 Thess. 4, 3.

"Ye are sanctified." 1 Cor. 6, 11.

IV. SPRINKLED BY THE BLOOD.

Sprinkling of the blood. v. 2.

"Blood of Christ....purge." Heb. 9. 14.

"Cleanseth....from all sin." 1 John 1. 7.

V. EXPECTING AN INHERITANCE.

Hope....to an inheritance. v. 3, 4.

"Partakers of the inheritance." Col. 1. 12.

"If children, then heirs." Rom. 8. 17.

VI. KEPT BY DIVINE POWER.

Kept by the power of God. v. 5.

"No man....pluck them out." John 10. 29.

"Preserved in Jesus Christ." Jude 1.

VII. REJOICING IN TRIAL.

Rejoice....trial of your faith. v. 6, 7.

"Will refine....as silver." Zech. 13. 9.

"After....suffered....perfected." 1 Peter 5. 10.

VIII. COMFORTED BY THE WORD.

Prophecies of the grace. v. 10-12.

"Testimony of Jesus." Rev. 19. 10.

"Prophets....have desired." Matt. 13. 17.

Thoughts for Young People.

Concerning Doctrines for Young Christians.

1. *By the foreknowledge of God we have been chosen to eternal life.* Not because of any goodness in ourselves, but (1) by the blood of Jesus Christ, which has made an atonement for every sinner; (2) by obeying the voice of God, which every sinner may do; (3) and by the sanctification of the Spirit, which every ransomed soul receives as soon as it becomes obedient. (Verse 2.)

2. *By the abundant mercy of God we have been made his children and heirs.* Sometimes the figure of adoption is used as if, like homeless little wanderers, our great heavenly Father had taken us in. But this and other texts bring the tenderer thought to us that God has "begotten us again." Of course, all figures stop short of the reality, and we must beware lest we read into such phrases as this a mystery that they do not hold. He simply is our Father, with a love for us, one by one, which no earthly father has for any or all of his children; and, being his children in this true sense, we are his heirs, and our first inheritance is the bright hope of a resurrection such as Jesus had. Then there comes the hope of a heavenly inheritance, enduring, indissoluble, and fadeless. Lastly, we who are so liable to fall are kept for these glories by the power of God.

3. *He who has thus saved us and secured our eternal salvation tries us for our good.* Gold is not put into the crucible for the sake of the dross; that is tried out of it and thrown away, and the gold that is left is far more valuable without the dross than with it. So the "praise and honor and glory" which shall be ours at the appearing of Jesus Christ will come to us because there have been taken away from us by the trials of earth the

dross and filthiness which was mingled with our nature. It is love that tries us. The more precious anything is the more need there is that it should be purified by trials. Faith grows stronger, purer, and richer by trials.

4. *All these rich experiences, present and future, are made ours by faith, hope, and love.* The salvation of our souls is the end of our faith. The glories of heaven are the object of our hope. Our Christian experience is the triumph of our love.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

There is some poor "stranger" away up in Pontus or Galatia. Come with me to his home. It may be only a hut. How scantily it is furnished! Examine his social standing. He has none. People speak of him as "that shabby Jew." They turn up their noses at him and turn away their heads. He has few friends. He does menial work. He is too insignificant to be pitied.

How solitary is his walk in life, and through what low places it runs! So says the world. That poor, solitary, unknown, ignoble "stranger!" He is of such high descent that God is his father. He is so known in heavenly places that the very Spirit of God has set him apart and sanctified him as precious. He is of such priceless worth that the crucified, risen Jesus has set his blood-mark on him and recognized him as a friend, and walks with him. He has such treasures in waiting for him that angels and archangels are its strong keepers.

O that inheritance to which he is looking forward! It is not a bank to be robbed. It is not a railroad to be run off its own track and its bonds collapse in a panic. It cannot fly away on the awful wings of fire. It cannot be blown down by tornadoes or swept away by floods. Yes, his heavenly Father will see that he has his inheritance. The stars above are not thicker than the shining sentinels who guard the walls inclosing his treasures.

So this poor stranger is going on to a prince's inheritance. He is just going through Pontus, halting for a day, resting for a night—only a pilgrim passing in disguise to his royal station. Some day it will be revealed to him. The gates will be thrown open, and to his own he will pass in joy and triumph. O day to be longed for, when that "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" shall be like a palace with every door wide open.

Until that day of revelation what if he have trials? He has them surely. He was asked to participate in sacrifices to a pagan god the other day, and because he refused he was mobbed. The body was bruised, but his soul was safe with his Father. He has had trials in his home. Follow him into that still, shaded little room where he turns back a sheet and looks at his beloved

dead. It was his all. He is alone now. How anguished is his heart! Out of the black shadows springs an ugly temptation to give up his faith in God. No, he cannot do that. Something he saw the other day occurs to him and helps him. He saw the gold in the crucible. How hot and pitiless was the fire, crumbling and melting the beautiful gold; but O the dross that came away! And the refiner, taking it all away, looking down upon the crucible, saw his face there. "It is my faith," says the poor stranger. "It is precious to God as that gold in the crucible; O so much more precious! And he will look down, maybe, and see in the poor stranger's heart just himself, and in the life without something of the Saviour's life, I trust."

Yes, the life of the Saviour, the Messiah, the anointed, the beloved of God. O how prophets anticipated him and saw the splendor of his coming, while Israel's sweet singers sang of him! How bewildered they were by the sufferings that would agonize him, and dazzled by the glory that would follow! And now he, the prophesied, has come, has gone up to his own, and some day the sojourner in the distant country will see him. They will miss the poor stranger up in Pontus and wonder why he comes not out of his home, and they will push back his door and search. O how they will start away from that corner where only a few rags may cover his dead body! "There he is!" they cry in terror. "Dead in that corner!" O, not there! In the night there was a soft splendor that fell all about his house. Angel chariots halted one moment, received him, and noiselessly, swiftly bore away a prince of God to his long-anticipated inheritance in glory.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

Verses 1-4. Inheritance is quite another thing in the East from our customs and laws concerning the property of a deceased person. The unit of the family under Roman law was, and to-day among Hindoos is, not necessarily determined by blood relationship. The family is composed of all who recognize the authority of the same father. The family is a corporation of which the oldest father in the group is the administrator. Sons marry and bring their families into the one home; their sons do the same; and the children and grandchildren, and all the adults as well, are under the authority of the oldest father of the group. Adopted or orphan children brought in are part of the one family. The property of all is held in common, and the ownership is with the one oldest father. It is not to be divided. It is communal property, held in the name of the oldest father, who has lifelong authority over it. All are coheirs. It means something from this old Roman and Hindoo standpoint to be told that Christians are coheirs with Jesus Christ, or that the family possession is held

"inconvertible," as Peter now says. When, being born of God, or "adopted" into this family, we say "Abba," Father, we come under this one father-authority, and into the common property. Originally this common property under Roman law included personal as well as real estate, but later exceptions were made of soldiers' pay, next of civil service salary, next of perquisites, next if derived from mother's estate, and next if not derived from either parent's property, parents having a life interest. But formerly it was not so. All inherited in common all that was owned by any.

A young Jew in Oroomiah, who accepted Christianity and patiently endured persecution on account of his faith, was compelled to sign away all claims to the family inheritance. He did it cheerfully, writing after his name, "This I do for Christ's sake."

By Way of Illustration.

Verses 3 and 4. That word "inheritance." What is it? The pay of a soldier is not inheritance; neither are the fees of a lawyer nor the gains of a trade. The rewards of toil or skill, these are earned by the hands that receive them. What is inherited, on the other hand, may be the property of a newborn babe, and so the coronet won long ago by the stout arm of valor now stands above the cradle of a wailing infant. The rewards of the prowess of grim old barons have descended to successors who, holding these, enjoy broad lands and noble rank which their wealth never bought nor their courage won. Thus the saints hold heaven. It is theirs not by conquest, but by heritage. Won by another arm than their own, it presents the strongest imaginable contrast to the spectacle in England's palace that day when the king demanded to know of his assembled nobles by what title they held their lands. At the rash question a hundred swords leaped from their scabbards. "By these," they said, "we won, and by these will keep them." How different the scene which heaven presents! All eyes turn on Jesus with looks of love, and all voices say, "Not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy name give glory."—Guthrie.

Verses 5. "Kept." The word here translated "kept" is a military term, used for those who are "kept" as in a fort or garrison town besieged. There is a power above our own and above our enemies that guards us: salvation itself our walls and bulwarks.—Leighton.

It is not the hold which the child has on its mother that keeps it safe, though it cling ever so desperately; but it is the strong, encircling mother-arms about the child which hold and keep it from falling. Not the hold which we have of God, but the hold which he hath of us, keeps us safely. We cannot keep ourselves.

Verses 6 and 7. No one who has been over the Pennsylvania Railroad by daylight can forget the wonderful horseshoe bend. The first time I saw it, as I looked out of my window and watched the rear cars of our train gliding along toward the curve in exactly the opposite direction to that which I was at that time pursuing, and realized that only a few minutes before I was myself in the same position, it flashed into my mind that this is the way in which God sometimes leads his children. They follow his guidance, and he places them in circumstances which seem to them unfavorable to growth in Christian life. Yet he will surely bring them by a way they know not to their desired haven. And they will see that at the very time when they felt they were being led out of the right path they were really hastening on their way to heaven.

Gold cannot be destroyed by fire. Fire only melts the dross and makes the gold purer.

Tempests only serve to root the oak deeper. These are from without. Inward decay and weakness will cause the oak's downfall.

Verses 8 and 9. How can men to-day make the absent Christ their most constant companion? The answer is that friendship is a spiritual thing. It is independent of matter or space or time. That which I love in my friend is not that which I see. What influences me is not his body, but his spirit. If Christ were to come into the world again few of us would ever have a chance of seeing him. Millions of her subjects in this little country have never seen their own queen. And there would be millions of the subjects of Christ who could never get within speaking distance of him if he were here. Our companionship with him, like all true companionship, is a spiritual communion. All friendship, all love, human and divine, is purely spiritual. It was after he was risen that he influenced even the disciples most. Hence, in reflecting the character of Christ, it is no real obstacle that we may never have been in visible contact with himself. He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away."—*Drummond.*

The Teachers' Meeting.

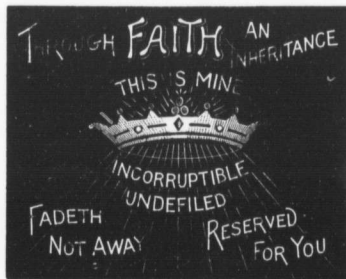
Study the occasion of the writing of this letter (the persecution in Asia Minor); its author; the people to whom it was addressed; its characteristics. . . . Trace the origin of the Christian churches in Asia Minor. . . . The lesson divides itself into: I. Salutation to God's Chosen Ones (verses 1, 2). II. The Inheritance of God's Chosen Ones (verses 3-5). III. The Endurance of God's Chosen Ones (verses 6-12). . . . Or, take the outline given in our series: I. The Inheritance of Faith (verses 1-5). II. The Trial of Faith (verses 6-8). III. The End of Faith (verses 9-12). . . . Or, follow the

plan of the *Illustrative Notes*, and treat, I. The Strangers (verse 1). II. The Elect (verse 2). III. The Begotten (verses 3, 4). IV. The Kept (verse 5). V. The Tried (verses 6, 7). VI. The Rejoicing (verse 8). VII. The Saved (verses 9-12). This last is preferable for adult scholars, because it is all from one point of view. Profitable comparison may be made of Paul's phraseology with Peter's in passages like this, where they treat the same subject. . . . The Trial of Faith: Faith is tried (1) by privation and loss; (2) by prosperity; (3) by little exasperations; (4) by acute and unexpected temptations from Satan; (5) by the ordinary atmosphere of the world, the secular surroundings of life; (6) by intellectual difficulties concerning God's revelation; (7) by illness or physical weakness. But all these trials bring out the increased preciousness of gold that never perisheth. . . . Election, predestination, and foreordination resolve themselves in the last analysis to this: (1) He that believeth shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin; (2) he that endureth to the end shall be saved eternally; (3) they who receive the precious gift of faith thereby become the sons of God, and being sons they shall receive the spirit of holiness to walk as Christ walked. . . . If the whole universe is interested in our salvation, and angels desire to look into it, what sort are we if we neglect it?

References.

FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 1897, 2856, 3870-3873, 9215, 9421, 9462. Ver. 2: Prose, 8313-8315. Ver. 3: Prose, 9622, 3915, 3918, 3062, 1872. Ver. 4: Prose, 9421, 10333. Poetical, 1728, 1735, 3494. Prose, 2104, 2099. Ver. 8: Prose, 2467, 3363, 6285, 8580, 8599.

Blackboard.



DIRECTIONS FOR COLORS.—The word "faith" in white, and the other words in the sentence light blue. "This is mine" in red or purple. The crown, bright yellow or white, touched up with

purple. The words in the rays of light should be made with strong colors, like dark red.

The design is not intended to be used during a review other than to bring forth the thought of personal possession in the divine inheritance referred to in verse 4. God is my Father. Jesus is my Son. He is my Brother. I am a joint heir. *This crown of life is mine, my very own.*

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Heavenly Home.*

Introductory. Our last lesson was found in a letter written by one of the Lord's apostles. What was his name? Yes, James. Do you know the names of any other apostles who wrote letters? Yes, Paul and John and Peter.

Our lesson to-day is from one of the letters Peter wrote to the strangers scattered about in different countries. Shall I tell you why they left their homes and went to far countries?

The men who hated Jesus hated his followers. They did not want anyone to believe that Jesus was the Son of God, and they tried to make people afraid to talk about Jesus or to hear about him! When a man with a very hard heart became emperor or king he would give orders to persecute the Christians; and then believers in Jesus would have to fly for their lives! They would be hunted as if they were very wicked people; all their property would be taken away; they would be put in prison, and often they would be killed!

It was after such a persecution that Peter wrote two letters to these "strangers." They were not strangers to Jesus. They loved him so much that they would not deny their faith ever to save their lives. But they were among strangers, and very sad and troubled. How glad they would be to get a letter from Peter!

[With flat crayon make a path tending upward on the board. Near the beginning of the path make several straight marks.]

Everybody in this world is traveling to another land. This is not our home; God has put us here to stay a little while and get ready for the better home, which will last forever. I have made some marks here in the path to stand for the travelers. There are men and women and children; every person you see is taking this journey to the other world. Little children have just begun the journey. When you sing the pretty song, "We are little pilgrims, marching, marching," that is what you mean—that you have started on the journey that leads to heaven.

[The song referred to may be found in Mrs. Crafts' *Songs for Little Folks*, and is admirably adapted to this lesson.]

But the path is not all smooth and pleasant. Sometimes you will come to a very rough place

which will be hard to get over. There will be hills of difficulty and sharp thorns of temptation. Great, rough rocks of trouble are found in the path. Yes, all these are to be found in the path that leads from this world to heaven! Are you afraid? Do you want some strong, brave friend to go with you and help you along?

Peter knew that these strangers had come to these hard places, and so he wrote to tell them what to think about. "Look away to the end of the path," said Peter. "See what God has waiting for you! You are rich and happy. God's home is yours. Soon you will be there with him. Never mind the troubles here. There is something so good a little farther on!"

This is the way Peter talked. He felt rich, and he wanted all these sad-hearted Christians to be glad, because they were God's children and heirs to a heavenly home!

There is a sweet song that shows how Peter felt, and how we may feel too. [Sing, "I'm the child of a King."]



[At the end of the path make sun rays falling back upon the path, and impress the thought that all children who love Jesus may be glad even when in trouble, because they are going straight toward God's home of light and love, and he lets the light come streaming out to show the way to those who love and obey him.]

I have something very good to show you right here, at the end of the way. You may spell the word that I will print—S-A-L-V-A-T-I-O-N.

Do you know what this means? Getting safe-home! Away from the sin and sorrow and fear! Out of earth's little, dark life into the large, bright, blessed life of heaven! O, how glad we ought to be that our dear Lord has made such a good way for us! And the way is Jesus Christ! If we believe in his dear love and obey his teaching, this glad, sweet home will be ours!

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Grace, 'tis a charming sound.
O holy Saviour! friend unseen.
I heard the voice of Jesus say.
Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole.
Glorious things of thee are spoken.

No. 2.

God loved the world of sinners lost.
Jesus all my grief is sharing.
All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
Lord, we come in faith believing.
Breast the wave, Christian.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Of what future blessing have Christians a lively hope? **An inheritance incorruptible.**
 2. Where is this inheritance? **Reserved in heaven for us.**

3. What hope have we of getting it? **We are kept by the power of God for it.**

4. To whom does this inheritance belong? **To all who with full heart believe in Jesus.**

5. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"Giving thanks unto the Father," etc.**

A. D. 95 or 96.]

LESSON XII. THE GLORIFIED SAVIOUR.

[Dec. 17.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. Phil. 2. 9.

Authorized Version.

Rev. 1. 9-20 [Commit to memory verses 17, 18.]

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Je'sus Christ, was in the isle that is called Pat'mos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Je'sus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and O'me-ga, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in A'si-a; unto Eph'e-sus, and unto Smyr'na, and unto Per'ga-mos, and unto Thy-a-ti'ra, and unto Sar'dis, and unto Phil-a-del'phi-a, and unto La-od-i-ee'a.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Revised Version.

- 9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Je'sus, was in the isle that is called Pat'mos, for the word of God and the testimony of Je'sus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches; unto Eph'e-sus, and unto Smyr'na, and unto Per'ga-mum, and unto Thy-a-ti'ra, and unto Sar'dis, and unto Phil-a-del'phi-a, and unto La-od-i-ee'a. And I turned to see the voice which spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches.

TIME OF WRITING.—About 95 or 96 A. D. **PLACE.**—The Isle of Patmos. **RULER.**—Domitian, Emperor of Rome. **CONNECTING LINKS.**—The story of the years from 68 to 98 is a story of persecution of Christians by Roman authorities. Jerusalem is destroyed;

the temple is burned; the apostles are all dead but John; ten persecutions have vexed the Church and destroyed countless Christians; still the Church grows. The Church owes one of the most wonderful books of the Bible to this last persecution by Domitian, which sent John an exile to

Patmos. [For another view see Critical Notes.]
DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The present existence of Christ.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The glorified Saviour. Rev. 1. 9-20.
Tu. First and last. Rev. 1. 1-8.
W. Jesus transfigured. Mark 9. 1-10.
Th. Stephen's sight of Christ. Acts 7. 54-60.
F. Daniel's vision. Dan. 7. 9-14.
S. The glory of Christ. Heb. 1. 1-12.
S. "Worthy is the Lamb!" Rev. 5. 6-14.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 4, New Canadian Hymnal.

Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
 My great Redeemer's praise.

No. 10, New Canadian Hymnal.

Let earth and heaven agree,
 Angels and men be joined.

No. 5, New Canadian Hymnal.

All hail the power of Jesus' name!
 Let angels prostrate fall.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Voice, v. 9-11.

- Where was John?
 Why was he sent there?
 On what day did these events take place?
 Where was John at the time of this vision?
 Under what influence was he?
 What Spirit is here referred to? (2 Peter 1. 21.)
 Like what did the voice sound?
 What did the Lord say he was?
 What is the meaning of the phrase Alpha and Omega, which John uses so often?
 What command was given to John?
 To whom was he to send the message?

2. The Vision, v. 12-20.

- What did John see first?
 Who had seen this vision before? (Zech. 4. 2.)
 What did the candlesticks represent? (Verse 20.)
 Why is the Church like a candlestick? (Matt. 5. 14; Phil. 2. 15.)
 Who stood in the midst of the candlesticks?
 Who is meant by the Son of man? (Matt. 16. 13.)
 What was his clothing?
 Who wore a girdle of gold? (Exod. 39. 5.)
 What was Christ's appearance?
 What were in his hand?
 What did these represent? (Verse 20.)
 What was the effect of the vision on the apostle?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That Christ is living now and forever?
2. That Christ walks among his people?
3. That Christ holds the keys of eternal life?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Read the account of our Lord's transfiguration and compare it with this.
2. Reread Lesson V of the First Quarter and compare it with this.
3. Read the message given to each of the angels of the seven churches.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Voice, v. 9-11.

- What was the name of the seer?
 How does he describe himself?
 Why was he on Patmos?
 On what day has he his vision?
 What did he hear?
 What words were uttered?
 What did the seer do when he heard?

2. The Vision, v. 12-20.

- What did John first see?
 What else did he see?
 How was this being clad?
 How is his appearance described?
 What is said of his voice?
 What had he in his hand?
 What went from his mouth?
 What was this sharp sword? (See Heb. 4. 12.)
 How was John affected by the vision?
 What did the vision do?
 What was said to quiet John's fears?
 What honor has God given his Son? (GOLDEN TEXT.)
 What command was given John?
 What did the stars represent?
 What did the candlesticks mean?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That Jesus lives forever?
2. That Jesus cares for his Church?
3. That Jesus guards his ministers?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Reread Lesson V of the First Quarter.
 Read the account of the transfiguration.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What is the last book in the Bible? **The Revelation.**

Who wrote it? **The apostle John.**
 To whom did he write it? **To all the churches.**

Where was John when he wrote this book? **On the island of Patmos.**

What did he hear speaking to him on the Lord's Day? **A great voice.**

Whose was the voice that spoke? **The Lord's.** What did he call himself? **"Alpha and Omega."**

What does this mean? **The first and the last.**

Where did he tell John to write his words? **In a book.**

Before what did John fall as one dead? **Before the glory of the Lord.**

What did the Lord say to him? **"Fear not."**

What keys did he say he had? **The keys of hell and of death.**

What did he tell John to write? **Things present and things to come.**

What were the seven candlesticks which John saw? **The seven churches.**

What were the seven stars? **The angels of the churches.**

Words with Little People.

The Lord Jesus Christ lived on earth as a poor man. He did it so that he might save us. But now he lives in heaven in the glory which he had before the world was made. John saw him and heard his wonderful words. Shall we listen too?

Lesson Truth.

I am he that liveth.

General Statement.

Among the isles of the Ægean Sea, off the coast of Asia Minor, is one called Patmos. It is about eight miles long and not more than a mile wide. It is a dreary and barren island, with few streams in its valleys and few trees to give shade. Here, in his old age, John, the apostle, was banished in a time of persecution. But John could well endure the rigors of banishment from earthly companionship, for in that isle his eyes were opened to behold the heavenly glories. He saw his Lord, upon whose bosom he had leaned full half a century before. But Jesus appeared not now in the body of his humiliation, but in full glory as the Son of God, and standing among the seven golden candlesticks which represented the churches of his love. His head shone, his eyes flashed, his feet glittered like molten brass. He was robed in dazzling white, and girdled with gold. The aged apostle fell at his feet, but Christ's voice, gentle as in times of old, reassured him, and a tender hand was laid upon his head. He was bidden arise and behold things that had been, that were, and that were to be. He was lifted up to heaven and saw the throne of God, and from that lofty height looked down upon the earth, beholding as in a panorama the stages of Christian history from the apostolic age down to the scenes of the judgment day.

Verse 9. Your brother. No doctor of divinity or bishop had ever so honorable a title as John's—that of apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. But he writes himself down here without titles as "brother" and "companion" of the "troubled ones." **Tribulation** is a Latin word taken over into English. It originally meant wheat-thrashing, but came to be used figuratively for persecution and trial. **Kingdom.** The Empire of Rome had by severe repressive laws made war upon the Kingdom of Jesus Christ—without, however, recognizing its royal authority. The weapon used by the empire was persecution ("tribulation"); the weapon used by the kingdom was **patience** (that meekness which nobody but Jesus and his followers believed was the inheritor of the earth); John's "brotherhood" and "companionship" freely shared both the persecution and the patience of his fellow-Christians. **Of Jesus Christ.** It was, then, the patience of Jesus which helped them to endure; they had become "partakers" of his holy nature. **The isle that is called Patmos.** A desolate little island in the Ægean Sea; it is about eight miles long and one broad, with a bold and deeply indented shore, and was used by the Romans as a place of banishment for criminals. It now contains about four thousand inhabitants. They snow a cave where, according to tradition, John saw and wrote down his visions. **For the**

word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Fidelity to the Gospel was punished by Domitian, the Emperor of Rome, who banished John to Patmos.

10. I was in the Spirit. He was spiritually transported. We talk of a man being "out of his head" or "in his senses"; this applies a similar idiom to one's spiritual life. **On the Lord's day.** As a devout Jew, John must always have regarded the Sabbath, our Saturday, as a day of special sanctity; but more holy still was the following day, made memorable by our Lord's resurrection, and probably also by his ascension to heaven. If ever a Christian while still on earth can soar to the invisible world into the highest region of spiritual realities, it is on the Lord's day.

11. I am Alpha and Omega. This is omitted from the Revised Version, not being in the most ancient manuscripts. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. **What thou seest.** The succession of visions with which he was about to be favored. **A book.** A parchment roll, though some ancient books were made of papyrus. **The seven churches which are in Asia.** There were far more than seven churches in what we now call Asia, more even in what is called Asia Minor; but these were in "proconsular Asia," the western district of Asia

Minor. The churches here mentioned were the centers of Christian life in that most populous portion of the ancient world, and collectively they are truly representative of the Church of Christ in every country and age. They were situated one in each of the following places: In **Ephesus**, the great commercial capital, renowned for size, wealth, and wickedness; **Smyrna**, only forty miles away, but an influential city; in **Pergamos**, one of the two greatest literary centers of Eastern antiquity; in **Thyatira**, a Macedonian colony; in **Sardis**, once the capital of Cræsus, fifty miles northeast of Smyrna and thirty south of Thyatira; in **Philadelphia**, twenty-five or thirty miles southeast of Sardis; and in **Laodicea**, famous for its wool trade.

12. Seven golden candlesticks. Seven separate lamp stands, which one would suppose must in John's mind have connected themselves with the seven-branched candlestick of the sanctuary in Jerusalem. The Church is the light of the world.

13. In the midst. Walking between them, **The Son of man.** The Revised Version says, "a son of man," a human being. **A garment down to the foot.** Such a robe was worn by nobles and priests, especially by the Hebrew high priest. **Girt about the paps with a golden girdle.** Both the high position and the rich material of this girdle indicate the sovereignty of its wearer; a toiler would have had a leathern girdle, and he would have had it tied tightly around his waist. This description shows the Son of man as both king and priest.

14. His head and his hairs were white. Splendidly pure. To say **like wool** and **as white as snow** only intensifies the description. **His eyes were as a flame of fire.** Piercing and beautiful. No sin he cannot see, no enmity he cannot consume, no mystery he cannot solve.

15. His feet like unto fine brass. As if

they burned in a furnace. His face glowed like metal under a white heat. "**Brass**" was one of the most valued metals of the ancients, in demand for ornament as well as for use. **His voice as the sound of many waters.** Loud and musical like the roar of the sea. John had seen Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, when his earthly form was thus illumined, and he now sat, or stood, within the sound of the waves which broke on the cliffs of Patmos.

16. In his right hand seven stars. Held like a bunch of flowers. Verse 20 explains these stars to be emblems of the angels of the churches, and these angels were doubtless pastors, who in the truest sense represent the Church. It is but fair to say, however, that some have explained the angel of the Church as "a method of representing the Church itself, the moral image of the Church as it struck the eye of the observer." **A sharp two-edged sword.** For a mere picture it would be awkward to conceive of a sword proceeding out of the mouth; but we have the same figure almost in the colloquial phrase, "cutting words." The thought is that the utterances of Jesus are penetrating and are two-edged, commending some, condemning others. **As the sun shineth in his strength.** What a splendor of Christ this depicts!

17, 18. I fell at his feet as dead. From awe and terror. **Fear not.** He laid his right hand, and by touch as well as by word he comforted his frightened servant. **Live, and was dead.** Both are foundation facts in the Christian faith. **The keys of hell and of death.** Of death and of Hades. Jesus has the government of hell and the government of the place of the departed; the realms of death and of life are alike under his control.

20. The mystery. Rather the explanation, the secure signification. It follows.

CRITICAL NOTES.

The character of the material in this lesson is introductory. As an introduction it is of value not so much for its ethical content as for its historical data. Its purpose is to bring us into sympathy with the standpoint of the author, so he tells us who he is, where he was, and why he was there; what he saw, what he heard, and the churches to whom he is commanded to write. Studied as the historical background of the book, these verses will prove interesting and instructive.

The following analysis will be an aid to more detailed study: The author and circumstances of the vision (verse 9); Commanded to write to the seven churches (verses 10, 11); The vision (verses 12-16); The message (verses 17-20).

Verse 9. I John. The date of the writing of the

Apocalypse is located by the most recent scholars in the year 68-69 A. D. The question of the authorship is much more difficult, and cannot be regarded as settled. Difference of opinion has existed from a very early time. Of the three writings accredited to John—the Apocalypse, the gospel, and the first letter—the last two are very similar to each other and equally dissimilar to the first.

In the first centuries this difference was used by some as an argument to discredit the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse. One of the most remarkable criticisms of the early Church, quoted with approval by Eusebius, is that of Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria. This eminent scholar had no disposition to remove the Apocalypse from the canon, but adduced against the traditional author-

ship an almost exhaustive array of arguments. In modern times the school of Baur accepted the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse, and from this standpoint argued it impossible to accredit the gospel to the same author. The objections urged against one author for the three books are in the main:

1. In the Gospel and the First Epistle of John the name of the author is not mentioned. The writer persistently keeps himself out of sight, while in the Apocalypse the author discloses at once his name, and repeats it without hesitation.

2. Mentioning his name as he does, it is not as an apostle or as the beloved disciple, but simply as a brother and partaker in tribulation.

3. The author speaks of the twelve objectively as an outsider, and in one case presupposes their death (Rev. 21. 14; 18. 20).

4. The subject-matter of the gospel and the epistle is almost identical. The key words—"the life," "the light," "grace," "truth," "the Father and the Son," etc.—run through them both. But the Apocalypse is different from these writings, and foreign to them, not touching nor in the least bordering upon them; almost, so to speak, without even a syllable in common with them.

5. The Judaistic trend of the Apocalypse; the anti-Judaistic trend of the gospel.

6. The diction of the gospel is pure and elegant. "The Apocalypse is written in ruder Greek, containing barbarous idioms, and in some places solecisms."

7. Papias states that there were two Johns and disciples of the Lord, an apostle and a presbyter.

8. Eusebius records the tradition of two tombs in Ephesus, each of which is called John's to the present day.

On the other hand, it is claimed that "the Apocalypse is one of the best authenticated books of the New Testament. It was used by Papias and others of the earliest fathers, and already by Justin Martyr was expressly ascribed to the apostle John. Tradition, so far as we have it, is unanimous, with the exception of the Alogi." Those who accept this tradition as authoritative find little difficulty in answering satisfactorily to themselves the objections cited above. For instance, the fact that in the Apocalypse the author discloses and asserts himself is a characteristic of all prophetic writings. Difference of theme, and consequent difference of style is due to changed circumstances and lapse of time. The Judaistic bias of the Apocalypse is denied, and the tradition of the two Johns and the two tombs in Ephesus regarded as insufficient to set aside a book so well authenticated.

10. I came under the influence of the Spirit. The difference between a "man being in the Spirit" and "the Spirit being in man"

marks the distinction between prophetic ecstasy and inspiration. In the first case the human subject is passive; the personality is absorbed. What he sees is objective and passes as a panorama before him. Inspiration in the highest sense implies a human personality quickened and intensified in its aspirations. The Apocalypse is an illustration of the former; the Gospel of John or Paul's letter to the Romans, good examples of the latter.

The distinctively Jewish character of this symbolism is finely portrayed in the following: "The purely Jewish stamp of this vision should not escape attention. With the Jew the religious idea was ever uppermost; the artistic ever secondary, if considered at all." Any attempt to give external embodiment to this description of the risen Lord must detract from the sublimity of the mental concept.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. *What is it to be in the Spirit? To what extent may we be in the Spirit?*

To be in the Spirit is to have an elevation of soul which fits us to think about spiritual things and enjoy spiritual experiences (1 Cor. 12. 2). In such a condition the mind is prepared to receive the revelation of the Holy Spirit and interpret the word of God to others (2 Cor. 3. 6). Each one may enter upon this experience to the extent of his committal to God and acceptance of the Holy Spirit as an abiding presence in his soul (Eph. 5. 18, 19).

Question 2. *In what physical, mental, and spiritual condition was John when he received this revelation?*

The apostle became—that is, came to be—in the Spirit on the Lord's day. His consciousness was so lifted up that his spiritual nature entered into complete communication with the spirit realm. There was a mental rapture, or ecstasy, that produced such descriptions of his glorious vision as would have been impossible to him in any other than this supernatural state. Doubtless his intense spiritual condition rendered him unconscious of his physical nature. The outer world was shut out, and the inner life of the seer was so possessed by God's spirit that immediate communication was established with the invisible world.

Question 3. *Is there a reference to the first day of the week in verse 10? Is there sufficient warrant from Scripture for regarding the first day of the week as holy?*

The first question should be answered in the affirmative. If the Sabbath had been meant it would have been so designated. The first day of the week, marked as it was by the glorious fact of

the resurrection, and separated from other days by special Christian duties, had already become known as preeminently "the Lord's day." The Sabbath and the Lord's day are nowhere confused in Scripture, nor for some centuries after the close of the canon. The warrant for regarding the first day of the week as sacred is to be found in apostolic practice, in ecclesiastical enactment, and in the blessings which have followed upon its observance, rather than in any specific rule or command of the New Testament.

Question 4. *Have the details of this vision—the white hairs, brazen feet, flaming eyes, seven stars—any special significance?*

The details are too incongruous to be considered as merely aiding to bring out a general meaning from the whole, while lacking special significance of their own. The white hairs, making him ancient of days, point to Christ's preexistence; the flaming eyes to world-piercing wisdom, omniscience; the brazen feet to activity which has not ceased, though he is glorified; the voice like the sound of many waters; to the power of the heavenly, as contrasted with seeming weakness of his earthly, utterance. The sword is the word of God. The countenance like the sun represents the general majesty of his aspect.

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Saviour in John's Vision.

I. A LIVING PERSON.

He that liveth. . . . was dead. v. 18.

"Raised. . . dieth no more." Rom. 6. 9.

"Declared. . . . Son of God." Rom. 1. 4.

II. A GLORIOUS BEING.

One like. . . . Son of man. v. 13-16.

"The Ancient of days." Dan. 7. 9.

"Light of the morning." 2 Sam. 23. 4.

III. A CONQUEROR OVER DEATH.

Have the keys. . . . of death. v. 18.

"O death, where is thy sting?" 1 Cor. 15. 55.

"The resurrection, and the life." John 11. 25. 26.

IV. WATCHFUL OVER HIS CHURCH.

Send. . . . the seven churches. v. 11.

"Love God. . . . known of him." 1 Cor. 8. 3.

"Know my sheep." John 10. 14.

V. WALKING IN HIS CHURCH.

In the midst. . . . candlesticks. v. 13.

Seven candlesticks. . . . seven churches. v. 20.

"An habitation of God." Eph. 2. 22.

"Temple of the living God." 2 Cor. 6. 16.

Thoughts for Young People.

Facts Concerning Christ.

1. We learn in this lesson that Christ, though once dead, is now living. Upon that fact depends

the truth of the Gospel. If Christ did not rise, then we are all deceived. If he rose, we too shall rise.

2. We learn that Christ loves us. (Revised Version, verse 5.) He loved the world, and from love came to save it; he loved his disciples on the earth, and now he loves all men and is willing to save all.

3. We learn that Christ died for us, and by his dying takes away our sins. (Verse 5.) We cannot understand the mystery of his atoning death, but we can believe it as a fact, asserted all through the Bible.

4. We learn that Christ gives us high privileges—"kings and priests." (Verse 6.) Those who follow Christ in his humiliation shall share in his exaltation.

5. We learn that Christ in his glory still wears the likeness of his humanity. He appeared to John as "one like unto a son of man." It is our brother-man who sits upon the throne. (Verse 13.)

6. We learn that Christ in glory has a deep interest in his people on the earth. He holds in his hands the stars, which represent his ministers; and he walks among the candlesticks, which represent his churches. He knows their condition and their need. (Verses 12-18.)

Lesson Word-Pictures.

O Patmos, bare and bleak and rocky! One day there is left upon your shores a prisoner. Patmos looks at him. He is only an ordinary man, apparently, perhaps poverty-clad, and Roman soldiers jostle him about.

"Poor prisoner!" you say, pityingly.

How little Patmos understands the man thrust out upon its rocks. What connection he has with heaven! What visions are to hang upon his eyes! What harmonies will roll through his soul! What splendors will dazzle, what joys will thrill! How far into the future will his eyes pierce, seeing what woes upon the earth, hearing what solemn announcements of judgment!

Scenes of glory? How memorable is the revelation that one day brings! It is the Lord's day. Patmos does not keep the Lord's day. The apostle keeps it, and how precious the association of the hallowed hours! How sweet the song of any birds, how rare the flowers, how laden with blessings the winds that breathe across the blue sea! All the day is one garden like that of Joseph of Arimathea; and lo, in the garden is John's risen Lord! The vision comes suddenly. The apostle is in the Spirit, so still, so hushed, and yet so thrilled and stirred. And what does he hear? A voice so clear and echoing, trumpet-like! How those tones thrill the soul, "I am Alpha and Omega." Who is it thus commanding in his proclamation? John turns, and O, never-to-be-for-

gotten vision of the still Sabbath hour! He sees seven golden candlesticks. With what a soft, lustrous flame they burn! And what form is that rising up against this surface of gold and flame? Lo, One clothed in stainless robes, a shining girdle about his form, his hair like snowy fleece, his eyes a piercing flame, his feet dazzling as the molten brass in the furnace hour! How impressive his voice, growing, swelling into the sound of many waters! And in the grasp of his right hand is the glory of the Pleiades, and out of his mouth flashes a sword of two-edged flame, while his face shines as the noonday sun!

What wonder that the apostle falls to the earth! There, at the feet of the glorified One, he lies as if dead. He stirs not, speaks not, looks not. Is he dead, cut down by the awful sword of flame? O, gentle and uplifting the touch of a hand, and tender and comforting that voice, "Fear not!"

Yes, "Fear not!"

Why should John fear?

It is the voice of Jesus, the Friend on whose bosom leaned the beloved disciple; the Teacher who so spoke at Galilee and Bethany and in the temple courts; the Saviour who agonized at Gethsemane and suffered on Calvary and rose from the tomb! Why should John fear when that hand of Jesus, dearest friend, wisest teacher, most gracious Redeemer, is laid upon him?

"Write," does his Lord say?

Yes, he will write.

Soon I see him sitting down, still in the Spirit's hush and power, to tell scattered companies of believers what the Lord may say. He will write to the seven stars that Jesus holds in his right hand, and to the seven golden candlesticks amid which he stands and shines. Yes, he will turn to the wonders of that day and tell the seven churches of the impressive glories of Patmos.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

Verse 18. The "keys of hell and of death" is, like almost every part of this Book of Revelation, purely oriental imagery. The Egyptian *Book of the Dead* was compiled, as is supposed, seven hundred years before John wrote this. It is a miscellaneous collection of Egyptian theological ideas. Chapter 125 shows Osiris, the god of the dead, seated on his throne, and near him forty-two judges; before him a balance, in one scale of which is placed the heart of the dead man who is being judged, and in the other the symbol of the divine law. The dead thus brought to judgment is obliged to affirm his innocence, while the judges watch whether the heart in the balance confirms the truthfulness of the confession or declaration of innocence. He is obliged to say:

"I am not a robber, I am not a murderer, I am not a niggard,

I am not a teller of lies, I am not a monopolizer of food,

I am not an extortioner, I am not unchaste, I am not an adulterer,

I am not the cause of others' tears, I am not a dissembler,

I am not a doer of violence, I am not a domineering character,

I am not an eavesdropper, I am not a chatterer,

I am not obscene, I am not an exciter of alarms,

I am not hot in speech, I do not turn a deaf ear to the words of righteousness, I am not foul-mouthed, I am not a striker, I am not a quarrelor, I do not revoke my purpose, I do not multiply clamor in reply to words."

By Way of Illustration.

Verse 9. St. John, banished to the lonely isle of Patmos, was rewarded by a vision of the glorified Saviour. The three Hebrew children cast into the fiery furnace were sustained with the presence of God. Pentecost says of Stephen's martyrdom: "God did not interpose to save Stephen from the cruel death that awaited him down here on the earth, but gave him instead a vision of the glory that awaited him in that near heavenly world which far more than compensated him for the pain of martyrdom. If only we could keep in mind that God has two worlds, whereof he has made us citizens through Jesus Christ, we should not make such one-sided interpretations of his providences down here; and many of the things we so bitterly complain of would to us, if only we could see through the opened heavens, be matters of unspeakable joy to our souls."

Verses 13 and 20. "Seven candlesticks are the seven churches." The sole reason for having a church in this world is that it may be a light-bearer. Christ said to his disciples: "Ye are the light of the world." "When a diamond ceases to reflect the light it ceases to become a diamond." So when a church ceases to radiate light it becomes a useless thing. Its value lies solely in its reflecting power.

Verses 13-17. Jesus Christ is in the midst of his churches, and holds his ministers in his right hand. "God's truth and God's Church are safe in this world. If a visitor to St. Paul's Cathedral, London, should, before venturing inside, walk about those massive walls, and examine anxiously to see if the floor would hold him, we would laugh him to scorn. Very like such a traveler is the man who is afraid God's word and his Church will be overturned."

Verse 18. Not one of those we have seen die has come back to tell us what there is beyond. As you sit thinking of the certainty of death and the doubt about the future, let this voice come to you,

clear with personality and sweet and strong with love: "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and am alive for evermore." At once death changes from the terrible end of life into a most mysterious, but no longer terrible, experience of life. Not merely is there a future beyond the grave, but it is inhabited by One who speaks to us, who went there by the way that we must go, who will receive us when we come. This is the account Christ gives of himself after his resurrection and ascension. The devils of despair are scattered before that voice, and fall on their faces like the Roman soldiers who saw him come forth from the tomb of the Arimathean, and trembled with fright, and knew that their day was over, and that the prisoner they thought was dead was indeed too strong for them to keep.

"*The keys of death.*" Christ, then, having experienced death, has the keys of death to open its meaning and to guide the way through it for those who are to die like him. It is because he died that he holds the keys of death. Do we not know how any soul that has passed through a great experience holds the keys of that experience, so that, as he sees another coming up to it just as ignorantly and fearfully as he came, he can run up to this newcomer and open the door for him, show him on what side this experience is best entered, lead him through the dark passages of it, where he could not easily find his way alone, and at last bring him out into the splendor of the light beyond?

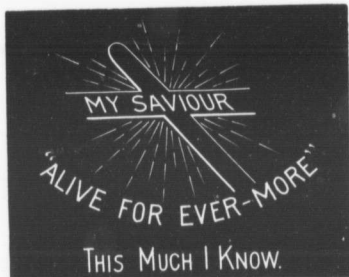
The Teachers' Meeting.

Draw a map showing the location of the seven churches and of Patmos.... Describe John, an old man in exile at Patmos.... The vision which he there beheld: (1) The time—"the Lord's day." Show how early the first day of the week began to be observed, and find an allusion to it in Paul's life (Acts 20. 7).... (2) The apostle's condition—"in the Spirit.".... (3) The voice (verses 10, 11).... (4) The candlesticks. Show how they were a type of the Church.... (5) The glorified Saviour; his appearance.... (6) The effect of the vision.... The teachings will naturally group around the account of the vision which John beheld. One line of teaching on this subject is, "The Glorified Saviour."

References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 18: Keys, 502. FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Prose, 10003, 11595, 3367, 9392, 9393, 3365, 727. Ver. 9: Prose, 11858, 11859, 5527. Poetical, 3856. Ver. 10: Poetical, 2821. Prose, 3658, 4885. Ver. 20: Prose, 7277.

Blackboard.



DIRECTIONS FOR COLORS.—Outline the cross with light blue; the words "My Saviour" in bright red or scarlet; rays, yellow. The sentence, "Alive for evermore," write with white chalk, and the remaining sentence in green, shaded with yellow or red.

BLACKBOARD THOUGHT.—"This much I know" from this lesson: "My Saviour is alive for evermore," a living, glorious, loving, ministering person. He cares for his messengers; he cares for us.

The following may also be used on the board as a review exercise:

WHO?	JOHN. L. L. A. 90.
WHEN?	SUNDAY.
WHERE?	PATMOS.
WHAT?	HE SAW JESUS.

L. G. C. L.

EXPLANATION.—Write the words Who? When? Where? and What? on the board. Then the answers.

Who? John. Last living apostle. Ninety years of age.

When? On Sunday.

Where? On the island of Patmos.

What? John's vision; what he saw—Jesus, Living, Glorious, Conquering, Loving; King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Instead of writing on the board the answers in full, write the first letter of each word, then review the questions and answers by pointing to the letters on the board.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Jesus lives to-day.*

[Print with colored crayon, "The disciple whom Jesus loved."]

Jesus loved all his disciples, even poor, sinful Judas; but for one he had a special love. Do you know his name? Yes, it was John. Do you not think John was honest, kind, loving, patient, true? Do you think he was a doer, and not a hearer only, of the word? Do you think he lis-

tened to what Jesus said, and then went away to do as he pleased?

We all feel sure that John was a true lover of Jesus, and that he tried above all else to please him. And this is what we must do if we want to be the John kind of disciples.

John lived to be very old. He was not killed as the other apostles were for preaching Jesus, but he was cruelly treated, and at last was sent away from his home and friends to a lonely island called Patmos. Here, it is said, he was made to work in the mines, though he was such an old man, and was rudely treated.

[Make a trumpet on the board.]

One Sabbath day John heard a wonderful sound near him. It seemed like a beautiful trumpet voice. He turned quickly, and saw the Lord Jesus Christ standing by him! It was his voice speaking that John thought was the trumpet. [Make a cross.] When John remembered how he had seen Jesus hanging on the cross, how full of joy he must have been to see him standing there so bright and glorious! For his face shone like the sun now, and his eyes were like a flame of fire.

Out of his mouth went a shining sword, and in his right hand he held seven stars. He stood in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, and the sight was so glorious that John fell down before him as if dead.

Why do you think the Lord came to speak to John that Sabbath day? I will tell you.

John was "in the Spirit." That means he was ready to hear what God would say. When we are full of our own thoughts and ways we cannot hear God's voice. But when we are in the Spirit, waiting and listening for him, then he can make us hear, and he loves to speak to us.

John remembered the Sabbath day, and the Lord remembered him.

The Lord Jesus put his hand upon John, and said, "Fear not." Then he told him why he need not be afraid: "I am he that liveth, and was dead."

No, John need not fear anything if the mighty Lord who cared for him was living!

Once a young prince was stolen from his home and hid away in a lonely place by some enemies of his father. He was afraid he should be killed, but one day word came to him from his father through a trusty servant. "Do not fear; I am coming to save you." How glad this made him! He knew that his father had great power, and would be almost certain to do as he said.

But John was the child of a King who has all power, and though he was a prisoner, far from home, he could not fear, for a mighty Helper was near who would surely deliver!

Jesus is as near to us as he was to John. He is waiting to speak to us. He wants us to trust and not be afraid.

Are we waiting to hear him speak? Do we want to hear him?

[Make an open Bible on the board.]

The Lord Jesus came and spoke to John to comfort him, but this was not all. He had work for John to do. He wanted him to carry his messages to others. He told John to write all the words that he spoke to him in a book. John obeyed, and the book is the Revelation, the last book in the Bible. The messages to the seven Christian churches in Asia are in this book, and many wonderful and glorious things that John saw in a vision.



Closing Words. [Make

Lesson Symbol on the board.] Who is "alive for evermore?" Yes, our Lord Jesus. He is living to-day to speak to us. If you listen you will hear his voice when you pray, when you try to conquer self, when you turn away from wrongdoing. It will not be a great voice such as John heard, but a small voice in your heart. He will teach you good lessons every day, and he wants you to learn them well, so that you may help to teach them to others.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
Keep me, hide me, O my Father.
I need Thee every hour.
I'm but a stranger here.
There is a land of pure delight.

No. 2.

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus.
O sing the pow'r of love divine.
O my Saviour, how I love thee.
Thy sins I bore on Calvary's tree.
Christ is knocking at my sad heart.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Where was John in banishment? **The isle of Patmos.**
2. How did Christ appear to him? **Transfigured in glory.**
3. What did the stars in his right hand represent? **The churches of Christ on earth.**
4. What does Christ carry? **The keys of hell and of death.**
5. What has God done? **GOLDEN TEXT: "Wherefore God also hath," etc.**

B. C. 4.]

LESSON XIII. THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

[Dec. 24.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Matt. 1. 21.

Authorized Version.

Matt. 2. 1-11. [*Commit to memory verses 9-11.*]

1 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.

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.

Revised Version.

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

2 lem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and

3 are come to worship him. And when Her'od the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Je-

4 ru-sa-lem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should

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

6 And thou Beth'le-hem, land of Ju'dah, Art in no wise least among the princes of Ju'dah:

For out of thee shall come forth a governor, Which shall be shepherd of my people Is-ra-el.

7 Then Her'od privily called the wise men, and learned of them carefully what time the star

8 appeared. And he sent them to Beth'le-hem, and said, Go and search out carefully concern-

ing the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word, that I also may come and

9 worship him. 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

10 was. And when they saw the star, they re-joiced with exceeding great joy. And they came into the house and saw the young child

with Ma'ry his mother; and they fell down and worshiped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

TIME.—B. C. 4. **PLACES.**—Jerusalem, Bethlehem. **CONNECTING LINKS.**—The following events of New Testament history had already taken place: 1. The prediction of John the Baptist's birth (Luke 1. 5-25). 2. The annunciation to Mary of Christ's coming (Luke 1. 26-38). 3. The birth of John the Baptist, B. C. 6 (Luke 1. 57-80). 4. The birth of Christ, B. C. 4 (Luke 2. 1-7). 5. The visit of the shepherds (Luke 2. 8-20). 6. The presentation of Christ in the temple (Luke 2. 21-39). **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The incarnation of Christ.

HOME READINGS.

M. The birth of Jesus. Matt. 2. 1-11.
Tu. Return of the Magi. Matt. 2. 13-18.
W. Announced to shepherds. Luke 2. 8-18.
Th. Simeon's prophecy. Luke 2. 25-38.

F. The Word made flesh. John 1. 1-14.

S. Light of the world. Isa. 9. 1-7.

S. In likeness of men. Heb. 2. 14-18.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 302, New Canadian Hymnal.

Hark! what mean those holy voices,
Sweetly sounding through the skies!

No. 301, New Canadian Hymnal.

Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

No. 299, New Canadian Hymnal.

Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.**1. The Star, v. 1-6.**

What is the story of the wise men as told in legend?

What was the course which they had come?

How long would the journey from Persia to Judea occupy?

For what had the East been famous? (1 Kings 4. 30.)

If they were led by a star why did they go to Jerusalem and ask?

To what public official announcement did the question of the wise men lead?

How many distinct announcements were thus made that Jesus had been born?

What classes of the world's society were thus informed that the King had come?

What are the supernatural elements in this story?

2. The Child, v. 7-11.

Where did the Magi find the King they sought?

Were they disappointed in finding only a child?

Do the circumstances afford any hint as to his age?

What was the supreme act of these men's lives?

Was this child ever worshiped again in his life?

Of what was this first worship typical?

How was the star itself an illustration of Christ's work for men?

What did Jesus call himself when, years afterward, he taught in the temple?

How is Christ the Light of the world?

Practical Teachings.

1. These wise men sought the king where they supposed the king would be, in Jerusalem. He was not there. We often think we seek God when we go where earthly wisdom prompts, and fail to find him.

2. These wise men gave the best they had to give, gold, frankincense, myrrh. And we give, what?

3. These Eastern heathen, we should say, told the Church that the King was born. The Church gave answer where he should be born: the heathen sought him, the Church forgot him. Whom are we imitating to-day, Church or wise men?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Read this story carefully. It is simply told. Think carefully about it. Why is it here? John does not tell it. Why does Matthew?

2. Learn what you can from secular history about Herod. What Romans had he known? What had he done?

3. Bethlehem was an historic town. How was the past history of Israel connected with it?

4. Study the condition of the times which made it possible for Herod and all Jerusalem to be troubled—that is, to be aroused.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**1. The Star, v. 1-6.**

During whose reign was Jesus born?

In what city and province?

Who came to visit him, and from whence?

What question did they ask?

Why had they come?

What prophet spoke of a star out of Jacob? (Num. 24. 17.)

How did these tidings affect Herod?

Whom did he summon for counsel?

What did he ask of them?

Why did Herod inquire of the priests? (Mal. 2. 7.)

What was their reply?

From what prophet did they quote? (Micah 2. 3.)

What were the words quoted?

2. The Child, v. 7-11.

What secret inquiry did Herod make?

What did he bid the wise men to do?

What did they again see as they departed?

Where did the star guide them?

How did they feel when they saw the star?

Whom did they find in the house?

How did they offer reverence?

What gifts did they present?

What was the mission of this child? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That Jesus is the Messiah?

2. That Jesus brought joy to the world?

3. That Jesus should have our homage?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find an event at Bethlehem in the Book of Ruth.... In 1 Samuel about a drink from the well of Bethlehem.... How many people are named as rejoicing over the infant Christ?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Where was Jesus born? **In Bethlehem of Judea.**

Who was king at this time? **Herod.**

Who came from the East to Jerusalem? **Wise men.**

For whom were they looking? **For Jesus.**

What had they seen? **His star in the east.**

What had they come to do? **To worship the new king.**

Who was troubled by this? **King Herod.**

Whom did he call to ask where Christ should be born? **The chief priests and the scribes.**

Where did he then tell the wise men to go? **To Bethlehem.**

What did he tell them to do when they found Jesus? **To bring him word.**

How were the wise men guided to Jesus? **By the star.**

What did they do when they saw the child Jesus? **They worshipped him.**

What gifts did they offer him? **Gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**

How were they warned not to tell Herod? **In a dream.**

Why did Herod want to know where to find Jesus? **So that he might kill him.**

Where did the wise men then go? **To their own country.**

Words with Little People.

When the wise men went looking for Jesus the great God showed them where to go and what to do. When a simple-hearted child starts to look for Jesus this same God is ready to tell him where to go and what to do!

Whisper Question.

Where is he?

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

Old King Herod sat on the Jewish throne. His was a reign of gold and iron. He was a born ruler, with large ideas and magnificent methods, but tyrannical, perfidious, and morbidly suspicious. It was the close of that year which, for want of better reckoning, we count from the creation of the world as the four thousandth; it was four years before the beginning of our present era, called Anno Domini; (which, as Bible students know, was begun four years too late, by the mistake of a good monk, Dionysius Exiguus, who studied in the Dark Ages, and made a mistake of four years in his estimate. In Bethlehem Jesus had been born, and much of local stir had arisen because of the vision of angels to the shepherds, and because of Simeon's prophecy in the temple; albeit the news of the birth of a king "of David's line" had not come to Herod's court with any such emphasis as to cause a fresh outburst of the royal jealousy. But now, perhaps eight or nine weeks after the birth of Jesus, a company of Magi (from Persia probably) arrive in Jerusalem after a long and wearisome journey, and announce that from the stars they had read the news that the "King of the Jews" was born. In those days news that came by way of the stars was more trusted than any other, for nobody questioned the "scientific" accuracy of astrology; and the stars were almost like a crude "associated press," which sent dispatches that could be read simultaneously in all countries. That these "wise men" were astrologers, and that astrology is now proved to have been a clumsily woven tissue of falsehoods, does not in any way affect this beautiful story; for probably the star, and certainly the impression made by the star on the minds of the Magi, were miraculous. Herod saw at once that when this news got abroad the Jews would be very likely to become enthusiastic for the new king. This he trembled to anticipate, and at the same time he did not dare to directly show his hostility. So he sought to accomplish his purpose by guile; and with apparent reverence he inquired of his own "wise men" where "the Christ should be born." To Bethlehem the Magi were directed; there they saw the infant Jesus, and to him presented their treasures in adoration.

Verse 1. When Jesus was born. This may mean that the star appeared in the East simultaneously with the time of Jesus's birth in Bethlehem; but it is more likely that the statement is simply that in general connection with our Lord's birth the star came. **Bethlehem of Judea.** There was a Bethlehem in Northern Palestine; the one here referred to, "in Judea," was six miles south of Jerusalem; it was famous as the birthplace of David. **Herod the king.** This was Herod the Great, son of an unscrupulous Idumean general named Antipater, and father of a number of wicked rulers, among others Herod Antipas, who caused the murder of John the Baptist. (1) *Thus cruelty and crime, as often as crowns, are inherited from wicked princes.* **Wise men.** Magi. Probably they belonged to the priestly class of Persians. (2) *God has sincere followers outside the visible Church of Christ.* **From the East.** From some one of the lands east of the Euphrates, and, with little doubt, from Persia. Their journey was at least

one thousand miles in length. (3) *How much easier it is for us to follow Christ than it was for them.* (4) *Those who would find Christ must be willing to face difficulties.* **To Jerusalem.** The capital of the kingdom, and therefore the place to look for the king. With all sincerity these men seem to have gone at once to the palace, believing that "He that was born king of the Jews" would be found there.

2. Where is he? They evidently expected that all the Jews would know of the king whom they had come so far to seek. (5) *" Ofttimes those who are nearest in place are furthest in affection."* **King of the Jews.** A king sprung from the Jewish race. The secular historians state that there was at this time an expectation prevalent over Asia that one coming from Judea would rule the world. **His star.** This was probably a luminous, star-like body, of miraculous origin. Seeing the strange star, and sharing in the popular expectation, they undertook the journey to

Judea. (6) *Both the study of nature and the intuitions of the heart lead to Christ. To worship him.* Not merely with the homage paid a prince, but with the devotion due to God.

3. He was troubled. Fearing not only the loss of his crown, but the penalty of his crimes. (7) *Kings have troubles as well as cottagers.* (8) *"A little child made the great Herod quake on his throne."* **All Jerusalem.** They feared fresh tumults and wars, and dreaded the justice of a heavenly king even more than Herod's cruelties. (9) *Those who, unreconciled with Jesus, are afraid to meet him.*

4. He had gathered. He assembled the Sanhedrin, or great council of the Jews. **Chief priests.** Probably including the high priest, his living predecessors in office, and the chiefs of the twenty-four courses, each of which served a fortnight in the year at the temple. **Scribes.** Transcribers and interpreters of the Scriptures; a learned and influential class of the people. **Where Christ.** More precisely, "the Christ," the expected Messiah. **Should be born.** Sure that the looked-for Christ had come, Herod forms the bold purpose to thwart the divine plan and slay the newborn king, unconsciously fulfilling Psalm 2, 1-6.

5. In Bethlehem. (10) *Not all those who know where Christ is to be found, and who point others to him, will themselves seek him. Thus it is written.* The prophecy is found in Micah 5, 2, and was delivered at least seven hundred years before the birth of Christ. It is quoted not precisely, but substantially, as written, according to the Jewish custom.

6. Princes. In Micah the word is "thousands," which were smaller divisions of the tribes, each having its prince. (11) *It is well when scientists and theologians, in the spirit of faith, compare notes concerning Christ.*

7. Privily. Secretly, lest his purpose become known and meet with defeat. **Diligently what time.** "Precisely at what time." He wished to know the precise age of the royal child whom he had resolved to slay.

8. That I may come and worship him. (12) *"There is no villainy so great but it will mask itself under a show of piety."*—Bishop Hall.

9. Lo, the star. It had disappeared for a time, and now was again revealed. Their journey was taken in the evening, perhaps because cooler than the daytime, perhaps because they could not wait for the morning. (13) *The search for the King of kings will brook no delay. Went before them.* Seeming to travel through the heavens.

10. They rejoiced. How different the feeling of these Gentile seekers from that of the Jews of Jerusalem! (14) *That which brings trouble to the evil, gladdens the heart of the good.*

11. Into the house. The temporary shelter

of the stable had by this time been exchanged for a more permanent home. **Mary.** The mother of Jesus was a maiden of Nazareth, of lowly station, though a descendant of David, and betrothed to Joseph, who was of the same kingly lineage. **Treasures.** Their chests or boxes. **Gifts.** The orientals always bring gifts when they visit kings or great personages. Some have found symbolical meanings in these gifts, "as to a king, the gold; as to one who was to die, the myrrh; as to God, the frankincense."—*Origen.* **Frankincense.** A fragrant gum, used in sacrifices. **Myrrh.** A gum obtained by cutting a thorny tree in Arabia, used for incense, as an anodyne (Mark 15, 23), and in embalming the dead (John 19, 39).

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Faith of the Wise Men.

I. GENTILE FAITH.

Wise men from the east. v. 1.

"Gentiles shall come." Isa. 60, 3.

"Other sheep I have." John 10, 16.

II. WORKING FAITH.

Came... from the east. v. 1.

"Many people shall go." Isa. 2, 2, 3.

"Shall come from the east." Matt. 8, 11.

III. INQUIRING FAITH.

Where is he... king? v. 2.

"Seek ye the Lord." Isa. 55, 6.

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

IV. PERSISTENT FAITH.

Search diligently... they departed. v. 8, 9.

"Search... with all your heart." Jer. 29, 13.

"Seek, and ye shall find." Luke 11, 9, 10.

V. REVERENT FAITH.

Worshiped him. v. 11.

"Every knee should bow." Phil. 2, 10.

"Blessing... unto the Lamb." Rev. 5, 13.

VI. GENEROUS FAITH.

Presented unto him gifts. v. 11.

"Kings... shall bring presents." Psalm 72, 10.

"Bring gold and incense." Isa. 60, 6.

Thoughts for Young People.

he Faith of the Magi.

1. It was faith in an unexpected quarter, among Gentiles, a thousand miles away from Judea.

2. It was faith which had not the Scriptures to rest upon, but arose from the intuitions of earnest minds.

3. It was faith on the part of men of science, who could look up from nature to nature's God. (Verse 1.)

4. It was faith which inspired exertion and endeavor; the journey of Abraham, without the promise to Abraham. (Verse 1.)

5. It was faith which remained unchilled by what it found—jealousy in the king, lack of interest in the priesthood, selfishness among the people. (Verse 3.)

6. It was faith which overcame every obstacle in the path of its purpose to find Christ. (Verse 8.)

7. It was faith which accepted humbly and gratefully the divine guidance and the divine plan. (Verse 10.)

8. It was faith which offered not only formal honor, but practical gifts to Christ. (Verse 11.)

Lesson Word-Pictures.

WHAT is the matter with Herod? His wicked eyes have a look of trouble. He walks up and down the floor of his palace, muttering, shaking his head, wondering what he would better do.

To go back a little way, there came one day some men riding into town—men on camels, men who plainly had been making a rough journey. They said they had seen a star in the east, and it was the star heralding the birth of the King of the Jews! What, that beautiful white star up to which Judea had been looking, wondering at its strange, rare luster, at its size and significance! The very star. And those men alighted from their camels and wanted to know where this infant King might be, as they wished to worship him.

Another king of the Jews, another than Herod? What does it mean? thinks Herod, walking the palace floor. Ah, he has it! He stops, smiles, and nods his head in assent. A lucky thought! He will summon the chief priests and scribes, and ask about certain old Jewish prophecies telling of Messiah, and find out about the place where he is to be born and—then what will he do? I don't know, but you may. Let an old wolf alone to find out a way for strangling babes in the cradle, if need be.

The chief priests and scribes gather. I can imagine that they come in fear, perhaps wondering if the old wolf may want their heads. No, it is a very innocent question he asks—where will Christ be born? Their countenances brighten. Where will the Anointed be born, the Messiah, the Holy One of God, the great King of Israel, the Ruler of all nations? I seem to see them standing erect, in great and conscious dignity, and as his eyes kindle some one repeats that grand old prophecy crowning little Bethlehem with imperishable honor. Herod looks solem, dismisses the assembly, and calls in the wise men. What a contrast between that king thinking evil in his heart and those strange travelers summoned from their homes to follow a beautiful star, and with self-denying gifts to honor their Lord!

When did they first see the star? he would know. They tell the strange story, so like a romance. He nods. He has it all arranged. Let

them go down to Bethlehem, find the infant King, bring Herod word again, and then he will go down and worship! A wolf bowing by the side of a baby in harmless adoration! The innocents—he may call them—turn away. Does any one of them look back to see a wolf rolling his wicked eyes and snapping his red jaws? Come away, Magi! Let the palace door swing quickly between you and your enemy!

It is night.

The land is still as with the blessing of God. The stars come up above the hills, and wheeling into line join in the shining procession that all night will march through the heavens. And there is the beautiful star that won the love of the Magi in the Eastern land. Southward it beckons them, Bethlehemward. I hear the footfall of the camels as the Magi ride away in the still, starlight night. And at last they see the shadowy roofs of the little town that Ruth loved, that David honored, and that a baby has made immortal. But where? the wise men are asking, looking along the line of some narrow, ancient street, then up at the beautiful star. Perhaps, if there, we would have given up the search. No; faith is leading these men, and love surely finds.

Ah, there it is—the house where, shrined in the arms of the beautiful mother, the end of the wise men's loving quest, Israel's Hope, the world's Redeemer! What wonder that they bow in loving worship and heap their golden, fragrant gifts!

When they mount again their camels does the star say, "Ride to Jerusalem?" No; some word of the Lord bids them not go home by way of a wolf's den. Ah, wolf, with merciless, murderous spring, when you light at Bethlehem your coveted prey will not be there—only a baby's empty nest.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The easy connection between the divine and the human is one of the commonest subjects of faith in the whole Old World. Nimrod was on earth a mighty hunter, and passed away to become a god. Herod made an extraordinary oration, and the people said he was a god and not a man. Paul shook a serpent from him unharmed, and the people said, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." Simon Magus was a single attribute of God, omnipotence incarnated—"the great power of God." Fohi, of China, is reputed as having been born of a virgin; the Schakaoof of Thibet also. The Hindoos think the divinity has been incarnated nine special times, and they are looking for the tenth, or holy, incarnation, which is to inaugurate a millennium, or, rather, endless peace and happiness. This is to occur at Sambhal, within the bounds of the North India Conference, and this is rapidly displacing holy Benares in the Hindoo mind. It kindles expecta-

tion. The time for this "sinless incarnation" is popularly supposed to be near at hand. The Moslems look for Imam Mahdi as a forerunner of Al Masih (Christ), who will come down from heaven to destroy Dajjal, the antichrist from the Moslem standpoint. The Moslem community is every little while going here and going there to see the Mahdi, the John Baptist of Christ, who is to come again. The fanaticism of Islam over the Mahdi, who, it was alleged, had come into the Soudan, stopped the progress of the British and broke the power of the Khedive of Egypt. Persia is full of the thought of the Mahdi. It is part of God's plan to work through great movements of mind, like the great expectations which were found widespread of a great coming One, not only among Jews, but among Persians, like the Magi, who, star worshippers as they were, followed the star of Bethlehem.

By Way of Illustration.

Verses 1 and 2. Some astronomers conjecture that Aleyone is the center around which the whole sidereal system revolves. Whether that be true or not, it is undeniably certain that the star of Bethlehem is the center of this world's spiritual astronomy. If that star had never risen on a dark and sin-cursed world, O how differently its history would read! That Christmas night brought Christ. With Christ came the Gospel of human brotherhood and the elevation of woman; with Christ came the highest civilization and the purest philanthropy; with Christ came Calvary's atoning sacrifice for sin; with Christ came victory over death and the grave.

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" We are willing enough to take him as Saviour; we hesitate to make him king. We forget that God has exalted him to be prince as well as Saviour. And the divine order is irreversible. Put the sun in its central throne, and all the motions of the planets assume a beautiful order. Put Jesus on the throne of life, and all things fall into harmony and peace. Seek first the kingdom of God, and all things are yours.

Verses 9. "The star...went before them." They followed the star. They acted on all the light they had; and they were "wise men" because they were seekers of truth. I do not know how much knowledge they had. I do know that they showed their knowledge by seeking more. I fancy it cost them some thing to follow that star. Explorers have to be brave men; they are almost always considered fanatics, but where should we be to-day without our explorers? There is help for us in following this "star"; not a sun, but a star!—not following much light, but being true to the light we have. Ah, it will bring us sometime to the

very feet of the blessed Christ himself! Only follow the light you have. Be true to the starlight, and it will bring you to the light of the sun.

Verses 11. Bring gold to the Christ as you adore him this blessed Christmas time. Will you give gifts to each other, and none to the very one whose birthday we celebrate? But for Christ's birthday all other birthdays would be occasions for bitterest weeping instead of joyous greeting. Or if you have not gold to bring, we all have frankincense to offer. This precious substance was the chief constituent of the incense, the ascending smoke from which so beautifully symbolized prayer as it rose before the mercy seat. Pray especially for God's work and his workers at Christmas time. And some sad and bruised heart may have the bitter but precious myrrh to offer the Christ. Gather up the little garments the baby used to wear—she wears shining robes now—and send them to the nearest deaconess "poor closet." Bring out the precious keepsakes. If the coins and east-off jewelry laid away in napkins in this country could all be brought forth for God's work, it would mean scores of souls saved through the agencies they would set in motion. Or, perhaps it is your own life you have to offer. God has hedged your way—brought you face to face with an awful sorrow. You wonder what you will do with your broken and empty life. Give it to God in special service. He will restore it, fill it, make it glow with heavenly brightness, as you minister to him in his poor and needy children, or carry the knowledge of him to those who sit in the shadow.

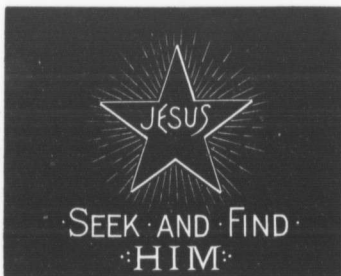
The Teachers' Meeting.

Locate the East, Bethlehem, Jerusalem... Give some account of Herod... Distinguish between this Herod and others of the same name... The wise men, who they were... The star, what it was... (Avoid long discussions on these subjects.) ... Note four classes of people, and their various feelings toward Christ... The example of the wise men: (1) Purpose; (2) Earnestness; (3) Faith; (4) —; (5) —; (6) —... Significance of the gifts to Jesus... How we should seek him... What we should give him.

References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 1: The Magi, 630. Ver. 2: The Star of the King, 631. Ver. 9: Presents, 64. FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Ver. 9: Poetical, 765. Ver. 11: Prose, 6012, 7847, 8910, 8911, 10758, 11991. Ver. 12: 5080, 5083, 5084. Ver. 13: Prose, 12101. Ver. 14: Prose, 9491, 8758, 8873. Ver. 15: Prose, 2947, 2938, 8839, 10372. Ver. 16: Prose, 10280, 4104. Ver. 17: Prose, 3345, 1385, 2388, 4132, 9975. Ver. 18: Prose, 10507. Ver. 21: Prose, 9199.

Blackboard.



This is a Christmas lesson. Its application is for each one of us to follow the example of the wise men, and seek and find Jesus.

DIRECTIONS FOR DRAWING.—To draw the star first make a circle the size you wish the star to be. Do this with a piece of chalk tied to a string. Make a dot exactly on the top of the circle; that will be where the upper point of the star will rest. Divide the circle into five equal parts, commencing at the top mark and counting that as the first mark. Rule the outlines of the star from the dots made on the circle. Do this with white chalk, and then take light yellow chalk and rule the rays of light out to the circle. The circle should be made faintly, so as not to show.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Looking for Jesus.*

Introductory Story. Several years ago two Christians from Syria came to America. They had heard of Jesus and learned to love him. But they were persecuted for their faith, just as the disciples were so long ago, and had to fly from their country to save their lives. They knew the name of one Christian in the American city where they landed, and they tried to find him. They called him the "Jesus man." They were following a star, but it was not a star in the sky; it was the star of faith in Jesus. And it brought them to the right place, too. It brought them to Christian friends and home and happy work for Jesus.

[Make a beautiful star on the board.] When Jesus was born (how long ago was it?) some wise men came a long way to find him. They were willing to spend a great deal of time and take a great deal of trouble to find Jesus, for they had true wisdom—the wisdom that God gives.

They had heard that Jesus was coming, and they wanted to see him and worship him. God saw the wish in their hearts, and he showed them how to find him. He always knows the heart that

truly wants Jesus, and sends some servant of his to show the way.

Do you know what servant of God showed the wise men the way? Yes, it was a star! The sun and moon and stars are all God's servants. The trees and the flowers, and every living thing that grows and moves—all are made to serve the great, good God. They belong to him, for he made them. Do you not think they ought to be glad to serve him?

Has he any little servants here, in this room, to-day? If a star could show the way to Jesus, do you not think a little Christian child could? But the child must first know the way himself, then he can show it to others.

[Print, "His servants shall serve him."] Shall we not hide this text away in our hearts, and always think of it when we see the star?

[Make a crown, or pin one to the board cut from gilt paper.]

The wise men were looking for a king, one whom they could worship and obey. Do we want to give up our own way, and let the King of love and goodness rule over us? If we do the star of faith will go before and show the way.

The wise men came to Jerusalem, and there was another king. Herod was his name, and he was afraid he would be put off his throne. He was troubled when he heard how these wise men came from so far seeking King Jesus! He sent for the Jewish priests and scribes, and asked them where the Scriptures said Christ must be born. They told him the prophets said in Bethlehem. Then he sent for the wise men, and told them to go there and find the new King, and then to come and bring him word, so that he could go there and worship him too. This was not the truth. He wanted to know where to find Jesus, so that he might send and kill him; but God did not permit this.

If you should start to-day to find Jesus, some wicked Herod of pride or selfishness or untruth would try to keep you from him. But if you keep right on you may be sure the star of faith will lead you straight to him.

When the wise men found Jesus in the lowly cattle shed they were full of joy! They knew they had found their King, and they worshiped him and gave him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, the very best things they had!

[Make several small hearts on the board, and print above, "Give me thy heart."]

We cannot bring gold and rich spices to our Lord, but we can bring what he asks—our hearts. And we can bring them now at this glad Christmas time, when so many eyes are turned toward the manger and the holy Babe.

Shall we follow the star of faith and prayer, and find Jesus for our own dear Lord and Saviour?

OPTIMISM.

No. 1.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty.
Calm on the list'ning ear of night.
Joy to the world! the Lord is come.
Hark! the herald angels sing.
Waken, Christian children.

No. 2.

Who is this, so weak and helpless?
Silent night! Holy night.
The joyful morn is breaking.
Glory to God! peace on the earth!
Again, o'er all the Christian earth.
Thou, who camest from above.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What name was given to the Saviour before his birth, as given in the GOLDEN TEXT? "**Thou shalt,**" 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.**

FOURTH QUARTERLY REVIEW.

Dec. 31.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (Rev. 22. 21.)

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The birth of Jesus. Matt. 2. 1-11.
Ta. Redemption in Christ. Rom. 3. 19-26.
W. Justification by faith. Rom. 5. 1-11.
Th. Imitation of Christ. Eph. 4. 20-32.
F. The Christian home. Col. 3. 12-25.
S. Grateful obedience. James 1. 16-27.
S. The heavenly inheritance. 1 Peter 1. 1-12.

REVIEW SERVICE FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Make out a list of the Titles of the Lessons of the Quarter in a column, with the chapter and verse of the Golden Text written after each title. In a parallel column write the following topics, presented in order by each lesson, with illustrative texts: The Believer Saved, Rom. 1. 16; The Believer Redeemed, Rom. 3. 24, 25; The Believer Reconciled, Rom. 5. 1; The Believer Transformed,

Rom. 12. 2; The Self-denying Believer, 1 Cor. 8. 13; The Victorious Believer, 1 Cor. 15. 20-22; The Generous Believer, 2 Cor. 8. 4, 5; The Gentle Believer, Eph. 4. 31, 32; The Studious Believer, Col. 3. 16; The Righteous Believer, James 1. 25; The Rejoicing Believer, 1 Peter 1. 8; The Spiritual-minded Believer, Rev. 1. 10. These topics together form one connected theme, the Believer in Christ. Be ready to give promptly the name of each lesson, the words of the Golden Text, and the name of each of these topics, if the teacher calls for them, and the words of the verse in which they are specially presented.

2. The quarter's lessons are selected from seven epistles and one prophecy. Name these books, and the lessons which are taken from each. Give the author, date, circumstances, and object of the writing of each epistle.

3. Give in as few words as possible your idea of the sort of man Paul was; James; Peter; John.

4. What beautiful figure is presented in Lesson XII, which, for other purposes, was presented by one of the prophets, and studied in an earlier lesson this year?

5. Name the seven churches. Who founded each of them?

6. What sort of people composed the church at Rome? Had Paul ever met them when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans?

7. Did Peter address his epistle directly to the dispersed Christian Jews in Palestine? or in Africa? or in Europe? What does he say prophets and angels eagerly desire to understand?

8. What is the meaning of "law" as Paul uses the phrase? Why cannot a man be justified by keeping the law?

9. Give James's definition of pure and undefiled religion. Give Paul's. (See the first two verses of Lesson III.) Can these two statements be harmonized?

10. What is Paul's rule for daily Christian living? (See verse 17 of Lesson IX.)

11. How are we related to each other? (See verse 5 of Lesson IV.) How does this relationship affect our ordinary habits, such as those of eating and drinking? (See verses 12, 13 of Lesson V.) How does it affect our duty concerning the partaking of intoxicants?

12. What is the gist of practical Christianity, as Paul understood it? (See verse 32 of Lesson VIII.)

13. Read Lesson VI, and tell what you believe to be Paul's opinion of the practical value of Christ's resurrection in our salvation.

14. How is Jesus our example? (See verse 9 of Lesson VII.)

REVIEW SCHEME FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

I. TITLES AND TEXTS.

[The following chart is designed to aid the memory in recalling the Titles of the lessons and the Golden Texts. The pupil should drill on the chart until all can be readily recalled.]

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. The P. of the G. | I am not ashamed— |
| 2. R. in C. | Being justified freely— |
| 3. J. by F. | While we were yet sinners— |
| 4. C. L. | Be not overcome of evil— |
| 5. A. for the S. of O. | We then that are strong— |
| 6. The R. | Thanks be to God— |
| 7. The G. of L. | He became poor, that ye— |
| 8. I. of C. | And be ye kind one to— |
| 9. The C. H. | I will walk within— |
| 10. G. O. | We love him, because— |
| 11. The H. I. | Giving thanks unto— |
| 12. The G. S. | Wherefore God also— |
| 13. The B. of J. | Thou shalt call— |

II. LESSON FACTS.

[The following will test the pupils' memory, and also exercise the judgment. May the Holy Spirit use the truth to enlighten the conscience!]

1. Make a list of all *persons* named in the lessons of the quarter.
2. State what *places* are named in the thirteen lessons.
3. Write out the *doctrines* taught in the quarter's lessons.
4. Name the *duties* taught which you think the most important.
5. *What have you gained* from this year's Bible study?

REVIEW SERVICE FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

DIRECTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

How many GOLDEN TEXTS can you repeat?

I am not ashamed—
Being justified freely—
While we were yet—
Be not overcome—
We then that are strong—
Thanks be to God which—
He became poor—

And be ye kind one to—
I will walk within—
We love him because—
Giving thanks unto the—
Wherefore God also hath—
Thou shalt call his name—

LESSON I tells of the power of the Gospel. To whom did Paul write a letter? **To the Church in Rome.** What does the Gospel make known? **God's goodness.**

LESSON II shows something better than the law. What is better than the law? **The Gospel.**

LESSON III tells how to be saved. Who died for us when we were sinners? **Christ.**

LESSON IV tells about right living. What should a Christian give to God? **His body.**

LESSON V is a temperance lesson. What did Paul say does not commend one to God? **Meat and drink.**

LESSON VI is about the resurrection. What does Paul declare? **"Now is Christ risen."**

LESSON VII is about the grace of giving? What should Christians give first? **Themselves.**

LESSON VIII tells whom we should try to be like. Who is the Christian's pattern? **Christ.**

LESSON IX describes a Christian home. What is the perfect bond? **Love.**

LESSON X is a letter from the apostle James. What good gift has been sent to us? **The word of God.**

LESSON XI is a letter from the apostle Peter. Who has chosen us to be his servants? **God.**

LESSON XII tells who was seen by the apostle John. Where was John? **In Patmos.** What did the Lord tell John to do? **To write his words.**

LESSON XIII is the story of the birth of Jesus. Where was Jesus born? **In Bethlehem.**

Blackboard.



Responsive Review Service for the Fourth Quarter.

Supt. Give Title and Golden Text of First Lesson.

Right-hand Half of School. The Power of the Gospel. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Supt. Second Lesson.

Left-hand Half of School. Redemption in Christ. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Supt. Third Lesson.

Right-hand Half. Justification by Faith. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Supt. Fourth Lesson.

Left-hand Half. Christian Living. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Supt. Fifth Lesson.

Right-hand Half. Abstinence for the Sake of Others. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

Supt. Sixth Lesson.

Left-hand Half. The Resurrection. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Supt. Seventh Lesson.

Right-hand Half. The Grace of Liberty. "He became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

Supt. Eighth Lesson.

Left-hand Half. Imitation of Christ. "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Supt. Ninth Lesson.

Right-hand Half. The Christian Home. "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."

Supt. Tenth Lesson.

Left-hand Half. Grateful Obedience. "We love him, because he first loved us."

Supt. Eleventh Lesson.

Right-hand Half. The Heavenly Inheritance. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Supt. Twelfth Lesson.

Left-hand Half. The Glorified Saviour. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."

Supt. Thirteenth Lesson.

Right-hand Half. The Birth of Jesus. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."

LESSON I. (First Single Voice.)

Paul told the Christians at Rome that he prayed for them without ceasing, that he longed to come to them to share his spiritual blessings with them and to have converts among them. He said that, having received the Gospel himself made him a debtor to all who were without it. He declared: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." And then he showed that all the glory and gain of the Gospel depended on

faith. "The just shall live by faith." The lesson has great beauty and practical helpfulness.

LESSON II. (Second Single Voice.)

Paul's Epistle to the Romans tells us what the law says about sin and what the Gospel says about salvation. The law gives us the knowledge of sin, the guilt of sin, the hopelessness of sin, and the fact that all have sinned.

The Gospel tells us of a salvation through faith in Christ, of a salvation for all men, a salvation by which we are justified; that is, set right before God's law. Thus, while we learn that we are great sinners, we learn, too, that Christ is a great Saviour.

LESSON III. (Third Single Voice.)

In the third lesson we learn that faith in Christ brings us peace, grace, joy, patience, experience, hope, and love. We learn that because God loved us while we were yet sinners, and because Christ died for us, we shall be saved from wrath through him. By faith—that is, by believing in Christ—we appropriate to our needs the atonement in Christ.

LESSON IV. (Fourth Single Voice.)

Because we have been redeemed Paul beseeches us to consecrate ourselves a living sacrifice to God's service. And if we are consecrated we shall be no longer conformed to this world, but transformed. These are some of the results: we shall appreciate the gifts and work of others; we shall be sincere; "kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality;" and so full of love and sympathy that we shall not only "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep," but even bless them which persecute us: "bless, and curse not."

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LESSON V. (Fifth Single Voice.)

Paul writes to the Corinthians who are troubled as to whether they ought to eat meats which have been offered to idols, that those who have knowledge know that an idol is nothing in the world, and so for an intelligent Christian who had never worshiped idols it could not trouble the conscience to eat such meat. But for the sake of those who were easily tempted, in whom custom had wrought a reverence for the idol which even conversion to Christianity could not at once overcome, they must take heed lest their liberty of conscience "become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." Paul asked the solemn question, "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" Paul then set forth his rule of conduct—abstinence for the sake of others—in these words: "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth."

LESSON VI. (Sixth Single Voice.)

In the sixth lesson Paul shows us some of the results of believing that Christ did not rise from the dead: 1. "Our preaching is vain;" 2. "Your faith is also vain;" 3. "Ye are yet in your sins;" 4. "They which have fallen asleep are perished;" 5. "We are of all men most miserable." Paul then boldly declares: "Christ is risen from the dead," and this follows: 1. He is "the first fruits of them that slept." As on the day of Passover the high priest laid a sheaf of new wheat on the altar as a sign and pledge of the coming harvest, so the resurrection of Christ is a promise of ours. 2. To him has been given "all rule and all authority and power." 3. "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

LESSON VII. (Seventh Single Voice.)

In the seventh lesson Paul urges his Corinthian brethren to liberality, recalling to them how the Christians of Macedonia out of their poverty and persecution had sent a collection to the needy saints of Palestine. This liberal spirit was the result of first giving their own selves to the Lord. Christians should be liberal, because it is the grace which crowns faith and utterance and knowledge and diligence and love; and because we are thus following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

LESSON VIII. (Eighth Single Voice.)

Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians urges them to study closely the character and words of Jesus. He tells them that if they imitate Christ there will be a change of companions, of conversation, and of manner of life. There will be a change of heart—"all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

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LESSON IX. (Ninth Single Voice.)

Paul to the Colossians tells them how the elect of God should live. They should be merciful, kind, humble, meek, long-suffering, forgiving one another as Christ forgave them, having love to bind together all these graces, and peace to rule their hearts. They should give due attention to Scripture study and hymn singing, doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Wives should be submissive and husbands should be loving, children obedient, fathers forbearing, servants

obeying not with eye service. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance."

LESSON X. (Tenth Single Voice.)

James tells us that God is our Father, that he is a generous Father, giving us every good and perfect gift, and that he is an unchanging Father. "Wherefore let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath," laying aside all sin to receive the word, and being doers of the word as well as hearers. That man's religion is vain who bridleth not his tongue. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this. To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

LESSON XI. (Eleventh Single Voice.)

Peter in writing to Christians calls them strangers because they are really citizens of heaven. He calls them God's own children, and, as such, heirs "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." He tells them they may be kept by the power of God, and though they are tried with fire, they will rejoice with joy unspeakable, because the end of their faith is the salvation of their souls.

LESSON XII. (Twelfth Single Voice.)

John, the beloved disciple, on the Isle of Patmos, on the Lord's Day had a blessed vision. He saw Jesus of Nazareth, no longer as a persecuted man, but as a glorious Lord, a living Lord, a Lord who had conquered death, a Lord who walks among the churches represented by the seven golden candlesticks, and who holds his ministers, called here his angels, in his right hand.

LESSON XIII. (Thirteenth Single Voice.)

The wise men who sought for Christ show us what spirit a seeker should have. He should be in earnest; they journeyed a thousand miles over a wild country. He should have faith; they trusted in the unseen and followed the little light they had. He should have the spirit of self-denial; they left all to find Christ, and when they found him they gave him all their treasure. A true seeker will be rewarded as were the wise men. He will have guidance; they were guided by a star. He will find the Christ; "they saw the young child with Mary his mother." He will have joy; "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

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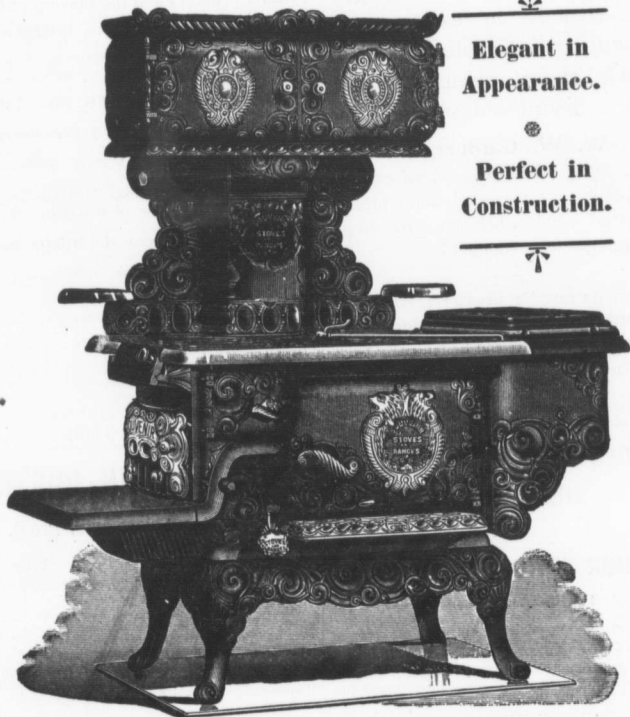
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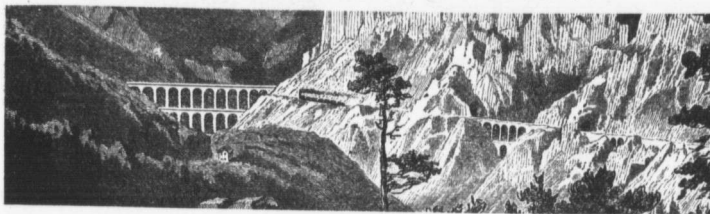
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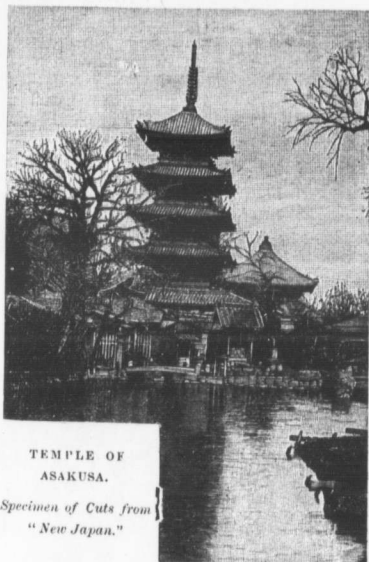
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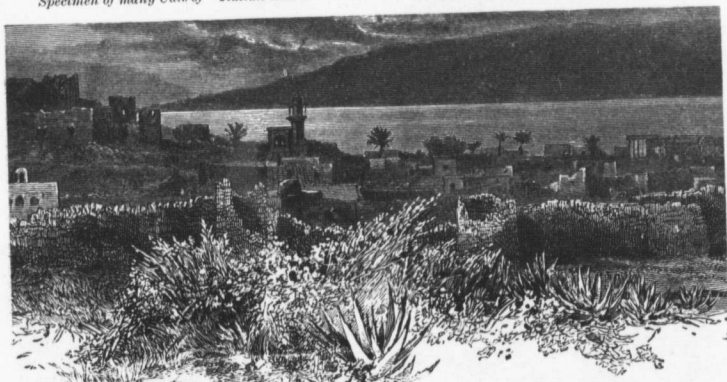
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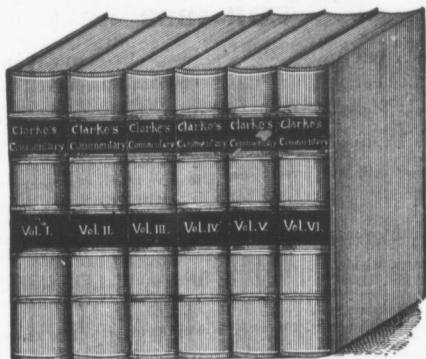
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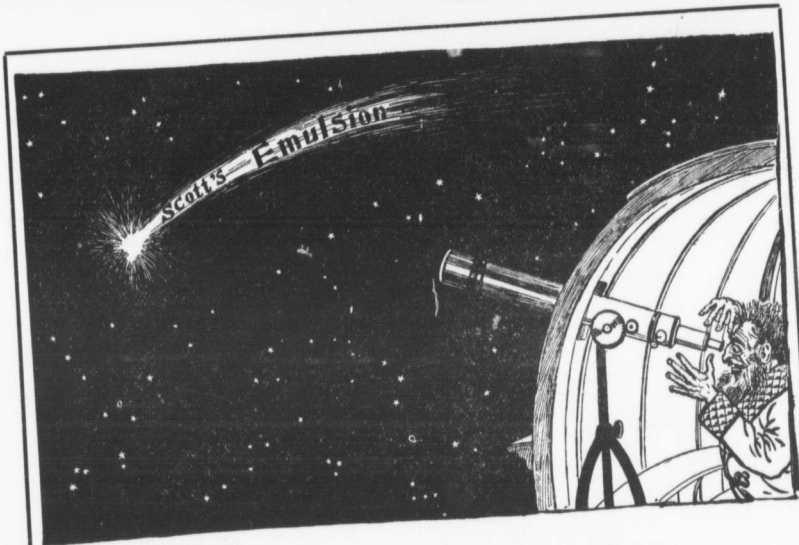
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of Children are speedily cured by Scott's Emulsion. It gives strength to the weak and insures perfect health. Scott's Emulsion is the most nourishing food known to science.

Prepared by Scott & Bowne, Belleville. Druggists sell it.